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Essays

1) Gnostizismus u. Freimaurerei (Gnosticism and Freemasonry) 38p.
2) Was ist die Freimaurerei (What is Freemasonry) 25p.
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G N O S T I Z I S M U S

U N D

F R E I M A U R E R E I.

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Ich habe die Absicht, heute mit Euch ein Gebiet zu betreten, das Einigen unter Euch moeglicherweise als fuer dieses Gremium nicht sehr passend erscheinen mag. Aber ich habe den Eindruck, dass Ihr, so wie es bei mir der Fall war, in meiner Zeichnung so manch Interessantes und so manch Wissenswertes werdet entdecken koennen. Ja ! Stellen wir uns vor, dass wir uns auf eine Entdeckungsreise begeben, auf eine archaeologische Expedition - und lasst uns sehen, was wir dabei ausgraben koennen.

Ich will heute ueber die Moeglichkeit mit Euch sprechen, dass der Gnostizismus in irgendeinem wichtigen Zusammenhang steht mit der Freimaurerei, oder besser gesagt, dass unsere Bruderschaft Einiges oder Vieles der Gnostik verdanken mag.

Ich will Euch gleich auch zu verstehen geben, warum ich mich hier ueber das Thema des Gnostizismus auslasse, warum ich mich ueberhaupt dafuer interessiere. Es hat mich schon immer interessiert, ja geradezu gequaelt, zu erlernen, zu erfahren, welche Gedankengaenge,welches Wissen, welche Logik, welche Ideologie die Gruender der modernen Freimaurerei beeinflussten, als sie den Beduerfnissen ihrer Zeit nachgehend der Koeniglichen Kunst konkrete Form gaben und das uns gelaeufige Ritual ausarbeiteten. Bisher haben mich alle Hinweise und Erklaerungen nicht befriedigt. Ich will aber auch nicht sagen, dass meine heutige Zeichnung die Antwort und die Loesung zu meiner voelligen Befriedigung bringt - aber ich glaube, dass sie ein wenig zu unserem besseren Verstaendnis, zu einem klaereren Einblick beitragen kann.

Also hoeren wir,was ich ueber die Gnosis und den Gnostizismus zu sagen habe, und welchen Zusammenhang ich zwischen ihnen und der Freimaurerei zu sehen glaube.

Wir wollen uns vorerst darueber klar werden, was wir unter der Gnosis, der Gnostik und dem Gnostizismus zu verstehen haben.

Das Wort "GNosis" kommt aus dem Griechischen und bedeutet "Wissen". Es handelt sich hier um intellektuelles Wissen im Gegensatz zu dem, das durch Glaube,Erfahrung oder Offenbarung erreicht wird. Gnosis ist eine geistige Bewegung; sie ist eine Weltanschauung; die vielleicht seit Urzeiten bereits unter den Menschen bestand, aber sicherlich dann geschaffen wurde, als die ersten religioesen,philosophsichen und wissenschaftlichen Gedankenformationen den Menschen moeglich waren. Diese obgleich noch primitive Denkregungen der fruehen Menschengeschlechter suchten sicherlich bereits ein Suchen nach einer Erklaerung fuer die sich in der Natur abspielenden Erscheinungen. Sie suchten ein naeheres Wissen ueber das Hoehere Wesen zu gewinnen, das die Welt und die Natur beherrscht; und sie suchten einen Weg zu entdecken, sich dieses Hoehere Wesen guenstig zu stimmen - und moeglicherweise dessen Kraefte und dessen Koennen sich zu eigen zu machen.

Das ist es, was Gnosis besagt, und wie ich mir die Entstehung der Gnosis vrostelle und erklaere. Sie war von Anfang an mehr eine Philosophie denn eine Religion. Spaeterhin wurde diese Gnosis durch den Kontakt mit, und durch Aufnahme von Elementen anderer Religionen in ihrem Charakter geaendert; sie wurde zu einer religioesen Bewegung, und als solche suchte sie moeglichst weite Kreise zu erfassen, so dass es zum Zusammenstoss mit dem gleichzeitig aufwachsenden Christentum kam,von diesem bekaempft und schliesslich als eine Haeresie verurteilt wurde. Aus diesem Konkurrenzkampf entstand die negative Beleuchtung, die bisher die allgemeine Meinung gefaerbt hat.

Der Gnostiker ist ein Anhaenger der Gnosis,dieser besonderen, soeben beschriebenen,meistens in den Vordergrund erst um die Zeitwende getretenen Form von Religioesitatet mit ihren spezifischen philosophischen und kulturellenbInhalten. Unter Gnostizismus versteht man diese religioese Bewegung innerhalb gewissen Gruppen und Richtungen, die nicht nur zur Zeit des fruehen Christentums bestand - als sie in der Form eines ausgesprochen gnostischen Religionssystems zum Ausdruck kam - sondern in weniger gemischter und verallgemeinerter From bweits viele Jahrhunderte zumindest in der Antike.

Bis vor Kurzem wurde allerdings der Begriff "Gnosis" nur auf die religioesen Bewegungen angewandt,die im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert unserer Zeitrecnung auftraten und in Konflikt mit der Kirche geraten waren. Heute wissen wir, dass dieser Begriff zu eng gefasst ist - und die von mir gegebene Definition wird von vielen modernen Forschern als die richtige angesehen.

Woher entstand denn die Gnosis ? Aus dem Urchristentum ? Aus dem apoklyptischen Judentum ? Aus dem hellenistischen Judentum ? Aus dem dualistischen iranischen Religionsgebiet ? Aus den hellenistischen Philosophien ?

Und wo entstand der Gnostizismus ? In Aegypten " In Persien ? In Palaestina ?

Und was bedeutet den schliesslich die Gnosis ? Ist sie ein dualistisches, ein monotheistisches System oder eine Mischung beider ? Ist sie eine Religion, eine Philosophie oder eine Mischung beider ?

Aber es ist nicht so einfach,allgemein anerkannte und angenommene Definitionen und Erklaerungen zu geben. Man kann sagen,dass nichts mit Bezug auf den Gnostizismus einfach und klar ist. Das scheint schon immer der Fall gewesen sein, denn schon Irenaeus hatte darueber geklagt,dass eine jede gnostische Sekte ein von allen anderen verschiedenes Programm verfolgte.

Moderne Forscher glauben im Allgemeinen nicht,dass die Gnosis hauptsaechlich hellenistischen Ursprungs ist, sondern dass sie aus nicht-orthodoxen juedischen Quellen stammt und sehr stark von orientalischen Mysterienreligionen beeinflusst war. Heute wird sogar nicht mehr angenommen, dass der Mandaeismus (ueber diesen spaeter mehr) urspruenglich christlich beeinflusst gewesen ist. Andererseits gibt es Wissenschaftler (WILSON), die sagen, dass zwar die Sekte der Essener in den Anfangszeiten der Gnosis in Qumran lebte, aber nicht gnostisch war - und hoechstens als pre-gnostisch gelten kann; denn das Streben nach Wissen in den Qumran Dokumenten ist nicht mehr unterstrichen als in der Weisheitsliteratur des Alten Testaments. JONAS sieht im Gnostizismus eine Gruppe von Glaubenssystemen,die ein neues und besonderes religioeses Prinzip bekannten, z.B. zu einem Unbekannten Gott,der den Menschen auffordert, und es ihm gleichzeitig verwehrt, ihn zu kennen. Von anderen Forschern wird der Gnostizismus als ein Dachtitel bezeichnet unter dem sich die verschiedenen Religionsphaenomena verbergen, die aber im Grunde genommen alle aus dem apokalyptischen Judentum stammen (GRANT). Andere behaupten,dass es sich um komplexe haeretische Lehren handelt, die sich in den ersten zwei Jahrhunderten der Kirche entgegengestellt hatten (WALLS). Anderewiederum finden, dass die Gnosis sich aus dem hellenistischen Judentum herleitet, dass sie aelter ist als das Christentum, dass sie nicht eine Verchleierung des Christentums ist,keine Ueberdeckung christlicher Lehren durch eine gnostsiche Philosophie (WILSON). BULTMANN beschreibt die Gnosis als eine aus dem Dualismus hergeleitete

Erloesungsreligion, waehrend GRONINGEN die Gnosis als aus einem mit starkem obgleich primitiven wissenschaftlicheh Durst gefuellten Hellenismus erwachsen sieht. Nicht nur die heidnischen Religionen,die in die hellenistische Welt flossen, sondern auch die Gnosis, die dort entstand, zeigen einen ausgesprochenen nach wissenschaftlchem Verstaendnis draengenden Impuls. Das kommt in den kultischen Riten und magischen Handlungen zum Ausdruck. Auch HAARDT bezeichnet den Gnostizismus als eine sich in mannigfachen und weitverbreiteten Gemeinschaftsbildungen manifestierende im Grunde nicht-christliche Bewegung der Spaetantike.

Wie Ihr seht, hat die die Wissenschaft in den letzten Jahren dem Gnostizismus in seinen verschiedenartigen AUsdrucksformen sehr starke Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Aber es ist den Wissenschaftlern nicht gelungen, auf eine gemeinsame Urform aller gnostischer Systeme hinzuweisen, aus der die uns bekannten vielartigen Richtungen haetten erstanden sein koennen. Man hat sich mit einem gnostischen Synkretismus als Erklaerung fuer die Gleichartigkeit in vielen gnostischen Darstellungen zufrieden geben muessen.

HARNACK definisert die Gnosis als eine "akute Hellenisierung des Christentums. SCHNEIDER bezeichnet den Inhalt der Gnosis "nur griechisch-hellenistisch und zwar vorwiegend platonisch". Die Gnosis bringe die Philosophie des AT vor. Er nannte den Gnostizismus den bedeutendsten zeitgemaessen Ausdruck der christlichen theologischen Wahrheit des ersten Jahrhunderts. REITZENSTEIN glaubt auf Grund seiner Studien des C o r p u s H e r m e t i c u m, dass die Gnosis unabhaengig vom Christentum in Aegypten entstanden ist. Es werden immer wieder Forschungen veroeffentlicht,die erklaeren, dass die Gnosis wesentlich juedische Elemente enthaelt. So denkt SCHMITHALS , dass in der vorchristlichen Zeit die in Babylon verbliebenen Juden ihre messianische Hoffnung im Sinne des gnostischen Mythos umgedeutet haben. Es gibt auch andere Wissenschaftler, die die Gnosis aus den babylonischen Religionen, aus dem Orient und so fort ableiten.

Ich werdemich in wenigen Minuten noch mehr ueber den geschichtlichen Hintergrund des Gnostizismus auslassen, aber vorerst moechte ich Euch eine Arbeits-Definition geben, mit der wir arbeiten koennen:

DIE GNOSIS IST EIN RELIGIOESES, BESSER GESAGT EIN PHILOSOPHISCHES BEKENNTNIS DER ANTIKE , MIT ZUSAETZLICHEN LEHREN IM LAUFE DER ZEIT IN DIE ALTEN TRADITIONEN UND SONSTIGEN UEBERLIEFERUNGEN GEMISCHT, UM DANN SPAETERHIN SELBST ALS EINE SELBSTAENDIGE QUELLE WEITERER AEHNLICHER GLAUBENSBILDUNGEN UND ALS MATERIAL FUER NEURERE MISCHUNGEN MIT JEWEILS BEGEGNETEN RELIGIONEN UND GEISTESRICHTUNGEN ZU DIENEN.

Um die Zeitwende konnte man gnostische Merkzeichen in den Taeufersekten an den Ufern des Jordan vorfinden,sowohl wie in den Mysterienkulten,die durch Sybkretismus die einen oder anderen gnostischen Ideen einverleibt hatten, und auch in gewissen religioes-philosophischen Gedankengaengen der hellenistischen Literatur. Auch die Kirchenvaeter nahmen die Gnosis anfangs als bemerkenswert an. KLEMENT von ALEXANDRIEN sprach von der Gnosis als " ein Wissen dessen,was wir sind,was aus uns geworden ist, wo wir sind, wohin wir gehen,was unser Geschick sein wird, ob wir erloest werden koennen, was Geburt und Wiedergeburt bedeuten". GRANT sah in diesen Gnostikern ein Suchen von dem Erkenntnis des Selbst, ein Suchen nach der Erkenntnis des Goettlichen im menschlichen Selbst.

Man denke nicht, dass die Gnosis nur eine von den vielen Geistesrichtungen jener Zeit war. Sie war im Gegenteil d i e sehr starke,gefuehlsgeladene religioese Weltanschauung, die dem Menschen der ersten Jahrhundertwende Antrieb und Hoffnung gab. Wir haben es hier mit einer dynamischen spirituellen Bewegung in einem aufgewuehlten Zeitalter su tun. Urspruenglich - und grundsaetzlich - bedeutete Gnosis reines Wissen und nicht Sepkulation. Der Gnostizismus vermittelte dem Glaeubigen ein Wissen, das bisher nur die Goetter besassen. Der Mensch besteht im Grunde aus goettlicher Substanz, und daher ist es ihm moeglich, durch Selbsterkennung gottaehnlich zu werden. Die Erkenntnis des Menschen, dass er Goettliches in sich birgt, bringt ihn mit dem Hoechsten Wesen naeher und zusammen, so erklaert KINGSLAND. Er stellt auch the These auf, dass das AT sowohl wie das NT im Grunde auf gnostischen Begriffen von Wissen und Weisheit beruhen.

In Anbetracht des Anspruches, eine religioes-philosophisches System zu sein, hatte die Gnosis auf die oben genannten Fragen des KLEMENT VON ALEXANDRIEN die Antwort zu finden. So beschrieb sie auf dem Hoehepunkt ihrer Entwicklung den Menschen als ein besonderes von einer ueberragennden Gottheit geschaffenes Wesen; dass aber der Mensch durch boese Einwirkungen in eine niedere Welt versetzt worden war. Das Ziel, das Bestreben,die Aufgabe des Menschen hat es zu sein, zur Gottheit zurueckzukehren. Das ist die "E r l o e s u n g ", auf die der Mensch wartet, mit der er rechnet. Waehrend seines Lebens auf Erden ist der Mensch das Gefaengnis fuer das von Gott kommende Licht, das in die niedere Welt geraten ist. Um dieses Licht und den Menschen zu befreien, hat Gott die Gnosis geschaffen, das besondere Wissen und Erkennen. Mit Hilfe der Gnosis wird schliesslich der Lichtstrahl in das urspruengliche Lichtreich zurueckkehren.

Es wuerde zu viel Zeit in Anspruch nehmen, sollte ich in weitere Einzelheiten dieses Glaubenssystems eingehen, aber wie Ihr seht, finden sich hier die gleichen Ideen wie auch in der Kabbalah, deren originelle Gedankenmasse jedoch nicht sind. Aber darueber spaeter mehr. Ich will noch hinzufuegen,dass die Gnostiker lehrte, dass Gott der Vater ueber Allem steht, dass Licht von ihm ausstarhlt, dass je weiter das Licht von ihm entfernt ist,der Einfluss niedriger daemonischer Kraefte zunimmt. Daraus ergibt sich ein bitterer Kampf zwischen den Maechten des Lichts und denen der Finsternis,

zwischen dem Guten und dem Boesen. Das ist der Grundgedanke des Dualismus. Die Gnosis ist dualistisch, absolut dualistisch. Das Materielle und Koerperliche sind Boeses, das Geistige ist gut. Zwar erkennt das Christentum auch eine tiefe Kluft zwischen dem Guten und Boesen, aber es sieht in dem Materiellen und Koerperlichen nicht etwas Uebles oder in dem Geistigen etwas a priori Gutes. Das Alte Testament kennt ueberhaupt keinen Dualismus;es sieht in dem Materiellen und dem Natuerlichen nicht etwas ohne weiteres Uebles oder Boeses.

Entsprechend der Grundlehge des Gnostizismus ist die Geschichte des Universums zugleich auch die Geschichte in grundliegender Form fuer die Menschheit. Der Makrokosmos erklaert den Mikrokosmos. Das antike Weltbiéd spiegelt sich im gnostischen Weltbild wieder. Unter dem Einfluss des Gnostizismus entstand in den Laendern oestlich vom Mittelmeer,unter der gleichzeitigen Einwirkung des Hellenismus, ein neues Weltgefuehl. Der Gnostizismus ist im Grunde genommen anti-kosmisch; er sucht sich das Weltall symbolisch ausgedrueckt vorzustellen. Dadurch kam es spaeterhin zu mancherlei Theorien die besagten, dass die Gnosisseine Reaktion sei zu einer in der Spaetantike weitverbreiteten Tendenz zu "negativen Seinsvorstellungen" in der "Entweltlichungstendenz".

In der ausgehenden Antike begann der Hellenismus religioese Zuege anzunehmen. Er hatte sich nun gegen gegen den gleichzeitig starken juedischen Monotheismus,gegen die babylonische Astrologie und gegen den iranischen Dualismus zu verteifigen. Der Hellenismus, mit den obigen Stroemungen gemischt, begann einen ausgesprochen geistigen Charakter anzunehmen. Das kam zum Ausdruck im hellenistischen Judentum,in der gnostischen Bewegung, in den Mysterienreligionen,in der neo-platonischen Philosophie - und in dem sich neu bildenden Xristentum. Fuer eine Zeit lebten diese verschiedenen Geistesrichtungen harmonisch beisammen - aber der Friede dauerte nicht allzu lange.

Die grundliegenden dem Gnostizismus eigenen Gedanken waren schon seit langem in weit einfacheren und viel leichter verstaendlichen Formen in den von fast allen Kulturen gepflegten Mythen dargestellt worden. Es muss auch gleichzeitig betont werden, dass sich die Gnosis auch zuerst in den Mythen,iñem uralten Erbgut der Menschheit in allgemeiner Form vorgestellt hat Dabei koennen wir aber nicht sagen, dass der Gnostizismus viel juenger ist als die grossen Mythologien.

In der Gnosis der Mythen suchte man sich durch Riten die Goetter freundlich zu stimmen. Grundsaetzlich enthaelt diese Gnosis einen moralischen,einen metaphysischen Dualismus,von dem sich der Glaeubige mittels der Gnosis freimachen kann. In einem gewissen Sinne entspricht dieses auch dem was die Apokalypsis besagen wollte.

So wie die griechische Philosophie so ist auch der Gnostizismus in grossem Masse mit der Mythologie verbunden. PLATON laesst die Mythologie da weitersprechen, wo der Dialog nicht mehr ausreicht. Und der Mythos uebernimmt da die Fuehrung, wenn die Ideen die Grenzen des Wissens erreicht haben.

Das Meiste, was der Gnostizismus zum Ausdruck zu bringen sucht, erscheint als eine Art von Mythologie; aber dabei ist es nicht klar fuer uns zu unterscheiden, ob die Ideologie oder die Mythologie fuer die Gnostiker das Primaere ist. "Bei den Gnostikern besteht eine unbewusste Taetigkeit des Geistes,die mit der Philosophie die Begrifflichkeit, mit der Mythologie die Unverantwortlichkeit teilt", sagt KERENYI. Aber sicherlich teilt der Gnostiesismus mit der Mythologie auch die Glaubwuerdigkeit.

Wo und wann entstand wohl eine grosse Mythen schaffende Kultur, die mit ihren Schoepfungen moeglicherweise nicht nur alle spaeteren Mythologien mittelbar auch den Gnostizismus beeinflusste, werden wir fragen. " Mythologie ist keine blosse Ausdrucksweise, an deren Stelle etwa auch eine andere,einfachere und verstaendlichere haette gewaehlt werden koennen, nur eben zu ihrer Zeit nicht, da sie dann als die einzig moegliche, die zeitgemaesse Ausdrucksweise gewesen ist", stellt MALINOWSKI fest. "Der Mythos in einer primitiven Gesellschaft, d.h. in seiner lebendigen urspruenglichen Form, ist keine bloss erzaehlte Geschichte, sondern eine gelebte Realitaet". Die Mythen erzaehlen. Sie suchen nicht zu erklaeren, "wie es eigentlich ist", in der Art wie es die Philosophen tun, Der Mythenerzaehler greift in die Urzeit zurueck um zu erzaehlen, was "urspruenglich war"

Im AUfbau des gnostischen Systems wurden die Lehren, die in den aus den verschiedensten Kulturen stammenden Mythen enthalten waren, mit den immer wieder begegneten Religionen gemischt. Der Mischung wurden dann noch mancherlei Volks- bezw.pseudo-wissenschaftliche Vorstellungen, gewoehnlich in der Form gnostischer Dramen, beigegeben. Und all das wurde dann, mit etwas Glauben an eine Seelenwanderung aus dem Platonismus und dem Pythagoreanismus gewuerzt, als ein kompaktes gnostisches,einer Religion gleichendes Glaubensbild angeboten. Oft kam dann noch ein Schuss babylonischer Astrologie hinzu. und eine Beigabe von persischem Dualismus und gewisser Kultvorschriften aus dem aegyptischen Totenbuch. Fernerhin ist ein juedischer Einfluss seitens der grossen Diaspora-Colonien inm Alexandrien und sonstwo nachweisbar. Es soll uns nicht ueberraschen, dass im Gnostizismus auch theosophische und anthroposophische Elemente entdeckt werden koennen. Das ist letzten Endes, was Synkretismus bedeutet.

Zusammenfassend koennen wir sagen, dass der Gnostizismus, so wie wir ihn heute verstehen, eine typisch hellenistische Ideologie enthaelt ; dass er im Grunde genommen eine pseudo-wissenschaftliche religioese Weltanschauung ist, die, aus dem Orient kommend, sich ueber die Mittelmeer-

laender ausbreitete, und dann wiederum in den Osten eindrang. Orientalische, griechische , juedische und christliche Mythen und Begriffe sind in einen einzigen gnostischen Rahmen zusammengebracht. Und dann ergibt sich wiederum ein weiterer Synkretismus der verschiednen gnostischen Gruppen untereinander - und daraus ergibt sich eine nicht unbetraechtliche Verwirrung und sehr viel Uneinstimmigkeit. " Betrachten wir nur die Unbestanedigkeit ihrer Lehren", klagt St. IRENAEUS, " nicht zwei oder drei kannst Du finden,die ueber denselben Gegenstand dasselbe sagen". Leider ist durch den synkretischen Faktor den Forschern die Arbeit sehr erschwert worden, da dadurch der Ursprung,der Inhalt,das System und die originellen Prinzipien im Laufe der Zeit verwischt worden sind.

Im 6. Jahrhundert v.Chr. begannen die Achameniden, die Machttraeger Irans, die damalige Welt zu erobern. Sie konnten aber ihr Ziel nicht voellig erreichen, denn sie konnten Griechenland nicht unter ihr Joch bringen. Aber als 300 Jahre spaeter Alexander sein Weltreich eroberte, gelang es ihm, Persien diesem einzuverleiben. Es gelang ihm dabei auch,bedeutende Elemente der iranischen Kultur und der Religion Irans mit derer Griechenlands zusammenzubringen. Alexander's Eroberungen brachten fernerhin auch all die anderen damals bereits in seinem Weltreich bestehenden Kulturen und Religionen miteinander in Beruehrung. Das fuehrte zu gegenseitiger Befruchtung und Beeinflussung. Und so wurde die Zeit und die Welt des SYNKRETISMUS geschaffen

Das Wort " Synkretismus " bedeutet "Zusammenfliessen,Mischen". Es hat einen besonderen Sinn mit Bezug auf die Gnosis, wie ich bereits andeutete. Synkretismus ist nicht identisch mit Gnostizismus - aber in einem gewissen Sinne ist Gnostizismus doch Synkretismus. In diesem unsren Falle brachte der Synkretismus ein Ineinander-Uebergehen von griechischen und orientalischen Goetterfiguren und ein Zusammenlegen der diesen entsprechenden Mythen. Aber man muss sich darueber klar sein, dass der Gnostizismus mehr ist als ein synkretisch gemischter Salat aus Mythen und Goettern. Gnosis ist eine Art von Religion, sie ist sui generis.

In den Prozess des Synkretismus wurden auch eine Anzahl von Mythologien einbezogen. Die bereits vor der christliche Aera wirkenden orientalischen Mythen enthielten schon viele juedische Elemente; und nach der Beruehrung des Christentums mit der Gnosis nahm die letztere noch weitere Elemente aus dem Alten Testament auf.

Welche sind die auf synkretischen Ursprung hinweisenden gnostischen Charakteristika ? Im Allgemeinen fuehlt man, dass aus Iran das Prinzip des Dualismus kommt,aus Babylonien die Astrologie. Die juedischen Sekten gaben ihren Beitrag. Aus Aegypten kam der Isis-Kult hinzu, aus Syrien die Verehrung des Sonnengottes und aus Griechenland die religioese Philosophie.

COLPE , der im Johannes-Evangelium eine schein-philosophische gnostische Auslegung von Gott und Welt sieht, erklaert, dass unter den vielen Titeln,die Jesus verliehen sind, die des "Menschensohnes" und des "Logos" Anzeichen eines gnostischen Erloeserbegriffes sind. In den Schriften des PHILON sind Spuren des Urmenschen-Erloeser-Mythos enthalten. Der Logos stellt das Zentrum der Welt dar, existierte bereits vor der Erschaffung der Welt, stellt den inneren Menschen dar, und dieser innere Mensch, das menschliche Selbst verspricht die Erloesung.

Der Begriff "Gnosis" wird zur Benennung eines weiten Gebiets religioeser Anschauungen angewandt. Eine Menge gnostischer Ideen sind auch in meisten orientalischen Religionen anzutreffen. Die Gnosis war eine aus einem Gemisch verschiedenster Glaubensarten zusammengesetzte Religionsform und bestand schon lange vor dem Aufkommen der christlichen Religion. Die hermetische Literatur beweist das Wirken eines gnostischen Systems bereits im 2. Jahrhundert vor unserer Zeitrechung. Spenden wir einige Minuten, um den Platz einzunehmen,denn der Gnostizismus in den damals bestehenden Religionen einnahm. Beginnen wir damit,iuns seine Beziehung zu den hellenistischen Religionen anzusehen.

Wir haben es PLATON zu verdanken, dass die Religion und die Philosophie auf den gleichen Nenner gebracht wurden. Unter der Wegweisung von Platon's Philosophie sucht der Grieche seine Sicherheit darin zu finden, dass er sich und seine Welt vernunftsgemaess zu verstehen suchte. Der griechische Philosoph nahm auch die Rolle eines Propheten auf sich.. Eine fuehrende Rolle spielte in diesem Sinne auch die Stoa . Der Mensch wurde zum Mittelpunkt des stoischen Philosophie; an Stelle der von den Menschen verfassten Gesetze ist das Naturgesetz gestellt. Menschliche Vernunft und Weltvernunft sind wesensgleich. Affekte und Leidenschaften sind unnatuerlich. Das ist gut oder schlecht, was die innere Freiheit,das innere Geloestsein von der Welt foerdert oder aufhebt.

Die Philosophie gab dem durchschnittlichen Griechen die Moeglichkeit, sich sein Lebensbild zu schaffen. Dieses war weiterhin dadurch erleichtert, dass die Philosophie die damaligen Wissenschaften - so z.B. gesellte sich die Astrologie zur Astronomie - im taeglichen Leben zur Anwendung brachte. Religion und Philosophie waren unzertrennbar in ihrem Ziel; beide suchten die Frage zu beantwroten: "Was ist Gott ? Was ist der Kosmos ? Welchen Platz nimmt der Mensch im Universum ein ? Gibt es eine Erloesung ? Was bedeutet der Tod ?"

In dieser Umgebung entwickelte sich die gnostische Religiositaet aus einer Mischung von griechischem Glaubnessystem mit Religionsbegriffen, die aus Persien und aus dem Judentum stammten. Und auf diesem religioesen Glaubensgebiet siedelte sich auch die griechische Philosophie an. Grundsaetzlich schloss das "Wissen" des Gnostizismus die Kenntnis aller himm-

lischer Namen ein, so dass man alle dort bei Namen anreden konnte. Und es war notwendig, im Besitz magischer Passworte zu sein, so dass man eine gewisse Kontrolle ueber die himmlischen Maechte besass. Das koennte vielleicht darauf hinweisen, dass die Gnosis im Grunde genommen gardnicht religioes ist.

In der religioesen AUffassung der Griechen stehen maechtige Goetter den Menschen gegenueber; aber die ersteren bleiben immer innerhalb der Grenzen dessen, was recht und gerecht ist, und dadurch wurden auch den Menschen die Richtlinien fuer ihr Betragen vorgezeichnet.

Es ist zweifellos, dass die Gnosis einen stark philosophischen Charakter aufzeigt - ob neoplatonisch oder stoisch ist noch immer umstritten. Gleichweise sind sich die Forscher noch immer nicht einig, ob die Gnosis, die ja Wissen und Erkennen sucht, in der hellenistischen Philosophie wurzelte oder nur eine philosophische Denkart aufzeigt.

Es ist eine typisch hellenistische Einstellung, im Wissen per so das eigene Heil zu erblicken. Das unterliegt den religioesen und philosophischen Betrachtungen im Hellenismus, und diese gnostische Einstellung macht, in Verbindung mit einer Art von magischem Ritualismus, die Mysterienreligion aus. Wir sind berechtigt zu sagen, dass letzten Endes alle uns bekannte Mysterienreligionen gnostische Systeme waren, oder zumindest eine Quelle darstellten, aus denen die Gnosis schoepfte.

Im 3. vorchristlichen Jahrhundert erschienen zahlreich apokalyptische Schriften. Sie sind als die Folgeerscheinungen der damaligen politischen Verhaeltnisse anzusehen. Die talmudische Tradition erwaehnt die apokalypischen Ideen nicht. Die apokalyptischen Schriftsteller gaben, mit Hinweis auf prophetische Gedanken im ALten Testament ihrer Enttaeuschung und ihrer Verzweiflung Ausdruck, um dann doch gewisse Hoffnungen zu finden. Diese Schriften taugen viel dazu bei, dass der Hellenismus in den benachbarten Laendern Vorder-Asiens Fuss fassen konnte. Zur gleichen Zeit kam auch ein Strom neuer Anschauungen mit iranischem Inhalt in Beruehrung mit juedischem Denken. In dieser Periode, ungefaehr im 2.Jahrhundert v.Chr. konnte man unter dern Juden bereits gnostische Gedankengaenge finden,die dann spaeter dän sich stark bemerkbaremachenden Gnostizismus bedeutend beeinflusst haben moegen. GRANT ist davon ueberzeugt, dass der Gnostizismus im apokalyptischen Judentum entstanden ist. Das "esoterische Wissen" der Qumran-Sekte am Toten Meer war von einer Art, wie sie auch den Gnostikern "eigen" waren; auch sie betrachteten dieses Wissen als eine Bruecke zwischen dem Menschen und dem Goettlichen. Beiden Gruppen war auch eine ausgesprochene dualistische Ansichrtgemeinsam.

Die im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert wirkenden nicht-orthodoxen christlichen Sekten mit ihrem mystischen Philosophie-Systemen, gruendeten sich auf eine gnostische Kenntnis Gottes. Es waren synkretische Systeme, die bedeutende heidnische magische Begriffe aus Conglomeraten griechischer und juedischer Quellen entnommen hatten. Mit Bezug auf die letztere bestanden diese hauptsaechlich aus der Bibel und den damals zirkulierenden apokryphischen Schriften.

Einige von Euch haben mich sicherlich bereits bei frieheren Anlaessen ueber die Bedeutung sprechen gehoert, die den Mysterienreligionen im Hellenismusund in den hellenischen Religionsgeschichte zukam - und welche massgebende Rolle sie in der Freimaurerei eingenommen haben. Sie stellten keine tiefgruendige Philosophie dar , und sie stellten auch keine grossen Ansprueche an die Intelligenz. Sie sprachen durch Symbole und Allegorien, mittels der in den Riten vorgebrachten Dramatisierungen bekannter Mythen. Sie waren wahre Volksreligionen. In den alten Zeiten in Griechenland sprachen in den Mysterienkulten Goetter wie Demeter und Kore von dem staendigen Kommen und Vergehen in der Natur, und sie uebermitteltem dem Eingeweihten ein Gefuehl der Sicherheit und das Versprechen der Glueckseligkeit im Jenseits.

Die Mysterienreligionen waren auch Erloesungsreligionen, die den Menschen goettliche Kraefte, ja sogar Gleichstellung mit den Goettern versprachen. Das kam besonders zum Ausdruck in dem aus Persien eingefuehrten Mithras-kult. Die Anhaenger dieses Kultes waren meistens Soldaten, und der Kult wurde durch diese ueberall dort eingefuehrt,wo sie Dienst taten, d.h. in den entferntesten Gegenden des Kaiserreichs. Es gab damals eine grosse Anzahl von Mysterienkulten, und ein jeder von ihnen hatte seine eigene, oft sehr interessante Symbolik. Es wuerde jedoch zu weit fuehren, diese naeher zu beschreiben.

Die Mysterienreligionen uebten einen grossen Einfluss aus auf die gnostische Philosophie. Platon fand des Oefteren Anwendung fuer das Wort "Mysterion"; er meinte damit das, was spaeter als Sakramente in der christlichen Theologie auftauchte. Platon scheint auch bereits einen Dualismus gemeint haben, wenn er von "zwei Seelen im Menschen" als die Grundlage des Kosmos sprach: "Man muss zustimmen: die Ursache sowohl des Guten als des Schlechten, des Schoenen sowohl wie des Haesslichen (Swhimpflichen), des Gerechten wie des Ungerechten, und ueberhaupt aller Gegensaetze, ist die Seele, wenn wir sie als die Ursache aller Dinge festsetzen" (GESETZE X). Harnack nannte den Platonismus "die Religion des Hellenismus".

Die Gnostiker zeigten eine grosse Neigung, sich den Anschein von Mysterienreligionen zu geben. Und so kam es, dass die den Mysterienkulten eigenen Riten viel zum Aufbau der gnostischen Religionsformen und -zeremonien beigetragen haben. Man kann sogar sagen, dass in einem gewissen Sinne die Mysterienreligionen zur Bildung des Gnostizismus gefuehrt haben. Ein weiterer Beitrag, den die Mytserienkulte leisteten, war die Tatsache, dass die gnostischen Sekten, so wie die Mysterienkulte, keine Klassenunterschiede kannten, und die Mitgliedschaft einem Jeden offen stand, gleich welcher Gesellschaftsklasse und welchem Bildungsgrade er angehoerte. Weiterhin muss hinzugefuegt werden, dass so wie in den Mysterienkulten auch in dem Gnostizismus Religion und Philosophie in Harmonie lebten mit Magie und Astrologie.

Es muss verstanden werden, dass die Mysterienreligionen keinerlei Dachorganisation kannten,dass sie nicht eine eigene Kirche besassen,dass sie sich zu keinem zentral ueberwachten Dogma bekannten, dass sie sich auf keine allen gemeinsame Offenbarung bezogen. Daher waren sie regelmaessig von lokalen,politischen und zeitlichen Stroemungen beeinflussbar.. Das trug weiterhin zum synkretischen Wirken bei; und da diele Mitglieder der Kulte auch Gnostiker waren, so konnten sie ohne grosse Schwierigkeiten gnostische Ideen in die Mysterienkulte hineinbringen. Dadurch wurde im Laufe der Zeit der Mythos gnostisch aisgelegt,umgedeutet, ausgebeutet.

Die orientalischen Kukte und Mysterien hatten bereits im 3. und 4. Jahrhundert eine Rolle in den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen sich und der Kirche, und auch zwischen dem Gnostizismus und dem Neoplatonismus gespielt. Dieser letztere sah in den Mysterienkulteneine Ueberlieferung der alten Weisheiten des Orients mit goettlich offenbarter Wahrheit, waehrenddie Kirche die von der Gnosis erfassten Mysterienkulte als eine Falschauslegung, als eine Verhoehnung ihrer eigenen Lehren ansah. Beide Stroemungen waren im Konkurrenzkampf um die Corrangstellung und in der Werbung von Anhaengern. Beide versprachen die Wiedergeburt,Erloesung, ewiges Leben, Suendenvergebung.

Um die Zeitwende gabes viele Sekten,Religionen und Bewegungen mit gnostischem Inhalt. Es gehoert nicht in den Rahmen meiner Zeichnung, auf diese naeher einzugehen - und daher will ich mich hauptsaechlich auf den Einfluss der Gnosis auf das juedische und christliche Religionssystem beschraenken.

Aber vorerst einige Definitionen dessen, was ich erwaehnen will.

M y s t e r i e n - R e l i g i o n e n oder -K u l t e entstanden, besonders im Hellenismus, durch Religionen, die aus griechischen und orientalischen zusammengestetzt waren. Es waren Geheimkulte und nicht Staatskulte. In diesen werden in dramatischer Form ausgefuehrten Riten und in symbolischer Sprache das Geschick von Goettern und Goettinnen vorgefuehrt. Dem in diese Kulte eingeweihten Mitglied war Unsterblichkeit und Erlaesung zugesichert.

Der K u l t ist eine Ehrfurchtsbezeugung der Gottheit gegenueber, dem was heilig ist durch Riten und Symbole und Worte Anerkennung zu zu beweisen.

Der N e o - P l a t o n i s m u s besagt eine durch P L O T I N U S (205-270) begruendete auf der Basis der LEhren Platons fussende philosophisch-allegorisch-metaphysische Religioesitaet. Gott ist Einmalig. Vernunft regiert. Die Seele ist sowohl materiell wie geistig. Sie erzeugt die materielle Welt durch den Logos. Der LOgos ist Licht, die Materie Finsternis. Das Sonnenlicht ist symbolisch fuer das geistige Licht. Finsternis ist nur Abwesenheit dieses Lichtes. Plotin ist weltbejahend im Gegensatz zur Gnosis.

R e l i g i o nist ein System, das von der Beziehung des Menschen mit seinem Gott handelt. Sie erklaert, foerdert und begruendet diese Beziehung.

Die P h i l o s o p h i e ist eine intellektuelle Disziplin, die versucht, aber nicht etwa durch ein bestimmtes festgelegtes starres Denksystem, eine alles umschliessende und eine in alles eindringende Erklaerung zu geben fuer das Rationale, das Reelle, das Geistige, und die es sich erlaubt, auch gelegentlich hypothetische Nenner in die Denkart einzufuehren.

Der Gnostizismus ist nicht eine isolierte Erscheinung in der Religionsgeschichte. Er ist nicht eine nur auf sich selbst konzentrierte religioese Organisation gewesen. Er hat nicht nur aus anderen Religionen geschoepft, hat sich nicht nur in ein aus den mannigfachen Mysterien, Mythen und Philosophien geschneidertes buntes Gewand gekleidet, er hat gleichzeitig auch alle in den Jahrhunderten um die Zeitwende - und dann auch ueber viele Jahrhunderte hinweg -die damals und dann wirksamen Religionen beeinflusst.

Obgleich die Gnostiker im Allgemeinen das Alte Testament ablehnten , oft sogar dem biblischen Gott die Schoepferrolle absprachen, und obwohl sie ausgesprochen judenfeindlich waren, so wird doch heutzutage das Judentum, besonders das hellenistische synkretisierende Judentum der Diaspora, als der wahrscheinliche Boden gesehen, auf dem die Gnosis erwuchs. KINGSLAND stellt die These auf, dass das Alte Testament sowie das Neue Testament im Grunde auf gnostische Begriffe von Wissen und Weisheit beruhen. Man kann in dem Gnostizismus die Bemuehungen des P H I L O N von Alexandrien wiedergespiegelt sehen. Er lebte ungefaehr um die Zeitwende herum. W i l s o n sagt, dass Philon von hellenistischen Redewendungen, Allegorien und gnostischen Begriffen Gebrauch machte, um das Judentum der hellenistischen Welt verstaendlich zu machen, und dass er dadurch die Entwicklung des Gnostizismus in bedeutender Weise foerderte. Er machte in seinen Schriften von dem im Judentum unbekannten Begriff des "Logos" Gebrauch. Er besagt damit, dass Gott unbekannt bleibt. Der Logos ist ein zweiter Gott in der Art eines Erzengels. Logos ist das was wir von Gott sehen koennten. Der Urmensch wurde durch den Logos im Ebenbilde Gottes geschaffen, aber der Erdenmensch ist nicht diesem gleich; er ist von den dem Logos behilflichen niedrigeren Geistern, den Demiurgen, geschaffen worden. Dieser Erdenmensch ist nicht wirklich Gott gleich und daher kann er leicht dem Suenden verfallen.

Der Einfluss des Gnostizismus auf die Religionen der jeweiligen Zeit war bedeutend. Von der Zeit an hat er einen mehr oder weniger erkennbaren Einfluss auf die religioesen und kulturellen Bewegungen in der Welt gehabt. So kann man eine Einwirkung des GNnstizismus in der Vielzahl der Sektenbildungen des fruehen Mittelalters, im hochentwickelten Moenchstum, im Jainismus in Indien, im Mandaeismus im Irak und im Sufismus des Islam entdecken. Aber als eine selbststaendige geschlossene Religionsform hat sich der Gnostizismus - der Manicheismus war in einem gewissen Sinne eine Ausnahme - gegen die ABwehr des rabbinischen Judentums,der christlichen Kirche und der islamischen Orthodoxie nicht durchsetzen koennen. Im Talmud, der zur Zeit der Hochbluete des Gnostizismus geschrieben wurde, finden wir die Gnostik nicht einmal erwaehnt. (Allerdings denken viele Forscher, dass mit den dort als Laeterer zurueckgewiesenen " minim" die Gnostiker gemeint sind. Die Rabbis gaben sehr wohl zu verstehen, dass sie die Gnosis, und besonders dessen Dualismus schaerfstens ablehnten. Es muss auch darauf hingewiesen werden, dass sich unter den fuehrenden Gnostikern der Jahrhunderte keine juedische Namen auffinden lassen.

Die juedische Gnostik war einzigartig in dem Sinne, dass sie die typischen ghnstischen Elemente aufnahm, diese aber trotzdem isoliert hielt, da deren Begriffe mit den grundsaetzlichen Lehren des Judentums unvereinabr waren. Da das Judentum ein Monotheismus par excellence ist, da Gott einzig und unteilbar ist, und da der fuer die Gnosis typische Dualismus, der von zwei sich bekaempfenden goettlichen Maechten, dem des Guten und des Boesen,der desLichtes und der Finsternis spricht,, musste eine solche Anschauung mit dem keinerlei Interpretationen oder Abweichungen duldenden juedischen Monotheismus in Konflikt geraten. Andererseits muss man beobachten, dass dieser juedische Monotheismus durch den aus der hellenistischen und dem iranischen Welt eindringenden Religionen, die im Grunde auch monotheistisch waren, zwar sehr gestaerkt wurde aber nicht beeinflusst wurde. Aber ein gewisser Dualismus wurde doch zugelassen - man kann fast sagen durch die Hintertuer. Es war unvermeidlich, dass durch diese Kontakte auch fuer das Judentum neue Anschauungen eingefuehrt wurden; man erkannte z.B. die Existenz von Engelscharen an, die zwischen Gott und den Menschen stehen und wirken; und diese Engel wurden nunmehr in gute und boese eingeteilt, gleich wie es in Iran der Fall war./ Der ausgesprochene Dualismus der Qumran-Sekte scheint ausschliesslich auf diese Gruppe - und auf gewisse hellenisierende solche - beschraenkt gewesen zu sein, und vom Grossteil des dfaaligen Judentums feindlich angesehen und rundweg abgelehnt worden sein. Auch der Begriff der "Erloesung" wird in einem gewissen Grade anerkannt,aber der Mensch muss aus sich heraus seine Erloesung erreichen, Es wird nunmehr auch gelehrt, dass in alles was ist und vor sich geht ein Ziel und ein Zweck enthalten ist. Das Prinzip der "hiesigen Welt" und das der "kommenden Welt" macht sich bemerkbar. Eschatologische Gedankengaenge beginnen eine grosse Rolle zu spielen; aber es ist klar zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass die Versprechungen der messianischen Zukunft nicht den Einzelnen betreffen, sondern sich auch weiterhin auf das juedische Volk als Ganzem beziehen.

Klare Anzeichen einer juedischen Gnostik kann man in den Qumrantexten finden, und in dem esoterischen Charakter der Geheimlehre der streng gesetztreuen rabbinischen Markaba-Mysterien des 1 Jahrhunderts. Auch in den damals zirkulieredden apokalyptischen Schriften - die man als eine Reaktion auf die damalige alle Gesellschaftsschichten betreffende unruhige Zeit ansehen muss - enthalten neben eschatologischen Gedankengaengen auch ausgesprochen gnostische Ideen. Die aus der ausgehenden ANtike stammenden Qumran-Dokumente sprechen von Gottes endgueltigem Plan fuer das Ende der Welt. Was immer in der Welt besteht und geschieht, haengt mit einem Wissen um Gott zusammen. Das Erkennen von Gottes Wirken erlaubt es, das klar vorgeschriebene und geplanteZiel des Weltgeschehens und dessen Ausgang zu begreifen. Wie ich bereits erwaehnt habe, hatten die Qumraner auch eine dualistische Weltanschauung: Gott hat das Gute (Licht) und das Boese (Finsternis) geschaffen. Diese mit ihren Engeln und Daemonen stehen sich feindlich gegenueber. Daher

hat Gott dem Guten geheimes Wissen anvertraut. Dieses ist eine spezifisch juedische Form einer Gnosis; sie ist mit Esoterik und Mystik gemischt. Grant denkt, dass es besonders das apokalyptische Judentum war, das viel zum Gnostizismus beigetragen hat.

Die Apokalyptikerwaren keine Philosophen; sie stuetzten was immer sie beschrieben auf irgendwelche Offenbarungen,die sie erhalten zu haben behaupteten. Sie blieben innerhalb des Rahmens des Alten Testaments, trotz der vielen Allegorien und Symbole,die sie anwandten. Aber es findet sich viel Dualismus in dieser Literatur, in der das geistig und moralisch Boese dem geistig und moralisch Guten gegenueber gestellt wird. Aber der Menschi ts nicht grundsaetzlich schlecht; sie koennen alle wieder gute Menschen werden. Die apokalyptischen Schriften widersprechen niemals dem Monotheismus. Moderne Forscher sind der Meinung, dass das Judentum keinen direkten Einfluss auf die Bildung und die Entwicklung des Gnostizismus gehabt hatte, dass es aber manchseits dazu beigetragen hat (WILSON). Im Judentum fanden sich Gedanken,Ideen. Motive und anderes Material, die im Synkretismus mit anderen religioesen Elementen zur Bildung der Gnostik fuehrten. Diese machte viel Gebrauch von der biblischen Schoepfungsgeschichte, aber kaum von irgendeinem anderen Material im ALten Testament. GRONINGEN legt die Hypothese vor, dass die Gnosis fuer gewisse esoterische Linien im Judentum verantwortlich war, die dann in der Kabbalah und in den verschiedenen juedischen Sekten nach dem hellenistischen Einbruch in das Judentum zum Ausdruck kamen. Es ist ihm viel wahrscheinlicher, dass der Gnostizismus seinen Einfluss auf das Judentum hatte, und nicht dass es die Gnosis schuf.

Die Apokryphen - eine im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert n.Chr. nicht in Hebraeischer Sprache abgefasste juedische Literaturgattung - zeigen den von hellenistischen Ideen beeinflussten Wunsch nach einem tieferen Verstehen der Welt. In diesen Schriften wird gewissen Ereignissen im Alten Testament eine voellig andere AUslegung gegeben. Sie bringen Zukunftsvisionen mit kosmologischen Erklaerungen und moralischen Ermahnungen. Mannigfache und komplexe Symbolik kommt zur Anwendung, um himmlische Dinge dem Menschen verstaendlich zu machen - und in dieser Weise werden die aus dem Alten Testament herauszulsenden Zusagen " mehr glaubwuerdig" gemacht.

Ich habe bereits zu Beginn dieser Zeichnung darauf hingewiesen, dass mit Bezug auf die Kirche - und so auf das Christentum - die Gnostik ganz andere Masse angenommen und zu ganz anderen Massnahmen gefuehrt hat.

Die meisten Kirchenvaeter - aus deren Schriften uns ja der Hauptteil unserer Kenntnisse ueber die Gnosis zugekommen ist - berichten,dass die Gnosis entweder aus dem Christentum heraus oder in dieses hereingewachsen ist; dass es zu einem Austausch, zu einem Ineinanderfliessen gnostischer Ideen kam. Die Gnosis ist nicht-christlich. Das Corpus Hermeticum aus der Spaetantike enthaelt gnostische Ideen,die beweisen,dass die Gnostik nicht eine inner-christliche Reaktion ist sondern eine allgemeine Bewegung des ausgehenden Altertums. " Gnosis minus Christentum ist Gnosis", sagt QUISPEL. Die Gnosis hatte alle Charakteristika einer Religion, aber sie hatte eine besondere Logik. Sie war niemals christlich. Mythen,Worte,Dialoge, die anderen Figuren in der vorchristlichen Zeit gehoerten, wurden Jesus oder Johannes in den Mund gelegt.

Die Gnostiker sind keine "christlichen Theologen", wie HARNACK behauptet. Es wird aber zugegeben,dass es viele nicht-christliche gnostische Denker gibt, die einen bedeutenden Beitrag zur christlichen Theologie geleistet haben. Weiterhin steht fest,dass obgleich um die Zeitwende die Gnostik weitberbreitet gewesen war, sie nicht eine "Weltreligion" genannt werden kann, wie es QUISPEL tut. Hoechstens kann man sagen,wie es JONAS vorschlaegt, dass sie einen "spaet-antiken Geist" darstellte.

Moderne Forscher sind der Meinung, dass das Judentum keinen direkten Einfluss auf die Bildung und Entwicklung der Gnostik hatte, dass es aber mancherseits dazu beigetragen hat (WILSON) . Im Judaismus fanden sich Gedanken,Ideen, Motive und anderes Material,die im Synkretismus mit anderen religioesen Elementen zur Bildung der Gnosis fuehrten. Die Gnosis macht viel Gebrauch von der biblischen Schoepfungsgeschichte.. GRONINGEN kommt zum Schluss, dass sowohl das Judentum wie auch das Christentum zu sehr und wahrlich Religion waren, als dass in ihnen die Gnosis haette entstehen koennen. Aber er glaubt, dass die Gnosis sehr viel von ihrem Einfluss und ihrer Bedeutung, sowie ihrer Anziehungskraft dem Christentum zu verdanken hat.

Zur Zeit der Entstehung des Christentums nahmen die gnostischen Religionen , gemeinsam mit den Mysterienreligionen und den Taeufersekten, die sich in den Laendern um das Mittelmeer gebildet hatten,einen bedentenden Platz ein. Diese vorchristliche Gnosis ist in der vorchristlichen juedischen Gnostik verwurzelt. Deren gnostische Ideen kamen schon sehr frueh mit dem jungen Christentum in Beruehrung, und sie wiederum machten durch Umdeutung von dessen Lehren und unter Andeutung esoterischer verborgenes Wissen Gebrauch. Dadurch gewannen diese Gnostizismen und

und deren Traeger einen betraechtlichen Einfluss auf das Christentum und seine Lehren. Sie versuchten , den christlichen Glauben mit Vernunftsgruenden anzugehen, ihn zu "verweltlichen", ihn zu einer Religionsphilosophie - und besonders einer solchen mit hellenistischer Toenung - umzuwandeln. Gleichzeitig sah jedoch die Kirche in den Gnostikern eine intellektuelle Elite,die es unternahm, die christliche Botschaft in einer annhembaren philosophischen Form dem kultivierten Publikum vorzulegen. Die Gnostik suchte den Ursprung des Boesen zu erklaeren und die Beziehung des Materiellen zum Goettlichen. Und obgleich die Kirche, die selbst der Gnosis so viel zu verdanken hatte, den Standpunkt vertrat, dass gnostisches Wissen nur durch mystische Erfahrung erworben werden kann und nicht mittels gewoehnlicher intellektueller Forschung, so haette es nicht zu der bitteren Feindschaft der Kirche fuer die Gnostik kommen muessen, haette die Kirche nicht sich so sehr bedroht gefuehlt. Das ist wohl auch der Grund, dass die kirchlichen AUtoren von IRENAEUS bis EPIPHANEUS die Gnosis als Haeresie verurteilten. Aber obgleich die Kirche die Gnostik so scharf bekaempfte, konnte sie es nicht vermeiden, ihrerseits von dieser theologisch beeinflusst zu werden.

Die Kirche konnte es nicht zulassen, dass eine andere Religion, besonders eine,die auch einen Erloeser versprach und von Mysterien redete,die leichter erfassbar war und interessantere Lehren anbot,sich breitmachte. Alle diese ihren eigenen Richtlinien nicht entsprechenden Religionsformen wurden als Haeresien gebrandmarkt, und ein jeder Anhaenger einer Haeresie wurde zum Ketzer. Die Kirche hatte ihre eigenen Mysterien, die nunmehr zu "Sakramenten" wurden. Andere konnten nicht zugelassen werden.

Besonders in den ersten Jahrhunderten, wo die Kirche selbst um ihre Lebensbefaehigung und -berechtigung zu kaempfen hatte, sah sie in dem damals sehr verbreiteten und maechtigen gnostischen Religionssystemen einen starken und gefaehrlichen Gegner. Der Vorteil der Gnostik lag darin, dass sie viele der Lehren und der Persoenlichkeiten des Neuen Testaments uebernommen und gemeinsam mit den urspruenglich orientalischen Anschauungen in ihren eigenen Religionskomplex eingebaut hatten. Es muss hier klar betont werden, dass der Gnostizismus, der zur Roemischen Kaiserzeit ueberall stark vertreten war und viele Anhaenger besass, nicht eine christliche Sonder- oder Splittergruppe war, sondern eine selbstaendige und selbstberechtigte Weltanschauung.

Es war unvermeidlich, dass die Kirche es sich zur AUfgabe machte, die Gnostik zu vernichten, udn sie hatte in diesen Bemuehungen vollen Erfolg. Als die Kirche zur roemischen Staatsreligion wurde, machte sie von ihrer Machtstellung und der ihr zur Verfuegung stehenden Staatsgewalt vollen Gebrauch, um die gnostischen Bewegungen auszurotten. Das gelang ihr nach langem Kampf. Und wie es immer in soschen Umstaenden der Fall ist, wurden dabei auch alle Literatur und alles sonstige kulturelle und kultische Material mitvernichtet.

Die christliche Gnosis der damaligen Zeit war sui genetis. Sie war in einer vorchristlichen juedischen Gnosis verwurzelt. Dieses drueckt SCHMITHALS uengafehr so aus:"die Gnosis ist eine religioese Bewegung, die den Menschen lehrt, sich als ein Stueck goettlicher Substanz zu verstehen, die zwar durch ein verhaengnisvolles Schicksal in die Gefangenschaft der ihm wesensfremden Welt und ihrer daemonischen Beherrscher geriet, der Befreiung davon aber sicher sein darf, da er die Erkenntnis seines unverlierbaren Goettlichen Seins besitzt".

P a u l, der fast der einzige APostel war,der das Wort "Mysterion" anwandte (St. Johannes tat es nur ein einziges Mal), sah die Welt durch die Brille der Apokalypse. Gott,das Mysterium, muss vom Menschen erkannt und gewusst werden. Diese Erkenntnis und dieses Wissen koennen nur durch den Glauben und das Mysterium selbst geboten werden. Dieses konnte Paul allen Menschen bieten, und nicht etwa die Mysterienreligionen und auch nicht die Gnostik, und gleicherweise nicht die Philosophen mit ihren logischen AUslegungen. Es ist interessant, dass BULTMANN behauptet, dass die Apostel Paul und Johannes den Erloesermythos der Gnostik entliehen haben, die die letztere wiederum dem iranischen Dualismus verdankte.

Aber es ist unvermeidlich, dass vom 3. Jahrhundert an die Kirche in jeder Gnosis eine Form des Manivaeismus sah; und auch heute noch bedeutet fuer die Welt - und besonders die christliche Welt - der Gnostiker als gefaehrlicher,hirnverbrandter Mensch,der einem normalen Menschen unverstaendliche Phantasien verbreitet.

Der Manichaeismus wurde von dem persischen Propheten M a n i (216-276) -der Name ist wahrscheinlich ein Ehrentitel wie Christus oder Buddha - gegruendet. Er stammt aus dem zoroastrischen Glaubensgebiet. Mani wurde in Persien zum Heilstraeger und -verkuender.Die Ideen des Manichaeismus bestanden wahrscheinlich schon vor Christi Geburt. Er wurde staendig durch einen fortgesetzten Synkretismus bereichert - und ernahm auch viele christliche Elemente auf. Eine wichtige Stellung nimmt der Lichtmythos ein. Licht und Finsternis symbolisieren die Grundprinzipien des Guten und des Boesen. Lichtteilchen,die auf der Erde verstreut sind, muessen in die Lichtwelt gebracht werden. Eine ausgedehnte Mythologie und eine reiche Symbolik verscueb, die Lehren, die nur den Eingeweihten wirklich verstaendlich sind, auch den nicht-Erwaehlten klar zu machen. Waehrend Platon,die Stoiker,Philo und die Christen an ein Hoeheres Wesen als Weltschoepfer glaubten, sahen diese man foutlefotm Ymredl1tg in dem Schoepfer die Verkoerperung des Boesen. Er ist der Feind des wahren Gottes und der Menschheit. DiesesrDemiurge, damit ist der juedische Gott gemeint, laesst nicht zu, dass der Mensch zu dem wahren Gott zurueckkehrt. Der Manichaeismus enthaelt mannigfaches unglaublich erscheinendes ideologisches un mythologisches Material.

Die in ihm enthaltenen gnostischen Prinzipien sind vielen Religionen und Kulten entnommen. Er hat den Charakter einer Religion. Diese war urspruenglich fuer die persische Welt geschaffen gewesen, und sie passte sehr gut in diese. Es ist nicht zu verwundern, dass der Manichaeismus nach seinem Eindringen in den Westen sich viele Anhaenger und auch viele Gegner schuf. Der Manichaeismus,wie er sich im 3. und 4. Jahrhundert ausbreitete, kann mit keiner der vorher bestehenden gnostischen Ideologien verglichen werden.Er predigte einen ausgesprochenen Dualismus, befeindete auch den biblischen Gott als den Inbegriff des Boesen, und gab den Legenden und Ereignissen im ALten Testament eine entgegengesetzte Beschreibung und AUslegung. So wurde z.B. die Schlange zu einem Wesen, das dem Menschen wahres Wissen bringen wollte, aber von Gott daran gehindert wurde; und Kain wurde zu einem guten, aber von Gott unberechtigerweise gehassten und verfolgten Individuum. Scheinbar waren derartige Ideen sehr anziehend, denn der Manichaeismus ueberlebt fast 1000 Jahre und konnte ueberall in der damals bekannten Welt, einschliesslich China, Anhaenger finden.

Es gab zur Zeit des Ausgangs der Antike und in den ersten Jahrhunderten unserer Zeitrechnung eine Anzahl von gnostischen Sekten. Einige von diesen konnten auf ein betraechtliches Alter zurueckschauen. Aus der Menge dieser Sekten will ich nur einige erwaehnen.

Eine solche Sekte waren die MANDAER. "Manda" bedeutet "Gnosis, Wissen". Die Anhaenger dieser Sektelebten in Mesopotamien - und eine kleine Gruppe von ihnen lebt noch heute unterdem Namen S u b b a - dief Wasserschoepfer - in dem Gebiet des heutigen Irak. Diesen Namen tragen sie wahrscheinlich wegen eines Wasch-oder Taufvorgangs in ihrem Ritual/ Die Taufe fand in einem Fluss statt; das fliessende Wasser wurde "Jordan" genannt. Es gibt auch einen "himmlischen Jordan", den die Wissenden einst erreichen werden. Die Taufe war begleitet von einer Salbung, einer Kommunion unß der Zeremonie der "Kniesetzung". Die Taufe vermittelte dem Taeufling "Manda" d.h. Gnosis, sowie Unsterblichkeit. BULTMANN sieht im Mandaeismu den Urahnen des Johannesevangeliums. Die Laienmitglieder hiessen "Mandaer", die Priester "Tarmidia" oder Schueler, und die Priester hoeheren Grades "Mazuraia" oder Nesorier.

Es gab damals im Judentum am Randgebiet Palaestinas auch noch andere Sekten mit gnostischen Taufakten. Als eine dritte Komponentedes damaligen Judentums stellten sie eine deutliche gnostische Bewegung dar neben der orthodoxen und hellenistischen Gruppierungen. Die Taufsekten bestanden auch noch nach der Zerstoerung des 2. Tempels weiter.

In diesen Sekten stellte die Taufe eine sakrale Handlung dar, die alle fruheren Kultakte im Tempel ersetzte. Die Taufe als solche war ein wichtiger Teil der Gnosis. MANI, von dem ich bereits berichtet habe, scheint viel von dieser Klasse der Taeufer - z.B. den Anhaengern des MARKION, des ELCHASIAS, des BARDESAM - uebernommen zu haben; und er scheint auch deren Rat gefolgt zu haben, seine Lehren besonders den Heiden-Christen anzubieten und sich von den Lehren und Bindungen des Judentums loszusagen.

Ich will noch eine weitere Gruppevon Gnostikern erwaehnen, von denen ich annehme, dass sie Euch interessieren werden. Sie wurden unter dem Sammelnahmen der " OPHITEN " zusammengefasst. Sie umfassten die Ophiten selbst, die Sethianer, die Cainiten, die Archoniten, die Severianer, die Justinianer und noch viele mehr. Leider ist durch den synkretischen Faktor den Forschern die Arbeit sehr erschwert worden, da dadurch der Ursprung, der Inhalt, das System und die orio¢nellen Prinzipien im Laufe der Zeit verwischt worden sind. Die Sethianer sahen in Seth, dem Sohn des Adam den Urmenschen und auch den Urgott. Die Ophiten waren Schlangenanbeter, bei denen die Schlange eine bedeutende Rolle spielte. Diese Gnostiker hassten und achteten, fuerchteten und ehrten die Schlange, die sie den "Grossen Herren" nannten. (Manche werden Euch werden sich vielleicht daran erinnern, dass die Zeitungen vor nicht allzu langer Zeit von solchen Sekten in AMerika berichteten).

Manche Formen der Gnostik - im Christentum- sind Gegenstuecke der alten Gnostik. Theosophen und Christian Science sind Haeresien in moderner Auffassung (RADFORD), und ALLBRIGHT nennt Toynbee, Tillich und Schweitzer moderne Gnostiker.

Um das Jahr 1000 kamen wiederum gnostische Ideen zur Oberflaeche in der Kabbalah. SCHOLEM glaubt, dass die Tradition niemals unterbrochen war. Der Tuebinger Theologe F.C.BAUR wollte beweisen dass der deutsche Idealismus Hegel's die derzeitige Gnosis war und viel mit der antikn Gnostik gemein hatte. Man sieht auch die Psychologie des C.G.JUNGals Ausdruck einer gnostischen Einstellung.

Einige weitere Erklaerungen des Wesens der Gnostik sind angebracht.

Die Gnosis ist wahrscheinlich in Vorderasien entstanden und nicht in Aegypten, wie lange Zeit angenommen wurde.Die orientalische Mystik wurde von den Gnostikern des 1.-2. Jahrhunderts hellenisiert und christianisiert. Die Gnostiker mit ihrer heidnischen Gnosis wurden die Wortfuehrer der Gegner der Kirche.

Alles Interesse in der Gnosis konzentrierte sich letzten Endes auf den Menschen. Wir koennen sagen, dass die Anthropologie den Mittelpunkt der Gnosis ausmachte. Der Ursprung des Menschen ist das Hauptthema der gnostischen Mythen und Doktrinen : wie er sich selbst findet und damit den Weg zur Erloesung. Denn der Mensch hat Goettliches in sich, und dieser Teil des Menschen bleibt nun auch mit dem Boesen, den Leidenschaften,den Suenden in Beruehrung. Obgleich das Weltall seinen geregelten Gang ghabt, die Himmelskoerper ihren vorgeschriebenen Weg nehmen, und die Astrologie ihre volle Bedeutung hat, so will der Gnostiker sich nicht einem vorgeschriebenen Schicksal unterworfen fuehlen. Er will sich frei fuehlen von allen kosmischen Gesetzen und moralischen Vorschriften. Der Mensch ist zwar in der Welt, aber er ist nicht von der Welt. Die Welt ist von Daemonen geleitet. Der Mensch ist aber von goettlicher Substanz und durch Gnosis kommt er zur Verwirklichung des Goettlichen in seinem Selbst.

Der Gnostiker fuehlt sich erwaehlt. Er allein hat den"N o u s ", das Bewusstsein, die Gabe die Gnosis zu erhalten. Es ist eine intuitive Erkenntnis, eine offenbarte Kenntnis von dem Sinn und dem Wesen der Welt. Die Gnostik war wohl mehr eine visionaere Mythologie als eine Philosophie oder Theologie.

Die Gnosis predigte,dass der Mensch zur Erkenntnisseines wahren Wertes gelangt seinen goettlichen Ursprung erkennt und die erstrebte Wiedervereinigung des Goettlichen in ihm mit seinem Ursprung erreichen kann. Das Wissen ist durch Offenbarung (juedisch und christlich), durch Mystik (griechisch und persisch) erreicht. Diese Lehren sind durch steten Synkretismus verallgemeinert und umgedeutet worden. Ein Dualismus - die Unterteilung aller Dinge in Gutes und Boeses,in Licht und Finsternis - ist spezifisch fuer die Gnostik. Gott ist Licht,Gutes,Leben. Die materielle Welt ist Finsternis, Boeses,Tod. Engel und Daemonen beeinflussen das Geschick des Menschen. Die makrokosmische Welt spiegel sich im mikrokosmischen Menschen wieder. In Mythen und Symbolen werden die gnostischen Prinzipien dem Eingeweihten mitgeteilt. Diese Mysterien sind im Christentum zu Sakramenten gewroden; sie haben ihren gnostischen Ursprung nicht verborgen.

Eine reiche Symbolik hat von Beginn der Gnostik gedient. Sie hat sie aus alten Kulturen und Kulten uebernommen, und sie sind nunmehr der archtypische Besitz aller Zeiten geworden.

Ich hoffe, dass Ihr nunmehr verstanden habt, dass es keinen Grund gibt, der Gnostik mit Verdacht oder gar mit Ablehnung zu begegnen.

In ihren Kaempfen um Anerkennung in den ersten Jahrhunderten ihres Bestehens, in ihren Bemuehungen, als alleig seligmachende Lehre die Heiden zu bekehren, und spaeterhin in ihrem bewussten Herrschen als die alles ueberragende Macht auf religioesem Gebiet, hat die Kirche jede Abweichung von ihrer Doktrin als Verirrung abgelehnt, als Haeresie verurteilt und als Ketzerei vernichtet. Und wie es halt unter solchen Umstaenden geschieht, wenn man befuerchtet, dass ein einziger fauler Apfel den ganzen Vorrat verderben mag, wenn ein einziger schlechter Jude fuer alle Zeiten fuer alle Juden als bezeichnend angeprangert wird, so ist auch der Manichaeismus - eine besonders auffaelige,zwar sehr einflussreiche und ausgesprochene antichristliche gnostische Bewegung - fuer die Kirche das Vorbild,der Massstab und das uebertriebene Beispiel geworden und geblieben.

Nun, von diesem Vorurteil muesst Ihr Euch freimachen; und ihr duerft mir gluabne, dass auch vielen Kreisen der Geschichts- und Religionsforscher heutzutage man die alten Vorurteile abgelegt hat. Die Gnosis ist eine alte, eine sehr alke Glaubensform. Sie ist eine der Fazetten einer Weltanschauung, die die alten - und in einem gewissen Sinne auch die modernen - Religionssysteme in der Welt gebildet hat.

Die Gnostik ist bezeichnen d fuer, ist die Grundlage fuer alle uns bekannte hellenistische und orientalische Kultsysteme und Mysterienreligionen. Die Gnosis ist kein spekulatives sondern ein mythologisches System. Sie hat keinen philosophischen Inhalt. Siemag fuer manche eine Religion bedeuten oder zu einer solchen werden.

Der grundliegende Gedanke in der Gnostik war der gleiche wie in dem Mysterienreligionen: das Versprechen einer Erloesung. So wie die Mytserienkulte versprach auch die Gnosis eine geheime Botschaft zu besitzen; und mit dem Besitz dieses Geheimnisses,mit dem Wissen gewisser Symbole und der Kenntnis gewisser Riten war die Zusage gegeben, den Zugang zu einem gesegneten Leben nach dem Tode zu erhalten.

Gnosis bedeutet, wie ich bereits dargelegt habe, Wissen,Erkennen, Verstehen. Dieses gnostische Wissen bedeutet eine sofottige Erkenntnis des Wahren und der Weisheit. Wissen erlangt man durch Suchen. Erkenntnis wirkt heilbrängend und erloesend. Das geschieht durch goettliche Offenbarung oder durch die Vermittlung einer Erloesergestalt, oder durch den Tod und die Wiederauferstehung einer mythischen Heldenfigut.

Und Gnosis bedeutet auch Wissen um den A.B.A.W. Dieser ist der Schoepfer unserer Welt. Gnosis bedeutet das Verstehen, welche Bedeutung der Mensch in dieser Welt hat. Sie bedeutet das Erkennen welche Verpflichtungen der Mensch seinem Schoepfer,seinem Mitmenschen,sich selbst gegenueber hat. Gnosis besagt, dass es an uns selbst liegt, wie wir unsere AUfgabe erfuellen, und dass uns das moeglich ist, wenn wir gelernt

haben, uns selbst zu kennen und zu verstehen, wenn wir gelernt haben, das Gute in uns zu finden und das Boese in uns zu erkennen - oder, wie es masonisch heisst, dass wir uns bemuehen, dem Licht zuzustreben. Das ist ist eine Form des Dualismus in der Gnosis, die wir ja auch fuer uns angenommen und anerkannt haben. Die Gnosis gibt uns Einsicht in den Zweck und das Ziel unseres Dasein's; sie versichesr uns, dass mit unserem Tod nicht alles aufhoert; sie verspricht uns, dass etwas von uns erhalten bleibt; sie gibt uns zu verstehen, dass etwas von uns ueberlebt.

Das ist die Gnosis in Wahrheit. Und glaubt bitte nicht,.dass dieses nur meine persoenliche AUslegung ist. Und ihr werdet wohl auch sicherlich bereits selbst verstanden haben, dass das auch Freimaurerei ist.

Ja, meine lieben Brueder ! Die Thesis meines Baurisses ist die, dass die Freimaurerei eine gnostische darstellt, dass sie zumindest gnostische Elemente enthaelt, dass es eine gewisse Berechtigung gibt, sie als ein gnostisches System zu betrachten.

Aber das stimmt doch nicht ganz, werdet Ihr einwerfen. Und ich stimme Euch zu" dem ist nicht ganz so. Denn die Gnosis von der Ihr wisst, oder zumindest etwas mehr wisst, hatte ja angestrebt, eine Religion zu sein. Und das kann ja nicht von der Freimaurerei gesagt werden. Aber Ihr muesst Euch dessen klar werden, dass so wie die Freimaurerei keine Religion ist, keine Theologie darstellt, und so wie sie auch in Zukunft auch nicht den geringsten Anspruch erhebän wird auf einen noch so bescheidenen Platz in der Gesellschaft der Religionen, so war auch die klassischhe Gnosis, die vorchristliche Gnostik keine Religion. Sie war eine Ideologie. Sie war eine Weltanschauung. In einem gewissen Sinn war sie vielleicht auch eine Philosophie.

Das haben die Gruender der Koeniglichen Kunst so wie sie vor beinahe 300 Jahren in ihrer modernen Aufmachung erstand, sehr wohl verstanden. Sie haben es nicht anders beabsichtigt, und sie haben das klar zum Ausdruck gebracht. So wie wir in unserem Ritual die Mysterienkulte sich wiederspiegeln lassen, ohne den geringsten Eindruck zu erwecken, dass wir eine heidnische oder irgendeine andere Religion vertreten wollen, so pflegen wir auch gewisse einfache gnostische Ideen, und so haben wir, da wir diesen jedweden religioesen Charakter genommen haben, uns ein Weltbild geschaffen, das ein jeder von uns in seine eigene religioese oder philosophische Weltanschauung einsetzen kann. So sind gnostische Begriffe mit und in den Mythen,den Symbolen,den Allegorien vergangener Kulte, Philosophien vergangener Zeiten, alte Traditionen und Lebensweisheiten die Bausteine,mit denen wir unser Lebenssystem erbauen koennen.

Liebe Bruder ! Sollte diese meine Ausfuehrungen Euch befriedigen und sollten diese meine Erklaerungen Euch genuegen, sollten sie Euch verstaendlich gemacht haben, warum wir Gnostisches in unserer Freimaurerei entdecken koennen, so duerft Ihr Euch gluecklich preisen. Dann gestattet

mir ein Gestaendnis: ihh beneide Euch deswegen. Denn ich habe mich mit dem ungeheuren Gebiet der Gnostik eine lange Zeit beschaeftigt, weil ich eine Erklaerung dafuer suchte, warum und wieso gnostische Gedankengaenge in die Freimaurerei gebracht werden konnten, obgleich die Umgebung, die Geschichte,die Prinzipien und die Iedologie der Gnosis unserer Freimaurerei haetten fremd sein muessen. Und hinzu kommt, dass vor 300 Jahren das Wenige, das von der Gnostik bekannt war - die Gnosisforschung ist relativ neuzeitig - in keiner Weise sehr einladend war. Die Fragen, die ich mir stellte, waren: was hat die Gruender unserer Bruderschaft bewogen, so viele dieser so typischen grnostischen Faktoren unserem Ritual einzuverleiben ?Warum haben sie denn so sehr bewusst, fast moechte ich sagen liebevoll, so viel von den Mythen und Zeremonien, den Anschauungen und den Begriffen der ueberlieferten Schriften,der alten Kulte und der tiefsinnigen Philosophieen , die gnostische Weisheiten und Anschauungen enthalten, in die Freimaurerei eingewoben ?

Ich habe lange Zeit gesucht nach einer Erklaerung. Ich habe versucht, mich in den Geist,in die Hoffnungen unserer freimaurerischen Vorfahren zu versetzen, und ich glaube eine Antwort gerade mit Bezug auf die Gnostik gefunden zu haben, die mich befriedigt. Vielleicht wird sie Euch auch genuegen.

Zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts war man sich sehr wohl bewusst, dass ein neues Zeitalter in der Menschheitsgeschichte begonnen hatte. In den vorhergehenden 3-400 Jahren hatte die Welt auf allen Gebieten der Wissenschaften und der Kultur grosse Fortschritte gemacht. Und wenn auch das alltaegliche Leben sehr erleichtert war und die Lebensbedingungen sehr erweitert, so blieb doch das, was den Wert des Lebens,den Sinn des Lebens, das Ziel des Lebens ausmacht - deren Auslegung bisher die organisierten Religionen fuer sich in Anspruch genommen hatten - immer noch von diesem neuen Wissen vernachlaessigt, immer noch von Abzrglauben verdunkelt.

Denn trotz ihrer durch Wissenschaft geschaerften, durch Vernunft geklaerten Erkenntnis der Gesetzmaessigkeit der Vorgaenge im Leben und in der Natur, wussten die Philosophen, die Denker der damaligen Zeit, dass sie nach einer Umschreibung, einer Klarstellung der Bedeutung des Menschen im Universum zu suchen hatten. Sie hatten nicht nur eine klare Scheidung zwischen dem zu machen, was dem Menschen durch Offenbarung und was durch sein absolutes Wissen bekannt war. Sie hatten sich endgueltig darueber klar zu sein, was zum Glauben und was zum Wissen gehoerte. Aber sie warensich auch dessen bewusst, dass welcher Art auch das kulturelle Klima gewesen sein mag, Wissenschaft und Technik zwar, moeglicherweise durch wiederholende und nachahmende Experimente die Phenomena der Natur analysieren koennten, diese aber niemals den Wert des Lebens, den Wert des Daseins und das Wesentliche des Menschseins wuerden erklaeren koennen. Die Theologie konnte nicht mehr helfen. Sie hatte versagt,besonders von dem Zeitpunkt an, wo sie dem wissenschaftlichen Fortschritt nicht hatte folgen wollen, sich ihm nicht hatte anpassen wollen. Zu allen Zeiten hatte der Mensch den Drang nach wissenschaftlichem Verstehen. Dieses besteht in dem Bemuehen des Menschen, die Naturkraefte und das Materielle in der Natur, in der Welt ueberhaupt, zu begreifen und zu kontrollieren, wo und wie immer diese Kraefte sich bemerkbar machen, sei es auf oekonomischem, materiellem,sozialem, politischen und religioesem Gebeiet.

Die Maenner des ausgehenden 17. und beginnenden 18. Jahrhunderts hatten durch ihr Studium die Moeglichkeit, die auf einander einwirkenden verschiedenen Geistesstroemungen des klassischen Altertums auf die aufgewuehlte Geisteswelt der ausgehenden ANtike und die der ersten Jahrhunderte unserer Zeitrechnung zu erforschen. Seit der Renaissance hatte man Zugang zu der klassischen Literatur, und die alten griechischen Philosophen stellten eine nimmer versiegende Quelle neuen Wissens dar. Die Denker und Wissenschaftler der beginnenden Aufklaerung erfuhren dadurch, erlernten dabei, was den Menschenvergangener Zeiten so bewundernswert ur

erschienen war, und was dann im Verlauf der Jahrhunderte verzerrt und misverstanden wurde - und dann in seiner Verzerrtheit und in seinem Misverstaendnis sich verhaertet hatte, und nun als ein negativer, einer Verbesserung nicht mehr faehiger Begriff ihre eigene Zeit erreicht hatte. Fuer die Maenner der Aufklaerung war die Versklavung des Menschen unter diesen versteinerten,intolerante, illogischen und unwissenschaftlichen Begriffen nicht nur unannehmbar, sondern auch voellig unerklaerlich, und sie suchten den urspruenglichen, sicherlich wahren Begriff der Moralitaet, von dem sie durch ihre Stadien erfuhren, wieder ans Licht zu bringen. Sie suchten das Verstaendnis dessen, was wahr ist, klar zu umreissen, und das, was der Mensch bereits vor Jahrtausenden gewusst hatte, und was dann unter den Schlacken des Unwissens verborgen und denen der Intoleranz erstickt worden war, wieder auszugraben. Im Gefolge der Aufklaerung war fuer die christlichen KKrchen - und fuer die Theologie im Allegmeinen - die aufkommende religionsgeschichtliche Vergleichung von besonderer Gefahr. Denn das neue Interesse bestand darin, d . e Religion zu finden, die allen Religionen gemeinsam ist und diese dann unter dem Licht der Vernunft zu betrachte.

Die Aufklaerung schuf die Atmosphaere und brachte die Maenner hervor, die die Faehigkeiten und den Mut hatten, es auf sich zu nehmen, ueber diese alten Geistesrichtungen Klarheit zu schaffen.

Nachdem nun bewiesen war, dass die Bibel bezueglich der Kosmälogie Irrtuemer aufweist, so hatte man zu verdachtigen, dass sie auch noch sonstwo und sonstwie andere Irrtuemer enthaelt. Daher fand man es angebracht, in der Natur selbst Rat und Leitung zu suchen. Die Umwaelzung, die die Astronomie erfuehr, rief eine solche auch im ganzen Kulturbreich hervor. Es gab so manchen Philosophen - wie z.B. PASCAL (1623-1666) -, die Schwierigkeiten hatten, sich mit diesen Tatsachen abzufinden. Pascal konnte sich scheinbar in der neuen Atmosphaere nicht zurecht finden. " Ich glaube, das Beste ist, sich nicht zu sehr mit der Meinung des Copernikus abzugeben. Es ist fuer unser ganzes Leben viel wichtiger, dass wir wissen, ob unsere Seele unsterblich ist oder nicht".

Unter diesen Mannern der Aufklaerung gab es eine Gruppe,die im Rahmen des neuen Wissens und Verstehens eine Weltanschauung verwirklichen wollten, die sich auf Grund ihres Studiums der klassischen Antike in ihnen gebildet hatte, und in der sie die Antworten,die Wegweiser und die Philosophie entdeckt zu haben glaubten, mit denen sie sich ein passendes Bild des Universums zu schaffen hofften in dem gleichen Sinne wie das Weltbild, das vor Tausenden von Jahren nicht weniger begabte und intelligente Menschen sich zu ihrer vollen Befriedigung geschaffen hatten.

Besonders anziehend musste fuer die Maenner des 17. Jahrhundert - wie Newton, Descartes etc - die Erkenntnis gewesen sein, dass nicht erst zur Zeit der Renaigsance,der Reformation oder der wissenschaftlichen Revolution,sondern bereits im klassischen Altertum die Philosophen

geglaubt hatten, mittels der Wissenschaften eine Lebensphilosophie zu finden. Die Bedeutung der Wissenschaften in allen Lebensphasen war eine Tatsache geworden nachdem in der Renaissancezeit, ungefaehr im 12 Jahrhundert bereits, Aristoteles,Platon,Ptolomaeus und deren juedisch-arabischen Kommentatoren entdeckt worden waren, und Grammatik,Philosophie, Rhetorik und Musik nunmehr der Physik und der Astronomie innerhalb des akademischen Lehrplans Platz einzuraeumen hatten.

Die 17. und 18. Jahrhunderte standen stark unter dem Einfluss der neuartigen Astronomie und Kosmologie; und die Philosophie glaubte Beweise fuer das Goettliche in dem Ablauf der Welt zu sehen. Aber da die neue Kosmologie nicht mehr der der Bibel entsprach, verloren die grossen Denker jener Zeit mehr oder weniger jedes Interesse an der Religion. Sie suchten anstatt die ANtwort in der Form einer Naturreligion zu finden. Schon SPINOZA (1632-1677) hatte erklaert, dass Gott und die Welt nicht zwei separate Definitive sind, sondern dass es nur einen einzigen unendliche Gott gibt, naemlich die Natur.Alles in der Natur ist vollkommen, sagte er. Der Mensch und seine Bedeutung im Weltsystem nahmen nunmehr den Vorrang ein in dem Suchen nach einem neuen Verstehen. Es war POPE (1688-1744), der erklaerte, dass "der Mensch das beste Studiumobjekt ist, um die Menschheit zu verstehen".

Es ist unvermeidlich, dass die Beschaeftigung mit der Unendlichkeit und derVollkommenheit des Universums den denkenden Menschen auf religioese Gedanken bringt, auf die er , je nach seiner Einstellungund Ausbildung mit einem Glaubensbekenntnis oder mit Vernunftsgruenden oder mit wissenschaftlichen Erklaerungen reagieren wird. Eine solche Reaktion in einer von diesen Formen ist notwendig, um dem Menschen, der sich ueber den Sinn des Lebens Gedanken macht, mit der Wirklichkeit in Kontakt zu halten. Dieser Kontakt bleibt auch weiterhin eine Wirklichkeit, wenn die Philosophie nicht genuegt und die Metaphysik als Helferin einspringt.

Wir duerfen nicht vergessen, dass die Philosophen udd Wissenschaftler der Aufklaerung trotz allem religioes fuehlende Menschen waren. Sie erkannten zwar eine unirrbare Gesetzlichkeit im Universum, aber sie hatten keinerlei Zweifel, dass ein Hoeheres Wesen diese Gesetze geschaffen hatte. Fuer sie, mehr als fuer die heutigen Wissenschaftler, gilt was EINSTEIN gesagt hat.

> "Das Schoenste,das wir erleben koennen, istdas Mysterioese. Sie ist die Quelle aller wahren Kunst und Wissenschaft. Der ist so gut wie tot,dem Gefuehlsempfindungen fremd sind, der nicht in Wundern und Ehrfurcht verweilen kann.Seine Augen sind geschlossen. Diese Einsicht in die Geheimnisse des Lebens, obgleich sie ANgst in sich bergen mag, hat viel zur Schaffung der Religionen beigetragen. Zu wissen,dass das,was uns immer als unergruendbar zum Staunen zwingt,in Wirklichkeit existiert, dasses sich als die groesste Weisheit und als das strahelndste Schoene anbietet,die aber unser stumpfes Verstaendnis nur in einfacher Form aufnehmen kann,-dieses Wissen,dieses Gefuehl, macht den Kern wahrer Religioesitaet aus. "

Als man erkannte, dass der gesamte bisherige Begriff, den man von dem Weltall hatte, voellig falsch war, und da das Verstaendnis,das die Philosophen von Gott hatten mit dem,den sie von der Welt hatten, in direkter Beziehung stand, so wurde es nunmehr unerlaesslich, dem Gottesbegriff dem neuen Weltbegriff anzupassen. Die Folge war, dass um das Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts die Anschauungen des Pantehismus,des Deismus und des Atheismus an die Oberflaeche kamen.

Eine einfache Abschaffung eines uebernatürlichen Wesens, eine Verneinung eines Schoepfers, eine Vereinfachung des Goettlichen, wie es die Agnostiker,die ATheisten und z.T. auch die Deisten vorschlugen, war vielen dieser Philosophen nicht annehmbar. Sie waren Maenner der Wissenschaft, und sie hatten Dinge gesehen und Erfahren, die man nicht einfach als mechanische oder naturbedingte Ereignisse abtun konnte. Etwas mehr war fuer das Verstaenmnis notwendig; etwas musste herangezogen werden, was ehrlich gesehen als eine metaphysisch beleuchtete Arbeitshypothese ausgelegt werden konnte. Und es musste ihnen zu Bewusstsein kommen bei Ueberlegungen in dieser Richtung, dass die G n o sis, der sie inihrem Studium der Antikeund in ihrer Kritik der Theologie begegnet waren, zwar nicht in ihrer von Fantasien,Aberglauben und Magie verzerrten Form, aber auf ihre urspruenglichen und einfachen Charakter reduziert, die passende Antwort ,die Auskunft,die sie suchten geben konnte. Mit dem Einbruch der aufklaerung hatte sich unter den Religionswissenschaftlern eine weniger ablehnende Einstellung der Gnostik genegenueber entwickelt. Man begann zu glauben, dass sie misverstanden war, und die Haeresien wurden nicht mehr mit den gleichen harschen Worten beschrieben. Atheismus und Phantasien waren unbrauchbar, aber der Deismus, der sich aus den Newton'schen Lehren fast von selbst ergab, war nicht zu verwerfen. Der Daismus hatte einen gemeinsmaen Nenner fuer Wissenschaft und Religion gefunden. Er hatte in seinem System einen Platz fuer Gott bereit gehalten. Er hatte daher Gott auch die gebuehrende Ehre geboten. Welch immer auch die verschiedenartigen AUsdrucksformen des Deismus waren - und es gab eine Reihe solcher - in allen war der Glaube an ein Hoeheres Wesen als den A.B.A.W. enthalten.

Der Deismus war der Versuch,eine Naturreligion, eine natuerliche Moralitatet, einen natuerlichen Begriff von Gott zu schaffen. Wir haben uns darueber klar zu sein, dass es sich um eine Bestaetigung und nicht um eine Ableugnung der Gottheit handelt. Viele christliche Theologen jener Zeit waren bereit, sich mit einer solchen Ideologie zu indentifizieren.

Zweifellos waren die Philosophen der Aufklaerungszeit fest davon ueberzeugt, in einem Zeitalter zu leben, das nicht nur neuratig sondern von jedem bisherigen grundsaetzlichhverschieden war.

Die Intellektuellen der Wende des 17.Jahrhunderts suchten ein philosophisches,nicht-theologisches System, in das der Mensch des neuen Zeitalters hineinpassen kann. Sie studierten eifrig die klassische Literatur und die vorchristliche Geschichte. Sie waren nicht nur tief beeindruckt von der Einfachheit, mit welcher zu jener Zeit die schwerwiegenden Probleme des Menschseins,des Gottverstehens und der Jenseitswelt gehandhabt wurden, sondern auch von der Art wie sie geloest wurden, so dass dem einfachen Sklaven so wie dem gereiften Philosophen ein Mittel in die Hand gegeben wurde, sich in undmit seinem Leben zurecht zu finden.

Aus dem Glauben an mystischen Kraeften und okkulter Wissenschaft, der die primitive Welt beherrscht hatte, und der nunmehr nicht mehr annehmbar war, konnte man ein rein gnostisches Glaubenssystem herausfiltrieren, das von staendigem Wert war, das fuer alle Zeiten und alle Kulturen gueltig war und auch von dem gebildeten Menschen der Aufklaerungszeit angenommen werden konnte.

Damit meine ich ausschliesslich die vorchristliche Gnostik, jene Bewegungen, die ein rechtes Verstehen dessen was sie als Lebens- und Naturmysterien ansahen, die sie durch Erkennen und Wissen erfassen wollten, und von dessen Wissen und Erkennen sie eine Verbindung mit den mysterioesen Kraeften und goettlichen Wesen zu erreichen hofften.

Die Gnosis begann einst mit einer auf Magie geschuetzten Theorie des Lebenssins, der Gottheit,des Menschen,des Universums,der Moralitaet. All die immer sich vordraengenden Frage suchte die Gnostik anfangs mit magischen Formeln zu loesen. Heute hilft uns die Wissenschaft weiter, aber auch heute ist die Grenze ins Metaphysische nicht als unpassierbar angesehen.

Der heilige HYPOLYTUS, ein Schueler des Iraenaeus, der Ende des 2. Jahrhunderts lebte, schreibt, dass die Magie,wie die Zauberei, die Daemonenbeschwoerung und geheime Riten ein wichtiger Bestandteil der gnostischen Lehren war. "DäseHaeresie stammt von der Magie und der Philosophie", und er nennt Simon Magus, den damals bekanntesten Gnostiker, als den fuehrendsten Experten. Hypolytus sieht in der Astrologie eine die Kirche noch staerker belaestigende Lehre. Er erwaehnt auch, dass die Pythagoreanischen Theorien - die der Sphaeren und Zahlen - von der Gnostik auf ihre Ideen der Kosmologie,der Kosmogonie und des Dualismus angewandt wurden.

So wie es unerlaesslich ist, wenn man die Gnostik verstehen will, dass man die geschichtlichen Ereignisse der ausgehenden Antike,die damalige erwartende und aufgewuehlte religioese Stimmung der Menschen in

Rechnung stellt, so muss man auch die Bestrebungen,das Suchen und die Begeisterung der Gruendungsvaeter der Freimaurerei in dem Studium der derAufklaerungszeit vorausgehenden Remaissance und Reformation Richtlinien zu finden, nicht aus den Augen lassen.

Fuer den Menschen der Antike war der Kosmos der Mittelpunkt seiner Vorstellung dessen, was ein geordnetes Dasein ist. Das ideale Ziel des vpr-Sokratischen Denkens, sowohl das des Platon,des Aristoteles, der Stoiker und der Neo-Platoniker war die Identifikation mit dem Kosmos. Es galt als hoechste Weisheit und als vollkommenste religioese Ergebung, sich in den Kosmos einzufuehlen,sich ihm zu unterwerfen,dessen Majestaet zu ehren.

Die Griechen sahen in der sie umgebenden Welt ein geordnetes und schoenes System, und deshalb war auch die Menschheit als geordnete Gesellschaft in vollkommener Harmonie mit dem Weltall anzusehen.PLATON und die Stoiker predigten, dass das Universum schoen und vollkommen und schliesslich auch heilig sei, und dass sich der Mensch in dieser Welt dementsprechend aufzufuehren hat; und es galt als Beweis hoechsten ethischen Fuehlens, sich bewusst den kosmischen Gesetzen zu unterwerfen.

PLATON hatte gelehrt, dass es einen Schoepfer der Welt gibt, der diese Welt in voller Weisheit erschaffen hat. Sein Timaeus behandelt das fuer die griechische Philosophie so bedeutende Thema der Kosmologie und ANtrhopologie. " Daher koennen wir sagen, in dem wir die Sprache der Wahrscheinlichkeit anwenden, dass die Welt ein lebendiges Wesen wurde und durch die Vorsorge der Gottheit mit einer wahren Seele und echter Intelligenz versehen wurde", sagt er dort. Aus der kosmischen Weltordnung ergeben sichMoralgesetze,die einer Religion gläichen. Auch die STOA sah Kosmologie und Moralitate eng verbunden. Ethik war nicht nur durch die Bewegung der Planeten geschaffen; sie war auch von dieser abhaengig.

SOKRATES hatte bereits die Selbsterkenntnis gelehrt und damit das Interesse des Menschen "verinnerlicht"; und PLATON,und nach ihm PLONTIN gaben dann AUGUSTINUS das Material, von einer "Vergeisterung" zu sprechen in den Betrachtungen des Menschen mit Bezug auf sein Dasein. Die Bibel lehrte, dass die Welt fuer den Menschen geschaffen wurde. Der Mensch und nicht die Welt wurde im Ebenbild Gottes geschaffen, und daher war der Mensch von Bedeutung fuer Gott. Die kosmozentrische Philosophie wurde in der westlichen Welt zur anthropozentrischen. Das Interesse des Menschen wurde auf sich selbst gelenkt.

Die Gnosis war ein Kind des Hellenismus. Die alten Gnostiker gehoerten zur kultivierten griechisch-roemischen Elite. Sie standen sehr unter dem Einfluss der hellenistischen Philosophie. Sie sannen ueber das Leben und die Beziehungen der Menschen untereinander nach. Sie fanden die ANtwort in der zu der Zeit ueblichen Ausdrucksform religioeser Symbole und kultischer Handlungen.

Die Gnostik gab sich auf religioesem und literarischem Weg Ausdruck. Sie hatte,was man in dem damaligen Licht als einen wissenschaftlichen Charakter bezeichnen darf. In den Riten der damals gepflegten Kulte kann man bereits Anfaenge wissenschaftlichen Denkens entdecken. Dieses passte in das gnostische Denken hinein. Es bestand bereits im klassischen Griechenland die Art von Neugierde, jenes bewusste Suchen und Forschen, die wir heute als die Seele der Wissenschaft bezeichnen. Das machte sich nicht nur auf dem Gebiet der Medizin bemerkbar. Die griechischen Philosophen jener Zeit - und spaeter auch die von Alexandrien - hatten seit dem Wirken des Aristoteles eine wissenschaftliche Komponente in ihre Lehren eingefuegt, die nebern Medizin auch die Mathematik,Naturwissenschaften und Astronomie um - fasste. Wo immer griechische Philosophie und wissenschaftliche Anfaenge sich begegneten, entstanden auch gnostische Systeme.

Das Beduerfnis, eine wissenschaftliche ANtwort fuer alles zu finden - wobei natuerlich "Wissenschaft" jeweils eine besondere Bedeutung und Auslegung hat - war die treibende Kraft fuer das Entstehen, die Entwicklung und Ausbreitung der Gnostik.

Das was man als wissenschaftliches Denken und Suchen bezeichnen darf, kam im antiken Griechenland, in der babylonischen Astrologie, der iranischen Magie etc. zum Ausdruck. VAN GRONINGEN glaubt, dass dieser Drang nach Wissen - er nennt ihn "Scientismus"- fuer die Ausbreitung und fuer die Entstehung der Gnostik verantwortlich war.

In der Ansicht der Gnosis hatten kosmische Kraefte Einfluss auf den Menschen - und die Gnostiker suchten sich von diesem Einfluss freizumachen. Der Weg zu einer solchen Befreiung ging fuer die Gnostik nicht ueber die Religion, d.h. durch den Aufbau eines persoenlichen Verhaeltnisses mit der Gottheit, sondern durch das Verstaendnis dessen, was der Messch ist, wie er seine Umgebung kontrollieren kann,wie er sie sich unterordnen kann.

GUITTON denkt, dass das gnostische Problem im Grunde aus dem Problem der Beziehungen zwischen Glaube und Vernunft beruht, und dass dieses Problem seit jeher bestanden hat. Er sieht in der Gnostik nicht eine Religion sondern eine Philosophie. Die Gnostik hatte immer die Intelligenz herausgefordert und hatte schon immer die Philosophie auf die Probe gestellt.

In den Bemuehungen, die gefuerchteten, ueberall anwesenden feindlichen Kraefte zu verstehen und zu kontrollieren, wandten die alten Religionen und Philosophien sowohl gnostischen Gedankengaenge als auch die damals als vorwissenschaftlich zu bezeichnende Astrologie und Magie an. Auch mit Hilfe von durch Visionen und Orakel erlangtes Wissen glaubte der Mensch seine Welt zu verstehen. Es ist dieses, was Gnosis bedeutet. Gnosis war ein Wissen,das Freiheit und Hoffnung gab. Es war eine Hoffnung,mittels des Wissens,das die damalige Wissenschaft ausmachte,, eine auf religioeser Grundlage begruendetes Verstaendnis der Welt zu

erlangen. Die so entstandenen gnostischen Systeme waren durch philosophische, religioese und wissenschaftliche Impulse angespornt.

Diese aus dem Bereich der griechischen Philosophie stammende Gnostik fand mittels der Anwendung klassischer Mythologien einen passenden Rahmen in den Mysterienreligionen. Dabei besassen die Mysterien und die Mythologien kaum ihre eigene Philosophie, und daher blieb die klassische griechische Philosophie unverzerrt und unveraendert. Es bestehen heute zwei sich widersprechende Lager unter den Wissenschaftern, die diese Tatsache entweder ablehnen oder sie bestaetigen. Aber vor 3-400 Jahren wurden die damaligen Intellektuellen an der Schwelle der Aufklaerung nicht durch derartige Diskussionen abgelenkt. Sie sahen in der Gnosis ein klares Denken, ein begeistertes Suchen, ein wissenschaftliches Forschen, ein spekulatives Sinnen als die hervorstechendsten Merkmale und die passenden Antworten. Daher entsprach, das was sie in der Gnostik fanden, so sehr ihrer eigenen Geistesrichtung, und mir scheint, dass sie zu dem Schluss haben kommen muessen, dass das was die Gnostiker erreicht zu haben scheinen auch fuer sie ein wunschenswertes Ergebnis darstellen koennte.

Ich habe bereits ueber den Inhalt und das Programm der Gnostik von vor 2000 Jahren gesprochen - aber lasst uns nunmehr schauen, wie die Gnosis durch die Brille der Aufklaerung aussehen musste.

GUITTON erklaerte, dass die Gnostik universal ist und schon immer in religioeser Form und in verschiednen Umgebungen bestanden hat. " Gnosis ist der Ausdruck eines absurden Traums der Kollektiven Menschheit".. Er sagt, dass die Gnostik schon immer bestanden hat als eine Gedankensart, als eine Intelligenz kategorie,als ein Archtypus. Sie bietet eine einfache Loesung fuer das Problem des Boesenund des Guten,die das Leben des Menschen beherrschen. "An Stelle der Notwendigkeit eines Glaubens tritt jetzt klares Wissen, die Gnosis. Das ist die Bedeutung der Gnostik". Gnosis biete die Gelegenheit und Moeglichkeit, die Welt zu verstehen, ihre Kraefte zu kontrollieren. Gnosis bedeutet daher Freiheit. Der Mensch wird daher zum Zentrum des Weltalls.

Die Gnostiker kannten den Begriff eines persoenlichen Gottes nicht. Es bestand fuer sie keine persoenliche Beziehung zwischen Gott und Mensch. Fur die Gnostiker war Gott ein transzendentales,unpersoenliches,unfassbares Wesen, das nur durch die Gnosis erfasst werden kann und womit und wobei sich der Gnostiker auch identifizieren konnte.

Und dabei ist die Gnostik keine Religion - und doch ist sie mehr als eine Religion. Sie enthaelt eine philosophische Erklaerung des Universums, der Gottheit und des Menschen. Gnosis macht von den jeweils zeitgemaessen wissenschaftlichen Kenntnissen Gebrauch; sie nimmt religioese Ausdruecke auf und bringt jeweils moderne philosophische Gedankengaenge an. Die Gnosis hat keine eigene Theologie. Theologie ist heute keine Philosophie mehr, wie es im klassischen Altertum der Fall war.

Gnosis ist jedoch, so wie ehedem, undenkbar ohne Philosophie, unmoeglich ohne Wissenschaft, und unhaltbar ohne religioesen Zuschlag. Sie ist ohne ein Versprechen inneren Friedens unannehmbar und ohne das Zugestaendnis der Denkfreiheit unvorstellbat. Es muss fuer die Intellektuellen eine besonders anziehende Entdeckung gewesen sein, dass die vorchristliche Gnostik starkes wissenschaftliches Interesse zeigte, so ausschliesslich fast eine Loesung der Lebensfragen mittels wissenschaftlicher Mittel suchte.

Die Gnosis birgt in sich das Versprechen der Erloesung, des Wiederaufesstehen, aber es wird klar gemacht, dass diese nicht durch eine Mittelsperson und auch nicht in physischer Form erfolgen wird. Wo solche Begriffe in der Gnostik auftauchen, kann man nachweisen, dass sie spaeter synkretisch zugefuegt worden sind.

In der Gnosis war Raum fuer Mystisches und Okkultes. Die Gnostiker nahmen an mystischen Riten teil, und er wird in magische Passworte und geheime Zeichen eingeweiht und mit geheimen Naman vertraut gemacht. Aber dann entfernte die Gnostik das Kultische der Mysterien, und sie gab dem geistigen Element in den Lehren den Vorrang. Im Neo-Platonismus und im hoeheren Moenshstum fehlen dann diese Kulthandlungen schliesslich voellig, und eine reine Verinnlichung ist nunmehr bemerkbar. Hier kann es auch zu einem Zustand der Ekstase kommen, was in dem Zuschauer und dem Teilnehmer der Mysterienreligionen nicht moeglich war. Aber in beiden Richtungen mag die Mystik hineinspielen und zum Mysterium fuehren.

Eine neuzeitliche Gnostik predigtschliesslich die Erfassung des Goettlichen und das Einswerden mit dem Hoeheren Wesen durch eine hoehere, esoterische Art des Erkenntnis, die oft mit einer pantheistischen oder dualistischen Auffassung verbunden ist. Dazu genoeren die Anthroposophen, die Theosophen,die Rosenkreutzer,die Christian Sciences, die Spiritualisten.

Das der Gnostik unterliegende Grundmotiv ist eine philosophische Neugierde, d.h. der Wunsch, die Bedeutung des Lebens zu verstehen. Es ist das Suchen, den Sinn des Lebens in seiner Totalitaet zu erlernen. Obgleich sich spaeterhin die Gnostik zu einer philosophischen Wieder-Auslegung des Christentums entwickelte - HARNACK behauptete,dass die Gnostiker die ersten waren, die ein christliches Doktrinensystem aufstellten und die in der Entwicklung des christlichen Dogmas verwickelt waren - so ist das nicht etwa eine neue Entwicklung sondern eine typische Eigenart der Gnosis, die alten Gedankengaenge in immer neuer Kleidung darzustellen. Denn diese neuartigen gnostischen, sich christlicher Ideen und neutestamentlicher Bilder bedienende Formen zeigten immer noch ihren klassischen gnostischen Hintergrund, und sie spiegelten auch

die Philosophien des Aristoteles,des Platon und der Stoiker wieder. Diese Befunde und die den beiden gemeinsame Kosmologie sprechen die gleich Sprache.

Es scheint in vielen Kreisen die Ansicht vorgeherrscht zu haben, dass die Gnostik erst im 1. oder 2. Jahrhundert n.Chr. entstand und durch die Spannung mit dem Christentum bedingt gewesen ist. Es wird allgemein heute zugegeben, dass die Gnosis eine viel aeltere Geistesrichtung darstellte, und dass sie, obgleich sie in der Bildung des Christentums mitwirkte, dann selbst wiederum von diesem geanedert wurde.

Die Mythologie nahm eine zentrale Stellung in der Gnosis ein, Die Mythen jaben keinen wahren geistigen Inhalt; sie sprechen in abstrakter Weise von koerperlichen, natuerlichen,materiellen Dingen. Sie bringen dann oft magische oder mysterieose Elemente hinzu. Die Goetter und Goettinnen sind natuerliche und materielle Wesen, und sie stehen wahren, faktischen Naturkraeften gegenueber.

Um unser Bild zu verstaendigen, muessen wir weiterhin bedenken, dass der erweckende Humanismus aus den grossen Umwaelzungen in Europa Gebrauch machte, um die grosse Tradition, aus der er schoepfte, und der auf die geistigen Schaffungen des klassischen Griechenland zurueckging, sich eben diese antike Geistesgeschichte zum Leitfaden machte. All die grossen Figuren der Vergangenheit hatten bereits das Beduerfnis gehabt, sich und ihre Welt zu verstehen, und ihre Ratschlaege, auch wenn sie mit den Ergebnissen der modernen Wissenshaft in Widerspruch standen, hatten keineswegs ihren Wert eingebuesst.

Fuer die Maenner der 17. Jahrhundertwende ergab sich nun die Frage, welche Faktoren ihnen in der ihnen nunmehr in die Augenfallenden und von den Religionsgeschichtlern nicht mehr so harsch und feindlich angesehenen Gnostik zusagen konnten, und welche Elemente dieser alten Weltanschauung sich in der freimaurerischen Auffassung der Welt,der Stellung des Menschen in der Welt, die Pflichten des Menschen sich, der Welt und dem ABAW anwenden lassen koennen. Denn diese freimaurerische Auffassung ist ja die Essenz der Freimaurerei. Und fuer uns erbibt sich nunmehr die Fragesellung, was in der Zeit der Aufklaerung, im Rahmen der wissenschaftlichen Revolution und im Lichte des aufgehenden Humanismus die Gruender der Freimaurerei in der Wesensart des Gnostizismus als anziehend als des Einschliessend wert gefunden haben.

Der Mensch hat von jeher ein unbeschraenktes Vertrauen in die Erfolge und die Erlaeuterungen der Wissenschaften gesetzt, und er hat von den Wissenschaftlern eine Erklaerung des Weltalls und seiner Funktionen, des Menschen und seines Daseins erwartet.

In der Gnosis konnte der den Menschen angeborene wissenschaftliche Drang zum Ausdruck kommen, die materielle Seite des Universums und die diesem eigenen Kraefte zu kennen und zu beherrschen. (GRONINGEN). Das besagt in anderen Worten, der Mensch draengte danach, den Kosmos zu begreifen, die kosmischen Kraefte sich zu unterordnen, sich von den den kosmischen Vorschriften freizumachen. Das ist schliesslich ein ausgesprochen humanistischer Zug der Gnosis, der hier zum Vorschein kommt. Denn obgleich die Seele, die Psyche eine derartig grosse Rolle in der Gnosis spielt, dachte der Gnostiker hauptsaechlich im Sinne eines materiellen Kosmos. Ihn interessierten besonders die naturalistischen Kraefte. Das veranlasst GRONINGEN, in der Gnosis eine materialistisch und naturalistisch denkende Weltanschauung zu sehen, und ein wissenschaftliches Denken als das Grundmotiv der Gnosis der vorchristlichen Zeit zu bezeichnen.

Diese Grundprinzipien, diese philosophischen Grundlagen der Gnosis haben die Gruender der modernen Freimaurerei, wie wir sie in ihrer heutigen Aufmachungkennen, sehr wohl erkannt. Sie haben eine derartigen gnostischen Inhalt der Freimaurerei wohl bewusst,beabsichtigt und in nicht missverstaendlicher Weise, klar zum Ausdruck gebracht. So wie wir in unserem Ritual die Mysterienkulte sich wiederspiegeln lassen, ohne dabei den geringsten Eindruck zu erwecken, dass wir uns mit einer heidnischen Religion identifizieren wollen, so pflegen wir auch gewisse gnostische Ideen und Anschauungen; und so haben wir auch die Gelegenheit und die Moeglichkeit, da wir diesen jedweden Charakter einer Religion genommen haben, uns ein Weltbild zu schaffen, das ein jeder von uns in seine eigene religioese und philosophsiche Weltanschauung einpassen kann.

So sind diese grundliegenden gnostischen Begriffe gemeinsam mit den Mythen, den Symbolen und den ALlegorien der antiken Mysterienkulte die Bausteine, die wir zum Aufbau unseres Lebenssystems anwenden koennen.

Der Mensch ist im Grunde genommen ein religioeses Wesen. Ein jeder Mensch hat ja einen Glauben irgendwelcher Art. Der Kommunist und der Atheist haben ja schliesslich auch ihre bestimmt umrissenen Glaubensbilder. Eine Religion ist jedoch a priori und in allem auf Gott - wie immer dieser bezeichnet und benannt wird.Das trifft auch auf die Gnosis zu. Aber die Gnosis begann als ein philosophisch-wissenschaftliches Weltbild. Sie wurde zu einer ausgesprochen religioesen Bewegung - im Laufe der Zeit wurde sie fuer viele sogar zu einer Religion (so wie der Marxismus und der Totalitarianismus zu Religionen werden konnten.)

Die Gnosis bedeutet das Wissen um den A.B.A.W., dem Schoepfer dieser Welt. Sie bedeutet ein Verstaendnis fuer die Wichtigkeit, die der Mensch fuer seine Welt hat. Sie bedeutet das Erkennen der Verpflichtungen, die der Mensch seinem Schoepfer,seinen Mitmenschen und sich selbst gegenueber hat. Die Gnosis lehrt, dass es an uns selbst liegt, wie wir unsere Aufgaben erfuellen, und dass uns das nur moeglich ist, wenn wir uns selbst kennen und verstehen lernen, wenn wir das Gute in finden und das Boese in uns erkennen - oder wie es masonisch heisst, wenn wir dem Licht zustreben. Die Gnosis gibt uns Einsicht in den Zweck und das Ziel unseres Daseins, und sie verspricht uns, dass mit unserem Tod nicht alles aufhoert, dass irgendwie von uns immer etwas uebrig bleiben wird.

Das ist Gnosis - und das ist Freimaurerei.

Ja, meine lieben Brueder ! Die Thesis dieses Baurisses ist die, dass die Freimaurerei eine gnostische Weltanschauung darstellt, dass sie ein philosophisches System nach der Art der Gnostik ist.

Aber das stimmt ja nicht ghaz, werdet Ihr mir vorhalten. Und ich stimme Euch zu: es ist nicht ganz so. Denn die Gnosis war zumindest spaeterhin darauf ausgegangen, wenigstens ein Religionssystem darzustellen - und das ist doch keineswegs der Fall mit der Freimaurerei. Die Freimaurerei ist keine Religion. Sie stellt keine Theologie dar. Sie will auch nicht die kleinste Ecke im Bereich der Religionen einnehmen. Aber das ist die einzigsten Einwendung, die mir selbst in diesem Augenblick einfallen koennte.

Ich hoffe, dass Ihr nunmehr ein einigermassen klares Bild von der Gnosis und der Gnostik habt. Ich hoffe, dass Ihr nunmehr verstanden habt, dass die Gnosis nicht mit Verdacht oder gar mit Abscheu abgewiesen werden muss. Ihr muesst Euch erinnern, dass in ihren Kaempfen um die Anerkennung waehrend der ersten 2-3 Jahrhunderten ihres Bestehens, dass in ihren Bemuehungen, als alleinig seligmachende Lehre die Heiden bekehren zu duerfen, und dann spaeterhin in ihrem bewussten Herrschen als alles ueberragende Macht auf religioesem Gebiet, die Kirche jede Abweichung von ihren Lehren als ein Verirren abgelehnt, als Haeresie verurteilt und als Ketzerei ausgerottet hat. Und so wie es halt im Leben ist, wennein einziger faulender Apfel den ganzen Vorrat verdirbt, wenn ein einziger schlechter Jude als fuer alle Juden bezeichnend angeprangert wird, so ist auch der Manichaeismus - eine besonders aufaellige, zwar sehr einflussreiche aber ausgesprochen anti-ckkistliche gnostische Bewegung - fuer dieKirche das Vorbild, der Masstab und das uebelriechende Beispiel der Gnosis geworden.

Von diesem Vorurteil muesst Ihr Euch freimachen - und die Erkenntnis, dass man das tun muss, scheint heute auch in den Kreisen der Geschichts- und Religionsforscher anerkannt zu sein. Die Gnosis ist eine alte, eine sehr alte Weltanschauung. Sie ist eine der Fazetten einer Weltanschauung, die die alten - und zu einem grossen Masse auch die modernen - Religionssystsme der Welt gegruendet hat. Die Gnosis ist bezeichnend fuer,stellt die Grundlage dar fuer die alten hellenistischen und orientalischen Kultsysteme und Mysterienreligionen; sie hat auch die christliche Religion mitgebildet , und sie hat auf die moderne juedische Religion - damit meine ich die nachrabbänische- und auf den Islam ihren Eindruck hinterlassen.

Gnosis bedeutet, wie ich schon wiederholterklaert habe, Wissen, Verstehen, Erkennen.

Ihr werdet nunmehr mit Berechtigung die Frage stellen, ob der Antagonismus der katholischen Kirche, der ja die Freimaurerei seit ihrem Bestehen vor 270 Jahren belaestigt, mit dem gnostischen Hintergrund unserer Bruderschaft in Beziehung steht. Bisher habe ich eine solche Begruendung nirgendwo angefuehrt gefunden. Die Kirche hat uns niemals als eine haeretische christliche Sekte bezeichnen koennen. Sie hat uns niemals Ketzer genannt. Aber ich habe keinerlei Zweifel, dass fuer die Wuerdentraeger der Kirche und ihren politischen Beratern, sowohl fuer ihre theologischen Interpreter gewisse Parallelerscheinungen zwischen uns und der immer vorhandenen Furchh vor Haeresie einen - sei es auch nur unbewussten - Einfluss hat.

Liebe Brueder ! Wenn ich eine Zeichnung wie die heutige vorlege, so hoffe, so wuensche ich immer, dass eine ausschliessende Aussprache mir etwas von dem vielen, was ich selbst nicht weiss aber sehr gerne wissen moechte, bringen wird. Ich bin mir dessen bewusst, dass den Meisten von Euch das Gebiet der Gnosis voellig fremd ist, oder dass das Wenige, was Ihr darueber wisst, Euch nunmehr falsch oder zumindest ungenuegend erscheinen muss. DAHER KANN ICH HEUTEVON Euch eine Aussprache ueber meinen Bauriss wohl nicht erwarten.

Solltet Ihr Euch aber angeregt fuehlen, so studiert doch zu Hause die einschlaegige Literatur, diskutiert doch meine These mit erfahrenemen Bruedern - und fragt doch auch solche,die der "profanen Welt" angehoeren. Es wuerde mich sehr freuen, dann von Euch zu hoeren.

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Lieber Bruder Willy:

Ich freue mich, dass Br. Hein Bar-Levi Dir eine Copy meiner Zeichnung uebersandt hat. Ich wusste nicht, dass er sie in Haenden hatte, - ich hatte mir schon Gedanken gemacht, wie ich Ihm eine besorgen koennte, denn bei der Verlesung des Protokolls der entsprechenden Arbeit erwaehnte er, dass er nicht die Gelegenheit hatte, sie persoenlich zu lesen. Hätte ich gewusst, dass Du auch auf dem Gebiet des Gnostizismus "taetig" gewesen bist, so haette ich mich wahrscheinlich schon vorher mit Dir ueber dieses Thema unterhalten.

Aus Deinem Schreiben habe ich den Eindruck gewonnen, dass Du mit meinen Ansichten und Schlussfolgerungen die Gnosis betreffend, und besonders mit Bezug auf ihren Einfluss auf die Freimaurerei, nicht einverstanden bist. Ich kann mir sehr wohl vorstellen, dass Du damit nicht einverstanden sein kannst - und ich werde Dir gerne die Gruende dafuer vorlegen.

Vorerst lass mich Dir klarmachen, dass die Zeichnung, die Du in der Hand hast, nur ein AUsaug aus einer groesseren Arbeit ist, die ich in diesem Jahre ueber dieses Thema fertiggestellt habe. Als im Oktober der stellvertretende M.v.St. Br.Nathan Fischer mich beauftragte, einer Gruppe von Schweizer Bruedern,die unsere Loge besuchen wollten, eine Zeichnung vorzulegen, habe ich aus dem umfangreichen,mehr detailierten Bauriss "Gnosis und Freimaurerei" einen Auszug gemacht, d.h. die Arbeit auf ca. 20% zusammengeschmolzen.

Aber trotzdem glaube ich, dass aus dieser, der Loge sodann vorgelegten Zeichnung, meine Meinung und Schlussfogerungen klar zu erkennen sind.

Das Gebiet der Gnosis is sehr gross. Es ist faszinierend. Ich kann mir sehr wohl vorstellen, dass Dich dieses Studium sehr beschaeftigt hat. Ich selbst habe mich ueber viele Jahre damit abgegeben; und ich weiss auch, dass ich nur einen geringen Teil der Materie habe erlernen koennen und verstehen duerfen. Und dabeihabe ich mein Lernen und Forschen nur darauf beshhraenkt, welche Beziehung die Gnosis zur Freimaurerei hat, d.h. welchen Einfluss sie auf die Ideologie, die Philosophie der Freimaurerei aufweist, welche gnostische Elemente moeglicherweise im maurerischen Ritual und den Darstellungen in der Loge nachweisbar sind.

Und hier liegtja der Grund dafuer,dass Du mit meiner Auffassung, den in meiner Zeichnung dargestellten Ansichten nicht einverstanden bist. Daskannst Du auch unmoeglich sein. Denn das, was Du als Gnosis kennen gelernt hast, studiert hast, kennst, ist kaum in der Freimaurerei wiedergespiegelt. Vielleicht kann man sogar das Gegenteil sagen.

Wir Beide haben diese andersartige Einstellung einfach deshalb, weil jeder von uns von einem ganz verschiedenen Startort ausgegangen ist. Ich rede von einer reinen Form der Gnosis. Ich rede von der Urgnosis, von der urspruenglichen Gnosis. Ich rede vbn der vor-christlichen, der nicht-christlichen Gnosis. Ich rede von der Gnosis, die dem Menschen verstaendlich machen will, dass er sich zu einem Zweck in dieser Welt befindet, dass er nicht das Produkt einer ungeplanten Entwicklung ist. Die Gnosis, von der ich rede, erkennt an, dass in aller und jeder Beziehung der Mensch im Mittelpunk des Allseins steht - es ist eine anthropologischen Gnosis. "Die Gnosis,die ich meine", ist die Vermittlung der Kenntnis - meinetwegen oft in einem religiosnaetigen Rahmen - wo der Mensch sich durch Selbsterkenntnis zur Selbsterloesung durchkaempfen kann. Diese Gnosis ist ein Erloesungsglaube, aber nicht ein Glaube an einen Erloeser.

Ich rede nicht von der Gnosis, die im 1. Jahrhundert entstanden ist durch Einmischen von synkretischen Begriffen aus dem Neoplatomischen,dem Iranischen dem Apokryphischen mit Hilfe einer grossartigen Phantasie. Die Unmengen von gnostischen Sekten, die an die Oberflaeche kamen,haben sich dann im Phantasieren zu ueberkommen versucht mit ihren Begriffen von Demiurgen, den Taufen,den Erloeserfiguren. Diese letztere"Erfindung " haben die christlichen Gnostiker - auch die Kirche - eingefuehrt ueber die Valentianer, und sie wurde dann von den Manichaern, mit Hilfe von apokryphischen Quellen weiter ausgebaut.

Die Gnosis, die ich als die echte ansehe, ist die in den mystischen Kulten dargestellte; ich finde sie auch in typisch juedischer Faerbung in der Qumran-Sekte wieder, bei den Apokalypten sowie bei den Urchristen. Wenn Du willst kannst Du auch die mittelalterliche Moenchsorden sowie das Rittertum hinzurechnen,sowie die Alchemie,den Sufismus,den Hassidismus. Der "allgemeine christliche Gnostizismus"mag - vielleicht abgemildert - wiedererkannt werden in den verschiiedenen mystischen Bewegungen, wie der Kabbala,den Rosicruceans,den Theosophisten etc. Aber nicht in der Freimaurerei. Die Gnosis der ersten Jahrhunderte suchte, wie es schon der gute Clemens von ALexandrien sagte, auf dem Ruecken der Christus-Figur in den Himmel zu kommen.

Was das Judentum angeht, wie man " Bei Philon von Alexandrien sehen kann ", so habe ich den Eindruck, dass der gute Philon kaum einen Eindruck auf seine eigene Zeit und Umgebung hatte, und schon garnicht auf das nicht-hellenisierte Judentum; dass seine gnostische Verarbeitung der Bibel eine fuer den damaligen Markt bestimmte Verpackung war; und dass Philon sein Ueberleben in der Religions- und Philosophiegeschichte wohl hauptsaechlich dem Umstand verdankt, dass er von den fruehen christlichen Religionsformern missverstandenerweise als einer der Vorlaeufer des Christentums bewertet worden war.

"Die Gnosis ,die ich meine" ist das Wissen,dass es etwas Hoeheres gibt,dass es etwas Ueberlebendes in uns gibt, dass es etwas ueber uns und ausserhalb von uns gibt (wie immer ein jeder von uns fuer sich selbst dieses 'Etwas' bezeichnen will), und dass dieses etwas in uns niemals,unmoeglich, voellig verschwinden kann. Diese Gnosis,dieses Wissen um das,was wir in unseren Logen symbolisch im "Licht" sehen, ist das,was ich als die wahre,die urspruegliche,gar die einzige "Gnosis" ansehe. Erst diese Gnosis macht das Leben sinnvoll - gibt unserem Leben erst Sinn. Ich glaube, dass der Hauptzweck und die tiefe Berechtigung der Freimaurerei darin liegen, uns dieses Sinns und Zweckes bewusst zu machen, d.h. die urspruengliche Gnosis zu vermitteln und zu bewahren. Alles andere im maurerischen Program ergibt sich von selbst.

Das wollte ich gesagthaben, und das hat meine Zeichnung vermitteln wollen. Ich bin sicher,dass die Gruender der modernen Freimaurerei diese Weisheit dem modernen, unter dem zentrifugalen Entfremdungsdrang leidenden Menschen haben uebermitteln wollen; denn diese Gnosis, von der ich rede, laesst den,der hoeren kann, wissen, dass wir ohne die rechte Wuerdigung unseres Selbst mittels des uns gegebenen Girokompasses, niemals werden lernen koennen,wofuer und wozu wir hier ueberhaupt leben. Das ist die "Selbsterkenntnis, von der man so viel in der Freimaurerei spricht, von der die Loge in uns das Wissen erwecken will. Und das ist jadas, was die Mysterienkulte,.die Qunitessence gnostischer Botschaftmbesagen - jene, die so "klar verborgen sind" in den maurerischen ZRiten und Ritualen, Symbolismen und Allegorien. Von den letzteren ist unser Ritual voll, und sie enthalten verhuellt all die Weisheiten der alten Mythen,welche wiederum ein Sammelbecken einer wahren Gnosis sind.

Gestatte , dass ich nunmehr eine Bemerkung hinzufuege. Ich bitte Dich, mir diese nicht uebelzunehmen. Ich verstehe, dass Dir manches, in dem was ich geschrieben habe - in diesem Brief sowie in meiner Zeichnung - nicht verstaendlich, vielleicht sogar unverstaendlich sein kann. Die Darlegung dessen, was ich unter " Gnosis und Freimaurerei" verstehe - und das hat natuerlich garnichts mit einer Beweisfuehrung auf Grund religioeser Auffassung oder einer theologischen Argumentation zu tun - muss fuer einen Bruder, der unter dem Einfluss des Schroeder'schen Rituals form der Freimaurerei sieht und denkt und wirkt, fremd und befremdend und seltsam erscheinen. Ich habe wenig Schwierigkeit, meine Ideen einem "alten,freien und angenommen" Bruder wenigstens einigermassen klarzumachen. Du musst ja dessen Ritual kennen; Du hast doch sicherlich des Oefteren die Gelegenheit wahrgenommen, an dessen Logenarbeit teilzunehmen. (Das trifft leider nicht auf den Grossteil der Br.Br. der "Shiloah" zu). Studiere doch das Ritual dieser - ich moechte fast sagen urspruenglichen Form - der Freimaurerei in und unter dem von mir darauf gerichteten Licht. Bedenke aber, dass ich mich keineswegs auf die sogenannten "Hochgrade" beziehe - obgleich ich zugebe, dass man die Freimaurerei nicht verstehen kann, wenn man nicht wenigstens zu den drei Grundgraden auch in den des " Royal Arch " (Holy Chapter) eingefuehrt worden ist. Andernfalls hilft jedweder Kommentar sehr wenig - und darum muss ich auch den Artikel im Freimaurer-Lexikon als unzutreffend und hoechstens als nicht sehr hilfsvoll ansehen. Ich muss ge-

stehen, dass ich wahrscheinlich meine Zeichnung ueber " Gnosis und Freimaurerei " nicht in der 'Shiloah' aufgelegt haette, waeren nicht die 14 Brueder aus der Schweiz damals anwesend gewesen.

Ich hoffe, dass Du verstanden hast, was ich -Alles in Allem- habe sagen wollen, auch wenn Du nicht annehmen kannst, was ich gesagt habe. Aber Dein Verstehen genuegt mir; mehr erwarte ich nicht von einem Bruder - und auch nicht von mir selbst. Dieser Brief ist fuer mich ein weiterer Grund zur freudigen Ueberraschung: seit Jahren habe ich nicht die Konzentration gehabt, mich derartig ausschweifend im Schriftlichen zu unterhalten. Wer weiss, wann eine solche Stunde wieder sich bereit erklaert ?

Ich danke Dir nochmals fuer Dein Interesse. Mit faellt gerade in diesem Moment ein, dass "...wer ewig strebend sich bemueht..." - versuchen wir uns strebend zu bemuehen....

Es bleibt mir noch uebrig, Dir und den Deinen ein froehliches Weihnachtsfest und ein gesundes und glueckliches Jahr zu wuenschen. Und auch Dich zu bitten, dem ehrw. M.v.St. Deiner Loge und den Bruedern dort meine besten Wuensche zu uebermitteln.

Bruederlich Dein

I N H A L T S V E R Z E I C H N I S .

1. Urspreengliche Freimaurerei und der Ursprung der Freimaurerei.
2. Dir Bruderschaft.
3. Glaube und Aberglaube.
4. Religion und Freimaurerei.
5. Die Freimaurerei und der bewusste Jude.
6. Weisheit, Staerke und Scheenheit.
7. Ueber die Entstehung des Mythos.
8. Die Sekte der Essener.
9. Die Sekte der Therapeuten.
10. Die Mysterienkulte.
11. Die Stellung des Freimaurers in der heutigen Welt.
12. Was die Freimaurerei uns zu sagen hat.
13. Maurerisches Sinnen.....
14. Masonische Gruebeleien.
15. Etwas Ideales und Esoterisches zusaetzlich zur Erziehung
16. Grundbegriffe der Freimaurerei.
17. Was uns die Freimaurerei lehrt.
18. Meine freimaurerische Philosophie.
19. CaRITAS. Caritas ? Caritas !
20. Der Schurz des Feimaurers.
21. Der Sinn und Zweck der Loge.
22. Das freimaurerische Geheimnis.
23. "Einige Worte" ueber die Freimaurerei.
24. O Quattuor Sancti Coronati !
25. Welchen Dank schuldet die Freimaurerei der Frau ?
26. Wie is es wirklich mit der englischen Freimaurerei ?
27. Festrede zum Rosenfest 1979
28. Ein masonisches Credo.
29. Ueber das Wundern und das Staunen.

WAS

IST DIE

FREIMAURERE I ?

KARACHI 1967

Liebe Brueder ! Ich muss gestehen, dass ich mich etwas unsicher fuehle, wenn ich zu einer Gruppe von aelteren und erfahrenen Freimaurern wieder Eurigen ueber eine Zeichnung wie der heutigen sprechen soll. Ich war ja selbst so oft enttaeuscht, wenn ein Redner ein solches oder aehnliches Thema anbot, und ich wuerde mich nicht wundern, solltet Ihrauch nunmehr nunmehr Euch damit abfinden, dass Ihr " nunmehr wieder einmal einer Predigt zuhoeren " muesst. Ich bitte Euch jedoch: Habt etwas Geduld ! Ich glaube, ich werde meinen Vortrag etwas anders als es sonst ueblich ist, anfassen - und vielleicht auch eine nicht allgemein gehoerte Auslegung vorlegen.

Was ist die Freimaurerei ? Dieser Art Frage wird immer wieder in freimaurerischen Versammlungen gefragt, und die mannigfachen Antworten, die man hoert besagen nicht, dass diese umstritten sind,oder dass darueber Uneinigkeit herrscht, sondern dass ein jeder Bruder hier oder sonstwo in der Welt seine eigene Antwort, seine eigene Auslegung - und seine eigenen Erwartungen hat. Aber bevor ich diesen Punkt wieder aufnehme und meine eigene Meinung der Unzahl von Ideen,die ueber die Freimaurerei undihren Sinn hinzufuege, muessen wir uns erst klar darueber werden, wie und wann die Freimaurerei entstand; denn die Frage des " Was " ist sehr mit der des " Woher " verknuepft.

Wenn wir die freimaurerische Literatur durchstoebern koennen wir viele , sich oft widersprechende, Theorien ueber die Entstehung der Freimaurerei entdecken. Ein FaCHMann wird Euch erklaeren, dass die Freimaurerei in der Urzeit der Menschheit als eine Geheimgesellschaft entstand,

dass sie seither und zu allen Zeiten unter der Obhut hervorragender Menschentypen stand und durch alle Geschichtsperioden hindurch durch eine Kette von weisen Maennern weitergetragen wurde, Diese hervorragend begabten und weisen Maenner kannten viele der Naturgeheimnisse, und sie waren in sehr inniger und vertraulicher Beziehung mit jenen uebernatuerlichen Maechten, die dem Uneingeweihten schon immer - und nicht weniger heute - verborgen sind.

Eine andere Schule wird behaupten, dass waehrend des Bau's des ersten Tempels in Jerusalem Koenig Salomon Beweis seiner ungewoehnlichen Weisheit und Voraussicht darin zeigte, dass er in Vorausahnung der modernen Gewerkschaftsbewegung seine Arbeiter sehr erfolgreich in Logenartige Zuenfte organisierte. Ein Nebengewinn dieser Organisation war, dass die Arbeiter bereit waren, die ihnen beigebrachten Erfahrungen, die neuartige Philosophie und die geachtete Stellung, die mit ihrer Arbeit,und der Zusammenarbeit mit dem Koenig, als Teilzahlung anzunehmen und sich mit einem sehr maessigen Lohn zufriedenzustellen. Ein derartiges Lohn-Abkommen wuerde heutzutage keine Gewerkschaft anerkennen, das steht sicherlich fest. Allerdings bin ich nicht ganz sicher, dass unsere heutigen abgehaerteten Gewerkschaftsfuehrer nicht einem weisen Unterhaendler , wie es der Koenig Salomon war, viele Zugestaendnisse haetten machen muessen.

Und dann gibt es noch eine weitere Gruppe von maurerischen Forschern, denen es ganz und gar an Phantasie und Romantik fehlt, die uns beibringen wollen, dass die Freimaurerei nichts anderes ist als ein geistig-philosophischer Zweig,der waehrend der Aufklaerung auf eine nicht mehr lebensfaehige Zunft von Bauarbeitern aufgepfropft worden ist u.zw. durch Maenner,die sich ihren idealistischen und humanistischen Bestrebungen in einer romantischen Umgebung und auf einer desitischen

Grundlage.

Ich moechte Euch nunmehr eine weitere Auslegung geben. Sie ist bei Weitem keine neue solche - aber sie mag Euch und Eure Ideen in eine ganz andere Richtung weisen. Ich bin der Meinung, dass die Freimaurerei zu jenen religioesen Organisationen gehoert, die vor mehr als 2000 Jahren das geistige Leben der damaligen zivilisierten Welt beherrschten.

(Bevor ich fortfahre, sehe ich mich gezwungen, Euch dahin gehend zu beruhigen, dass die Empfindlichkeit meiner muslimischen Brueder in keiner Weise durch meine Darlegungen gestoert werden wird. Ich bin mir voll bewusst, dass innerhalb unserer Logen gleich wie in all den Logen ueberall in der Welt, religioese Probleme nicht angeschnitten werden duerfen. Aber diese Vorschrift betrifft Diskussionen,die Zwist und Feindseligkeit mit sich bringen koennten. Die von mir nunmehr gebotenen Diskussionen,die beabsichtigen,die Stellung der heutigen Freimaurerei mit Bezug auf und im Verhaeltnis zu religioesen Organisationen der Vergangenheit zu erklaeren, sind zweifellos zulaesslich.)

In meiner heutigen Zeichnung will ich versuchen, die sogenannten Mysterien-Religonen zu beschreiben, von denen Ihr alle sicherlich schon Einiges gehoert habt.

Die Mysterien- oder Sakramental-Religionen erstrebten die Annaeherung an die Gottheit mittels gewisser Riten und Lithurgien; die Zulassung erforderte eine gewisse Periode strenger Pruefungen und einen Eid, alles Gesehene,Gehoerte und Erfahrene strengstens geheimzuhalten. Die diesen Religionen gemeinsame Lehre besagte, dass der Mensch eine ihm von einem Hoeheren Wesen ueberlassene goettliche Essenz in sich birgt; dieses goettliche Element muss freigemacht werden, um zu seinem goettlichen Ursprung zurueckzukehren. All diese Kulte schrieben vor, dass

eine feierliche Initiationszeremonie notwendig war, um eine solche Erloesung zu gewinnen, und dass gewisse Riten befolgt werden mussten, um das Individuum von seinen Suenden zu reinigen. Man glaubte, dass man Gnade erzielen kann, dass gewisse Kenntnisse, und durch diese die Erloesung, dadurch vermittelt werden , wenn der Eingeweihte die gleichen Leiden und Sorgen erlebt hat wie die Gottheit selbst; und es war in all diesen verschiednen Kulten und Religionen den Mitgliedern die Zusicherung gegeben, dass durch diese Erfahrungen sie mit der Gottheit in Verbindung kommen und bleiben werden - und dass sie geradezu selbst gottartig werden koennen. Wer zu diesen Religionen gehoerte, zu einer solchen Gemeinschaft gezaehlt wurde, war nunmehr seiner Unsterblichkeit gewiss. Diejenigen jedoch, die nicht die Gelegenheit wahr genommen hatten, in diese Kultreligionen eingefuehrt zu werden, mussten auf ein trauriges und schmerzhaftes Ende rechnen.

Eine besondere Bedeutung hatten unter diesen Kultreligionen die Orphischen und Pythagoraeischen Bruderschaften, die der " Grossen Mutter", die der Attis,die des aegyptischen Lord Serapis,der Isis,des Syrischen Baal und Adonis,der Samothrazischen Kabiri,des Persischen Mithras, der griechischen Eleusis,der Phrygischen Sabazios, des Dionysos. Hinzu kamen dann auch die hermetischen Theosophisten und die Gnostiker.

Diese lange Liste soll Euch nicht nur die Mannigfaltigkeit der gleichen Ideenbegriffe zeigen, sondern auch, dass diese Kulte ueber die ganze damalige Welt ausgebreitet waren. Ein zusaetzlicher Grund fuer die allgemeine Beliebtheit und Anerkennung ,die diese Mysterienreligionen genossen , war die Tatsache, dass sie die ersten Religionen waren, die keine sozialen Unterschiede anerkannten: Herr und Sklave,Grieche oder unzivilisierter Fremder, Maenner und Frauen waren innerhalb dieser Bruderschaft gleichberechtigt und gleichstehend. Sie gaben den Massen eine

ihnen allen verstaendliche Religion, und sie schufen in der damaligen autokratischen Welt ein ungewoehnliches demokratisches Milieu. Diese Religionskulte nahmen den Religionen jedwede nationalistische Faerbung, und sie erlaubten einem jeden, sich seine eigene religioese Verwirklichung zu suchen und zu schaffen. Religion wurde nicht nur eine rein persoenliche Angelegenheit, sondern auch etwas das allgemein Menschliche ueberragendes. Das fuehrte zu der Bildung von Bruderschaften mit und in den Mysterien-Religionen. Derartige Bruderschaften bestanden bereits zur Zeit Alexander's des Grossen und sie haben damals und lange hinterher eine bedeutende Rolle gespielt.

Man kann getrost sagen, dass fuer die besser erzogenen Leute diese Mysterien in intellektuellem Sinne nicht viel Anreiz boten, und daher wurden in diese etwas oberflaechlichen Mysterienformulierungen ein gewisses religioes-philosophisches System eingeflochten. "Diejenigen, deren Interessen vor allem intellektueller Natur waren. oder die zumindest eine Theologie erwarteten,die vom intellektuellen Standpunkt annehmbar war", bemerkt K. lake ,waren stark von dem Metaphysischen der Neu-Platoniker und der Ethik der Stoiker angezogen". In diesen schienen sie eine einigermassen verstaendliche Erlaeuterung des Universum's zu finden, d.h.eine Weltanschauung,die den Tatsachen zu entsprechen schien, sowohl wie eine Lebensphilosophie,die das Gewissen befriedigte und in der Lage sein konnte, ewiges Glueck zu bieten. Andererseits waren diejenigen,deren Interesse hauptsaechlich auf religioesem Gebiet,im engeren Sinne des Wortes,lagen, vom orientalisch-mysterioesen in den Kulten angezogen". (EARLIER EPISTLES OF PAUL, 1914).

In jeder dieser Mysterien-Religionen fanden die besorgten und bedrueckten Menschen jener Zeit eine Botschaft und einen Trost. Denn diese Menschen sahen die Welt voller schrecklicher Daemone und Geister, und die Mysterien versprachen eine Idenfikation und eine Vereinigung mit der

Gottheit, denen diese Daemone und Geister untertan waren. Die von dem taeglichen Kampf ums Dasein bedrueckten und erdrueckten Menschen gaben sich nur zu gerne einem Zustand der Begeisterung und Ekstase hin, der ihnen Ausweg und Befreiung erlaubten. Diejenigen,die nach dem fragten, was nach dem Tode folgt, erhielten die Zusage, dass sie nach ihrem Ableben an dem Leben und dem Glueck der Gottheit werden teilhaben duerfen. Das wirkte als Trost und klang wie Erloesung bereits zu Lebzeiten.Die Sakramente nahmen dem Tod seine Wirkung und gaben dem Empfaenger Unsterblichkeit. Das geplagte Gewissen wurde beruhigt mit dem Versprechen goettlicher Guete und Verzeihung. Zur Stunde des Sterbens wurde einem mittels Versprechen und Gebet Erleichterung gewaehrt. Der Begriff der Wiedergeburt, als ein Vorgang geistiger und magischer Natur empfunden, wurde aus dem Osten in der Form ewigen Lebens eingefuehrt, und damit erklaert, dass der Eingeweihte zu einem aus unsterblicher Substanz bestehenden Uebernatuerlichen Wesen geworden war.

Leider ist es nicht moeglich, eine volle alles umschliessende Beschreibung dieser Begriffe und dieser Denkart zu bieten, da die Mysterien im Laufe der Jahrhunderte staendig Umaenderungen durchmachten, da sie sich stetig den Beduerfnissen der jeweiligen Zeiten und Umstaende anzupassen hatten.

Es ist angebracht, hier darauf hinzuweisen, dass waehrend der sechs Jahrhunderte ,die zwischen Alexander dem Grossen (334 v.Chr.) und Konstantin (327 n.Chr.) lagen "...es wohl keine Zeit gegeben hat in der Geschichte der Menschheit wie dieser, wo die Menschen sich mehr fuer Religion interessiert oder nach hoeheren ethischen Idealen gestrebt" hatten (Legge: "Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity"). Der Boden war vorbereitet fuer religioesen Eifer und Drang. Die Dinge, mit denen sich die Leute am meisten beschaeftigten, war die Natur und

das Wesen des Goettlichen, die Herkunft des Boesen, die Beziehung von Schicksal und Glueck mit was man Vorsehung nennen koennte, die Bedeutung der Seele, die Moeglichkeit des Freiwerdens von moralischen Vergehen, der Weg zur Vereinigung mit Gott, und das Erlangen seelischer und geistiger Hilfe zur Lebenszeit des Individuum's. " Die hellenistische Philosophie nahm einen wissenschaftlichen ANschein an" (Mahaffy); sie war nicht mehr so spekulativ wie frueher, und beschaeftigte sich ohne Umwege mit dem Alltaeglichen im moralischen Leben des Menschen. Schliesslich endete diese Richtung , unter Philon und den Neo-Platonikern ,"in dem Aufbau einer Religion der ' unio mystica' " (Angus).

Die Mysterien-Religionen herrschten in der Welt um das Mittelmeerbecken fuer eine Periode von ungefaehr 1000 Jahren; ihr Einfluss ist bis auf den heutigen Tag in den religioesen Einstellungen der westlichen Welt erkennbar - und besonders so in der Organisation und dem Begriffsbild der Katholischen Kirche. Auch innerhalb der Freimaurerei ueberleben viele dieser Begriffe noch.

Die Kulte bildeten Bruderschaften, und der Zutritt zu diesen war nur durch eine Initiation moeglich. In Anbaeracht der strikten Geheimhaltung,zu der sich die Eingeweihten verpflichten mussten, wares damals - und ist es auch heute noch so - unmoeglich, die innere und verborgene Geschichte dieser Religionsgesellschaften kennen zu lernen. Nur einige unbedeutende Dinge bezueglich dieser Kulte konnten Aumsenstehenden mitgeteilt werden, besonders wenn ein Mitglied geeignete und interessierte Personen keilen wollte, Mitglied seines Kultes und somit seine Bruderschaft zu werdne. Das Hauptargument in solchen Umstaenden war jedoch immer der Vorteil ,dessen man sich als Eingeweihter vergewissern konnte.

In vielen Faellen war eine Probezeit vorgeschrieben, und erst nach der Absolvierung dieser wurde der "Neophyte", d.h. der Eingeweihte, als Mitglied des Kultes zugelassen und mit den anderen Mitgliedern und der Gottheit in Verbindung gebracht. Beweise einer gewissen Aufrichtigkeit , von Interesse und von geistiger und koerperlicher Gesundheit waren Voraussetzungen, bevor das Geloebnis vollkommener Geheimhaltung abgelegt werden durfte. Dieses Geloebnis war eine rein persoenliche Bindung und hatte keinerlei legales Gewicht, aber trotzdem war die Geheimhaltung derartig vollstaendig und auf das Genaueste befolgt, dass keinerlei Bericht uns ueberliefert worden ist von dem, was hinter den geschlossenen Tueren vor sich gegangen ist. Diese Geloebnisse der Geheimhaltung wurden mit fuerchterlichen und abschreckenden Formeln untermalt - und manchmal auch noch von furchterregenden Bildern und Vorfuehrungen begleitet. In manchen Initiationen musste der Neophyte vorher ein eingehendes Suendenbekenntnis ablegen, und in anderen Zeremonien wie beim Mithras- und Isiskult - war auch eine zusaetzliche Taufe noetig. Fuer die hoechsten Grade der Mysterien unterwarf sich der Candidat einer dreifachen Taufe: eine mit Wasser, eine mit Feuer und eine des Geistes. Wir wissen auch von Mysterien,deren Feiern von Opferdarbietungen begleitet waren. Fuer andere wiederum waren lane asketische Vorbereitungen wie laengeres Fasten,voellige Enthaltung, Peitschen,schmerzhafte Verstuemmelungen oder sonstige oft grausame Pruefungen. Die Begruendung fuer diese Quaelereien war, war die Grundregel, dass man die gleichen Schmerzen und Quaelereien zu erleiden hatte,wie sie der Schtzgott des Mysterienkultes selbst einstmals durchzumachen hatte bevor man auch die Freuden,das Gkueck und die Vorteile geniessen durfte, die dann hinterher dieser Gottheit geboten worden war.

In jedem Stadium seiner Laufbahn in den Mysterienkult wurde der Candidat geprueft. Seine geistige Entwicklung war gekennzeichnet durch schwere Pruefungen und Proben, sowie einer strengen Disziplin, aus denen man seinen Mut,seinen Glauben und seine Aufrichtigkeit ausfinding machen wollte. In einem jeden dieser Kulte war der Candidat Zeuge oder sogar Teilnehmer in einer vorgespielten Todesszene, so dass die Initiationszeremonie selbst als ein "Tod" angesehen wurde,von dem der Glaeubige durch Wiedergeburt "auferstand". (Wahrscheinlich war dieses der Grund,weshalb die Mitternachtsstunde so oft als die geeignetste Zeit fuer eine Initiation gewaehlt wurde). Platon sagte, dass "zu sterben initiiert zu werden bedeutet", und Themistus bemerkte,dass "...zur Stunde des Todes erleidet die Seele das Gleiche wie diejenigen,die in die grossen Mysterien eingeweiht werden". Apuleius berichtet,dass er einen "freiwilligen Tod" durchzumachen hatte,und dass er dem "Bereich des Todes" nahekam , um auf dieser Weise einen "geistigen Geburtstag" zu erleben. In den Ritender "Grossen Mutter" wurde der Candidat symbolisch in ein Grab versenkt. Nach den Berichten des Firmicus Maternus wurde der Athis-Candidat ein "moriturus" genannt, einer der im Sterben begriffen ist. Glaucus sagte ueber die Eleusische Initiation"...wundervoll ist in der Tat das Mysterium ,das uns die segensreichen Goetter geben. Fuer die Unsterblichen ist der Tod nichts boeses mehr sondern ein Segen", und Aristophanus berichtet, es war der allgemeine Glaube in Athen,dass "derjenige,der die Mysterien erfahren hat,nach seinem Tode goettlicher Gnade wuerdig ist; deshalb suchten auch alle, eingeweiht zu werden". Im Isis-Kult musste der Candidat ausrufen: "Ich bin erneut. Ich bin verjuengt. Ich bin Osiris". Man hat einen alten aegyptischen Text gefunden,der besagt:L So wahr wie Osiris nicht tot ist,so wahr ist es,dass er niemals sterben wird. So wahr es ist, dass Osiris lebt,so wahr ist es,dass seine Anhaenger leben werden. So wahr es ist,dass Osiris nicht vernichtet ist, so werden auch wir nicht vernichtet werden".

In dieser Weise wurde dem Neophyten bei seiner Initiation der Grundbegriff der Unsterblichkeit anvertraut. Und so war die Bevoelkerung der Antike mehr oder weniger in zwei Gruppen geteilt: die der "Geretteten" und die der "Nicht-Geretteten".

Im Allgemeinen musste der Candidat verschiedene Grade durchmachen; in manchen der Mysterienkulte waren es drei, in anderen fuenf,und in wiederum anderen sieben solcher Grade. Meistens waren die folgenden drei Stadien oder Stufen durchzumachen:

1. Die Katarrhsis = Vorbereitungs- und Probezeit.
2. Muesis = Einfuehrungs- und Aufklaerungsperiode
3. Epopteia = Stadium der Gnade und Erloesung.

Im "Theo Smyrnaeus" finden wir folgenden fuenf Grade oder Stadien:

1. Reinigung
2. Einfuehrung in die Riten.
3 Betrachtung der Symbole
4.Bindung und Verzierung mit Girlanden.
5.Erreichung der Gnade und der Gemeinschaft mit der Gottheit.

Die Mysterienreligionen hatten vom intellektuellen Standpunkt wenig zu bieten, denn schliesslich waren sie ja aus der Beobachtung der einfachen Tatsachen des Werdens und Vergehens in der Natur entstanden, aus dem Sinnen ueber den Wechsel von Winter in den Fruehling,des Sonnen-Aufgangs zum Sonnen-Untergang, in der Hoffnung, dass der Mensch den Goettern aehnlich und derer Unsterblichkeit teilhaft werden koennte. Wir muessen uns dessen gegenwaertig sein, dass der Begriff des Goettlichen im Gedankengang der einfachen Menschen der Urzeit nichts anderes war, alseine von der Natur besessenen all-belebenden Energie und Kraft. Die Massen hatten und brauchten keinerlei komplizierten philosophischen Systeme und Theorien, was so klar by Aristoteles zum Ausdruck kommt, der behauptete, dass es nicht noetig ist fuer den Intiatnten, etwas zu lernen, sondern nur Eindruecke zu gewinnen und in einen gewissen Gemuetszustand versetzt zu werden ganz einfach dadurch,dass sie in die Mysterien eingefuehrt werden. Das Auge,die Einbildungskraft,die Gefuehle sollten in Anspruch genommen werden und nicht die Intelligenz.

Im Ritual der Mysterien war sehr viel uraltes Material erhalten geblieben, dessen urspruengliche Bedeutung verloren gegangen war und in vieler Beziehung in der sich nunmehr entwickelnden Ethik ziemlich abstossend war. Um jedoch diese Elemente erhalten und weiter anwenden zu koennen, wurden viele Mythen eingewebt und vielerlei Allegorien gebraucht. Salustus deutete adaruf hin , dass ein Mythos nicht zu einer bestimmten Zeit sich ereignete, sondern schon immer wirkte und wirkend ist.
Die Allegory kann als die Anwendung von Philosophy an das Verstaendnis der Mythologie gedeutet werden, denn sie sucht in den Mythen, so grob sie uns auch erscheinen moegen, einen unterliegenden geistigen Sinn. Die allegorische Methode war wahrscheinlich zuerst von den Griechen angewandt, und erst spaeter von den Juden. Sehr viel Allegorykam zur Anwendung, als die Bibel in Aegypten in das "Septuagint" uebersetzt wurde. Aristobolus machte ausreichend Gebrauch von allegorischen Methoden in seinen Bibel-Erklaerungen, und auch Philon brauchte Allegorien in grossem Masse in seinen Schriften ueber die Bibel. Er war gefolgt von Paul, der dafuer verantwortlich war,dass die Allegory einen ununterbrochenen Einfluss in und auf die christliche Theologie hatte.

Die Mythen der primitiven Voelker konzentrieren sich fast ausschliesslich auf ihre mannigfachen Goetter, und wenn immer geschichtlich gesehen oder logisch betrachtet, eine Sage sehr unwahrscheinlich klingt, dannmuss halt ein Wunder herhalten. In den hoeher entwickelten Gesellschaften werden die Wunder durch bewusste und oft belustigende Unwahrscheinlichkeiten ersetzt. Wenn jedoch ein Mythos einfach gehalten oder ihm eine komplexe Form gegeben wird, immer und fuer immer hat er einen Erfolg und eine Wirkung: er zerlegt, so wie ein Prisma es mit dem Lichtstrahl tut, die Ereignisse,welche kompact und geschlossen erscheinen, in die einzelnen sich bedingenden und folgenden Ereignisse , erklaert L. White. Dadurch wird es dem Glaeubigen ermoeglicht, die an ein Wunder grenzende Geburt Jesus' durch eine Jungfrau zu erklaeren und auch dessen Abstammung aus dem Hause David's/

Die Schaffung eines Mythos kann nur analytisch erklaert werden,und Logik hat hier keinen Platz. Ein Mythos ist erfolgreich, wenn derjenige, der ihn in sich aufnimmt, wenn derjenige, der den Sinn dessen zurueckverfolgen kann,den immer wahr bleibenden Sinn zu erkennen vermag. Der Mythos ist ein wirksamer,notwendiger und erlaubter symbolischer Ausdruck in der Art, wie es die ALlegory,das Maerchen,das Gedicht und das Drama sind. Auch wenn dem Mythos der Anschein gegeben ist, dass es sich um einen geschichtlichen Vorgang handelt, so ist er doch immer von einer gewissen Zweideutig-

keit; er mag darauf bestehen, dass die beschriebenen Ereignisse sick in Wirklichkeit niemals ereignet hatten, aber der Mythos enthaelt doch immer eine Menge Phantasie und Wundervolles. So drueckt White seine Meinung aus. Man kann es auch so ausdruecken: ein Mythos behandelt nicht etwas, was sich einstmal ereignet hat, sondern etwas,was sich immer ereignet , die Beschreibung von Dingen, die sich hier oder dann ereignet haben. Ein Mythos enthaelt Material, das immer wahr ist und auch immer auf die uns taeglichgegenenden Erlebnisse anwendbar ist. Im Gegensatz zum Historiker jedoch,der mit einem bestimmten Ereignis beginnt, wird der Mythenmacher mit der Hervorbringung der geistigen Bedeutung beginnen, mit einer Umschreibung dessen, was immer wahr ist, was zeitlos unbegrenzt ist.

Mit Hilfe des ihm durch die Mythen und die Allegorien Material's wird der Initiant einer mystischen Erfahrung ausgesetzt,dessen Ausmass und Wirksamkeit von der Erziehung und der Empfindlichkeit des Candidaten bestimmt sind. Eine solche Erfahrung ist so alt wie die Menschheit selbst und zu jeder Zeit und bei allen Menschen moeglich gewesen. Sie ist eine der groessten Gaben die einem die eigene Religion geben kann. Sie ist unbeeinflusst von irgendwelcher Doktrin ,irgendwelcher metaphysischen Auslegung oder irgendwelchem mystischen Ausschmuck. Eine derartige mystische Erfahrung hatte der Mann,der bei seiner Initiation in eine der Mysterien-Religionen mit den Symbolen vertraut gemacht wurde. In diesem Milieu von grellem Licht und tiefer Finsternis, unter der Darbietung mittels Mythen und ALlegorien,dramatischer Darbietungen und lithurgischer Eindringlichkeit,musste er einen ihm fuer immer in Erinnerung bleibenden Erlebnis ausgesetzt worden sein. Man muss versuchen, sich die Einwirkung einer solchen Initiationszeremonie vorzustellen - dann wird man auch verstehehn, daas diese oft von Visionen, Stimmen und Ekstasen begleitet waren. Ein mystischer Vorgang im Menschen kann als ein Kultus dem Uebernatuerlichen,theosophischer Neigungen,seelischer Erhebung und spiritualem Suchens ausgelegt werden. Das Ziel des Mystiker's ist die direkte Erfahrung eines goettlich-menschlichen Zusammenkommens auf der Basis der methaphysisch-theologischen Doktrin, dass die Seele in einem Hoeheren Wesen aufgehen kann.

Man kann ganz allgemein sagen, dass der antike Mystizismus auf der Anthithesis zwischen Seele und den Sinnen,zwischen dem Geistigen und dem Materiellen,zwischen der Welt und dem Jenseits, zwischen dem Ahnen und dem Beweisbaren beruhte. Der Ausgangspunkt dieser Art von Mystizismus

ist der im Menschen geborgene"goettliche Funken", sei dieser die von Platon "Anamnesis" (Erinnerung) genannt oder von Plotinus "Intuition" oder die von Paul "Pneuma" (Geist), Andere nennen es den dem Menschen angeborenen "Logos", der mit dem universalen,dem goettlichen Logos Beruehrung aufnehmen kann.

Jede Religion muss immer mit dem Zeitgeist rechnen, d.h. es muss die AUfgabe der religioesen Fuehrung sein, die jeweiligen geistigen Anforderungen und Wuensche zu kennen und zu verstehen. Eine lebende Religion muss nicht nur mit dem Anforderungen der Zeit mitgehen, sie muss auch in der Lage sein, auf diese Einfluss auszuueben. Leider hat das Versagen der heutigen Religionen, ein hohes ethisches Niveau zu bewahren und zu fordern ihnen das Recht und den Einfluss genommen, mit den Anspruechen unserer Zeit mitzugehen. Das ist nicht etwa eine neuzeitige Erscheinung; das war eine immer wieder in der Geschichte auftretende Schwaeche. Aus diesem Grunde konnte zu gewissen Perioden in der Geschichte die Astrologie,nicht nur sich innerhalb der Religionen breitmachen, sondern durch ihren ueberwaeltigenden Einfluss den Menschen den Glauben an die Magie aufzwingen. Diese Magie, dieser Glaube an eine Zauberkunst war notwendig geworden, um den schaedlichen Einfluss boeser Geister und feindlicher Goetter zu neutralisieren. Dieser Glaube an Magie, dieses Vertrauen auf die Macht des Zauberwortes, fuehrte die damalige Menschheit in die Arme der Mysterien-Religionen. Es besteht wohl kein Zweifel,dass es dem Einfluss der Astrologie und der Magie war, welche von dem unscharfen verschwommenen Religionsgefuehl in der Antike zu den Mysterien-Religionen gefuehrt hat.

Im Laufe der Jahrhunderte kamen immer weitere oder neuere Mysterien-Kulte auf - oder sie wurden vom Ausland importiert -,und diese uebernahmen die bereits bestehenden Kulte mit ihren Riten und Mythen, und mischten diese mit den neuen Methoden,Formen und Lehren. Aber all diese Mysterien lehrten, dass eine Initiation eine glueckliche Zukunft versprach. Der Orphismus lehrte, dass der Mensch der Suende verfalleb ist, und dass er seiner gerechten Bestrafung entgehen kann,wenn er in das orphische Leben eingeweiht worden ist. Die Religion des Dreimal Groessten Hermes bot dem wahren Gnostiker Vergoettlichung als das schliessliche Ziel an. Fuer die Gnostiker bestand nur der Wunsch , "Gott wirklich zu kennen". Ohne "Gnosis" war Erloesung unerreichbar. In Wirklichkeit ist das ja die Lehre jeder Religion. Aber im Griechisch-Roemischen

Zeitalter hatten jede der mit all den anderen im Wettstreit liegenden Religionen einen ausgesprochenen gnostischen Charakter; eine jede behauptete von sich, unschaetzbare Offenbarungen zu besitzen,die nur den eingeweihten Anhaengern anvertraut werden durften. So bruestete sich das Judentum, Kenntnisse das Leben betreffend zu haben,die von Gott dem Moses offenbart und durch die Propheten uebermittelt worden sind. Und so glaubte man auch, dass die Mysterien-Religionen Wahrheiten kannten,die einizigartig und nur ihnen bekannt waren. Sie konnten aber einem Initianten anvertraut werden mit Hilfe eines sakramentalen Drama's, das das Lebenund die Leiden der Gottheit vorfuehrte; dadurch wurde dem Neophyten wertvolle und heilige Kenntnisse anvertraut, und gleichzeitig gewisse Formeln,Worte und Zeichen,mit deren Anwendung seine Erloesung gesichrt war. Andere damalige Religionsformen hatten einen gewissen esoterischen zusaetzlichen Inhalt. Das war z.B. der Fall mit der Hermetischen Religion. Das Christentum eignete sich die besten Zuege der damals bestehenden und wirkenden Religion an; es behauptete von sich, seinen Anhaengern eine besonders wertvolle Offenbarung bieten zu koennen.

Der Vollstaendigkeit halber moechte ich noch weitere Punkte und Elemente in den antiken Religionen erwaehnen, die fuer uns heute in der Freimaurerei von Interesse sein koennten.

Gemeinsame Mahle spielten in den Mysterien eine grosse Rolle. Sie hatten einen sakralen Charakter; sie bedeuteten fuer die Teilnehmer eine Union mit der Gottheit. In der Antike waren solche Gemeinschaftsmahle Teil einer Opferhandlung, oder sie folgten einer solchen. Mahlzeiten,die Mitglieder einer Zunft gemeinsam einnahmen, gehoerten zum Leben der Antike. Man kann heute noch Frescos sehen, in welchem solche Gemeinschaftsmahle der Begraebniszuenfte dargestellt sind. Solche Festmahle wurden von den anderen Zuenften des Altertum's und Mittelalter's zu Ehren eines verstorbenen Mitglied's veranstaltet; man nahm an,dass der Verstorbene auch anwesend war - und an der Mahlzeit teilnahm. Im griechisch-roemischen Kultmilieu war man ueberzeugt, dass die Gottheit bei solchen Kultmahlen ebenfalls anwesend war. In vielen Mysterien fand ein "Agape" oder ein sakramentales Mahl vor der Initiation statt; in der antiken Symbolik sollte das besagen, dass der Candidat den Koerper der Gottheit, oder seinen Totem und aehnliches verzehrte. Dill berichtet,dass waehrend der Mahlzeiten den Schutzgoettern Dank ausgesprochen wurde.

Von grosser Wichtigkeit fuer alte und moderne Religionsgeschichte ist das Beduerfnis der damaligen griechisch-roemischen Welt, private Bruderschaften oder Zuenfte zu bilden - die aber alle einen gewissen religioesen Charakter besaasen.(Th. Mommsen: "De Collegiis Sodaliciis Romanorum") Im Allgemeinen entstanden solche Organisationen vorerst in den bedeutenden Seehaefen wie Pyrrhaeus, oder auf wichtigen Inseln wie Rhodos,Delos,Thera usf. Sie botèn Fremden Gelegenheit, ihren religioesen Beduerfnissen nachzukommen,und wenn noetig, Hilfe zu finden. Inschriften, die aus der Roemischen Kaiserzeit erhalten sind, bezeugen, dass ueberall solche clubartige Einrichtungen der verschiedenen Berufe gabfinden waren. Es gab Clubhaeuser fuer die Zuenfte der Fischer,der Baecker,der Kahnbesitzer,der Holzfaeller,der Schmiede,der Metzger,der Muenzenmacher,der Perfuemverkaeufer,der Weinhaendler,der Maurer,der Geldwechsler,der ausgedienten Soldaten und viele mehr. Es gab aber auch soziale Clubs fuer die Reichen und die Nichtstuer. In fast jeder Stadt gab es solche Clubs fuer diese Zuenfte; sie wurden Thiasoi,Collegia oder Sodalitates genannt; manchmal gab es mehrere solcher in der gleichen Strasse. Livius beschreibt bereits 200 v.Chr. Clubs von Bacchus-Verehrern; und Sulla berichtet ueber im 1.Jahrhundert v.Chr. bestehende Clubs in Italien, deren Schutzherren aegyptische Goetter waren. Zu dieser Zeit erlitten diese Clubs oder Bruderschaften ihre ersten Schwierigkeiten, denn es scheint, dass sie sich politisch betaetigt hatten; und im Jahre 64 v.Chr. fand der Roemische Senat sich genoetigt,solche Bruderschaften zu verbieten,die in dieser Beziehung besonders gefaehrlich erschienen. Weitere solche Verbote wurden in dem Zeitraum von ungefaehr 250 Jahren zwischen der Regierung des Julius Caesar und des Alexander Severus erlassen; viele der Zuenfte wurden unterdrueckt. Wo das nicht moeglich oder angeraten war, wurden diese Zuenfte und Bruderschaften nunmehr einer strengen Ueberwachung ausgesetzt.

In dieser damaligen Umgebung scheint ein grosses Beduerfnis fuer solche private Organisationen bestanden haben. Das laesst sich aus den vielen uns erhaltenen Inschriften ersehen,die in fast allen Teilen der rgiechisch-roemischen Welt entdeckt wurden. Das laesst sich aber auch aus den Bemuehungen der Behoerden ersehen,die diese Bruderschaften strengstens ueberwachten und dem endlichen Nachgeben und Anerkennen der Behoerden mit Bezug auf diese Organisationen. Trotz der Polizei-Ueberwachung bluehten diese Clubs und Zuenfte ueberall. Es ist bekannt, dass viele Maenner der aristokratischen Gesellschaft Schutzherren oder Ehrenmitglieder solcher oft aus Auslaendern und niedrigen Arbeitern bestehenden Bruderschaften waren.

Man kann sagen, dass diese ueber das ganze Roemische Kaiserreich verbreiteten Collegia von den Arbeitern und Handwerkern fuer Zwecke gegruendet waren, die auch heute von den Gewerkschaften und den Handelskammern ausgeuebt werden. Sie boten den Mitgliedern Unterstuetzung und gaben ihnen ein Gefuehl der Sicherheit in dem Zusammenschluss in eine ZUnft oder Bruderschaft. Diese Zuenfte schufen fuer die Arbeit eine ehrenhafte Stellung in der Gesellschaft, und gaben dem Arbeiter ein Gefuehl der Selbstachtung in seinem Verhaeltnis zu dieser Gesellschaft.

Platon hat bereits diese Bruderschaften und Zuenfte erwaehnt im Rahmen seiner Berichte ueber die Mysterien-Religionen; allerdings hat er bezueglich ihrer Funktionen keine weiteren AUfschluesse hinterlassen. Sie hatten aber alle gemeinsam, dass man die Mitglieder sich auswaehlte, dass eine besondere Initiationszeremonie notwendig war, dass es eine Art vongemeinsamem Religionsdients gab, dass es starke bruederliche Bindungen unter den Mitgliedern entwickelte, dass man sich bemuehte,dem Bruder hilfreich zur Seite zu stehen; ALl diesen Zuenften war weiterhin gemeinsam, dass sie durch freiwillige Zuschuesse der Mitglieder finanziell unabhaengig waren, dass sie oft ihre eigenen Begraebnisstaetten hatten. Sie konnten sich untereinander durch Zeichen erkennbar machen, ("symboli et signa", uber die DEmosthenes im Einzelnen berichtet). Die Industrie-Zuenfte wamen vom Anfang an rein religioese Organisationen. Auf Grund des Einflusses Alexander's des Grossen bauten Orientalische Geschaetsleute in der Umgebung des Mittelmeeres viele private Zentren mit Bruderschafts-Charakter auf; dort entwickleten sich Zentren fuer Handel und Austausch, zu denen Leute aller Laender zugelassen waren. In den damaligen Bruderschaften finden wir zum ersten Mal Frauen-Mitglieder, sowie Angehoerige aller sozialen Klassen, die sich hier nunmehr zu gemeinsamen Religionsausuebungen treffen konnten. In diesem Milieu, in diesen Religionsgesellschaften,in diesen Bruderschaften entwickelte sich nunmehr die Erkenntnis, dass Religion die Sache des Einzelnen ist und nicht die des Staates und der Regierung. Diese Entwicklung hatte zur Folge, dass ein jeder daran interessiert war,diese Organisation zu staerken und zu erweitern, neue Mitglieder zu werben und fuer seine Bruderschaft Anerkennung und Einfluss zu gewinnen.

Ich habe bereits erwaehnt, dass diese Bruderschaften bald den Behoerden zu gefaehrlich erschienen; aber nach langem Kampfe erkannten sie auch, dass es nicht moeglich war,diese Zuenfte und Bruderschaften

zu unterdruecken, dass sie dann im Untergrund weiter taetig bleiben wuerden. Die Regierung beschloss daher, den fuehrenden Handwerks- und Arbeiterberufen offiziell die Gruendung von Zuenften zu erlauben. Alexander Severus erkannte als Erster diese Zuenfte an fuer Arbeiter und Haendler, und er ernannte Schutzherrn ("Defensores") fuer eine jede von ihnen. Im Jahre 112 n.Chr. stellte Plinus dem Kaiser Trajan den Antrag, in Nicomedia eine aus 150 Mitgliedern bestehende Loge von Feuerwehrleuten zu gestatten. Die Antwort , die er von Trajan erhielt, klingt ziemlich modern: " Wie immer sie sich auch nennen moegen, es steht doch fest,dasssie, sobald sie gegruendet worden sind, eine politische Organisation werden." Die Mitglieder dieser Zuenfte nannten sich gegenseitig "Bruder" - und die Zunftmitglieder redeten sich so an lange bevor diese Anrede im Neuen Testament gebraucht wurde. In dem Mithraskult waren die Mitglieder als " Brueder" oder als "Soldaten" bezeichnet, waehrend der Gruppenleiter "Pater" genannt wurde. Die Mitglieder des Kultes des "Jupiter Dolichenus" redeten sich mit "fratres carissimos" an.

Wie kam es, dass diese orientalischen Kulte einen solch grossen Einfluss hatten? Wie kam es , dass sie derartig auf die damaligen Menschen wirkten ? Erinnern wir uns, dass es zur gleichen Zeit andere intellektuelle und geistige Systeme gab wie die der griechischen Philosophen und der Gnostiker. Damals "stand auch die ethische Lehre des Judentum's" zur Verfuegung." , und es gab auch die vielen vom Staat unterstuetzten "heidnischen" Religionen, die auch eine Art von Ueberleben nach dem Tode anboten. Fernerhin muss erwaehnt werden,dass die Mitglieder der Mysterien-Religionen ziemlich grosse Ausgaben hatten, denn eine relativ grosse Zahl von Priestern verschiedenster Art und Raenge musste bezahlt werden, Tempel und Graeber mussten errichtet werden und teure Opfer mussten bezahlt werden. Trotz alledem mussten die sich zur Aufnahme und Initiation draengenden Leute gefuehlt haben, dass diese Unkosten annehmbar waren in Anbetracht der grossen Vorteile, die sie glaubten von den Mysterienkulten erwarten zu duerfen. In den religioes orientierten Zuenften gab es reiche und arme Brueder, und sehr oft hatten die ersteren die Unkosten fuer die letzteren zusaetzlich auf sich zu nehmen. Im Prizip bezahlte ein jeder seinem Vermoegen oder seinem Einkommen entsprechend. Was besonders eindrucksvoll ist war die grosse Anzahl von Arbeitern und Sklaven unter den in die Bruderschaft aufgenommen Initianten - und es ist bekannt,dass es innerhalb der Logen keine Klassenunterschiede gab.

Es muss darauf hingewiesen werden, dass all dieses sich in einem Zeitraum von ungefaehr 600 JaMren zutrug, viz:- von 300 v.Chr. bis 300 n.Chr. Wir muessen fernerhin uns klar machen, dass nicht lange vorher, um 6-700 v.Chr. ungefaehr, die bis heute bekannten grossen vorchristlichen Religionen geschaffen wurden. Zu jener Zeit lebten Confuzius, Taotse,Buddha,Mahavir,Zaratustra und Pythagoras. Damals unternahm im Judaismus der uns heute nur als "Deutero-Jesaiah bekannte Reformer seine bedeutende Aufgabe. Haben wir das Recht, das als Zufall auszulegen ? Ich glaube ,wir haben ein solches Recht nicht; denn in den vorhergehenden 2-3 Jahrhunderten war die damalige Menschheit auf ein sehr geringes Lebensminimum heruntergezwwngen worden. Infolge der lange andauernden Kriege und Unruhen waren die Voelker in staendiger Gefahr und Verzweiflung. Das fuehrte nun wiederum zu den grossen Voelkerwanderungen, die grosse Massen von Menschen aus dem Osten und dem Norden in die damalige zivilisierte Welt brachten.

Dadurch wurde der Boden fuer revolutionaere religioese Ideen vorbereitet, und die nunmehr in allen Teilen der Welt auftretenden Gruender der grossen Religionen konnten auf diesem fruchtbaren Boden ihre Wege zu einem besseren Leben und dessen besserem Verstehen vorzeichnen. Die von diesen grossen Maennern gegruendeten Religionen leben noch heute, spielen noch heute eine bedeutende Rolle. Aber wenn 2-300 Jahre vergingen, und die Massen feststellen mussten, dass der erwartete Trost und die erhoffte Besserung nicht verwirklicht waren, da machte sich eine bemerkenswerte Enttaeuschung bemerkbar. Es muss hinzugefuegt werden, dass diese Religionen zu einem grossen Grade an den Intellekt appellierten und daher fuer die Allgemeinheit wenig Anziehung bot.Nunmehr fanden die enttaeuschten Massen aller Klassen, dass die Mysterien-Religionen das bot an Hoffnung und Erfuellung,was sie in den anderen Religionen vermissten, die so stark von legalistischen Regeln und strenger Ueberwa-

chung gekennzeichnet waren. Diese Mysterien-Religionen hatten in mannigfacher Form bereits seit langem im Orient bestanden, und ihr Inhalt rief aus der Urzeitstammende Erinnerungen und Handlungen hervor. Daher waren die Versprechkn dieser Mysterien-Religionen eher verstaendlich und auch annehmbar. Diese Versprechen bestanden in einem leichter verstaendlichen Begriff der Erloesung; sie versprachen den Unbemittelten all die guten,ihnen hier auf Erden unerreichbaren Dinge, nach dem Tode; sie zeichneten den Glaeubigen die ihnen gesicherte Identifikation mit der Gottheit im Jenseits in glaenzenden Farben aus;sie schafften die sozialen Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Klassen der Bevoelkerung ab, die damals ja viel gewaltiger und schmerzhafter gewesen sein mussten als heutzutage. Es ist daher kein Wunder, dass die Massen den Mysterien-Religionen zustroemten.

Un nur so nebenbei gesagt: was sehen wir denn heute ? Koennen wir nicht einen gleichartigen Zustand der Unzufriedenheit und ein gleiches Sehnen nach einem neuen Lebensweg feststellen ? Sehen wir nicht auch heute ueberall das Suchen nach der Beantwortung all der Fragen nach dem Sinn und Zweck des Lebens ? Und sehen wir nicht, wie sehr die heutige Jugend darunter leidet ? Sehen wir denn nicht,wie die jungen Menschen von heute einen Weg,eine Methode nach der anderen ausprobieren,beginnend mit dem Kommunismus und dem Faschismus.? Sehen wir denn nicht,wie sehr die heutige Jugend die elterliche und gross-elterliche Generation fuer ihre Probleme und Sorgen verantwortlich macht - und wahrlich hasst ? Sehen wir denn nicht, dass auch diese heutigen Menschen neue religioese Ausdrucksformen suchen,neue mystische Begriffe sich schaffen und sich ekstatischen Erfahrungen hingeben - die unweigerlich fehlschlagen muessen, die diese Sucher noch verbitterter und noch enttaeuschter zuruecklassen muessen. Denn unsere heutige Jugend ist besser denn je erzogen, und sie muss bald erkennen, wie leer und inhaltslos all das moderne Gerede von

Erloesung,Rettung und Frieden ist, wie unbefriedigend all ihre Identifikation mit den alten und modernen Kulten und Religionen ihnen erscheinen muss. Leider ist bisher keine neue Religion aufgetaucht, die das Sehnen und Suchen verstehen und beantworten koennte; noch ist noch keine philosophische Schule vorwaerts gekommen, die der wartenden Menschheit annehmbare und ehrliche Richtung anweisen koennte.

Unsere "hoeheren Religionen" koennen einer moralischen und intellektuellen Untersuchung nicht standhalten, trotz dem der Hunger nach einer religioesen Ausdrucksform die Ansprueche heruntergeschraubt hat. Kein Ausweg,kein Ersatz ist uns geboten. Nicht einmal die Freimaurerei. Nicht etwa , weil diese nicht den Inhalt,den Wert,die Botschaft bietet, sondern weil es nicht die Fuehrung hat,die siese Werte vorlegt,diese Botschaft uebermitteln koennte. Haette in diesen unseren Tagen die Freimaurerei das geeignete Menschenmaterial,die rechte Fuehrung, haetten die Brueder den Hintergrund der Bruderschaft verstanden und deren Bedeutung in der heutigen Zeit erkannt, so haettensie den inbelligenten Suchern und den moralischen Fluechtlingen,die nach einem sicheren Zufluchtsort fahnden, die sich nach einem sicheren Hafen sehnen, den stuetzenden Arm und den leitenden Fuss bieten koennen. Leider hat in den letzten Jahren die "Koenigliche Kunst" einen derartig armseligen Ruf sich angeschafft, dass sie garnicht davon traeumen darf, eine solche Fuehrerrolle anzubieten. Habt Ihr nicht selbst genug Logen besucht, die sich in ihrem Wesen und"Arbeiten" kaum von einem Club oder einem Sportsverein unterscheiden ? Wieviele Laender koennt Ihr mir aufzaehlen, wo es nicht den Bruedern gelungen ist, der Freimaurerei eine feidnselige Umgebung zu schaffen, ihr ein negatives Bild zu malen ?

Hier und dort hatten wir grosse Moeglichkeiten,unsere Ideale zu verwirklichen, den Menschen zu dienen - und wir haben versagt.

Als Freimaurer sehen und beurteilen wir Dinge anders als sanstige Menschen; das ermoeglicht es uns, in allem was vor sich geht und uns vorkommt,eine uns intellektuell verstaendliche Richtung zu finden. Denn wenn es um geschichtliche Ereignisse geht, setzt das Erkennen und Beurteilen von Ereignissen eine Voreingenoomenheit im Beschauen und Bewerten voraus, was unweigerlich unsererAuslegung geschichtlicher Vorgaenge eine gewisse Verfaerbung verleiht, erklaert H. Weisinger.Eine TatsaCHE IST NICHT EINFACH EINE Tatsache nur weil sie eine klare Nachricht darstellt, sondern weil sie ein umschriebener Teil eines Interpretationsschema's ist, in welche diese Tatsache hineinpasst.

In der Freimaurerei ist uns die Moeglichkeit geboten,die Erfahrung vergangener esoterischer Bewegungen und sie sich daraus ergebenen Jenntnisse zu sammeln und das alles in unser eigenes System einzupassen,aus dem wir nunmehr und wiederum unsere Hoffnungen , Verstaendnisse und Glauben schoepfen. Ein jeder von uns Freimaurern hat das Recht,sich seine eigenen Glaubensbegriffe zu schaffen und diese in seine persoenliche Philosophie einzubauen. Ich glaube, dass was immer ein Mensch wahrlich glaubt, fuer ihn voellige Wahrheit darstellt. Ich glaube, dass das, was der Mensch als wirklich recht glaubt, fuer ihn wahres Recht ist. Ich glaube, dass das, was ein Mensch als suendenhaft und schlecht glaubt, fuer ihn suendenhaft und schlecht ist. Ich glaube, dass es eine Hoelle gibt fuer jene,die an eine Hoelle glauben. Ich glaube auch,dass es eine wahre Erloesung gibt fuer solche Menschen,die tief und ehrlich darang glauben, dass es fuer den Menschen eine Erloesung gibt. Ich glaube fernerhin, dass fuer den Menschen, der an ein Hoeheres Wesen glaubt, es ein solches ueberall zu finden ist.

Eine der grundliegendsten Eigenschaften des menschlichen Wesen's, d.h.,was ihn vom Tier unterscheidet, ist seine Gabe zu denken, mit Fragen aufdie Probleme des alltaeglichen Lebens zu reagieren,und sich mit den Problemen des kommenden Tages abzugeben. Ich sehe in diesem keine durch Instinkte bedingte Reflexe oder Verteidigungsmassnahmen, sondern ein bewusstes Planen fuer sein Leben und all dem,was es enthaelt. Das veranlasst den Menschen, Fragen an sich selbst und seine Umgebung zu richten. Es sind Fragen ueber unser Herkommen, ueber den Zweck unseres Dasein's und ueber unser Schicksal nach dem Tode. Fragen dieser Art hsbenden Urmenschen sicherlich bereits beschaeftigt, und haben dann zu der Bildung jener Urreligionen gefuehrt,die wir so anmassend als "primitiv" bezeichnen.

Die ganze Menschheitsgeschichte hindurch haben die Religionen -ob offenbarte oder sonstige - zu beantworten gesucht. Zu einem gewissen Grade waren die gebotenen Antworten annehmbar - und sie wurden auch angenommen. Vergessen wir nicht, dass in jenen alten Zeiten wahres Wissen irgendwelcher Art einfach nicht existierte, oder zumindest auf einen kleinen Kreis beschraenkt war. (Ich glaube, ich kann behaupten, dass in diesen unseren Tagen zum ersten Mal in der Menschheitsgeschichte Lernen und Wissen jedem Mann und jeder Frau , ohen Ausnahme,zur Verfuegung steht.) In vergangenen Zeiten - sogar bis vor wenigen Jahren - bedeutete Wissen auch Macht, und war deshalb bewusst und eifersuechtig den Massen vorenthalten. Das in uralten Zeiten vorhandene Wissen wurde fuer die Erforschung und Erklaerung der Lebensgeheimnisse verwandt. Damals bestand das Gefuehl - nebelhaft und verwischt -, dass es irgendwo ein Hoeheres Wesen gibt, von dem alles abstammte und abhing,der alles bis in die kleinste Kleinigkeit wusste und lenkte. Diese vage Empfinden brachte das Sehnen mit sich, mehr ueber all das zu wissen, und so nahe wie moeglich diesem Uebernatuerlichen zu sein. Und so ward mit und durch

den primitiven Religionen auch der Mystizismus geboren.

Die Freimaurerei ist ein philosophisches System, das mit solchen, bis in die Urzeit der Menschheit zurueckfuehrenden Systemen eine Kette bildet. Sie ist eine Organisation von Maennern,die eine Antwort auf die draengenden Lebensfragen suchen,die den Zweck des Lebens zu erkaanen versuchen,die den Ursprung und das Ende des Lebens zu verstehen suchen. Sie sucht uns Verstaendnis beizubringen ueber unser Verhaeltnis zum A.B.A.W. Sie lehrt uns, dass der Tod keine Drohung sondern eine Vollendung ist. Sie lehrt, dass die Welt fuer den Menschen geschaffen wurde, dass der Mensch diese Welt als einen Mikrokosmos selbst darstellt. All das besagt wiederum, dass ein Mensch fuer seinen Mitmenschen zu leben hat. Die Freimaurerei lehrt uns, dass wir mit unseren Mitmenschen diese oben genannten Ideen und Kenntnisse auch zu leben haben. Sie lehrt uns, dass nur Achtung fuer einen jeden Menschen und allen sonstigen Geschoepfen, sowie Liebe fuer einen jeden Menschen,ob Bruder oder nicht, Erloesung bringen kann. Erloesung bedeutet hauptsaechlich wahre Glueckseligkeit und innere Befriedigung. Aber allem voran steht Liebe fur die Menschheit in jeder Form und und Art. Diese Lehren schaffen in uns den Wunsch,den Mitmenschen so zu behandeln,wie wir selbst von ihm behandelt werden wollen; das erreichen wir vorerst dadurch,dass wir ihm so wenig Schaden wie moeglich anzutun versuchen, und sodann ihm so viel Gutes wie moeglich anzutun bestreben. Ganz sicher wird eine solche Einstellung zu einer Besserung unseres Charakter's fuehren, wird uns helfen,unserer niedrigne Triebe Herr zu werden. Wie wir uns in der Loge auffuehren,was wir innerhalb der Loge erfahren, was wir durch unser EBstreben,der Liebe und Achtung unserer Brueder wuerdig zu sein, ist die AUsbildung,die uns unserem Ziel naeher bringt.

Die bedeutendste Lehre,die uns die Freimaurerei erteilt, dass das wir erreichen genau das ist,was wir erreichen wollten, sei es was unser

unmittelbares,sei es was unser zukuenftiges Ziel ausmacht. Was immer wir zu tun und zu erreichen wuenschen und uns anschicken zu unternehmen, sollte immerimmer unser Bessersein,unser Vollkommenwerden umschliessen.

So sehe ich den Sinn - und die Definition der Freimaurerei. Diese Definition stellt zweifellos grosse Ansprueche. Sie wird von sehr vielen Brudern nicht angenommen werden. Ich verstehe das sehr wohl,denn ein Jeder hat ja das Recht,sich seine eigene Definition zu schaffen. Ein jeder von uns hat ja das Recht die Freimaurerei so zu sehen,wie er sie zu sehen wuenscht, von ihr zu erwarten,was er zu erhalten hofft.

Ich glaube nicht,dass es einen Sinn hat,ueber die letzten Saetze, die ich gerade ausgesprochen habe, eine Diskussion anzufangen. Es ist sicherlich vorteilhafter,dass ein Jeder von uns anstatt dessen in sich schaut und sich fragt,was die Freimaurerei ihm sagt und bedeutet. Vorerst wollen wir aber das von unserer eigenen Definition entfernen,was auch anderen Maenner-Organisationen und -Vereinen - Bridge-,Rotary-,Lions-Clubs _ gemeinsam ist, und dann abschaetzen, was uebrig geblieben ist. Ich fuerchte, dass sehr oft sehr wenig uebrig bleiben wird.

Liebe Bruder ! Wir haben mit der Wahrheit zu leben. Aber wenn wir zu dem obigen sehr pessimistischen Schluss und Resultat kommen, dann muessen wir uns fragen, ob wir der Verantwortung nachgekommen sind,die wir auf uns nehmen, wenn wir einen neuen Bruder bei uns einfuehren,wenn wir der Bruderkette ein neues Glied anfuegen. Haben wir wirklich unser ihm gegebenes Versprechen gehalten, haben wir wirklich das erfuellt, was er zu glauben berechtigt war auf Grund unseres Ritual's,unserer Zeremonienein den verschiednenen Graden. Haben wir uns ueberlegt,was er fuehlt, wenn er findet,dass er nicht das in der Freimaurerei gefunden hat, was er erwartet hatte ? Es gibt wohl kaum ein Bruder unter Euch hier, der seine Enntaeuschung ganz ueberwunden hat, wenn er feststellen musste,dass er nicht die gewaltigen Wahrheiten vorgefunden hat,die er erwartete. Wer

von uns hat nicht gehofft, dass er nach seiner Einfuehrung - oder dann bei seiner Befoerderung und seiner Erhebung - gewaltige Offenbarungen, neue Wege,neue Ideen - uebermittelt bekommen wird ?

Ihr moeget sagen, dass all das,was ich Euch vorgetragen habe,einen gewissen esoterischen Schimmer hat, den die Freimaurerei nicht versprochen hat. Wir haben dem Bruder nur die Hand bruederlicher Liebe zugesagt, und wir haben ihm nur versprochen,dass wir ihm zur Zeit der Not und Gefahr treu beistehen werden. Ja, liebe Brueder, das wuerde schon genuegen, wenn ein jeder von Euch Bruedern dieser Loge von sich sagen kann: "Ich kenne einen jeden Bruder dieser Bruder sehr gut. Ich weiss, welche Sorgen und Probleme er hat, und ich habe mich mit diesen identifiziert. Ich weiss, wer unter diesen Brudern sich einsam und verlassen fuehlt, und ich tue alles,um dem abzuhelfen. Wenn immer ich nachts mich schlafen lege, weiss ich ganz genau, dass keiner meiner Brueder sich in Gefahr oder Not befindet". Wenn ein jeder von uns ueber ein solches klares Gesichtsfeld verfuegen kann, dann hat die Freimaurerei das erfuellt,was sie auf der einfachen Lebensebene zu tun versprochen hat.

Was ich von der Freimaurerei erwarte,und was auf einer hoeheren Ebene liegt,ist das ,was uns Freimaurern von alten Zeiten her aus den mystischen Quellen und esoterischen Wissen ueberliefert worden ist,was auch in diesen Alten Zeiten niemals laut ausgesprochen und vorgelegt worden ist, sondern unter aeusseren Formen,in Symbolen und Allegorien verborgen blieb, aber von jedem entdeckt werden konnte,der danach suchte.

Das sind meine Ideen,liebe Brueder; sie sind zum grossen Teil nicht die gleichen,die Ihr anderswo gehoert oder gelesen habt. Sie sind zu einem grossen Teil meine persoenlichen AUslegungen dessen ,wie ich die Freimaurerei sehe,was ich in ihr zu finden hoffe. Es ist Euch ueberlassen, was Ihr in ihr sehen wollt, was Ihr in ihr zu finden hofft.

R E L I G I O N

und

F R E I M A U R E R E I.

Karachi 1966

Ich fuehle mich etwas unbegablich, dieses Thema in der Gesellschaft von erfahrnen und gebildeten Muslim Brueder ,hier so zahlreich anwesend, anzusschneiden - aber in Anbetracht der Angriffe, der unsere Bruederschaft letztens seitens vieler der muslimischen Religionsgesellschaften im Lande - zum Teil auf Anraten oder Veranlassung vom Ausland - sich hat ausgesetzt gesehen, fuehle ich es angebracht, hier klar und eingehend ueber den Fragekomplex der Religion im Allgemeinen und auch mit Bezug auf die Freimaurerei zu sprechen. Ich wuerde es vielleicht vorgezogen haben, mich diesbezueglich nicht zu aeussern, um jedwedem Missverstaendnis vorzubeugene, aber ich kann einfach nicht uebersehen, dass so viele von unseren Bruedern im Lande sich unsicher mit Bezug auf ihr Verhaeltnis als Freimaurer zum Islam fuehlen und nicht wissen, wie sie sich zu denen verhalten sollen, die es fuer einen Muslim nicht moeglich sehen wollen, ein Bruder der freimaurerischen Bruderschaft zu sein.

Gleich zu Anfang lasst mich unterstellen, dass ein Muslim es voellig mit seiner Religion vereinbaren kann, ein Freimaurer su sein. In der Koeniglichen Kunst gibt es nichts, was auch der religioeseste Muslim nicht anerkennen kann. Lasst mich auch fernerhin betonen, dass die Freimaurerei nichts mit Religion zutun hat, dass sie keine Religion ist, dass sie keine Religion ersetzen will - dass sie aber trotz allem etwas Religioeses enthaelt, dass sie nicht im Wettbestreit steht mit irgendeiner Religion, um Glaeubige anzuziehen. Die Freimaurerei hat aber aehnliche Ziele wie eine jede Religion,i.e. sie will dem Menschen Trost,Erklaerung und Erleichterung bringen, aber nicht in Konkurrenz mit irgendwelchen Glaubensrichtungen, sonder in Vervollstandigung dieser.

Religion und Freimaurerei sind keine Antagonisten - sie sind keine zwei entgegengesetzte Weltanschauungen, keine sich befeindenden Ideologien; aber sie koennen sich sehr wohl ergaenzen, sich gegenseitig von Nutzen und Segen sein. Jeder Freimaurer ist a priori ein glaeubiger Mensch, stellt einen religioesen Bodendar, in welchem die Religion sich einpflanzt und die Freimaurerei die Bewaesserung - und die Philosophie, falls benoetigt, den Duenger.

Das ist alles was ich ueber das Verhaeltnis von Freimaurerei und Religion zu sagen habe. Aber es gibt viel ueber den Komplex Religion zu sagen - und das will ich Eute aben ganz allgemein tun.

Religion in irgendeiner Form hat es immer gegeben; geographisch und geschichtlich besass der Mensch immer etwas, was als Religion am besten umschrieben ist. Kein Volk und kein Stamm hat bisher entdeckt werden koennen, der nicht wenigstens eine Spur von Religion fuer sich entwickelt hatte. " Fuer den Primitiven ist alles Religion", schreibt Bronislav Malinovski. " Er lebt staendig in einer Welt des Mystizismus und des Ritualismus". Angesichts der Grabbefunde aus der Zeit des"Neandertalers", d.h. von vor 100 000 Jahren, hatte dieser bereits sich Gedanken gemacht uber ein Leben nach dem Tode. Dasselbe kann auch von dem"Heidelbergmann"gesagt werden, der die Erstlinge aller Fruechte regelmaessig geopfert hatte,

Der Mensch braucht irgendeine Ausdrucksform fuer seine religioesen Empfindungen; er kann so seine Wuensche in den Wunsch goettlichen Eingreifens in Worte und Gefuehle kleiden. Darum ist Religion fuer den Erhalt der menschlichen Gesellschaft so wichtig.

Die von der Religion gebotenen Ideen behandeln Tatsachen und Zustaende in unserem Leben, die wir allein und aus uns heraus nicht haben handhaben koennen. Der grosse Vorteil, den ein Glaube hat, liegt darin, dass die von ihm gebotenen Darlegungen Auslegungen und Ideen von uns angenommen werden koennen, ohne dass wir weiterer Beweise beduerfen - obgleich nicht selten unsere "Leichtglaeubigkeit" in diesem Sinne damit zusammenhaengen mag, dass wir fuerchten,dass es keinerlei Beweise dafuer gibt. Wir duerfen im Rahmen unseren religioesen Glaubens uns damit zufrieden stellen, dass dieser seit langem existiert, dass er uns durch unsere Vorvaeter uebermittelt worden ist , obgleich jene seit langer Zeit vergangene Generationen ueber keine der wissenschaftlichen Entdecken verfuegen konnte wie die unserige.

Religion wurde " erfunden ", um eine ANtwort fuer all die ewigen Fragen ueber den Zweck menschlichen Daseins zur Hand zu haben. Religion wurde aus den aeltesten,den staerksten und den dringendsten Wuenßschen des Menschen geboren. Robertson Smithhglaubt, dass es weniger der Glaube and Geister und Goetter war,der der Religionsbildung zugrunde lag, sonder die Kulthandlungen,die sakramentalen Riten. E.B. Taylor dagegen denkt, dass die urspruengliche Religion in dem Glauben bestand, dass alles und jedes einen Geist oder eine Seele enthaelt; und dass dann im Laufe der Zeit dieser polytheistische Glaube an Goetter zum monotheistischen Glauben an einen einzigen Gott wurde. Und R.R. Marreth geht noch weiter zurueck: er denkt es urspruenglich einen Zustand gab,in dem der Mensch, bevor er einen mysterioesen unpersoenlichen Geist als diese Welt beherrschend anerkannte, sich eine ungeformte Lebenskraft, eine mysterioese Substanz als alles Lebende und Nicht-lebende bewohnende Substanz vorstellte. Auch heute gibt es Voelker, z.B. die Mana in Melanesien,die einen solchen Glauben haben. In diesem Sinne koennen

Hegel's und Comte's beruehmte Begriffe von einer Triade in der Weltgeschichte Anwendung finden: sie sehen Magik,Relkgion und Wissenschaft als Stadien in der Evolution der Religionsgeschichte.

Der Totemismus , die Verehrung eines spezifischen Tieres, mit dem ein Stamm sich verwandt fuehlt oder von dem es gar sich abgestammt glaubt, ist bezeichnend fuer die Verwandtschaft einer gewissen geschlossenen Gruppe. Dar Totemtier beschuetzt diese Gruppe und darf nicht verletzt oder getoetet werden. Die Mitglieder der gliechen Totemgruppe koennen keinerlei sexuelle Beziehungen miteinander haben, und das macht Heirat ausserhalb der Gruppe - "Exogamie" - notwendig.

Totemismus bringt den " Tabu " mit sich, eine allegorische Ausdrucksform des Verbotes von Moerder und Inzucht. Einmal im Jahre wird das Totemtier geschlachtet und verzehrt, um die Staerke des Stammes oder der Gruppe zu erhalten. Sigmund Freud glaubt, dass aus diesem Totemmahl sich die Verherung goettlicher Wesen - anfangs in der Gestalt von Tieren - und spaeterhin auch das religioese Opfer entwickelt haben. Diese Freud'sche Erklaerung der Bedeutung des Totemtieres laesst den Schluss zu, dass sobald dieses Tier nicht mehr als Ersatz fuer den Urvater zu gelten hatte,der gleichzeitig gefuerchtet und gehasst als auch verehrt und beneidet war,aus diesem Begriffskomplex die Urform Gott entstand. Der Vollstaendigkeit halber will ich hinzufuegen, dass aus seinen Untersuchungen Freud zum Schluss kam, dass religioese Ritenneurotisch-obsessiven Handlungen gleichen, die er in seinen Patienten beobachtet hatte. In Obsessionen dieser Art glaubt er das Ueberleben der geistigen Taetigkeiten des Urmenschen bis in die heutige Zeit wieder erkennen zu koennen. "..man kann sagen", schreibt Freud in "Totem und Tabu", dass der Fall eines Hysterikers ein Kunstwerk, der einer Neurose eine Karikatur einer Religion, und der einer paranoien Einbildung die Karikatur eines philosophischen Systems ist".

Die moderne Psychologie, besonders die der analytischen Schule, sieht die ANgst vor Vatermord den grundliegenden und staerksten Motivationsfaktor sowohl fuer die Entwicklung der Religionen alsauch fuer die der Neurosen. In diesem Zusammenhang wird oft auf den grundsaetzlichen Unterschied zwischen Judentum und Christentum hingewiese, u.z. dass das erstere den Vatermord nicht als einen bedeutenden Bestandteil des Gluabens hinsetllt. F reud's Theorie besagt, dass St. Paul erkannt hatte, dass die Menschheit sich ewig ungluecklich feuhlt, weil sie einst Gott den Vater getoetet hatte. Diese Ursuende wurde erst gesuehnt nachden Jesus der Sohn seinerseits zu seiner Lebenszeit geopfert wurde - und dass dieser dann seinerseits den Platz des Vater's uebernahm. Nach Freud ist Religion nichts als Wuenscherfuellung. Sie ist eine Illusion. Damit will Freud jedoch nicht sagen,dass die Religion im moralischen Sinn eine bewusste Luege oder epistemiologisch ein Irrtum ist. Freud

will mit seiner Bezeichung der Religion als eine Illusion keineswegs sagen, dass diese unrealistisch ist oder der Realitate widerspricht - in seiner Philosophie ist eine Illusion wenigstens teilweise eine Wunscherfuellung. In anderen Worten will Freud auch sagen - ob bewusst oder nicht,bleibe dahim gestellt - dass das was die Religion lehrt nicht bewiesen werden kann,dass es nicht bewiesen werden braucht,dass niemand es glauben muss - und auch ,dass das was die Religionen lehren nicht widerlegt werden kann.

Nach der Ansicht der evolutionaeren Schule war das Leben der Urmenschen sehr primitiv. Urpsruenglich besassenbsie nicht einmal eine Sprache. Das was diesen Urmenschen als Religion galt = Animalismus, Totemismus - war nichts als Magik und Zauberei. Im Verlauf der spaeteren Entwicklung - besonders angesichts der Unerklaerbarkeit sdes Todes - entdeckte man, dass Zauberei wirkungslos war und der Glaube an Geister und Goetter entstand, und aus diesem entwickelten sich die verschiedenartigen Ausdrucksformen der Religionen , um dann viel spaeter ein vernunftsgemaesses, wissenschftliches Denken einzufuehren, - und aus diesem wurden die Wissenschaften geboren.

Als im Verlauf des 19. Jahrhunderts die Religionswissenschaften aufkamen,versuchte man mittels des Studiums alter und moderner Sprachen, mittels des Studiums alter Literatur und moderner Veroeffentlichungen einen Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache und Religion zu finden. Man kam ueberein, dass die Mythologie das geeignetste Werkzeug war,um eine Art von poetischer Naturreligion zu konstruieren und in ihr die urspruengliche Quelle aller Religionsformen zu erblicken. Aber das Hauptinteresse der Religionswissenschaften, d.h. des Studiums der Urspruenge der Religionen, befasste sich mit den historischen,den ethnischen,den psychologischen und philologischen Aspekten der Religionen.

Die Hauptaufgabe wurde von den Anthropologen und den Ethnologen geleistet, die die Quelle der Urreligionen nicht in den aeltesten uns bekannten mythologischen Ueberlieferungen suchten, sondern in einem empirischenStudium der primitiven ungebildeten Voelker selbst. Die englische Schule unter der Fuehrung von Spencer und Tylor, sowohl die deutsche Schule von Leibniz und Hegel ,stellten die Theorie auf, dass Religion sich von der Steinzeit an bis zu unserer Zeit sich in gerader Linie und in kleinen Schritten, von einem niedrigen zu einem hoeheren Niveau und in verschiedener Art in verschiedenen Teilen der Welt entwickelt hat. Sie kamen zu dem Schluss, dass es moeglich ist durch die Erforschung der Religionen der primitiven Voelker und der Entdeckung von Spuren dieser primitiven Religionen in denen,die sich spaeter entwickelt haben, die Art und Form der urspruenglichen Religionen zu entdecken.

Seit einigen Jahrhunderten bereits haben christliche und jhudische Theologen die Urspruenge der verschiedenen Religionen mit dogmatischen Prinzipien angefasst. Sie verurteilten die heidnischen Religionen der Antike als Verzerrungen und Entartungen der urspruenglichen reinen offenbarten Religionen. Auch die Vernunftsphilosophen der Aufklaereung - wie Voltaire,Rousseau,Hume, Lessing,Diderot etc. - fanden gleiche dogmatische Erklaerungen. Die verschiedenen Religionen waren ihrer Meinung nach abgeleitet von der urspruenglichen Vernunftsreligion, die unmissverstaendlich den Glauben an ein Hoeheres Wesen, Unsterblichkeit und menschliche Freiheit predigte. Die Verzerrungen dieser urspruenglichen Begriffe in den modernen Religionsformen ist den Priestern zuzuscheiben und zum Teil auch durch die Hinzumischung von Volksgebraeuchen.

Die religioesen Glauben mit ihren Aengsten und den Bemuehungen, diese wiederum zu besaenftigen haben Ideenkomplexe geschaffen,die die Menschheit stark beeinflusst hat. Diese Ideen und Begriffe konnten deshalb so einflussreich werden, weil sie den Weg die primitiven Aengste zu ueberkommen wiesen und weil sie auch versprachen, die aeltesten,die staerksten und die dringendsten Wuensche der Menschen zu erfuellen: diese religioesen Begriffe versuchen eine Erklaerung fuer Leben und Tod zu geben; sie versprachen, dass der Mensch Recht und Gerechtigkeit zu seinen Lebenszeiten finden wird; sie gaben dem Menschen die Versicherung, dass sie gegen die ansonsten unkontrollierbaren Naturkraefte Schutz finden werden.

Im Allgemeinen sind die religioesen Ideen einer Person deren kultureller Entwicklung entsprechend debildet . Menschliche Kultur - und somit seine Religion - sind letzten Endes das Resultat des menschlichen Bemuehens,gegen die ueberwaeltigenden Kraefte der Natur und des Schicksals anzukaempfen. Der Mensch versucht,in seiner Machtlosigkeit und Verwirrung das zu erreichen, indem er ein Buendnis mit diesen ueberwaeltigenden Kraeften sucht. Er versucht auch, sie zu beeinflussen indem er sie auf sein eigenes Niveau herunterzubringen sucht, und das gelingt ihm am besten,indem er diesen Kraeften äne Vaterfigur verleiht. Und so drueckt sich des Menschen Beduerfnis, sich gegen diese Ueberkraefte zu schuetzen in seinem Sehnen nach einem Vater aus, was dazu gefuehrt hat, dass der Mensch sich eine Reihe von Goettern schuf, die er zu fuerchten hatte und deren Liebe er gleichzeitig zu gewinnen suchte.

Um sich diese Entwicklung zu erklaeren und mit ihr in Einvernehmung zu kommen, schuf der Mensch sich jeweilig eine passende Philosophie, deren Tiefe von der Komplexitaet der jeweiligen Beduerfnisse abhing.

Eine Philosophie ist der Ausdruck eines Glaubens - sie ist keine Wissenschaft. Die Philosophie hat jedoch, im Gegensatzzum Glauben, niemals und nirgendwo sich eine Organisations zu schaffen versucht; und ohne eine solchekann sie niemals die Staerke un den Einfluss sich schaffen, die eine Kirche,ein Staat,eine Partei oder eine Massanbewegung besitzt. Der Marxismus kann nicht als Beispiel gebracht werden; er nimmt eine Ausnahmsstellung ein: er stellt sich als eine Wissenschaft vor, ist aber eine Philosophie und benimmt sich und wirkt wie ein Glaube. Ein Philosoph - und seine Schule - kann keinen Anspruch darauf erheben,Macht oder Einfluss zu haben, die ihm von einem Hoeheren Wesen zugestanden ist. Trotzdem ist es nicht selten, dass Philosopher sich solchen Einfluss zuzuschreiben - und selten wird es ihnen von anderen auch zugestanden.

Glaube ist ein Weg und ein Mittel, mittels derer der Mensch die immer in ihm auftauchenden Fragen bezueglich des Sinns,des Zweckes, des Ziels seines Daseins zu beantworten und zu befrieden sucht. Jeder von uns hat solche Fragen und zusaetzlich auch seine persoenlichen Probleme und Fragen, und zu diesen sucht er - und oft findet er - seine eigenen und persoenlichen Glaubensformen. Das kann auch von solchen unter uns gesagt werden,die denken, sie haetten jede Art von Glauben aufgegeben und koennten sich auf die reine Vernunft und die jeweiligen wissenschaftlichen Erklaerungen verlassen. Karl Jasper geht noch einen Schritt weiter: er verweigert den Wissenschaften jedwede Moeglichkeit, dem Menschen befriedigende Antworten zu geben. "Nichts kann ohne eine Transzendenz bestehen, kein wahres Bild des Menschen ohne Gott", schreibt er.

Fuer den Glaeubigen ist die innere Staerke,das Problem des Todes anzufassen und zu verstehen ein Hauptbestandteil seines religioesen Glaubens; das ist auch der Hauptgrund, warum er sich den Vorschriften seiner Religion unterwirft. In unserer vorwiegend christlichen Welt drueckt das Dogma der Auferstehung Jesu' vom Tode die Hoffnung vieler aus, dass es ein Leben ohne Tod oder gar ein Leben nach dem Tode gibt. Dieses ist kein urspruenglich christliches Hoffnungsangebot. Diese Art von Hoffnung war in und durch die mannigfachen Mysterienkulte geboten, die die intellektuelle und geistige Welt um das Mittelmeerbecken erfuellte lange vor der Entstehung des Christentums. Was wir heute angeboten sehen ist die Darstellung der gleichen Grundwahrheit in einfacherer und passenderer Form.

Diese alten Mysterienreligionen suchten den inneren Menschen zu reinigen, suchten seine Neugierde zu befriedigen,suchten seine Furcht-erfuellten Zweifel zu besaenftigen. Das gleiche kann man vom Christentum sagen - und nicht weniger auch vom Marxismus: alt-herruehrende Versprechen und Versicherungen in politischer Verkleidung suchen den

Wunsch und die Erfuellung einer neuen Weltordnung nahezubringen. Das Christentum hat den zusaetzlichen Verdienst, dass es einen Ausweg und eine Loesung bietet fuer die ANgst,die Hilflosigkeit und die Verzweiflung, die seit jeher auf der Menschheit lagen, indem es auch die Verantwortung derer uebernahm, die an Christus glauben.

Es ist interessant, dass man heutzutage weniger von Angriffen - und ANgreifern - im Namen des Atheismus hoert und sieht. Gleichzeitig kann man auch seltener Vorkaempfer fuer den Glauben an Gott finden. Es wird vorgezogen, seine Gedanken ueber Religion und Glauben, ueber Ideologie und Philosophieefuer sich zu behalten,diese eine rein persoenliche ANgelegenheit zu betrachten. Es ist auch so im Allgemeinen gehandhabt; ueberall in der Welt besteht heutzutage eine religioese Toleranz , die bisher nicht bekannt war. Aber dieses Gleichgewicht,diese Toleranz scheint im Verschwinden zu sein, erdrosselt durch die sich ueberall bemerkbare Neigung zum Fundamentalismus, beonders im Islam. Aber der Islam hat immer einen kampfbereiten Fundamentalismus gekannt - und daher ist maechtig und einflussreich, weil niemand den Mut hat, sich dagegen zu wehren. da man sich ansonsten den Ruf anlegt, sich gegen die Religion ueberhaupt zu stellen. Daher gibt es kaum eine Reformbewegung unter den Muslims, und der Atheismus gilt als ein schweres Verbrechen. Unter den heute so fanatisch sich gebaehrenden Muslims kann ein Atheismus nicht erstehen, nicht der anthropologische Atheismus des Feuerbach, noch der psychoanalytische Freuds. Bisher hat auch der sozialpolitische Atheismus des Marx sich nicht zu laut gebaehren duerfen; vielleicht wird er jedoch im Laufe der Zeit doch den Einfluss der Religion dadurch schwaechen, dass den Wissenschaften mehr Raum gewaehrt wird, auch in der heute aufwachsenden muslimischen Jugend.

Man kann den Eindruck nicht vermeiden - und das Phaenomen auch kaum erklaeren - dass unter der Nachkriegsgeneration,die imWeltkrieg gekaempft und hinterher noch an manchen Kriegen hat teilnehmen muessen im Laufe der letzten fuenfzig Jahre , der Glaube als solcher - sei es in Gott, sei es in sich selbst,sei es an eine Zukunft - auch ein Opfer geworden ist. Gleichzeitig bemerken wir in diesen jungen - und nicht mehr so jungen Leuten - eine AUflehnung gegen die Authoritaet,beginnend mit der der Eltern und unweigerlich auch gegen die des Staates .Darum kann es uns nicht wundern, dass hier Religion keinen Platz mehr hat. Und keine der Religionen ist ausgenommen; und das ist eine unleugbare Tatsache, obgleich die Funktionaire der organisierten Religionen redenhandeln und reagieren, als ob sie noch immer so einflussreich waeren wie je.

Man hoert immer wieder, dass Religion unter dem Eindruck der Wissenschaften eines Tages wird aufgegeben werden muessen, wird voellig verschwinden muessen - und dass dann auch kein Platz mehr sein wird fuer die Philosophie. Das koennte doch nur moeglich sein, falls die sich so gewaltig entwickelnde Wissenschaft nicht nur die Grenzen unseres Wissens so viel weiter steckt, sondern falls sie auch den Menschen den gleichen inneren Halt,die gleiche Hoffnung und die gleiche Befriedigung bieten kann, wie es die verschiedenen Religionssysteme und philosophischen Schulen bisher getan haben. Aber so weit ich sehen kann, ist das bisher nicht der Fall gewesen, wird es wohl auch niemals sein, kann es niemals sein. Es ist beeindruckend, ueberwaeltigend, die Fortschritte der Wissenschaften zu erleben und sich der Hoffnung hingeben duerfen, dass auch in der Zukunft dem Menschen mehr an materiellem Guten geboten werden wird, dass seine Erwartungen, Neues zu sehen und lernen sehr wahrscheinlich staendig befriedigt werden. Aber wir haben dafuer einen Preis zu zahlen gehabt: unser Glaube an die Gegenwart eines immateriellen Etwas in und um uns herum ist uns genommen worden, oder zumindest geschwaecht worden. Fuer so viele unter unsist es unmoeglich - aber wir erreichen diesen Entschluss nur nach langem inneren Kampf - all das,was wir auf den A.B.A.W. beziehen durch die Wissenschaften in komplizierte Formeln gekleidet und verflacht zu sehen, in Mechanismengewandelt und von einer Computer-kontrollierten Instanz als Natur vorgestellt zu sehen.

Es ist unwahrscheinlich, dass auf die Dauer der Grossteil der Menschen sich damit wird abfinden lassen, dass wir den Glauben an einen alles fuellenden geistigen Faktor, an einen alles ueberragenden und alles zusammenhaltenden Baumeister uns je werden nehmen lassen. Ich kann mir einfach nicht vorstellen, dass die Wissenschaft je zum Glauben werden kann,dass sie je eine der bestehenden Religionen wird voelling ersetzen koennen - denn sie kann ja niemals die ANgst in uns beruhigen. Aber ich gebe zu und hoffe auch, dass die Wissenschaften ,obgleich sie niemals den Glauben im Menschen ersetzen koennen, sie diesen wird staerken und stuetzen koennen. Ein derartig aufgebauter und ausgebauter Glaube wird eo ipso alles was die Wissenschaftler uns immer neu bringen und bieten immer nur als neue Beweise, weitere Bestatigung ansehen fuer das, was der Mensch in seinem Inneren immer schon geahnt hatte.

Und das sollen wir erwuenschen, das sollen wir erstreben, denn irgendwelche Form von Religion braucht der Mensch, und ohne Religion kann die menschliche Gesellschaft nicht ueberleben. Der Mensch muss wissen was wahr ist, die Wahrheit muss er in sich fuehlen, um das Leben lebenswert zu wissen.

Allen Religionen ist gemeinsam, dass sie von den Glaeubigen ein voelliges vertrauendes Unterwerfen einem Hoeheren Wesen gegenueber verlangen; und der Lohn ist sowohl materieller als auch geistiger Art. Die meisten Menschen brauchen Religion dieser Natur, kann nicht existieren,ohne so von der Religion, von ihrem Glauben, gespeist zu werden. Wer die Religion ablehnt, kann aber nicht ohne auch sich neben einer Quelle zu wissen, die Befriedigung und Erfuellung bietet durch Freundschaft,Erfolge im oeffentlichen Leben, soziale Arbeit, wissenschaftliche Erfolge und kuenstlerischen AUsdruck.

Aber zum Glueck ist die Zeit vorbei, wo die Kirche in staendigem Streit mit den Wissenschaften lag; heute hat sich die Theologie den Naturwissenschaften anzupassen. Hute braucht die Kirche ihre Vorrangstellung nicht mehr durch Hexenverbrennungen zu beweisen. Es mag uns unvorstellbar sein, aber wir muessen uns immer wieder daran erinnern, dass wir heute eine Freiheit geniessen, die uns nur seit wenigen Generationen erlaubt ist. Vergessen wir nicht die Kreuzzuege, die Inquisition,die Vernichtung der Haeretiker,die Verbrennung von Nicht-Conformisten. Und lasst uns nicht falsche Schlussfolgerungen daraus ziehen, dass alldieses Blutvergiessen und Morden im Namen Gottes geschah. Und ueberhaupt: lernen wir uns nicht durch Schlagworte beeinflussen oder aufhetzen zu lassen. In der Loge koennen wir in Ruhe und Frieden unsere Gedanken formen,ordnen und klaeren. Der Freidenker ist nicht frei in der Art wie er denkt und was er denkt; er denkt so oft, was ihm vorgedacht wird. Andererseits haben die Theologen die Tendenz, die durch Vernunft erreichetn Ideen und Schlussfogerungen ins Laecherliche zu ziehen in der Hoffnung, den Glauben wiederzubeleben. Es ist manchmal so aufdringend, dass man denken sollte,dass man , um wirklich an einen A.B.A.W. zu duerfen, man kein Gelehrter oder Philosoph sein darf. Das scheint auch die Einstellung von Kierkegaard,Barth, Pascal gewesen zu sein, die in der christlichen Offenbarung die einizge Quelle von Wahrheit sahen.

Aber die modernen Theologen fangen an zu begreifen, dass die Religionen nicht von der modernen Wirklichkeit zu trennen sind, dass sie sich nur selbst schaden, wenn sie das nicht einsehen, wenn sich der Selbsttaeuschung hingeben. Eine Religion darf niemals der Unwahrheit ueberfuehrt werden, muss immer dem Menschen etwas zu bieten haben. Das ist ja die Staerke und das wahre Geheimnis der Freimaurerei. Denn die Freimaurerei verlangt keine buchstabengetreue Folge, verlaesst sich nicht auf verstaebdbisKas heruntergeleierte Gebete, drueckt sich Ritualen und Zeremonien,in Symbolen und ALlegorien aus, deren Sinn und Inhalt gleich von der ersten Stunden gegeben ist.

Religion soll nicht nur dem Herzen und Gefuehl etwas zu sagen haben, sondern auch dem Intellekt. Auch hier liegt eine Ueberlegenehit der Freimaurerei, von der die Religion lernen kann. Die Freimaurerei behandelt den Bruder wie einen intelligenten Menschen, was

man nicht immer von der Religion sagen kann. Ein weiterer Vorteil der Bruderschaft ist, dass wir in Gott - oder wie immer wir das Hoehere Wesen bezeichnen moegen - nicht eine rachsuechtige Vaterfigur vorstellebb Das hat auch dazu gefuehrt, dass Eltern eine solche strafende Gottvater-Figur als ein Erziehungsmittel anwenden.

Trotz aller Modernisierung und allen Fortschritts bleibt die Religion noch heute ein wichtiger Teil unseres Lebens. So schreibt C.S. Jung in seinem Werk ueber die Psychologie der Religion: " Unter all meinen Patienten in der zweiten Haelfte ihres Lebens, d.h. solchen ueber 35, habe ich nicht einen gefunden,dessen Problem letzten Endes nicht daring bestand, eine religioese Loesung in seinem Leben zu finden. Man kann mit Sicherheit sagen, dass ein jeder von ihnen krank wurde,weil er das verloren hatte,was in jedem Zeitalter jede der lebenden Religionen ihren Anhaengern hat zu geben gewusst, und niemand wurde wirklich geheilt, der seinen religioesen Standpunkt nicht auch wiedergewonnen hat. Das hat natuerlich nichts mit einer besonderen Religion oder Zugeheerigkeit zu einer bestimmten Kirche zu tun". Und spaeter fuegt er dann hinzu: "Das Ziel sollte die optimale Entwicklung der Moeglichkeiten in einem Menschen sein, die Verwirklichung seiner Individualitaet und seiner moralischen und intellektuellen Integritaet..."

Ich habe diesen Bauriss unternommen, nicht um den Verfall oder die Schwaechung der Religionen im Allgemeinen auszumalen, sondern um zu unterstreichen, wie gross die Vorteile sind,die die Koenigliche Munst zu bieten vermag. Ein bedeutendes Problem unserer heutigen Zeit ist , dass der Mensch von einer inneren Leere geplagt ist. Er sucht Erfuellung in irgendeiner der religioesen Ausdrucksformen; und wenn er dafin keinen Erfolg hat, dann bleibt ihm nichts anderes uebrig, als in irgendeiner aus Vernungt geborenen Ausdrucksform unterzutauchen, denn es besteht die Gefahr, dass er zum Neurotiker wird.

Ich habe mich meistens so ausgedrueckt in meiner Darstellung, dass ein jeder von Euch Zuhoerern von selbst Vergleiche mit der Freimaurerei anstellen muss. Aber es ist ja auch ganz klar,ddas diese nicht jedem passt und nicht ein jeder fuer uns geeignet ist. Ich muss muss gestehen, dass iuh ausser meinen Bemerkungen hier und dort keinen Rat geben kann, die suchen und zweifeln,die versuchen und verzweifeln. Ich kann auch auf keinen der Theologen oder Philosophen verweisen. Weder Feuerbach noch Marx noch Freud haben den Menschen von heute auch den Weg gezeigt , die sie uns haben hinter den mit ihrem Namen versehenen Tueren uns haben vermuten lassen. Vielleicht haben sie selbst gemerkt,dass diese ihre Wege nicht begehbar sind. Ich kann mir nur angehend ein Urteil ueber Freud zugestehen, denn ich habe viele Jahre lang zu seinen Anhaengern gehoert. Ich habe

den Eindruck, dass seine These ueber die Menschheit und die Religion durch einen inneren Drang geschaffen wurden,um - ohne Erfolg allerdings - sich eine Art von religioesen Glauben zu bilden. Diesen Eindruck habe ich verstaerkt gefuehlt, als ich ueber seine letzten Lebensjahre las. Er muss ein sehr ungluecklicher Mensch gewesen sein, denn er scheint zm Ende seine eigene Philosophie angezweifelt zu haben.
Ich mag mich natuerlich irren. Ich weiss ja viel zu wenig ueber diesen Mann. Ich kann ja nicht wissen, ob seine Schueler und die Freunde, die er zuletzt noch hatte, verlaessliche Zeugen und Beobachter sind oder waren. Ich habe das sichere Gefuehl, dass ihm ein Glaube fehlte, dass er etwas brauchte, um ihm inneren Halt zu geben. Ich glaube, es haette ihm sehr geholfen, waere er ein Freimaurer gewesen. Er haette in der Koeniglichen Kunst eine Ausdrucksform,einen Weg zu sich selbst, - eine ANtwort gefunden.

Ich bin nun am Ende meines Baurisses angekommen. Ich wollte mir und Euch Klarheit verschaffen, wie es um die Religion steht vom Standpunkt eines Freimaurers. Ich habe mich sehr bemuht, nicht die Religionen so zu malen, dass sie nur besaenftigt erscheinen und die Freimaurerei nur helleuchtend und anziehend.

Ganz sicherlich seid Ihr enttaeuscht - und Ihr duerft mir glauben: ich bin es auch. Aber ich bin sicher, dass Ihr heute viel Material in die Hende gedrueckt bekommen habt, um unter Euch und fuer Euch ueber das ganze von mir angeschnittene Problem nachzudenken. Tut das - es kann Euch und uns allen sehr von Nutzen sein.

AR 25045 17/1 Mastering years (copy)
Hermann M. SELZER Gll. text, documents, photos
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Maturing Years

1937 to 1946

II.

I n d i a.

Innocents abroad are always liable to step into cowshit - except perhaps and only for the time being - when travelling to the moon.

"Eastwards bound"

" Eastwards bound" ! How nice and romantic this sounds , does it not ? Better, far better methinks than " I travelled from Naples to the East, on my journey to India ". But in the end the result was exactly the same. I left Naples in March 1937 and one fine day in May of that very same year - my God ! it was a fine day indeed if you take the height to which the mercury had climbed inside the glasstube of the thermometer as the scale with which to judge the weather - I reached Colombo in Ceylon. I travelled ina Japanese boat. I cannot twll you exactly now why I had selected a Line which sailed under the "Rising Suh". I do not remember if I did so to gain some kind of experience in this way. It may be that I had the idea that on such a ship I would more quickly come into contact with the "mysterious East". It was, however,most likely nothing of the kind at all and it was the advice of the travel agent which made me select a Japanese boat, as apparently no English passenger ship made a detour to stop at an Italian harbour on its journey to the East.

I remember very little of the first stage of my journey, the one from Naples to Port Said. I recall only the tall,rugged Englishman with whom I shared the cabin; he must have doubted his eyes when he saw me arrive,dressed in my blue silk suit,representing such a sharp contrast to the other passengers who certainly never felt as hot and as uncomfortable in their shorts and open shirts as I did in my outfit. The surprised look on his face was intensified when his eyes fell on my heavy leather suitcases which would have been more suited to a sojourn in Florida or on the Riviera. Fortunately for him I left the boat in Port Said and his company , as I acquired there in the famous department store of Simon Arzt of course from among the sun helmets available just that kind of "Topi" which one sees only in Hollywood productions and rarely if ever at all anywhere else in the East, otherwise my appearance might have given that fellow in my cabin the impression that he was approaching his delirium tremens earlier on this journey than he had expected.

I am a poor sailor, and before I could stabilize my inner gyroscope, we had arrived in Port Said. I remember well this first impact of this my first contact with the East on my senses, my defensive posture to the approaching Orient, the heat and the squalor translated for me at that moment into a unceasingly moving, usually rushing, unpleasantly smelling and mostly gabbling and also begging humanity. I do not think there is need for me to describe these sensations further; they are common to most everyone who approaches the East without that squint-eyed romanticism, that Hollywood-tinted vision and that Marxist-taught distortion with which so many travellers have their first impressions so commonly and so overwhelmingly formed.

I am sure I have missed very much in my life, have deprived myself of so much fun by my far too sobler, my far too matter-of-fact and often critical approach to the world I have come to encounter now and then and to the diverse representatives of the human race which populated that very world. It was a very great mistake that I did not add on and off a pinch of romantics to what I saw and heard. It was a grave ommission that I had not read up a minimum of literature about the countries I was about to see, about the people I was going to meet. I had often cause to regret that I had not studied their history, their customs. Here I was going to face a new world with a totally wrong attitude , and the worst part of this all is that I did not think I had done wrong. I told me that I had a task before me and I was not going to be deviated from this task by considerations, by thoughts, by activities which might in the slightest interfere with my program. There will be time later on for all this, I consoled myself; the time would come, I told myself, when I could look at the romantic side of things, when I could play the leizurely traveller. At this moment, however, I told myself , nothing was going to deviate me from my task ahead. I did not even make friends on this journey; did not form associations of even a temporary nature as anything of this kind and in this sense mighht make me take off my eyes from the aim I saw ahead, might shift my compass needle from the direction I had decided. I missed much, no doubt. I agree I was stupid. I feel even now that I was a prig, but at that time I felt very virtuous as I did not allow anybody or anything to deviate me from my fixed, one-tracked interests.

However, I suppose this was not the only reason. I remember that I did not join into the shouts of joy nor add to the

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OR NO PAGE 2

mumur of disdain,neither in the expressions of the uninitiated nor in the looks of contempt of the experienced, when the wheelers and dealers, the guides or magicians went through their paces in order to amuse the passengers,no sooner had the ship reached the quai-side. I looked on as if I did not belong, actively or passively, to that world, and I was not amused. I do not in any way want to boast, but I have to mention that I was unusual traveller who not only never carried a photo camera but I was also that exceptional visitor to Cairo who never visited the pyramids and who never took a cruise on the Nile; I mention all this to make you understand how one-sided my interests were during those weeks and months - and how much I missed. Yes, I forgot to mention one thing: I went with a Dutchman, my cabinmate and also my neighbour in the hotel, to the Red Light District, but I left after a few minutes without even touching the glass of beer I saw placed before me and for which I must have paid the price of nearly the entire barrel from which it had been taken, while the tastebuds,the hormones,the skin of the Dutchman must have reacted in a quite different way, as he stayed on long after I had left.

I remained for a few days in Cairo,then I travelled to Palestine where I remained for a week or so' thereafter I returned to Suez to catch the next fortnightly Japanese boat for the East. This second boat was larger and appeared to me far more crowded than the first one. It may not have been the case, but I was certainly more aware of the passengers and of what was going on around me. All this appeared the more interesting as I felt now like a "seasoned "traveller who had already once before travelled on a Japanese baot, who knew the habits,the customs,the culinary particularities and above all also all the hidden characteristics of the Japanese.

I shared the cabin with two other east-bound passengers, both of them Dutchmen, and they were quite clearly surprised to see their new travelling companion,most unsuitably dressed and equipped and in addition now crowned with and by a fanciful sun helmet. Tey did not show their surprise; they did not remark - at least not in my presence - on what they saw. It may also be that these two young men in their comfortable clothing were never sober enough to focus their eyes for a sufficient time on me to fully realize the who,the where and the what of my presence in their cabin.

While the tourist class of the ship was filled to the last berth, only a single passenger t raveeled in the first class.

He was a Ceylonese Civil Servant travelling on Government expense who tried,possibly with success, to console himself on his isolation with his superior status. He appeared to me very lonely and he might have been recalling nostalgically his youth when I saw him look down from his deck onto the crowded one below him. I am sure he must at times have been longing for some company different from that of the Captain and the Chief Engineer with whom he shared meals and conversation.

On this journey there could not have been a greater contrast than between the two diverse groups who populated the tourist class. The majority consisted of Dutchmen, Government Servants,Military Personnel,businessmen or plantation owners who were returning to their posts in the Dutch East Indies. They were a jolly crowd, drunk most of the time, and their English,usually not too bad, was in the evenings far too slurred to improve my own knowledge of the language or to make me take in the object of their long-drawn-out conversations anddiscussions. Some of the Dutchmen were " coloured " - very often one partner of the married couples was of mixed blood - and since this my first contact with that Dutch crowd nobody could later on ever again make me believe that the Dutch treated their natives or their half-casts better than the British did (as was often alleged).

The other group, smaller in number and also otherwise less conspicuous, consisted mostly of Indian students who were returning from their studies abroad - this nearly always meant EnglANd - after a long absence from home. Most of them had been away for 3-4 years because very few of them would have had the means to pay an interval visit home. They were all young men, there was no woman among them. As a rule they kept company with themselves. They were quiet,reserved but in no way servile which some of the Europeans aboard appeared to resent. When I saw them first,they were all dressed like Europeans and when I left them in Ceylon from where they returned by train to their different places in India,they wore those very same heavy clothes, i.e. none of them had yet changed into the comfortable shirts and dhotis which are so much more congenial to the way of life and to the climate of India.

I was not at all interested in keeping company with the Dutchmen or the occasional Englishman abroad. I felt that I did not fit into their environment nor could I ever hope or intend to keep pace with them in their regular drinking sessions as soon as

the sun started to set. I must ,however, report with gratitude that they all soon realized my status, my origins and the purpose of my journey, and that many tried to persuade me, even during the short hours when they were again sober, to come to Indinesia,to settle there as a phsyician with their help and even with their financial support.

As you will understand I was mostly interested in the Indian passengers. I think they were all students; I do not remember an adult among the Indians aboard. Unofrtunately many days of the journey were lost before I could establish contact with these young men, i.e. before they realized that I was not an Englishman, that I kept somewhat to myself not because I looked down on them and the other passengers but because I was not attuned to that kind of company. Only in the last week did the Indians realize that I did not share the others' olympic attitude to and outlook on matters and men Indian. I must say, I enjoyed that first true contact with the second group of Indians I ever met in my life (the first group of "Indians in my life" I had met in Rome,as I told you). One thing, however, disturbed me very much, appeared to me incomprehensible: these young Indians admired all things German and di not hide their belief that Hitler was greater than any German who had ever lived before. It took some time before I understood that their love for Hitler was due to their hatred of the Englishman,because they shared with Hitler the English as an enemy.

One of the students, a quiet and gentle boy, kept company with me for many days. I am amazed that my English had apparently sufficed for prolonged hours of conversation. I had taken a few lessons in English conversation shortly before I had left Italy and altghough this did not make me acquire much knowledge, it gave me some unjustified confidence to apply the little I knew of the language. I was very glad when I found him express a reserved optimism about my chances in India. He painted for me acarreer I never realized nor ever intended to realize, as he hoped to see me immerse myself in his own world and as supposed that I would not come into any more direct contact with,or that I would at least try to distantiate myself from the environment,the opinions and the attitudes of the British Raj. When I told him that on my travel through India I was bound to visit also Calcutta, his hometown, in search of a suitable place to settle, he eagerly offered me his help and he promised to make my stay here as comfortable as possible.

And he did so. At least he tried his best, because when I came to Calcutta a few weeks later, he met me at the railway station - but more about this later on.

On and on the journey continued. It got hotter and hotter. Airconditioning was not yet known and as you can imagine,the cabins were anything by comfortable; butnobody expected anything different and nobody complained, even when day by day also the humidity increased and the skin protested against the constant irritation I must cinfess that I did take off my coat and tie at last and this made me feel very heroic.

No journey goes on for ever; at some stage every journey comes to an end, even if inertia does not want this to happen. And so one fine night the ship reached Ceylon. You will ask me why Ceylon if you wanted to go to India ? This out of the way stopover was entirely due to the fact tht Japanese boats did not touch any Indian harbour; they proceeded from the Suez Canal without a stop straight through to Ceylon. I had not studied the map carefully enough when I booked my passage in Rome, and I did not bother to change into an English boat from Port Said onwards. I accepted the advice of the travel agent who had sold me the tickets for a Japanese ship with the lure that the ship's company would pay for my rail ticket from Colombo to any town I might want to reach in India. And afterall: why should I not see Ceylon too ?

Yes, why not ? But nobody who had any commonsense would have travelledto the East at that particular time of the year, would have planned to arrive in May inCeylon of all the months in the years just before the Monsoon was about to break.

When the ship did glide into Colombo Harbour, we saw that the twon was festively lit up. The facades of nearly every important building was outlined by strings of multi-coloured lamps. The streets were crowded notwithstanding the late hour. Music was heard all over the twon. Sirens were howling and hooting without any apparent rhythm. Do not think that all this had been arranged in my honour or in that of any other passenger on our ship. It was May 12, 1937. It was Coronation Day. King George V had been placed that day on the throne of the British Empire. He had been crowned that day with among other things also with the crown of the Emperor of Ceylon.

Thinking back now I am amazed at my confidence in myself at my self-assurance with which I faced this new world I was entering. I did not even curse the heat nor did I feel in any way the

the handicap the climate should have represented. I took all this for granted and as I could not change the environment I had no other solution available than to adapt myself to it.

F 37282

Shula with Sev & Emrod

F37283 Mother with Emrod

F 37284

Shula in 1935

Family Crook 1937

F- 37285

Leni F37286

F37287 Jupp 1936

Palestinian Interval.

I mentioned already that I broke my journey in Egypt for a fortnight before I proceeded eastwards with the next Japanese boat. This break in my journey was not motivated by my wish to taste the wonders of Egypt or by the idea of getting slowly used to the Orient by adaption through the vicissitudes of the Egyptian environment. The reason for this interruption in my journey was the desire to see my parents in Palestine before entering a world in which I hoped to start a new life. I did spend a few days in Egypt - in Cairo and Port Said - but I felt no compunction to see what was left of ancient Egypt or any of teh attractions modern Egypt had to offer. I stayed in the Shepherd Hotel which successfully tried to reveal to me a kind of world I had so far not known. I walked through the streets which offered me an education I certainly needed and I sat for hours in comfortable chairs in front of a hotel or a pub or a coffeehouse here and there to sip cold beer and to eat from the platefuls of micro-sandwiches and pickles which accompanied every glass of beer. This was an experience I somehow still remember I had already in Italy booked my train seat from Cairo to Lod, and one evening,when the time had come, I took the train from Cairo to Qantara,the point on the Suez Canal from where the trains to Palestine departed every night. In the Cairo train I met for the first time that class of Egyptians which a t last could impress me and which could restore my equilibrium in the sense that these people in the compartment made me realize that apart from myself, the European background I knew and represented, one could find also beyond the borders of Europe and within Africa (which appeared to me to have started somewhere between Rome and Naples) many civilized and culturally very superior individuals. I am glad I encountered these people in the first class compartment in the train out of Cairo, as this experience put my displaced concepts of the occupants of this new environment back onto an even keel. It helped me from that evening onwards overcome moments in which I noticed ideas crowd up

Know all men by these presents that I/we[xx]

ss. Herman Markus SELZER

sses
des- Rehov Chapiro, 9, Haifa.
ons.

ound to the Director of Immigration, Government of Palestine, in the sum of

Sixty Pounds [xx] which I/we hereby deposit with the Acting Inspector of Migration, Kantara

d with our seals

d 14th day of April 198 7.

Whereas Herman Markus SELZER has applied to the

tor, Department of Immigration, for permission to enter Palestine as a traveller. And whereas

Director is prepared to grant the said Herman Markus SELZER such permission on

ition that the said Herman Markus SELZER leaves Palestine

r before the 15th day of July 19 37

Now the condition of the above-written bond is such that if the said Herman

arkus SELZER leaves Palestine on or before the 15th

of July 19 37 then the above-written bond shall be void, otherwise it

be and remain in full force and the sum of Sixty Pounds deposited

Acting Inspector of Migration, Kantara as above-mentioned shall be forfeited to the

rnment of Palestine.

ed, sealed and delivered by the above-named this 14th day of April 19 37.

(Signature) H M. Selzer

(signature)

in me which were more suited to an English colonial than to a Jewish boy from Oberhausen.

When I booked that train seat in Rome I had been told that a European travelling in a train anywhere beyond Naples could do so only in a first class compartment. The advice and the associated implications created in me misconceptions from which I had to free myself with quite some effort and at quite some cost.

We arrived at the Suez Canal Crossing; we were taken by ferry over the Canal at Qantara and met there the train which was to take me to Palestine. I deposited my luggage in a first-class-compartment and was then taken by one of the inescapable guides to the Government's Frontier Office where I had to deposit L.Sterl.60.- for the entry permit to Palestine. This payment was supposed to offer the officer a guarantee that I was not a clandestine immigrant and had no intention to remain illegally in Palestine. I think that more than the payment and my verbal assurance the presentation of my ships' tickets to India was more effective to persuade the immigration Officer who was at that time already sensitized against Jewish travellers who sought temporary visas for the Holy Land.

When I returned to the compartment I found that my luggage had been removed from the bench on which I had left it and was now deposited on the floor of the compartment; the coolie who had carried my suitcases and had been told to look after them until I had satisfied the frontier officials, was wringing his hands in anguish, undoubtedly because the two berths in the compartment were now occupied by half a dozen smelling,dirty but happily smiling individuals who appeared to me in no way the kind of passengers one would expect to find in a first-class-compartment anywhere in the world,not even in Egypt had a revolution suddenly broken out in the last half hour and turned the country communist. I indignantly told myself that I had not paid the enormous sum of L.5.- for my railway ticket in order to be forced into such a company during the forthcoming night journey.

It seems strange to me now that I could exhibit at that very moment, on my first contact with that part of the world, that kind of intolerance, that feeling of superiority which I had later on so often occasion to depreciate and to condemn in certain types of Europeans or Americans whenever these faced the " natives". It was not the attack against my sense of esthetics or the offence against my very sense of smell which made me tell the grinning crowd

facing me in their off-white shirts and trousers,their stained red fezes and their dirty bared feet, that I wanted them out of " my compartment ". It was the fact that they were there, the fact that I would have to share that confined space with any one of them which appeared to so offensive,so totally unacceptable - and also quite dangerous. My voice rose into higher and higher octaves and the less they appeared to understand my words the wider the grin became on their swarthy faces. They never changed their position and they remained comfortably stretched out across the seats.

I had the sense, somewhat delayed, it is true, to realize that I was powerless, outnumbered, at a great disadvantage and that I also appeared ridiculous in this confrontation between a topi-hatted tie-decorated,silk-clad European and the dusty fez-crowned shapeless-fashioned and cotton-shrouded Egyptians. I descended from the train and after some search located the young train conductor who I cannot blame for his inability to understand what I told him, especially as in my agitation which had taken over from my frustration,my pronounciation had changed to such a degree that it had lost its last semblance to anything which could have sounded like the King's English. Luckily I had, without my realizing it, changed into Italian which my dear conductor understood and also spoke well, and which in some way gained me his sympathy too. Understanding my complaint al last it caused him to look at me with wonder, as it had apparently in his experience very rarely happened that a traveller,especially a traveller to Palestine, and especially not a Civil Servant or a high military officer had ever confronted him with a regular first-class rail ticket.

" Who in heaven has made you buy a first-class ticket?" he asked. " Nobody ever does ! At the most you might have bought a second=class ticket and for a little baksheesh, for L.1.- at the most, I would have accomodated you in a first-class compartment. But to come here with a first-class ticket ! No wonder that nobody believes that you are entitled to occupy an entire berth in the first-class-compartment !"

He shook his head in wonder which he must have come to comprehend to some degree after he had taken a good look at me.

" Come with me ", he said," I shall see what can be done ".

He did succeed in emptying the compartment of the ticketless occupants to whom I had objected with the help of a

burly,shouting policeman. ALl considered this was a pleasant interlude after all. It came thus about that I was left by myself in that compartment. There were two other first-class compartments which were occupied by a few officials of the Palestine Administration who, of course, did not have to ask for the guard's help. They did not even bother to open their windows or doors to find out the cause of all the disturbance, an indication that such shouting and cursing was nothing unusual.

Midnight had passed before the train began to move and before I could relax my guarding the door of the compartment as the Egyptians who had been evicted did not accept defeat so easily and tried by diverse means to persuade me that I would benefit from their company.

At last I could fall asleep underneath the fan which was fixed underneath the roof of compartment and whose apparent function was to mix the hot air with the all pervading dust from the desert we were_crossing.

When the sun rose the next morning and I awoke, I found my compartment, myluggage,myself and my beautiful topi covered with about one inch of dust. I did not know that I should have closed the window during the passage of the train through the desert. I had learned my lesson - but had no chance to apply it as I have never since travelled by train through similar deserts(except in Pakistan on my way to Karachi, but those trains were well isolated and airconditioned). In any case: I was happy when the train reached the railway station of Lod. My throat was dry and there was not a drop of water nor any bottled drink within reach or view. However a state of distress like mine could not have been unusual and had, as expected, attracted enterprising business men: there were Arab boys waiting on the railway platform to cater for the needs of the travellers with parched throats. The boy who approached my window must have been impressed by the hearty welcome he received and I gladly took the half dozen juicy oranges he handed over. I asked him what I had to pay and he gave me some reply but I did not understand what he said. I supposed that with a six-pence coin I would cancel my debt, but no sooner had I handed over the money than he began ,uttering some guttural sounds, to hand in some more oranges. I tried to make him understand that I had enough oranges to last me for some time, bu again he shouted something which I did not understand and which I interpreted as his demand for further payment.

I gave him ,therefore,another six-pence-piece whereupon that young fellowstarted shouting still louder and began to pour a full basket of oranges through the window onto my bench. By this time I had already paid him four such installments amounting to two shillings and there must have been at least 100 oranges rolling all over the compartment.

Fortunately at that moment Jospeh and Ernst appeared to save me from the orange flood. They had come to meet me at the Station but they were late because the train had arrived half an hour before the scheduled time. They explained to me that the Arab and I had been acting under a misunderstanding (apparently the eternal fate of us two sections of humanity) and that this was due to both of us trying to decently to the other (a code of behaviour I wish would be adopted by those who think they have the right to manage and govern this part of the world). They explained to me tht oranges were very cheap at that very moment and that notwithstanding the high overcharge applicable for the supply of oranges at railway stations to European travellers in a first-class compartment by Arab boys,the two shillings I had paid so far should have provided me with a least double the amount of oranges than they noticed rolling at that moment so joyfully over luggage,benches and floor.

I was surely glad to see brother and brother-in-law, and we arranged to meet again in a few days' time, as my first stop in Palestine was to be Haifa which the train was to reach some three hours later. There my parents had established themselves after their arraival from Germany. It was mainly to see them that I had interrupted my journey to India that month of April 1937.

Ernst had been " looking around" to find outi f his experience in the spirits and wine trade could be used in one of thewineries of Palestine,or in a distillery or in the retail trade. He came to the conclusion that his special qualifications in this respect were not in demand and he and his brother Kurt bought each a share of L.1000.- in the newly established Autobus Cooperative. At that time at least this job belonged to the elite occupation of the country !

A short sojourn in Palestine in 1937.

I mentioned before that on my way to India in 1937 I spent about one week in Palestine. The country had considerably changed in character since Kate and I visited there in 1934. This cannot be entirely explained by the fact that I myself had changed since then or that I looked through differently tinted glasses. Everybody will tell you that Palestine - and later Israel - changed in so many aspects from year to year and I can assure you that also on my future visits in the 1950s and 1960s things appeared to have changed again and I did not meet that atmosphere I had experienced nor the mood I had known on any preceding visit. (For that matter the Israel of 1971 when we came here to settle is so vastly different again from the one in which I write again this page. This is in no way a criticism or a judgement - it is one of the many many factors which make life here interesting and fulfilling).

However, in 1937 the atmosphere was primarily dominated by a feeling of depression about the world situation, by a general anxiety about the fate of relatives and friends in E urope, by a palpable rage against the degr adation which accompanied every encounter with the British Authorities. I was very impressed by the very determined effort made by all the relatives and friends I met to adjust to the truly profound changes everyone of them had to accept in his or her changed conditions of life.

There was a very inspiring and inspired pioneering urge noticeable everywhere. This spirit which had fired the isealists of the past was now demonstrated by the many young and middle-aged people to whom fate and circumstance had now handed the tools to translate into living reality all those ideas and aspirations which they had in the past only exhibited and ventilated when seated in their comfortable easy chairs.

There was still a feeling of wonder around that Jews could take an active hand in every stage not only of the economic development,could manage on their own every part of the administrative machinery, but could equally well carry on every step and every stage in the productive process be it in the line of agriculture

be it in that of industry. The occasional self-deprecatory remark one heard was only meant to underline a reborn pride and had not yet that cynical undertone it was to contain later. Also many of those German Jews who had landed in Palestine by default, because they lacked the right initiative or the right attitude or because they had missed the dateline to emigrate elsewhere, evinced a for them new kind of interest and enthusiasm in matters Jewish and Zionist. And if this was in many an instance only a superficial or temporary reaction or often reverted again to an open or hidden refutal, this group contrasted sh/arply with that of their countrymen who had immersed themselves with enthusiasm into their reborn status of Jewishness and had now begun to use consciously and conscientiously that important,that small word " we ". They formed a valuable part of the population, pillars of strength everywhere in the coming very trying times, while those who never in tegrated, those German Jews who continued to use the word "they" in their eternally ongoing criticisms and their ever expressed discontent; preferred to emigrate again as soon as they had the opportunity to do so. Impossible as it may sound to future generations, a large number of these Jews even returned to Germany again while the air there was still stinking of the gas chambers and the crematoria. In the 1930s for the majority of the young Jews of Germany " Erez Israel" was a refuge and in the course of the unending series of deprivations,fights and political and economic changes it became their home, their Fatherland.

Everywhere the Jews from Germany who immigrated in the 1930s encountered the remnants of previous waves of immigration, mainly those from Poland and Russia, and though the latter ones felt and showed a certain superiority and had much occasion to exert and demonstrate a greater influence,they were also ready with help and support for the newcomers and they offered them also - albeit reluctantly - some room at the political top of the countgry Over the years matters became easier through a reciprocal adjustment and appreciation.

I travelled first to Haifa where I met my parents. They had been living there since their arrival 1½ years before. They had come with the admirable intention to support themslves after having been supported by their children during the last 3-4 years they had been in Germany. And as there was no hope to do so by any of the " traditional professions" Father had carried on

in the past, they selected - of course ,after having been advised to do so - the " restaurant business" which as a rule helps to feed the owner as long as he succeeds to feed the right number of satisfied customers at the rightly calculated price. Although in those pre-war years in Palestine some fashionable restaurants took care of that elite of hungry customers who lived on good government salaries or suitable expense accounts, the majority of those who frequented a restaurant was hardly looking for anything which one would call in our days a superior standard. Even with the little knowledge I had acquired by observing and testing (and tasting) diverse places in Haifa,Tel-Aviv or Jerusalem during that week, I could not conquer my depression and pessimism when I saw the restaurant which was supposed to feed the parents along with their clients. In those pre-fork days ,if the quality of a restaurant had to be judged, it might have got a finger for the quality of the food.

The restaurant consisted of a large shop-like room boasting two large windows painted white and was situated in a quiet street. Half a dozen tables surrounded by some rickety chairs occupied half the room; the other half was taken up by a large machine which with great clanking and hissing was made to press juice from the oranges or grapefruit fed into it; this machine could also be induced to add to this extract - if so commanded - a " spritz" of aerated water.

Father had quite a brisk business making this machine execute the orders of the many people "dropping in" for a cold drink. These customers hurried into the room,ordered their "meetz" or a "gazoz" or a "meetz-gazoz",put down 1 or 2 of the smallest coins for the drink, and they hardly stayed longer than a minute before they hurried out again. I still see the apologetic look Father gave me when I watched his activities as a bartender - he clearly considered this a painful blot on his mercantile honour.

The tables were occupied during luncheon and dinner hours by variegated types of customers; mostly, however, they were religious Jews. Mother had on a primus stove placed in a small adjoining room readied for the mealtimes pots of good chicken soup or beef soup, of noodles,of potatoes, of meet or poultry, and had in addition cooked vegetables aplenty to add to the dishes ordered by the customers who apparently were always very hungry. The plates were carried in and served by Father and the food tasted the better for the satisfying knowledge that additional helpings were provided

at no additional cost. Not only was the food good, not only was the quality quite satisfactory, but the prices were also surprisingly low. There was no "menue card". The daily fare was announced to the individual enquirer or soon enough learned by his observing the contents of the plates in front of the other customers. In theory there was a set price which Father was to charge for the food supplied; but in most cases he granted a discount as he felt that a customer here and a customer there could and should not pay the full price. The majority of the regular clientele consisted of religious Jews, as a rule bearded and old. The occasional exception,the young and clean-shaven,the non-religious clients (who were not served if they did not place a hat or a yamulka on their head) came too,often very regularly as they appeared to appreciate the food which was tasty and plentyful and reminded them of the cooking they had known at home - some time ago. In this case these customers did not mind that the food was in addition also kosher.

There exists a perennial problem, a headache and a worry for a kosher restaurant, frequented by religious Jews , when the payment for the meals consumed on a Shabbath has to be solved. Nature has not offered a solution for this problem and the Rabbinate has so far not found the time to solve it. There is no way out: a Jew has to eat also on such holy days. On the contrary: it is expected that he eats even better and more than usual when the Shabbes or the Jonteff comes on in the Jewish callender. The problem has arrisen not only because you cannot cook on a Shabbes but also because you cannot hand over or accept money on Shabbes. However, if you have no family of your own,if you have been eating regularly in a restaurant owned by a couple with a good Jewish heart, and you lived in a poor country where homes for old people were still unknown and where German restauration and reparation money had not yet raised the living standard to American heights, there is only one way out of this difficulty: you eat on a Shabbes as you used on other days in that very restaurant that very good same food which,however had been cooked in advance on the previous day and has been kept warm along with the the huge quantities of water for the interminable numbers of glasses of tea - and you pay the following day for the meals you have consumed on that very Shabbes or Jonteff. It may happen that you are not a regular customer of Moyshe & Dvora's Restaurant; in this case you pay in advance on Friday for the 2-3 meals you are going to consume on Shabbes. It can happen, of course,

that a stranger forgets to pay in advance; in such a case you cannot very well turn out a Jew from your house or your restaurant if he comes to eat, but you expect him to come back the next day, say the following Sunday, and pay his debts. Many came to eat,many paid in advance and many others paid the following day. However, it also happened that many did eat their meals without also paying up; many ate also their weekday meals on credit and disappeared after some time when their bill had grown uncomfortably high or suspiciously big. It happened more and more often that good and fine Jews had eaten their Shabbes or Jonteff meals andfailed to turn up to pay for them. Over the months the number of such customers with amnesia increased because it had become known that in " Moyshe Selzer's Place" you could eat on credit and you could continue to eat on credit for some time because Moyshe Selzer was ashamed to ask for payment when you continued to come or when you ceased to come. For reasons even you and I can understand - and for which we do not require to consult Nobel Prize winners in economy like Samuelson or Freedman - Moyshe Selzer noticed a certain shortness in cash. Are you surprised that for a change the ground rules do also apply to the Jews of Israel and in particular to Moyshe Selzer? (You must understand that there was not yet a Pichas Sapir around to upset any economic logic). There is no need for you to be surprised or to look for a reformulation of the rules. Moyshe and Dvora soon found that they would benefit,that they would earn more, if they closed down their business and stopped competing with Maxim's or the Sorch Club. I did not have any direct influence ontheir monumental decision to end their catering enterprise as this took place a few months after I had left. However, as far as you can imagine I enquired into the primitive groundrules of business life in Israel and discussed the matter also with Joseph,Shula and Clemens who, it appeared to me, required lessons from me to learn how to interpret the facts of life in a different way.

Joseph too had been only a little more than a year in Palestine by the time I visited him in Jerusalem. He too could not show so far any success and had no reason to boast about much luck. He had married Leni Schnitzer, a girl from Oberhausen, before coming on " Aliya". He had selected a carreer which was,apparently, to his liking for reasons of status,of association and for possibly other reasons too: he became a partner in the newly created taxi-cooperative "Aviv". However, when he was refused a driver's licence because

his eyesight was too poor, his " Chaverim" i.e. the other associates oreferred to return his L.Sterl.1000.- as he could have been useful to them only on the administrative side of the business and it was much cheaper to engage a salaried person for the simple office work required. And in the days when I turned up Joseph had been on the look-out for a job for some time; however, he soon succeeded in finding employment in one of the Jewish Agency offices from which he was later advanced into a responsible Government job. Unfortunately tragedy had struck his young family. A few weeks before I arrived Leni had delivered her first-born son Se'ev and she soon thereafter died from the flare-up and generalization of a long-standing tuberculous infection. I did not find her anymore alive. I was very sorry to see Joseph so helpless and forlorn,deeply worried about the baby,worried about the parents,worried about Yehuda.

However, he had nothing to worry with regard to Se'ev, his son. Shula had herself become a mother that very same week Leni had born Se'ev and she took on this baby and nursed him along with her own son Emrod. She brought them up as if they were her own twins. Shula had married a Russian immigrant named Crook, but the marriage was already on the rocks when I visited her. Shula accepted the challenge life offered her like so many other women of her generation; she worked hard, took on many a suitable and unsuitable job, but she succeeded in bringing up the two boys. Later on, during the war, when she met Asher, she became less lonely and she found some purpose and content for her life.

Joseph's main worry at the moment was our brother Yehuda. Clemens had turned into Yehuda from the moment he had set foot on the holy soil of Palestine. He had since long left the Kibbuz in the Hula Valley where in 1934 I had seen him shivering in the prangs of a malaria attack. He had never been one to take

orders from others without resentment and he could be very childish when his own opinions were not given the recognition he thought they merritted. He had been one of the pillars - one of the 300 000 or so pillars - of the Histadruth,the Trade Union Organization of that time and he succeeded in getting the distributorship for one district in Tel-Aviv for one the "Tnuva",one of the subsidiaries of the Histadruth. Every morning and afternoon he had to bring milk and other dairy products to the housedoors of the inhabitants of his district, cash the money for the merchandize supplied and hand over every week the collected money - minus a certain percentage which was his share, his payment - to the Hqrs. of the "Tnuva". He must have done a splendid job as a milkman because none of his customers complained; their daily needs of milk and cream, yoghurt and cheese and so on were satisfied and they honoured regularly his bills for the items he had supplied. The only complaint came from the Histadruth's Tnuva where the reverse order of business had in a certain but definite way become interrupted. Yehuda got the daily supply of milk products from them but he had on his side failed to hand over all the money he owed.

When at the railway station of Lod I met Joseph - along with Ernst - on that first day of my arrival in Palestine, he took te aside for a moment and told ne that Yehuda was " in trouble with the Police" and that " we should do something about this as soon as possible ". I was disturbed, I must confess, and when I visited Joseph 2-3 days later he told me about the "financial differences" Yehuda had with the Tnuva and his employers' threat to hand the case over to the Police. Joseph had succeeded to stay their hand until my arrival as he hoped that I would be ready and willing to bail out this very clever brother of ours.

" He owes over L.36.- sterling, but I am sure they will

gladly accept half the amount in order to sett le the business and this will let Yehuda off the hook", he hopefully told me.

They may have done so, may have settled for 50% of the money due to them especially as Yehuda was such a stout Trade Unionist and, as I mentioned, one of the "pillars"' but when they saw stupid me appear in coat,tie and topi,when they learned that I was on my way to fabulous India,they demanded the entire sum due to them to the lAS t agura, the last penny. Of course, they got the entire amount of L.36.- from me and they told me that I should be happy that they had not charged any additional accrued interest. In return I got a sheepish grin from Yehuda. I have not mentioned the matter ever again to him. I do not know why, as he is a very rich man now. L.36 sterling were at that time a lot of money. To give you an idea: Joseph,Shula and people like them earned in 1937 about L6.- to 8.- a month.

During this short visit I met other relatives,friends; they all asked me why I did not settle in Israel-Palestine instead of going all that distance to India on such an adventurous and possibly also dangerous undertaking. There were many reasons, many excuses I did bring forth, but I never mentioned the main reason: I can confess now that I could not have been able to face those annoting and enervating problems presented by the family, nor the pettyness of the people I met, and above all I resented the degrading attitude and behaviour shown by the representatives of the Mandatory Power. This was most likely the main factor,as after my experiences in the German jail I would not have been able to suffer any kind of authoritatively imposed restriction,degradation without rteacting sharply - and at whatever cost. And as I am now confessing what I felt and did not like to express openly, let me also tell you that least of all I could face the possibility that I would have

to submit my wellbeing,my fate,my wishes to the rules and regulations of the petty officials who had begun to emerge from the Jewish masses, whom I had already encountered here and there and whose behaviour made my pulse quicken during nearly every such encounter. Strange is man's character! I did not know, I did not calculate the fact that elsewhere officialdom might be worse,more intolerable and more intolerant - but a Jew isa Jew and he - especially a Jew of the Diaspora - does not like to take orders from other Jews. This is a state of affairs which is bad enough today but it was far worse when Jews began to emerge out of the amorphous masses of the Jewish Yishuv as officials, began to sit behind desks and started to issue orders, i.e. when Jews began to achieve that dream state cherished and prayed for by so many Jews of the Eastern Diaspora.

Singhalese Intrigues.

Our good ship, the "MAKIDU MARU", plodded on through the Indian Ocean. With every day by which the boat approached Ceylon the weather became hotter and stickier; day and night I was bathed in sweat and this did not change for the better after we had landed in Colombo. You cannot imagine with what envy the local people who with unconcerned ease succeeded to keep dry and apparently cool,while I felt the sweat run down my face,behind my shoulder blades,collect behind my collar and around my girdle zone. But undeterred by this discomfort I persisted in dressing in tie and coat. In this I was in no way an exception; many dressed in this way as a " Sahib" was apparently expected to torture himself in this manner. (I observed that all the Europeans and also the better-class Singhalese dressed, every evening at least, "formally" in coat and tie). I was told that notwithstanding the heat,the humidity, the absence of airconditioning (this blessing had not yet been bestowed on mankind), a man without coat and tie would not have been admitted into the diningroom of the ship and on land not even into the hotel lounge,a restaurant or even into a bus.

The boat made its way slowly into the harbour on that night of May 12, 1937 and it was already after midnight before we could disembark, I had booked a room in the leading hotel,the G.O.H and this had been a lucky move as all the hotels were completely full and there was no room anymore anywhere available. Luckily my hotel was just next to the harbour and I could walk there with the coolies carrying my luggage as it would have been difficult otherwise to get through the crowds in the streets to a distant hotel.

I learned soon enough why everybody - the British and the Singhalese - exhibited such a festive mood and why the town had been so tastelessly and also so disturbingly illuminated: this was Coronation Day. That day King George V. had been placed on the throne as King of England and as Emperor of the Empire. Those were the days when the Empire - somewhat dusty and already creaking, it is true - was still "the greatest " and it shone with special brightness after a good polish as the one it had been given on those very days in which I put my burning feet onto the soil of the Empire where the sun did not yet show any sign of setting.

It was hot ! The only place where I could breathe freely was the lounge of the hotel, next to the fountains and among the palm trees planted in the courtyard, well within the airOcurrent made by the large fans overhead. But I sat there only at rare moments and for short intervals. I was driven by that energy only a newcomer to the tropics possesses for the first year or two, and I was protected by that luck which the ignorance of the causes and consequences of heat stroke apparently grants. I had not the time to relax. I had not come to Ceylon to look at the sights and to enjoy a leizurely visit - even if such an enjoyment was identical with dry clothing for much of the time.

Early the following morning I asked a taxi driver to take me to the General Hospital which the hotel manager had indicated to me as the main hospital of the Capital. It was a huge building complex built in the usual Empire style. The large rooms and wide corridors under the high ceilings were quite cool and everything smelled impressively of disinfecants. The hospital,the doctors, the attendants were very clean,cleaner than any place of this kind I was going to see in the coming months and years anywhere in the East (I can add at this stage that ~~you~~ should you ever again go to the East

you will find that of all places you may visit Ceylon is in every aspect the cleanest). However, in May 1937 I did not know this; I had at that time no experienceof "normal" conditions in the East, and I felt scorn,pity mixed with all that kind of uncalled-for self-congratulation which a conceited greenhorn coming from a modern European clinic is bound to feel.

The doctors received me kindly, showed me around,asked my advice - most likely more out of politeness than because they thought a man coming from Italy might know more about their tropical diseases than they themselves. However, I was not very interested in a general hospital. I wanted to see the Mental Hospital. I had distincltly asked the Hotel Manager about such a hospital and the harrassed man appeared to have misunderstood me and he had directed the taxi driver to take me to the General Hospital. Of course, the doctors understood quite well what I wanted to see. They in turn instructed the taxi driver accordingly. I do not balme the doctors that they felt relieved when they saw me drive off.

After quitea long drive we reached the Mental Hospital. The place was situated beyond the limits of the twon, separated from the last row of houses by a wide open space. The hospital was made up by a large complex surrounded by a high wall. Outside the wall I saw two bungalows and many low,primitively built wooden structures. The latter housed the indigenous staff. The two bungalows outside the high wall and the administrative building situated within the compound wall, were the only structures made of stone and bricks. All other houses and barracks were made of wood with roofs covered by asbestos sheets. Within the walled compound large areas were separated from each other by wooden fences; and although about 1400 patients were confined within these various compounds one hardly heard more than an occasional cry or saw more than some movement here and there.

I was taken to the office of the Superintendent. I found him a very polished,charming,westernized man of pure Sighalese stock After a short chat he invited me to his bungalow for a drink. (He had a large selection of various alcoholic drinks but I preferred the iced pineapple juice which in the few hours since my arrival in Ceylon had become my favourite drink). After a few more minutes of polite conversation he told me that he had to hurry off to one of the many official functions which took place in town that very morning. He handed me over to his Deputy who after a tour through the various departments,compounds and other installations of the hospital invited me to his house, the second and smaller of the two bungalows I had noticed on arrival, to have lunch with him and his wife.

The Deputy Superintendent was a Christian of mixed blood He and his English wife proved very gracious hosts, to me the more impressive as this was my first meal ever in such an environment. I got not only my first introduction into the culinary arts of the East, but also a far more extended introdcution into local medical concepts and also the first hints of the way the game of intrigues is played. The Deputy - I think his name was Fernandez - was very keen to hear from me about the recent trends in Psychiatry. He was a profoundly frustrated man. His boss saw his duty not in the treatment of his patients, their comfort or their eventual cure , but mainly in the task to reduce as far as possible the expenses incurred by Government in the care for these mentgal patients. He found the easiest way to achieve this by reducing the availability of medicines, by reducing the supply of food and by reducing to the utmost degree the survival rate of these mentally ill patients. His way of thinking and his manner of treatment were made easy by the attitude of the local population to mental illness: a mental patient was thought possessed by the Devil and the family as a rule tried to

drive out the Devil by beatings, application of hot irons etc. A mental patient caused the family deep shame and his earliest disappearance from this world was at any time preferable to any possible cure. The hospital was managed accordingly; it was managed according to the concepts of economy of the Superintendent and the beliefs of the population. The only medicines prescribed were aspirin and phenobarbitones and heavy beatings were the only additional methods of therapy. The quality of the food was very poor and was quantitatively also the minimum a normal patient at rest might ever require. In addition the general health of the sick men and women was still further impaired by the standing order of the Superintendent thatall inmates had to leave their barracks at 6 in the morning and had to spend the following twelve hours of the daytime within the fenced-in open compounds I had seen making up the hospital area. The doubt I might have had about the veracity of the Deputy's tales was dispersed by the shock I had experienced when I had seen the many hundreds of men and women sit under the hot sun in the sands of their closed compounds without a tree or a bush giving a minimum of shade or protection. The Deputy could not give me a satisfactory explanation of this administrative program: was this the indifference of a Buddhist, the callousness of an Oriental or the selfishness of a politician ?

I felt very sorry for the Deputy and his wife. I well understood their frustration and their hopelessness. I expounded to them, as far as my broken English permitted, the quite considerable progress the pathology and therapy had made recently in psychiatry. I was shocked that nothing of what had become commonplace for me was known to this man and I was confirmed in the negative opinion I had formed about the Superintendent when I learned that the hospital did not subscribe to even one single professional journal. I promi-

sed to send him as much recent literature as I could collect.

The visit,the meal,the talk had taken up more time than I had thought possible and the Deputy - who had dismissed my taxi when he had invited me to lunch - drove me back all the way to my hotel,where for the rest of the afternoon I had a good rest underneath the large ceiling fan in my room.

I thought the episode was now closed. I had come to the conclusion that I had better abandon any possible idea I might have entertained to find as job in Colombo or to settle privately as a neurologist and psychiatrist. I think I was not anymore at all interested in Ceylon. But to be truly honest I think I thought nothing at all when I had reached my room as I must have at once fallen asleep after I had undressed and taken a quick shower.

I had less time than I might have wished to doze off the after-effects of the lunch, because to my surprise I was awakened by the Deputy who called on me with two companions who turned out to be members of the Ceylonese parliament. My newly made friend made me repeat what I had described to him about the ways mental hospitals in civilized countries treated their patients. I had to describe how patients were cared for,how they were considered sick people,as much patients as those who suffered from some kind of organic disease. I had to outline to these politicians again the researches which were going on everywhere, that at last with the help of modern therapy we could register ~~xxxxxx~~ some successful cures and I had to underline again and again the potentialities available in this respect also to the mental patients in Ceylon. My visitors appeared very interested and they asked me some very relevant questions. It took quite some time before I could communicate my thoughts in my poor English, but in the end there was no doubt that the t/wo MPs had understood me very well. I thought that I had now repaid the Deputy all the courtesy and hospitality he had shown me

that morning and I expected that the visit was the end of my contact with psychiatry in Ceylon. However, it was not to be. To my surprise the trio invited me to accompany them to the residence of the Health Minister. I accepted although I was tired, physically tired, and also because by now I was tired of the entire affair. I suppose it was pure curiosity which made me accompany them.

We had ,apparently, been expected at the private bungalow of the Minister of Health. The Minister and a few other men I saw sitting there in the drawing room greeted me very friendly and courteously when we arrived. They apparently knew already much about me and my background. Again I was made to explain to the Minister and his guests what I had already, a short while ago, told the two parliamentarians, viz:- that there existed a great difference between the medical and psychiatric facilities which were considered normal abroad and what I had seen here in Colombo. I told him about the possibilities which existed now to treat and cure a large oercentage of mental patients and I explained to the men assembled around the Minister the ongoing medical research in many parts of the world. To my great surprise the Minister asked me if I would be agreeable to stay on in Colombo for some time at least to help in the organization of a new hospital which his Government had since some time intended to build. I was, as you can imagine, taken aback by the suddenness of this offer and I tried to explain to the men sitting around me in that large room that I had not yet had the time and opportunity to make up my mind about my future in the East. The Minister, however, calmed me with the assurance that I did not have to decide at once, that he did not expect an immediate answer from me, as he himself would first have to cosnult his colleagues in Government about this new aspect with which he now viewed the planned program. He proposed that I "look around", that

I get acquainted with the twon and the country and that we meet again in a week's time for a more detailed discussions.

And so we parted on this understanding. I was sure that within a week I would be able to make my mind one way or the other. I was, of course tempted by the thought that there was a multi-facetted challenge in this offer to establish a modern hospital, that I could have so much material available and that I would have a virgin field at my disposal. At the same time the thought bothered me that such a decsion might make me miss other possibly better opportunities which might be waiting for me in India. Was I going to make a mistake and was I going to regret one day that Iu accepted the first offer I received ? In the end I was unhappy that the day had taken such a turn. My new friend, the Deputy, was jubilant when he brought me back to the hotel where we sat in the lounge for another half hour over a cold drink: he pictured in his mind a new and flourishing centre for the research and treatment of mental illnesses in which he would play an important role and from where the Superintendent, his enemy, was eliminated for ever.

The next morning, at a rather early hour, I was told by the servant that another visitor waited for me in the lounge. This time it was the Superintendent himself. He too was accompanied by two men, both of them M.P.s too, but different from the ones I had met the day before. The good doctor was very polite, coldly polite. There was no doubt that he was also very angry. Without mincing words he made me understand that he did not like my interference, that he did not require th e advice of any visitor from abroad. He made it clear, quite clear, that he too had influential friends and that he would do his best not only to torpedo the new hospital or any other scheme certain elements in Ceylon might have in mind for a hospital, but that he would also do his best ,his utmost best, to make my life miserable - and unfortunately also unsafe.

Having delivered all these homelies with a charming smile my visitors left with many good wishes for my health and success in India. They could not have been in any doubt, after the left that they had scored. They must have realized that they had scared me. I did not know the East, of course, but I had read enough - and my phantasy added sufficiently to what I had read - to make me know that I was not safe anymore. I had not bargained for this. I had not been prepaired for such a turn of events and I had no intention to play a pivotal role in any ongoing oriental intrigue.

I decided to leave. I booked a seat on the boats train to India for that same night. I did not leave the hotel to stroll through the streets as I had planned. I wrote to the Dy.Superintendent and also to the Minister that I had decided not to stay on in Ceylon for the time being as I wanted to go on to India as I had planned. I wrote that this decision should not be taken as my refusal of their offer, but that I would be ready to consider their proposal and to evaluate any possible future plans as soonas they were in a position to make me a concrete offer. They must have well understood what I wanted to make them understand in my poor English with the help of the dictionary. When I reached Allahabad some weeks later - I had giventhem the name of the hotel in which I had booked a room -a letter of the Health Minister was waiting for me. He offered me a two years' contract as advisor to the Superinendent of the newly to be built hospital. He proposed a salary which appeared to me reasonable at that time though not very excessive (which, I later discovered, was however far below what I had reason to expect). However I had long ago already decided to refuse anything which might even faintly be associated with the Mental Hospital in Colombo - and I informed the Minister accordingly.

M a d r a s.

I had made the journey to India with the intention to find a suitable place tp settle, but I had no preconceived idea where to settle and which criteria to apply. My plan was to travel through India, to stop over in the major cities and to investigate there the opportunities the places visited offered. I told you already that I knew pf the major cities from a map I studied, but I had not even read up a minimum about the country. I did not know details - climat/ic ,cultural,religious and what else you might mention and with which a clever and intelligent man should have been familiar before he had even started out from Italy - and this was the reason that I began my journey of exploration at the worst time of the year and was also unprepaired in many other aspects.

I arrived in Madras without knowing which hotel was most suitable, but I had no reason to enquire about this as the cab-driver took me without any further instructions to the Conemara Hotel which had the reputation of being one of the fines in India as I later learned. It was also built in that Empire style which I was to encounter everywhere , in so many hotels,railway stations, university colleges and High Courts all over India. I was givena cool room and I had a good rest before I sat out tovisit a Christian College to whose Headmaster Father Da Silva in Rome had given me an introduction. A horse-drawn cab, a "Victoria" brought me to the school and after I had spoken to the Headmaster,I found that this was not the way to get the right informations or to make suitable contacts. I returned from this wiser hardly any wiser, and my first act on my return to my room was to destroy all the remaining letters which good old Father Da Silva had given to me for a number of Christian teachers,lawyers or priests in different places in India.

Madras was my first " station: on my exploratory journey through India and I had not yet learned about conditions of medical practice and about medical practitioners with which I was going to become familiar within a very short time, however. I enquired from the hotel manager where I could obtain information about "medical condtions" in Madras and the man thought that I could obtain this information best from the " German doctor " who had been working since three years already in Madras. This was the first indication I had that there existed ,apart from me, Jewish doctors from Germany in India.

I went to see this Dr. Apple who was already over 40 I think, and appeared to be much affected by the heat. He was very kind and helpful, at least he gave me my first introduction to t he " state of affairs" I was going to encounter everywhere in India in due course. I did not know what to think about the invitation of Dr. Apple to settle in Madras too; he offered me whatever help he could give,placed his office rooms at my disposal for some hours every day. He appeared somewhat insistent I thought. I do not know if he acted out of kindness,out of shrewdness or if he felt lonely and really in want of company. Do not forget that I did not appear a competitor in his eyes. I had the intention to open a neurological-psychiatric practice; I did not intend to work in internal or general medicine. I believe more and more that Dr. Appel acted out of kindness. In later years I occasionally exchanged notes with him about some common patient here and there. I think I read once that he had died in Madras.

Let me add that I did not accept Appel's offer as I did not want to bind myself before having seen more of India. Appel considered this a wise decsion.

In Madras I had an experience to which at that time I did not give much importance and which only many years later popped

back into my consciousness and comprehension.

I was eating my luncheon in the dining room of the hoteland as I was unused to the spicy foods and did not know what else to order, I ate a few morsels from the different dishes placed before me, and I showed only too clearly my inexperience in the way I ate from each one in turn. Suddenly two Indians whom I had seen watching my performance from a neighbouring table, sat down next to me. The introduced themselves and began a conversation with me. They offered to teach me how to mix the different curries and chuttneys with the rice and offered also to intrduce meinto the superb art of how to suck the fresh mangoes which were so plentifully supplied with every meal. It took them quite some time to explain the technique and mechanism involved and I realized soonwell enough that in the course of our "conversation" about curries and manges they had succeeded in learning about my antecedents,the reasons of my presence in Madras and also about my future travel plans in India. It was very cleverly doe, the way how they drew me out.

After I had learned how to suck mangoes one of the gentlemen gave me his card and he offered his help should I have ever any difficulty anywhere in India. I learned from thecard that the man was a Major and I asked him what the separate letters he had added to his name intended to convey. He explained that these were abbreviations indicating that he had earned some academic degrees and been given some military medals, but that they had no connections with his profession, viz: that of an officer in the Secret Service. I must cnnfess in all honesty that this disclosure did not mean anything to me, and if he expected me to react to this statement he must have been very disappointed. Possibly he was convinced of my honesty,possibly he considered me a very clever fellow - but somehow at that time I thought he was a Jew and genuinely interested in me.

While I am writing this I suddenly realized what a kind of problem I must have represented to the Secret Service, to the CID in India. If I say that India was a Police State this may sound too grave an accusation and will not give you the right impression; but for all practical purposes and in the light of the shape and function of today's police states, India can be classified into that very category. The Government was quite well aware of the growing discontent among the people, of the revolutionary trends in the population which resulted often in acts of terrorism. Even though these terroristic acts may from our experience today appear ridiculously mild,poorly organized and ineffectively executed, they represented a constant problem to the Authorities and demanded constant vigilance. And this applied to no small degree to foreigners who travel through the country,contact everywhere doctors and other foreigners. Such a fellow somehow represented a puzzle, an enigma. I am sure I have been under constant surveillance since my arrival in India. This may have been the case already in Colombo, but during the security problems caused during Coronation Day the police authorities might have had other problems that very week. I am certain that all I did, whomever I saw, all my contacts, were carefully recorded and that some minor official in Delhi must have spent many hours to read the reports coming in with the strange informations resulting from my behaviour and my activities. Undoubtedly the puzzle did not fit into one category or other.

And I never realized all this. I never thought about such a possibility. Never had the slightest idea that I could be watched, checked and followed. This will show you , at least in this case, how inexperienced and harmless I was and should not becounted as further evidence of my stupidity.

The CID must have checked on my luggage,on my letters

without coming to any definite conclusion. Or did they ? They surely read all my letters, went through all my papers and they could nt find anything which might have made them suspect me. There is no doubt in my mind that the CID people must have realized that I was a harmless fellow but at other times they might have been less sure and somebody must have again checked on all the accumulated records. There must have surely been quite a file in Delhi about me. The people pouring over my file must have on and off have had doubts about me, and when the war started and the world credited the Nazis with more intelligence and greater cleverness than was justified, I must have figured in the calculations of the Indian Secret Service in a bigger role than I ever imagined.

I am going to tell you in the course of the following hundreds of pages how I lived in India, what I did, whom I met and so on and you might agree that some suspicious fellow somewhere in a dusty office in Delhi reading the reports,tabulating all the suspicious points about me, could have come to the conclusion that I had better be interned ? I begin to feel that this is the true diagnosis,especially as there were so many additional factors ,so many "private" enemies - my english coleagues,my polish landsmen etc - who by a hint here, a word there did certainly add enough fuel to make the flicker of suspicion burst into that fire which swept away any doubts about me.

Journeying through India.

Again today = as on many previous occasions when I have been indulging in recalling the past = I am shaken, I am even shocked when I realize with what carelessness, with how little preparation, which what non-challance, in short with what chuzpa, I travelled to and through India, entered a one to me in every aspect unknown world and unguided, unitiated and unprepaired and in an plain matter-of-factness faced men, issues, ppoblems and even dangers. Most probably I have in those days been blessed with quite an unusual amount of self-confidence, and I must have approached men of all kinds and ranks - British and indigenous - with some form of inner certainty and strength which those whom I encountered must have sensed and which must have made them look at me with a kind of respect and acceptance grown only and entirely on the soil of incomprehension. They must have thought they faced an individual the kind of which they could not have met before. This incomprehension must have at times created in them that sense of awe-tinged respect which in turn is possibly a pity-inspired tolerance which kept me safe and protected. Believe me, I am still today surprised at myself. You may possibly think that I am overdoing this business of patting myself on the shoulder, but do not forget that travelling on sucha scale, exploring in such a manner without sufficient backing, knowledge and protection was unusual in those years. Even though today's migratory performances of our youth may appear to you not far from what makes me in these memoirs look at myself with congratulatory wonderment, do not forget that our boys and girls of today roam around in hordes or know that within a short space of time or distance they are going ot meet people equally free of responsibility and aim in a new form of mutually supportive society.

But let this be enough ! I am dwelling on this point too much because the time came when this self-assurance was badly damaged and my inner strength irreparably undermined, when I was faced with the truth, the cruel truth that I was all of a sudden helpless and exposed to the whims and revenges and hatreds and finally - worse still - the indifference of people to whom I sprenuously denied any superiority but of whom I knew only too well that

they held all the advantages over me, that I was powerless, helpless.

I can confess here that my inner confidence was, if not shattered certainly bent and stained when the war broke out, my very freedom, my strong belief in my significance and a growing sense of my importance were suddenly threatened and when I had to show humility should I not want to suffer more humiliation. For me this was the moment of truth and the people around and above me sensed that my inner, my sustaining strength had gone - when I realized that my hair in a symbolic way had been cut off as that of Samson of old.

I may have been lucky, very lucky in everything I did, planned and arranged; and what may have appeared as arrogance to some and as innocent clumsiness to others, may have at times prevented me from unpleasand mishaps, but must at other times certainly have made me suspect in certain quarters of the Government of India who apparently shifted their diagnosis about my character from that of a simpleton to that of a very astute, shrewd and dangerous individual.

All these generalizations and hints may appear to you strange, superfluous or monotonous - and you are in all likelihood justified. Let me, however, go on now with my story and you will soon enough reach the pages from which you will come to know what I wanted to convey to you.

Let me tell you now in general lines my first dayns and weeks in India; thereafter I shall carry you again to some place here and there to tell you about some "happening", some event, some episode which I think is worth being described in detail.

As I have mentioned at the conclusion of the last chapter, I had found myself in the rather unpleasant situation of serving as the centre pin of old-established rivalries and newly planned intrigues. I possessed none of that reckless spirit of adventure which you might have possibly suspected in me, i.e. I did not feel any inclination to wade deeper into that pool of singhalese political mud confronting me in Colombo. Instead, after a stay of only three days, I was installed with my heavy luggage and my inevitable sun helmet in a railway compartment - a first class compartment again as I had been strongly advised to book by the hotel concierge. I was the only occupant of the compartment; apparently nobody thought of travelling on the day the King-Emperor was crowned.

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16, Jail Road Lahore

Bombay 1937 F 37294

The train left around midnight and when I awoke the next morning the train had already arrived at the railway station of Trichinopoly. I must have appeared strange to the many Indians whom I considered officials of one kind or the other,who walked alon the platform in their white shirts and dhoties,who paraded an umbrella in one hand and many-coloured stripes of clay on their forehead; and I cannot but have been a starnge sight to the other passengers on the train and to a multitude of children who had turned up from somewhere and stood around the window of my compartment gasping at me with open mouths. And quite rightly so. As a rule a European traveller,whatever his official or social status,travlled in khaki shorts and shirt, had his personal servant spread the inevitable bedroll on the compartment's bench for the Sahib to sleep and rest. And a Sahib had always a well-stocked ice-cooled box with drinks of all kinds in his compartment. And above all an intelligent traveller - Sahib or not - kept the windows closed not only against the heat but also to keep out the dust,the flies and the marauding holy monkeys.

I can now well imagine the impression I made on the public wherever I travelled during those first weeks in India. Mind you ! I say impression as nobody ever laughed about me, made fun of me or pointed a finger at me. The Indians were far too polite to behave in such a way. I was a phenomenon of a kind they had most likely never seen and about which they must have talked among themselves - in merriment, puzzled, intrigued ?

There I was in my compartment,in a blue silk suit, in shirt and tie,the inevitable topi - of a shape and type which is as a rule never seen in India- not far from my reach. And I was covered with dust and flies which I had allowed to enter the compartment through the open window. I had no bedding like everybody else and I had spent the night stretched out on the upholstered bench (I did not even know that this bench could with the help of a few moves be extended into a comfortable bed. All this and much more I learned in the coming days and weeks when I shared the compartment with seasoned travellers).

You might have thought that within a short time I would have learned to adapt myself to the rules and methods a traveller in India should observe, but it took quite some time before this dawned on me even though I had enough occasion to observe the manifold ways by which other travellers made themselves comfortable. I

travelled in this inexperienced,unpleasant and primitive way from Trichinopoly to Madras,from there to Bangalore and from there to Hyderabad inDeccan. Then I crossed the subcontinent to reach Calcutta From Clcutta I travelled straight westwards to Allahabad,Cawnpore, Agra,Lucknow and Delhi. In Cawnpore I had at last learned my lesson and had at last become weary of my uncomfortab;e way of travelling. In Cawnpore I decided to do at last as the British did, I visited the "Army and Navy Stores" (that important commercial institution and landmark which mothered all those who needed advice and guidance if they stayed on India only for a few weeks or settled there perma - nently) and bought there a thin firm mattress,two pillows, two sets of bedsheets and pillow cases, ablanket,towels and so on and hadd all the stuff fitted into a "bedding roll", a hold-all which is more important in India and has contributed more to the survival of the white man in India in the days before the airplane made things easier than even the ubiquous cholera and typhoid vaccinations. I also bought khaki shirts and khaki shorts,khaki knee stockings and in this outfit did I not only feel more comfortable but also my khaki topi appeared all of a sudden less incongruous especially as I had rounded out my purchases with a pipe which I kept most of the time between my teeth and made me less irritated whenever sand or dust filled my mouth. From than on did I last enjoy my travelling around although it was hot, very hot and the monsoon had not yet made its appearance.

From Allahabad and Agra I travelled to Delhi; thereaf- ter I continued to Bombay. You will agree this was quite an itinerary more or less a journey into the blue,planned more by the sequence of heavily printed names on the map in inidcation of major towns than by any more detailed study of the geography or other specifics of the subcontinent. I did not proceed from Delhi to Lahore (as you might have supposed) but travelled straight south down to Bomb- bay. Who knows if I would have returned again to Lahore from Bombay had I visited this our future place of residence already on this first leg of my journey.

I must shamefully also claim another distinction: have you ever heard of a traveller who comes for the first time (and if you want to start counting, who ever comes any of the many possible times) to Agra and does not visit the Taj Mahal ? Or who come to Delhi and does not visit the Red Fort ? Look at me and you will see

such a fellow. I knew vaguely of these structures from former reading but I did not visit any of them then. It was too hot,too dustyy and I had too much to plan and to do (that was at least what I told myself and to people who enquired). In reality there was nothing which could me distract then, as I was sure that one day I would come back and enjoy the sights of India at my leizure. In case I should not do so, incase I should never again have the opportunity to do so,something was goiing to be fundamentally so wrong with me so that also the memory of my having made use of that first occasion would not please nor console me.

Everywhere, from Madras to Bombay, I enquired from the hotel managers if any foreign doctors had settled in their towns.If that was not the case I asked for the name and address of the leading local english or Indian doctor which meant in practice the " Civil Surgeon ".

When I set out for the East, for India,for Madras, Calcutta,Bombay etc. I did not know that so many German Jewish doc= tors had already preceded me,had often since some years settled there in very active private medical practices. Some had come already in 1933; they all had become rich, some of them very rich. Those who had established themselves soon after 1933 had mostly been induced by connections they had in India from times past - be it Indian colleagues,patients,businessmen. I was told that these Indians gave these German refugees all the help and assistance possible and in a very generous measure before bad experience induced them to withhold further support to refugees. I found soon out that many such doctors had settled in India by the time I journeyed around and I soon found also that their success had gone to their individual and collective heads to such a degree tht they had come to believe that they did really possess unusual medical qualities and qualifications. And I dscovered also very soon that many of these doctors -usually those who felt unsure of themselves - lived under the dread that additonal doctors might decide to settle in "their towns and in this way come to compete withnthem.

This is a sad chapter and I wish that one day somebody might collect experiences of this kind,viz:- how German Jews knew where to go and knew to find help and support when they were at the receing end, but how they soon forgot their own experiences and reestablished their old form of egotism which had brought them into disrepute in many a country since long,when they were successful.

In H y d e r a b a d (Deccan) .

I spent three days in Madras and another three days in the pleasant hill resort of Bangalore and from there I took the train to Hyderabad. The map had shown that Hyderabad was quite an important town. I discovered that it was the capital of an "independant"Muslim State, ruled by the nizam. I remembered having read that this Nizam was possibly the richest man in the world.

It was a hot day when the train deposited me and my luggage, topi and all, at the railway station of Hyderabad. The coolie placed me into a cab,the cab brought me to a hotel,the hotelier gave me a room. And he gave me also the name of Major Naidu whom he called the leading physician in Hyderabad. I went to see Major Naidu. H e was the physician-owner of a private Nursinghome,called the " Golden Threshold". Naidu was a very nice man. He received me very kindly. He asked me to come back in the afternoon to have tea with him and his family. When in the afternoon I came for the tea I found a sumptuous meal laid out in the drawingroom of his bungalow. Mrs. Naidu presided over the table. I was told by her husband that shewas Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. This was interesting I said and greeted her again without showing in any way that I was impressed. She was the Mrs. Sarojini Naidu,her husband insisted. Very pleased to meet you Mrs. Naidu, I said. Poor me,stupid me,ignoramus me ! I did not realize that it was a great honour to sit at the table of this lady; did not know that she was a very famous woman,that she was the leading woman congress-politician of her days. I did not know this, but I should have known this. I should have read up some of the past and actual history of the country before placing my flat feet on this country's surface. But I did not know and you can imagine what a stupid impression I made. However, let it be said to the honour of my hosts: they appeared not to resent my ignorance and their kindness never changed.

There sat also another couple at the tea table: the son and the daughter-in-law of the Naidus. The son had only a short while ago returned from Germany where he had completed his medical education with an M.D. He spoke very fluent German which facilitated

MAJOR M. G. NAIDU,
M.B.

THE GOLDEN THRESHOLD,
HYDERABAD (DN.)

9th October 1937.

Dear Dr. Selzer,

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Yours sincerely,

M Naidu

Prime Minister of my presence

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our conversation much. His wife was a German girl (I was sure she was Jewish(- but as she did not mention this I preferred not to ask, especially as the son hinted here and there that he admired Hitler and his policy); she was very shy and very retiritng (but during a few seconds when we were by chance alone, she shispered that she lived in hell in that household,that the kindness shown to her in my presence was only a facade, that her husband was a very cruel fellow etc).

The Naidus were very interested in my possible coming to work in Hyderabad. They encouraged my plans and they assured me that I would never have to regret such a decision. However, they also pointed out that the weather was not too kind, that the summers were very trying (there was no airconditioning yet, of course). I would not have to worry abat the heat, they added however, as most of the Europeans and also the better-class Indians as a rule migrated during the summer months to one of the nearby hillstations. What made me rather hesitate to view Hyderabad with favour was their information that Hyderabad was an orthodox Muslim State, that I would have to arrange for two waiting-rooms in our practice as women could under no circumstance sit in the same room as men; that I would hardly be permitted to examine a woman but would still have to diagnose and treat then by a kind of telepathy. The major plus in my favour,they pointed out again and again was the fact that Kate was also a physician and that Hyderabad was ideally suited for such a husband-wife team.

I must confess that I liked the Naidus but that I did not like the strictly muslim climate of the State, which the Naidus, who were Hindus described in most unflattering terms. Do not forget that this was my first contact with Muslims ! I told my hosts that I would make up my mind and that I would in due course communicate to them my decision. (I kept my word, of course, and wrote and told Major Naidu that I had selected Kashmir for the summer and Lahore for the cold season).

The next day, while I was sitting in a tin bathtub underneath the fan in the centre of the drawing-room of my "hotel-suite" , I was told by a servant that Major Naidu "sent his compliments": he had come to see me again, as he had a special request to make. I dressed and saw the Major. He had come with a request: could I come with him to examine Sir Akbar Hydari,the Prime Minister of the State ? He, Naidu, had told the Prime Minister of my presence

in Hyderabad and the Prime Minister had expressed the desire to see me. As simple as that ! Of course, I agreed to accompany the Major to the residence of the Prime Minister.

Sir Akbar was a nice man, afriendly man, commanding from the first moment of contact the respect even of a fellow like I. He told me that he had for many years been suffering from chronic dyspeptic conditions, that he had not only consulted all the leading doctors of India, but that on each of his frequent visits abroad he had seen the specialists in many a country of Europe. However, nobody had been able to help him: his abdomen continued to bother him,his digestion remained impeded, his mind could not work clearly and so on. He took me into his dressing room where he showed me the medicines he had taken so far. I do not think any item of the last issue of the pharmacopoeia was missing. He showed me mountains of x-ray films and laboratory tests and all these agreed that nothing was specifically wrong with any of his abdominal organs or his chemistry.

While I was contemplating all the material presented me, I was quite worried how I could get out of the dilemma I was facing: how could I within the short time at my disposal, be it hours or even days, find anything new, anything which had not yet been tried or said, how could I give any kind of advice or medication without getting the expected reply that this had already been said and had already been prescribed.

To my good luck Major Naidu interrupted the silence by telling me full of scorn that Sir Akbar had even tried to get medical advice from the " quacks" who so abundantly and unrestrictedly " interfered with the health of the people in India; he asked my advice and help to persuade the Prime Minister that he should not lower himself to such depth. I suppose he told me this also not only to evoke my dis dain but also because he wanted me to understand how desperate the patient had become.

" Imagine !", Naidu told me. " Last week Sir Akbar started on a new treatment which one of the Ayurvedic quacks has prescribed. (He explained that Ayurveds or Veds are native healers using mainly herbs,animal organs etc.) That fellow", he continued, "prescribed that the patient should rise every morning before sunset, fill a silver cup with water from the well,place his gold ring into that mugfull of water, keep cup and contents exposed all day to the sun, and drink the water from that silver mug the moment the sun

sets again. Can you imagine that an educated man believes in such nonsense ? Can you explain to the Prime Minister, Doctor Sahib, that he should abandon such forms of treatment and that he should only take scientific medication in future ?"

I am afraid I did not do what the Major had wanted me to do or to say .Not only was I impressed by the therapy prescribed by my unknown native ayurvedic colleague but I was also happy that I could bow out with grace and could leave without making a bad impression. I explained to the Prime Minister and the Major that in the last year or so new ways of treatment had been intriduced in Europe for the treatment of intestinal infections or dysfunctionss, even for septic infections in general. It was the so-called " colloidal therapy". I explained to them that substances like silver,gold, iodine etc. were transformed electrically into a colloidal state and that they had definitely proved helpful in many a case. (I think that the fact that the era of the antibiotics was about to start - the sulfas and the penicillins - most likely not only made the colloids obsolete but cancelled also every further interest in them).

" And what else is the treatment of the Ved that a colloidal treatment", I concluded. " If you put the gold ring into the water inside the silver mug, a kind of electric current starts and transforms the water into a colloidal silver solution . Let Sir Akbar continue with this treatment. It is an excellent therapy and should prove beneficial".

I was very proud that I had so elegantly extracted myself from having to handle such a hopless case. I suppose Sir Akbar continued to drink from that mug, I suppose Major Naidu tried to find a solution for the conflict in his mins which I had started. In any case: I left the next day for the next stage of my journey.

(However, there is an additional paragraph to be written for this chaper. In 1938 we spent the summer in Kashmir. It was during the hottest time of the year ,July-August, when Major Naidu turned up there. He had come in person to take me with him to Hyderabad as the Prime Minister was in very poor health and had asked for me. It appears that I had made a good impression on him when he saw me in person.

As I said: it was hot. I was in Kashmir. It was hot even in Kashmir.And it was far hotter in the plains and especially so in Hyderabad. Airtraffic was unknown yet. A journey from Srinagar

to Hyderabad would have taken about 5 days journey by car and train. I would have to count the same time again for the return journey. And I would have to stay at least for 8-10 days in Hyderabad to be with the patient, to observe him, to watch him. I just could not face that journey, that heat, that strain,that train etc.etc. Neither could I leave my work for twenty days or so - at least that was what I wanted to make myself and the Major believe.

I refused to accompany the Major. I refused even when the Major offered me any sum, any fee I might ask. I refused even when the old man told me that he had come all the way from Hyderabad that he dreaded going back there without me . I refused. I am still sorry I did so. But regrets do not change the damage I did to myself and my reputation.)

I have told you already on a previous occasion how much a recall of old times,old experiences,old deeds and misdeeds can help you recognize you, see you in a different light, give you an opportunity to say: "I wished I had known better. I wished I had acted differently".

And it gives you also the opportunity to wonder about yourself, about your weaknesses,your mistakes and a divine protective hand which might have made you avoid disasters and mishaps, but still leaves you free to commit similar, even equal mistakes at the next occasion. How I envy the man who learns from his mistakes once for ever and never again repeats them - but he must be a dull and cantankerous fellow indeed.

In a Calcutta Porcellain Shop.

I knew very little about Calcutta; I knew only that it was the largest city in India, and possibly also politically and culturally the most advanced. This was what our friend Chaudhri in Rome had told us and this was was also conveyed to me by Subhas Rao the student I had met on the ship along with his firm conviction that Calcutta would be the ideal place in which to put up my shingle. I could not judge, of course, the cultural level of Calcutta, nor could I come to any conclusion with regard to its political atmosphere but even today can I unequivocally say that I am glad that I did not decide to become a resident of that big,dirty, crowded town.

I had cabled the time of my arrival to my newly found friend Rao, but coming from Madras my train was delayed and I missed the connection at Wardha with the train for Calcutta. I had to wait a full day in the railway guestroom at Wardha before I could continue my journey. I again cabled the new date I was supposed to reach Calcutta now after the delay, and I was not at all surprised that I did not find Rao with his checkered tweed coat and flannel trousers among the masses of humanity crowding the platform of the station. However, I had no time to come to any wrong conclusion: no soonerhad my luggage been taken from the train by a coolie,that I saw in front of me a young man in muslin shirt and dhoti, addressing me by my name - and I realized with a start that it was indeed Rao in a sensible local way of dressing.

He had been able to rent for me a room in a clean hotel he told me; it was not one of the fashionable hotels,he told me; it was a wellknown Hindu hotel, he told me. It was in addition a vegetarian hotel, he told me. And he asked me if I agreed with his choice I agreed, of course, with his choice; on the contrary, I told him, I was glad I was given the opportunity to live in such a hotel for a change.

We loaded my luggage into a Victoria, a two-wheeled horse-drawn carriage, and made our way to the Royal Hotel . We attracted the attention of all those we passed in the streets. This became the more evident no sooner the cab had entered the native

of the town. Quite a crowd assembled when we stoped in front of the hotel to watch me being greeted by the fat proprietor and some of his staff. I was taken to a large room with a clean tiled floor and a large ventilator overhead. Those protions of the walls which were not takne up by the many doors and the large windows, were covered by colourful tiles and here and there with even more colourful pictures of elephantine Hindu gods. The adjoining huge bathroom to which my host drew my attention had a primitive kind of shower and large water-filled receptacles,pots and pans,of all sizes and there were also many wooden b/oards on the floor the use of which I learned in due course. I also learned the use of the " W.C." which was of a kind I had never seen before: it is today called the "Japanese" type, but I think it was used by the Hindus long before the Japanese left the rice fields and began to squat down in the speciall y provided structures in the courtyards.

Mine host was very attentive and I was very well looked after in the Royal Hotel. What more can one expect than to have the owner look every hour or so into your room to enquire if you had in the meantime been able to think of some wish; that to have a servant sit day and night in the corridor opposite your open door; than to have the owner clad only in hisdhoti with this chest and his overhanging abdomen bared stand by your table while you eat, watch you eat,see to it that you eat more than you intended to, hands you conveniently sized pieces of chapati, spoons curd onto your plate and peels for you the bananas which you are than offered in suitably sized morsels.

Friend Rao returned in the afternoon and he appeared to have done his homework. He gave me the address of the eonly German doctor who had established himself in Calcutta, a certain Dr, G. Treu. I went to see this Dr. the following morning. He was quite friendly but I had come at a very inconvenient moment, as he had to "rush" out at once to see an important patient or an urgent call or something of the kind; but he invited me to come back that very evening to have dinner with him.

When IC returned that evening I found my Dr. Treu very upset.

" What have you been up to", were the words with which received me, no sooner had I entered his flat. " It seems to me that you have been the cause of quite some upheaval among the powers that be, or have at least drawn a lot of attention on yourself here".

" What do you mean" , I asked; though Iwas surprised, I was in no way worried.

" I do not know myself what it is about" ,was his reply. " But when I returned from my patient this morning, I found a CID officer waiting for me. He had come to enquire who you are, what you wanted from me,what I know about you. I told him that I had never before met you and could ,therefore, not reply to his questions, but that I was going to see you again this evening. I would not be surprised if somebody from the CID is here tomorrow morning to enquire again about you. Now tell me, what is it all about" ?

" I really could not tell you what has aroused the interest of the Police. I am not conscious of any misdeed. In any case: I can assure you I have a pure conscience".

I may have felt innocent and pure but I had soon to learn from the shocked reaction of Treu how gravely I had sinned. Or let me say how much I had misbehaved in the eyes and by the standards of the Establishment, as in the course of our conversation - during and after dinner - I learned that I had done everything a foreigner should not do, that I had done everything to arose the suspicion of the police authorities, that I had done everything possible to place myself in a bad light.

" My God !", groaned Treu - and his dsitress seemed genuine and not faked, " how could you be so stupid ? You are a foreigner who has come to Calcutta without an introduction to any British officer or official who might have vouched for you. You meet a young student just returned from England who most likely is known to the Authorities as a revolutionary, and you put up in a Hindu hotel in the native aprt of the t/own. You are most likely the only European ever to have done so since many years. And you are surprised that you have attracted the attention and the suspicion of the Police ? But what surprises me most is that you appear so unconcerned about all thestir you have caused!"

" You may rest assured", I told him, " that I am not very much perturbed by the disturbance I have caused among the CID, and I am by far not as much upset as you are. I am sure everyone concerned will soon realize that I am not at all interested in politics, local or otherwise. You can believe me, if I have done something which I should better not have done, I have acted only out of ignorance. I can assure you that nobody can accuse me of any crime A faux-pas ? Yes, I agree. I have learned from you that I have dome

certain things I should better have avoided doing, but you nor anybody else can accuse me having committed a crime ! This is the exact reason why I feel less concerned than I should be in your opinion".

" You do not know the conditions which prevail in this country, and especially in this town", insisted Treu, " otherwise you would have shown more concern.

I agreed. I did not know the conditions and problems in Calcutta; though this was not enough to absolve me in the eyes of others, I personally knew myself sufficiently innocent not to bother about any possible implications. I honestly felt that any intelligent man should and could see that I had not the slightest intention to get involved in any political game; that I was a doctor exploiting his chances to settle in practice in Calcutta.

This and nothing else was the purpose of my making contact with Treu, and this was the question I put to Treu after dinner Good Dr. Treu who in the morning had tried to impress me with his busy practice, in the evening with his excellent social and professional connections, suddenly changed into a dissatisfied man who complained about the paucity pf work and income and the difficulty to compete with the many established British and the very excellent Indian doctors in town. Mind you: I had come to India to start a practice in Neurology and Psychiatry; I did not intend to practice general or internal medicine and could,therefore, hardly be a competitor to Treu.

" Let me be honest with you", he finalized his arguments. " There is not enough room here in Calcutta for two German doctors. One doctor may live in comfort, but two would starve. And I must point out also to you that you have started on the wrong foot with the Police and that this may make your life here in Calcutta very difficult"

He certainly had given me an honest expression of his feelings and worries. This I accepted. But there was no doubt that he was not straight with me. I came to the definite conclusion that he was not an honest fellow.

I thanked him for the excellent dinner and he in turn must have thanked heaven that his arguments against my selecting Calcutta had been so suitably strengthened by the interest the CID had shown in me. However,neither the advice of Treu nor his warn-

ings made any great impression on me; the former was blatantly dishonest,the latter clearly exaggerated.

I not only thought so, I also acted in this sense.

I had learned from Treu that a certain Dr. Gerber of Stargard, a dentist was also living and working in Calcutta since one year and I recalled that Kate had learned somewhat vaguely about this from her parents. I contacted Gerber, met him and he turned out to be the very Gerber in whose mother's house Kate had been a boarder while she was in school in Stargard.

I asked Gerber what he thought about my coming to settle in Calcutta, to start my work here as a p hysician.

I have hardly ever again met a man who so persistently refused to give a straight and conclusive answer, a man who was incapable of pronouncing a clear yes or no. When I pressed him to give me a final reply he could bring forth only this final evasion"

" I must tell you that I do not know. I cannot judge your chances. I would like to advise you to settle here , I would like to say you should settle in Calcutta, I would like to say that Calcutta is such a big town and has room for two physicians, but as I live from the patients Treu refers to me, it would be an act of disloyalty if I advise you to come here and to open a practice here in competition with Treu ?"

What can you do with such a man ? What can you do with such an advice ?

And ,by the way, what do you think about the German Jew who has himself escaped and who refuses to give others a piec of bread ?

However, I had one more visit to make, one more venue to explore. I went to see Dr. B.C. Roy. I had never before known of this gentleman. Let this be said to my shame. I did not know that he was the leading Hindu physician in town, that he was the Dean of the Medical College , that he was the leader of the opposition in the Legislature,that he was the leading Congressman - and of course I did not know that a few years later,when India had become independent, he was going to be the Prime Minister of Bengal. This whows you that he was a very important man and it makes it understandable that the British did not like him and liked even less foreigners who tried to come into contact with him.

You cannot blame me if I do claim ignorance of all this at the time I came to Calcutta, I heard about this doctor and politician for the first time from Rao who after consultation with the hotel proprietor suggested that I visit Professor B.C.Roy, as he was such an important man and possibly a man who could help me.

Why not see Dr. B.C.Roy ?, I told myself. If he was in such an important position in the medical world, he might indeed be better able to give me advice than Treu and Co.

I went to the house of B.C.Roy without making an appointment - such was my self-assurance. The good professor was busy, I was told. He was directing a seminar of senior medical students. But to my surprise I was at once admitted. He made me sit next to him and made me tell him why I had come to see him . I was very impressed by this imposing man with his wise face and his kind manners.

I told him who I was; that I had come to India to start a new life; that I had come to see him to seek his advice about the main problem facing me at the moment: viz:- if there was a chance in Calcutta for me to earn a living as a neurologist and pyschiatrist that I had specifically come to enquire if there was any kind of hope to find work and employment in the Medical College itself.

As I have alreadymentioned: Dr.B.C.Roy was very kind and considerate. He explained to me that there was no separate department for neurology at the University yet, that he, the Professor of Medicine at times gave a lecture on some neurological subject; that he would welcome a neurologist to his faculty. He advised me to settle in Calcutta in private practice. He promised to send me his neurological and psychiatric cases and he assured me that he would help me in many other ways should I ever call on him for such help - and if after a year or so I had proved myself he would gladly install me in his College, as a lecturer in neurology in a first instance and later possible offer me a higher title.

What better news could I ever expect to hear ?

I thanked him and promised to think over hisoffer.

I certainly did put Calcutta at the top of the potential places which might finally be honoured by my professional presance I decided to continue my travel program. There were still so many other places to explore !

I went back to my hotel to pack. As you might have already understood, I did not see anything of the vaunted sights in Calcutta. I consoled myself: one day I might return. I was determined to return one day, even I had settled somewhere else. I wanted Kate to see this incredible town, to taste the contact with Indian life of this nature. I promised mine host that in case I did come back to Calcutta I would be accompanied by my wife and would,without any doubt, again take a room in his Royal Hotel. This pleased the good man very much and he assured me of his continued good wishes , good services and sincere prayers. He added, that he would call hils old mother from her village to be at the service of Kate during her stay in the Royal Hotel.

It is a pity that we never returned to Calcutta, not even for a short visit.

Homo Judaicus Bombayensis.

And then I went on to Bombay. I have on many occasions in later years been in Bombay (let me ,however, not exaggerate: "Many occasions" is to be taken only in a relative sense. I could not have been in Bombay more than eight times in all) - but on every such visi I confronted the town and its Jewish luminaries as a different man: wiser perhaps,less exuberant for certain, more disappointed without doubt - and always more and more reduced in social status.

On that first visit to Bombay at the end of June 1937 I did not know what the future was going to contain, did not care what kind of problems I might have to overcome. I felt I could handle the world,had to fear no enemy, could stare down anybody who misinterpreted my good intentions,could spit on whomever doubted my good character, could only dispise anybody who implied that whatever I did or was going to do was not honourable, could annihilate the obstacles the petty German Jewish doctors put into my way with their lies and intrigues.

I took a room in a small hotel and soon learned the whereabouts of the German-Jewish doctors in town. Quite a number had already taken residence in Bombay. The first comers, and now the leading ones were a certain Dr. Weingarten and a certain Dr. Berger. I had been warned not to attempt even to ask Berger for advice and so I went to see Weingarten. The man could not have been more charming and helpful. He had been "Oberarzt" - senior physician - in the University Clinic of Frankfurt; he had been successful in his treatment of rich merchants from India, who when approached for their support, helped Weingarten to open a practice in Bombay and assisted him further by introducing him to their friends and relatives. Berger who had been a medical representative in Berlin where he visited the local physicians in order to explain to them newly introduced medicaments, had also made use of his connections in the pharmaceutical world and had one day in 1933 turned up in Bombay with the intention to work as a physician. Both, Weingarten and Berger were welcomed by the Jewish Community of Bombay - both the "Bagdadi Jews" and

the "Bne Israel Jews" - who helped them with money,advice and patient On their advice the two doctors formed a partnership which,however, had been dissolved again by the time I met them. So far they had both been also good partners in their efforts to keep other physicians away from Bombya and they had become known to use methods which in noway would anywhere be considered to conform to accepted ethical standards. They "did not mind" that a limited number of dentists, dermatologists,ENT-specialists,ohthalmologists etc. opened their offices in Bombay, both, however, succeeded in preventing other physicians,using threats and boycots,from joining the German-Jewish medical community of Bombay.

A change had, however, occurred in those very days when I met Weingarten; a great deal of personal enemity had developed between him and Berger, and as Weingarten had by then developed a justificably good reputation in his profession and also an unassailab le position, he tried to hurt his former partner by among other things also encouraging competitors to settle in Bombay. May be I am mistaken. May be that Weingarten had come to repent his former attitude and had realized that he had been unfair to keep newcomers away by the foul means he and Berger had used so far and had forced others doctors in Bombay to support. As I say: maybe - and I do not know if all the rumours with which Bombay was constantly swamped ,were all to be trusted.

Weingarten was a snob, but a nice one. He asked me to have dinner with him when we would have more time to talk. He asked me to meet him at his Club in the evening,from where we would drive together to his house. He was immensely proud of having been accepted as a member in the "Byculla Club" and he had every reason to be proud - if one puts much weight on such honours - to be the only one of his group to have been elected to this very exclusive English Club. He tried also to impress me with his comfotable bachelor flat, the number of servants he had employed (one even exclusively for his small dog). During the course of the evening I received a very thorough introduction into the intrigues,the attitudes,the characters of the Jewish doctors of Bombay. Weingarten encouraged me to settle in Bombay and he even offered me his consulting rooms for the afternoons there to receive my neurological cases and he promised that with his help I would see many such cases.

On his advice I went next day to see a certain Dr.Weinbach, a relative and protege of Berger's, who had settled only a year or so before in Bombay, so that I might get first-hand knowledge of the "sub-terranean currents", as he called them. He asked me also to see a certain Dr. Laemmle, an ENT-Specialist whom he labelled a "decent fellow" and from whom I could expect clearn and honest answers to any and all of my questions.

I have met many unpleasant,hateful people before and since, but if I am asked to give somebody the crown of the most obnoxious man I have met, Weinbach would be a serious contender. He was a thickset man of about 45 who made no effort to hide his displeasure when he saw and heard me. He was a pediatrician who had decided to become an internist in Bombay (pediatricians were not yet much appreciated in the East) and he is said to have achieved this change over by simply multiplying the dosages of medicaments he prescribed by a factor of 3 to 5. When I told him that I had the intention to settle down in Bombay, he told me bluntly:

" We do not want anymore Jewish doctors in Bombay. There are already enough of us here. Go somewhereelse, India is a big country: go anywhere you want,but get away from Bombay".

" I do not know who the "we" are, but I hear from some of your colleagues here that they do not see my chances too bad"

" I do not care what these certain doctors say. I and my friends do not want you or anybody else to come to Bombay".

" But do you realize, Dr. Weinbach, that I would inno way compete with you or the other physicians ? I want to work as a neurologist and pyschiatrist, and would never be tempted to take away any of your patients."

" You are mistaken. And all those who told you differently aremistaken. We do not need a neurologist. We do ourselves all the neurological work which crops up. And there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that you will take also medical cases on ,medical cases of all kinds, should they turn up in your practice"

In my life, especially in my professional life,I had never heard anybody talk in this way. This appeared to me the way people talked on the market place or in the bazar. If I replied now in the bombastic way I did it was mainly dictated by my anger and my disgust. But bombastic or angry, I would have mostly liked to kick the fellow's shins.

" I do not understand how you can insinuate such kind of behaviour from my side", I told him. " It seems to me that you

have strange ideas of medical etiquette. I cannot judge, of course, if you have these all your professional life or have acquired these only since you are here. In any case, I would like you to know that I am in no way obliged to anybody of you and let me point out to you that I do not have to depend on anybody of you. I am financially indep//ependent . I have enough means to start my practice without asking for favours from you or your friends".

" You think so ?", sneered the dear colleague. " You really think so ? It appears to me that you will have to learn many a truth here. Let me give you a hint of the things you have stillto learn. A year ago a Polish Jew came to Bombay and settled down without out permission as a neurologist. About two months ago he committed suicide. Let this be some kind of warning and may it give you also some kind of understanding that we succeed in the end to make people realize that nobody can settle in this town without our permission".

A nice fellow, don;t you agree ?

I had heard in the meantime that since some time a "Jewish Relief Association" had been established in Bombay and I went to their office to ask for information. The Secretary, Mrs. Wartenberger, was a nice and friendly lady indeed; but she was clearly embarrassed to hear me and she did her best to discourage me. She told that she felt it her duty to give me only unfavourable information and that she would have to refuse in case I asked for her help to settle in Bombay. She repeated the same recital that a further increase in the number of doctors would threaten the wellbeing of all. Poor thing ! She was certainly ill at ease especially as I repeated to her what I had heard or how I had been treated so far.

And finally I went to see Dr. Laemmle. He and another EIT-man had opened a combined practice and were doing well.

" We have a good practice, which from one poit of view is a pity", he told me. "Because it binds me to Bombay against mywill and makes it impossible for me to pack up and go elsewhere. You cannot imagine how much I would to get away from here,away from all this hatred,all the slander,all the infighting. It is a pity that every one of us here is so successful: it has made us forget where we come from and why we came here. Let me give you an advice:", he continued. " I hope you will understand that I am not interested in giving you any bad or selfisg advice. I like you and would from a personal and even professional standpoint welcome to have you work here. But

notwithstanding all this,let me counsel you: give up the idea of staying here. If I could move; if I had the courage to give up everything and to start afresh, I would go to Lahore. Have you been to Lahore yet ? This is a pity, " he remarked when I told him that on my travel through India I had so far byepassed Lahgpe. " Lahore is a big town, ancient and cultured. There is no foreign doctor yet in Lahore. You will not find there any of our kind and friendly doctors who know how to make one's life misearble. And there is another favourable factor: you know that in summer the Central Government and the Provincial Governments,Europeans and better class Indian families move away from the hot places in the plains to spend the summer months in one of the adjoining hillstations. Lahore is the capital of the Punjab and the hillstation for the people from Lahore is mainly Kashmir. You cannot imagine the beauty of Kashmir. It is a paradise. And if you settle in Lahore and spend the summers in Kashmir,you will never regret this. I would be very surprised indeed if you will not thank me for the good advice I am giving you".

I found Laemmle a nice fellow. I thought then and do so now that he did not talk to me in this way only to make sure that I got away from Bombay. He was also so persuasive and so enthusiastic that I decided to take his advice and go north to " look Lahore over". I had in any case made up my mind that I would leave Bombay because I could not imagine how one could feel happy in such an environment of hatred - and fear.

Before I left for Lahore, I visited the Polish Consul General of Bombay. I thought it wiser to make him know of my existence and to have my name registered in his files. One never knows , I thought. Banasinski was somewhat taken aback that I did not know a word of Polish, but I could not have been such an exception, could not have been the only Jewish Pole he had ever met whose only "Polishness" was his passport. I do not know how he would have acted in other circumstances and in another place; he might have been equally nice also elsewhere, but it appeared to me that in the East he felt the need to act the fatherly person to me, his citizen in search of a home. He agreed that Lahore was a nice town,that Kashmir was a "beautiful place" - and he told me that he a good friend in Lahore, a politically very important personality who might be useful to me in the first few months for advice and introductions . He gave me a letter of introduction to this person. He was right: Begum Shah Nawaz whom I met through Bansainski, was to play a great role in our lives.

Now you know the reason, the manner, the way , the "why" I went on to Lahore. As I said before, I would not have settled down in Bombay after all I had seen and heard; there were so many other attractive places in India I had seen and which I hoped might suit me. However, when I came to Lahore, I came soon to the conclusion that this was going to be "our place". I could mention many a reason for this decision - but the main one was that there were no other German-Jewish doctors yet "in residence".

Only a few words about the protagonists I have mentioned at length here:

Weingarten - possibly because he was such a snob - married a famous Jewish Indian film actress , who in the end ruined him in many an aspect. His name figured for months in a "famous" case in the Indian press. He left Bombay, took on a job in a Hindu State. After the war he emigrated to Israel, where he died; I hear he was a man broken in health and spirit.

Also Weinbach came to Israel, but I could not find any details about his life here. I am sure that somehow and in some form he got his deserts. And Berger ? And Laemmle ? And all the others? I do not know, nor did I care enough to enquire .

L a h o r e - here I come.

It was hot , hot and humid, when I arrived in Lahore. I arrived by Frontier Mail, that relatively comfortable train which takes 36 hours to travel from Bombay to Lahore , and thereafter continues further north for another 12 hours or so. It was pre-monsoor weather,the mercury registered 108° and the humidities was up into the nineties. But it was still better,pleasanter than the climate of Bombay.

I stayed in Faletti's Hotel where I was given a large suite with large fans,large doors leading into a large verandah; there was also a large bathroom and a large dressing room. By this time I had become used to Indian hotels and could appreciate alredy subtler differences. Falett's was in my opinion a good hotel with good service and good food.

All this - climate,hotel,appreciateion of finer points in the people I encountered, made me agree with Laemmle's judgement. As usual I inquired about the doctors of Lahore. I was told that there were many English doctors of theIndian Medical Service staffing the Medical College and spending much of their time in private practice. There were also many Indian doctors who occupied subordinate positions in the College and in addition there were many other Indian doctors - Hindus,Sikhs and Muslims - who worked exclusively in private practice and had acquired good reputations as medical practitioners. I visited some of the professors, was given a polite welcome and very non-committal informations.

I learned of the presence of a group of Germans who lived permanently in Lahore, but who could hardly be of interest to me.They were the local representatives of major German industries, like Krupp,Siemens,Bayer and did not hide their enthusiasm for Hitler and Nazism.

Somehow my presence in town became known to the only other Jew from Germany who lived in Lahore. (There was also a German-Jewish dentist in Lahore, a Dr. Benjamin,but he spent that summer in Kashmir, and I met him only later). The German Jew, of whom nobody

had told me in Bombay, came to call on me in the hotel. He was a Dr. Lessheim, a former lecturer in physics at the Breslau University,who had been invited to do a scientific jobat the Lahore University, but had soon made so many enemies and had become such a nuisance to all concerned that he was dismissed at the first opportunity. He worked now as a private assist ant to the Profesor of Physics who seemed to appreciate Lessheim's faculties and accepted his particularities and protected him as much as possible from the hostility which surrounded that poor fellow. I soon came to understand why Lesssheim had to face so many difficulties: he knew everything better than the next man; there was nothing in the sciences,in philosophy,in politics which Lessheim did not know better and in which he thought himself an expert. Unfortunately he never hid his opinions of himself and others. In my case he had initially no great difficulty to make me believe that he was better informed than I myself. In my optimistic view of Lessheim's knowledge and capabilities,I gladly took his advise although his own position and circumstances did not induce much confidence in his qualifications. He lived with his wife,his mother and two dogs in a flat in a poor part of the twon,in constant conflict with the Indian and Anglo-Indian neighbours who at the best belonged to the lower middle-class. He had a ramshackle motorcar of uncertain origin literally held together with wires.

In Lessheim's opinion I had been wise to select Lahore as my future residence and he predicted that I was going to be successful. He was of the opinion that a gentleman should not stay in Faletti's Hotel,should instead take a room in Nedou's Hotel. The former was used only by "travelling salesmen",the latter by gentlemen and government servants. His judgemennt was not at all confirmed by my own observations but I was far too inexperienced yet to refute the opinions of experts. I solved this dilemma by renting a room in a Boarding House as I foresaw a longer stay and wanted to save my money. Lessheim gave his blessing as he confirmed that Mrs.Marshall's Boardinghouse conformed to the standards of a gentleman. He told me that I had to buy a motorcar as travelling by tonga- the horsedrawn carriage - was in the long run unbecoming to my status. As I did not want to spend a great chunk of my money on a new car, he found a very cheap three-year old Chevrolet which he found,after a thorough check to be in good condition. He did not know - and I did not blame him -

that the car had been smashed up in an accident,had been repaired thereafter and that insurance company was waiting for an ignoramus like him and I to take the car off their hands. But all in all Lessheim was very helgful indeed: he taught me to drive the car,arranged for me to get a driver's licence without the formality of a test. He accompanied me on my rounds to find a house, which exercise took up many a day. And on his advice I did at last rent a two-st oried bungalow, No 16 in Jail Road, from a Hindu with the imposing degree of DSc(London), who was clearly overjoyed to find in Leeheim and myself a couple of men far too ignorant of the intricacies of dealing in estates with Hindu scientists to realize in sufficient time that "we had been had". The Hindu had built the house entirely from material he had collected from old torn-down houses or from dealers in used building material. Not one item in the house,no brick even or any of the installations he used had been new when he purchased them. In consequence none of the dozens of windows and doors was equal in size or shape to the other. The electric wiring consisted of old used material as were the switches,plugs,locks,hinges etc.etc. The garden was large, filled with an abundance of trees and bushes, but very neglected and had the appearance of a jungle. There was a well in the garden and an electric motor was supposed to drive the pumping system which in turn should have brought forth abundant water. The motor too had been used,old and repaired before it had become many years ago the property of my landlord and it had been repaired,patched up mny a time - the last time with such a success that it was workingloudly but quite effectively when he demonstrated it to me at the time of my taking over the house. A few days later the motor expired again. However, Lessheim advised me to sign the lease for 11 months (11 month was the prefgered period as this freed the owner from paying taxes). A rider in the contract made me declare that I received the house, the garden,the pump etc. in good and working condition ! To make the landlord feel that he had definitely scored, he made me pay all eleven months' rent in advance. Whatever I was made to do or to sign was " as it is usually done here", I was told. Lessheim was very useful, as I said, and I dod no t blame him that he was not equal to the ruses and tricks the landlord played on us. I only realized the trap in all its extent which the Hindu had made me enter, during the many following months. The first lesson I learned when Kate joined me;

she showed me that it was impossible to fit the curtains she had brought along from Rome on my advice, she showed me that the bathrooms floors were encrusted with layers of dirt inches high (after days of work and many boddles of caustic soda we discovered that the floors were made of marble). When a week after we had entered the house the electric motor expired and when thereafter the mechanic we called in nearly every week became a constant institution for the regular patchwork required here and there, she and I had already become used to the surprises which the house and all connected therewith had nearly every day in store for us.

But after all it was a timely lesson. I learned that I had still very much to learn; and these experiences taught me that I had better realize that there were many cleverer people than I around, that I better shelve the kind of sense of superiority which had accompanied me for so long. I can assure you the experineces of that first year in Lahore did me a lot of good.

(Let me anticipate: after a year we gave the house back to the owner who, not surprisingly did not want it back and who tried to persuade me to prolong the pleasure of being his "lessee" for many more years. When he failed in these efforts he tried to make me believe that I had to give him back his house in "working order" according to his way of defining. Of course , I had to give him back his house in such a condition that the wiring ,the motore, the pump etc. worked satisfactorily - for about a week).

In the meantime August had come upon us. Kat e had completed her examinations in Rome and was on her way to India. The lift van with our furniture etc. which we had sent on from Rome,had arrived in Bombay. It had arrived in good condition and the Customs Authorities were surprisingly pleasant and lenient (these expressions are only justified by my later experiences, as I was not asked for any bribes by any of the different officials with whom I had to deal in Bombay and not even by the one who came to check on the contents of the lift when it had been opened in our house in Lahore. I can only explain the unusual behaviour of these officials all tht they expected to be handed their baksheesh without any asking and they must have been stunned when I said a nice "thank you" - and that was all.

With Lessheim's help I arranged for a "set of servants" to be handy when Kate arrived. Fortunately I did not engage them but left this to Kate - and for once I had been wise, as these servants I had "found" with Lessheim's help must have been the most unsuitble and the most crooked ones on whom the Indian sun shone in those days.

The time came to travel to Bombay to meet Kate. I rented a room in Hedou's Hotel for the time of our return to Lahore. The I added a second mattress and another set of bedsheets etc. to my bedding roll and left for Bombay. There I stayed in a small boardinghouse - and at last the day came when I stood at the pier and saw Kate waving at me from the majestic ship which made its way into the harbour of Bombay.

DOCTORS OFFICE
16 JAIL Road
IN
LAHORE
NOT
BOMBAY

F37295

Kate & our signboard
LAHORE

F37296

Kalish an I outside gate
LAHORE

F37297

In my office Jail Rd. LAHORE

F37298

In my office Jail Rd. LAHORE

With Kalisch and children of
Bashir Clan F37299

The Kalisches and we
F37300

KALISH AHMED

The Kalisch Episode.

I was first tempted to call this chapter the "Kalisch Trauma" but had I done so I would have attributed to the Kalisches much greater value, and this would make me eo ipso look a much greater fool than I have considered myself ever since. I am so harsh with myself although it was then and has ever since remianed a trauma. The pain of this episode has never been tempered by that benefit which a trauma can and should bring to a man who makes claim on some degree of intelligence: that this experience acts and serves as a lesson from which one draws the righ conclusions and future caution. T his I never did: I never learned my lesson nor did it prevent me from repeating my foolhearted ways of trusting untested people.

During the half year which Kate had remained in Rome to complete her M.D. examinations she wrote to me to India that she had been meeting again a Jewish girl from Poland whom we had once taken along on one of the free airplane trips which our friend G entile had provided. (I could not recall that girl - which should sufficiently indicate that she could not have made a great impression on me). Kate had been in contact with this girl recently as they prepaired together for the forthcoming examinations in Medical School.

The girl knew of Kate;s forthcoming departure for India and she begged her to make it possible for her and her fiance,Artur Kalisch,to join us. This Kalisch had come as a medical student to Italy as he could not enter a Polish University due to the restrictions imposed there on Jews, and he had completed his sudies in Naples the preceding year. The main theme of Kate's letters was that the girl and boy were in love with each other since they grew up in Lodz in Poland,that they despaired because they did nt see any kind of future ahead,that they did not know of any place where and how to earn their living in future. However, the main argument which Kate repeated and underlined was the ultimatum this boyfriend Kalisch had issued, viz:- that he would not marry his love if they could not find a suitable place where to live and work. The tears and laments

of the girl moved Kate's heart to such a degree that she begged me again and again in her letters to make it possible for Kalisch to come to Lahore, so that he could be made to keep his promise and place the wedding ring on his girlfriend's finger.

I must have been moved by the worries and the despair of the lovelorn couple and I wrote to Kate, what I had on previous occasions written to other people and which I was going to repeat again and again on future occasions in other circumstances notwithstanding all the poor and often downright negative experiences: "Let them come". And as before and as later on,I added: I shall do my best to help them". And in this case I even added" " I am ready to assist them even still further: we shall open a practice together, and although they have not enough money to start such a practice we shall help them out financially as far as we can". Imagine ! I did not even know this couple; I had never seen that man and though Kate had possibly seen him once in her life ,she could not remember much about him either. I made one condition, however: reacting to a hint that Kalisch wanted to explore his chances in India before signing the wedding register, I insisted that he and the girl would only be welcome as a married couple.

Are you surprised what is coming now ? What I am going to tell you ?

The Kalisches came to Lahore. We gave them half the house - half the upper floor for their private residence, and half the groundfloor which we had transformed into our working area. This groundfloor contained four consulting rooms,one for each of us doctors with a common waiting room and laboratory. We hired furniture for the "living quarters" of the Kalisches and they shared our meals until they could organize their own independent household.

Already within the first month it became clear that I had made a great mistake, that Kalisch was not the man with whom I could share my work. His wife was most likely not to blame as shewas far too servile,far too much afarid of him,far too much subordinate to reveal any decent character traits she may have possessed. It became now clear that Kalisch had from the onset had no intention to work in a partnership and that he had decided from the first day that he would free himself from any contact with us before he had even given our collaboration a fair chance. He was secretive regarding his patients; he made every effort that we should not share the friends

and contacts hemade, although we had from the outset made it a point to introduce him to our friends and make him use the connections we had been able to establish.

Within half a year the situation had become so intolerable and the atmosphere so unpleasant that I gladly agreed to his request that we break up the partnership and that each goes his own way. He had built up a group of his own patients and carefully nursed them as "his own". He later boasted that he had worked for this break from the first day, but it was stupid of him to explain to his friends that the reason for his planning was his resentment that we treated him and his wife as servants !

Although we lived in the same town, we had thereafter hardly any contact with each other anymore. Of course. I learned only later and when I did so I could not believe it for a long time,that it had become Kalisch's aim to to eliminate me as a competitor at the first opportunity. The future showed that he succeeded only too well. When I was interned he had no more competitor in town. Undoubtedly, a great part pf the responsibility for our internment is Kalisch's. He was a "true Pole",he spoke and wrote Polish as a good Pole should. I did not know a word of Polish like millions of Jews from Poland who inherited the Polish passport by virtue of the political upheaval resulting from the World War when the peace treaties dictated the new frontiers. Kalisch was the man who reported in "confidence" about my "patriotism",about my attitude to the antisemitic leadership in Warsaw,to the Polish Consul General in Bombay. The Consul senton and off forms to be filled in and Kalisch did this on my behalf in his good Polish. I received later on hints that the way Kalisch filled in these forms on my behalf were liable to incriminate me in the eyes of the Polish and British Authorities. I know for certain that when Kalisch was asked by the " Polish Government in Exile" via that same Consul General to guaranty my anti-nazi attitude ,he replied that he was in no way able to do so with certainty. I know also that when the British-Indian Government asked him to guaranty that I was truly Jewish and a convinced anti-nazi he equally refused t make a clear and unequivocal statement to this effect.

The Polish Consul General in Bombay could, of course, have no doubts that I was a Jew, a Jew from Galicia,one of thise

Jews whom he did not like and whom in addition he did not like to protect, and he was only too happy to follow the instructions of his Government to declare my Polish citizenship null and void because I had never lived in Poland . I have no doubt had Kalisch declared that I was a refugee Jew etc. I would have been allowed to keepmy citizenship and would not have been interned. I have no doubt that Kalisch's refusal to declare to the Indian Government his conviction that we were genuine refugees etc. had to a great extent contributed to that Governments decision to place us in an internment camp. Can you blame them for this decision ? Can you blame them if Kalisch, a Polish Jew who was guaranteed as genuine by the Polish Consul General refuses to make a statement in favour of another Jew who claims to be a refugee from Germany ?

I shall never forget the day when we were interned, when I went to see Kalisch in his office,when I requested him that he looked after my patient, and when I asked that he arranges that the fees still outstanding from my patients be cashed and forwarded to me. Kalisch did not even try to hide his glee; he jumped into the air,threw up his arms and explaimed: "Now I am going to be the only foreign doctor in Lahore. From now on I shall not have any competition".

Don't tell me that I am exaggerating. Don't tell me that a decent man could never behave like this ! I declare on my word of honour that the scene happened as I describe it. Does this mean that he was no a decent man ? What else have I been telling you all the time ? Heoffered me 50% of the fees my patients might pay to him; he did so for half a year or so, than he wrote to say tht he did not feel anymore and in any way obliged to me and that he wanted to cease every further contact with me.

And so he did. He certainly did not expect to see me again. I ,however, was for years living in the hope of meeting him again,of encountering him once more. And once we did meet, after the war,in the streets of Lahore,when we had returned from the Camp. He certainly did get a shock seeing me.He must have felt his life very much endangered as within a very few weeks he left for England. He told common acquaintances that he did not feel sure anymore in Lahore and expected to be murdered should he remain in Lahore. However, I did not care anymore to revenge myself,to demand justification for

for all his deeds and misdeeds, to ask him for a statement of accounts I had come to the conclusion that it was unavoidable that he was going to get his deserts, that was going to repay what he owes me in the course of the life he still had to live.

I do not blame him that he avoided meeting me in the autumn of 1941 when I came to Lahore on a week's leave from the Camp. when I came to sell our furniture we had stored in Lahore, when I noursihed the hope that we would be allowed to leave for America. Kalisch had left town for that week, I was told,so that there might not be the danger that he meets me even by chance. I do not blame him; I say this because many, nay all our good friends from former times avoided me on that visit,tried not to know me when they saw me on the street. There was only one man who showed me kindness in those days, on that visit. He was Sardar Khushwant Singh. I may write about him at a later occasion.

And so we settled in Lahore .....

In the first week of September 1937 we had completed our arrangements; the bungalow at 16, Jail Road was readied and we could start on our professional life. The lower floor of the house contained our consulting rooms - those of the Kalisches and ours , and there was in additoon also a comfortable waiting room. I had spend many an evening, extending it often late into the night, to repaint what the painters had painted, to enlarge anatomic motives on big white sheets to decorate the walls. I felt quite proud of my work, of the shiny white walls, the clean floors and the furniture reflecting the light in their shiny enamel coat. I fixed our name plates at the entrance gate and erected a large signboard with our four names outside on a grassplot in front of the house.

And thereby got into quite some trouble with the Medical Council of the Punjab. I had known that such a Council existed and that our names had to be registered by the Medical Council to empower us to work as doctors. We had our names and diplomas registered in due course.

(Legally anybody could practice as physician in India not only in those days but also today' but whoever called himself "doctor" or added any title or degree - these are usually expressed in a series of abreviated letters - to his name without being entitled to such " letters", was liable to persecution. It was not unusual to learn of "doctors" who had acquired their diplomas in some "mill" abroad, or who had bought the diploma from some deceased physician (an ,of course, had changed their name accordingly), and there were in every bazar in the country medical practitioners who had never been able to complete their studies because for one reason or the other they failed three times in their final examinations,the M.B,BS. and this was indicated by the addition of M.B.,B.S.(F) to their names on their signboards (The F. standing for "Failed").

I knew also that ,contrary to German usage, a newly settled doctor could not place an advertisement into the newspapers to inform the public of his arrival or return; in short, the British concept of medical ethics prevailed and any form of advertisement

was unacceptable. I am not surprised that the medical authorities considered our big board far too large and approaching an advertisement - and they were certainly justified in their criticism.

A priori they were also peaved,unhappy,disturbed,jealous,furious or whatever sensation of antagonism you can name that we had dared to come to Lahore and to settle there as physicians. This did not only apply to the British doctors - all in Government service and mostly working as teachers in the Medical College of Lahore, but even more to the Hindu,Muslim and Sikh physicians who,apparently, feared our competition more than the English colleagues or had less inhibitions to express their dislike and also fears. They must have known that for years German and other continental physicians had opened practices in the main towns of India,that as a rule they all had been successful, had acquired a large part of the better class or richer patients who as a rule had added so much to the salaries of the Government physicians , had made up the main income of the leading private Indian physicians and had absorbed among the ever morenationalistically inclined population who did not want to consult British doctors and had little respect fortheir own indigenous medi=cal men and had shown preference for foreign doctors. These facts and circumstances made it unavoidable that wer were not received with anything even approaching a cordial welcome by our colleagues, and that our first contact with the Medical Council was rather panful However, after a year or so there were a few English physicians and many Indian ones who - though they could hardly be called our friends - showed us quite some degree of friendliness and collegiality. We could also clean our slate with regard to the Medical Council by our explanation that we did nt know the British professional rules - and of course, by removing the offensive signboard.

As I mentioned: we established quite a few good contacts withlocal doctors but they were usually those who did not worry about our ability to compete with them, i.e. the surgeons,the gynecologists,the ophthalmologists etc., while the physicians, the internists never forgave us our presence and never missed an opportunity to fight us.

We soon developed a good practice and acquired even a kind of good reputation. We had the most variegated kind of work and patients. Apart from the better classes making up the Lahore and

Punjab Society, into which we were soon introduced mainly by the purposeful efforts of Begum Shah Nawaz and her relatives, we attracted also many patients for whom the very fact that we were foreigners was sufficient reason to make them think that the combination ofour skin colour, the origin of our passports, the fact of our non-British origins imbued us also with superior medical knowledge.

We soon counted also many British men and women among our patients, not only those who were engaged in industry and business, but also many Government servants who otherwise had access to free medical services from Government doctors but who, apparently had not too much trust in their own countrymen. (The opinion one often heard expressed by British and other residents was that any medical man worth his salt would have found employment and a carreer " at home ", would have been successful in England, and would not have had to come away to the colonies to find employment).

Our house adjoined a small complex of bungalows mainly occupied by British Government servants. As advised by friend Lessheim I "dropped" visiting cards printed in the right form and size into theletter boxes of all the neighbours, as well of those in front of the leading physicians in town. Except for the Professor of Gynecology and who lived nearby and our next-door-neighbour, nobody found it necessary to do the accepted and expected thing, viz:- to return the courtesy of "dropping" his own card in return into our vast and newly acquired letterbox. Nevermind, we thought , we could live with this emptiness of our own letterbox; however, we did not realize at that time the degree of hostility and contempt this omission indicate(

Before I continue, a few words about out "next-door-neighbour". The middle-sized bungalow, within a neatly kept garden, belonged to a certain Mr. Ijaz Daultana, who called on us in person the moment he had noticed that we had made contact with him through that dard in the letterbox. He was a politician of some kind, of a brand which exists in every part of the world: a wheeler-dealer, corrupt and well versed in all the tricks which brought forth all the riches and advantages he could not claim or otherwise own from his background as a small landowner. He must, however, have made a very good income as he lived with his wife elsewhere in Lahore, while the bungalow next to ours had been placed by him at the disposal of his two mistresses, who fortunately were sisters and lived in the

harmony possible. Kate was appointed phsyician to these two ladies and I was given the unusual permission to visit them too from time to time on a social basis, for a cup of tea. (I suppose this was due to the fact that I was a European and a physician,and not because there was that extreme belief in my inability to ever abusing his trust). Mr. Daultana did not have to fear me: thase two sisters did not fonform to my concept of beauty;but appearently they did to his. They had been dancing girls,had worked for years as prostitutes and both were coincidentally very much overweight. Most likely they were considered beauties as their skin was very fair indeed. All associated with this bungalow, master and mistresses, appeared to be inanely proud of their salon in which we and other guests were received: everything therein, without exception, was in mauve colour; not only the furniture,the covers,the glasses,the crockery and cutlery, even the large globe depicting the world in different shades of mauve.

It is a pity we lost contact with this household after a year when we changed house. However, that year we had the pleasure to welcome the son pf Mr. Daultana: Mr. Mumtaz Daultana who had completed his education in Cambridge and who came to call on us in his grey cutaway suit and spats. Apparently he did not want, in later years,to be reminded of this background,especially as he married a third sister from that menage. When Mumtaz became a leading politician,the the prime minister and later on Ambassador, there was little friendship left between us. (One day he called me to his house, when was already a mighty politician, to see his nephew. He thought hiself important enough to keep me waiting for quite some time. I do not know how long he would have kept me waiting, as I do not know the waiting period he thought the difference between our positions demanded,as I left after ten minutes and refused ever again to go nearhim)

The Daultanas were poor people and Mumtaz' education, grey cutaway,white spats and all were paid for by his uncle, Sir Shahabuddin who later adopted Mumtaz as his son and turned the young ambitious fellow into a very rich man. IO treated Sir Shahabuddin for many a year; he was a true gentleman. I enjoyed every visit . I had to walk up uncounted stairs into the tower on top of whichhe lived and which he never left, and where he finally died. I always regretted that the fine old man was no more alive whenever, after our return from the Internment Camp, I passed that large palace which Mumtaz thereafter could call his own.

And so we lived and worked as physicians in Lahore in those years before the Second World War, when the British Raj was still mighty,the Germans still sure of their future might, and the Indians felt that change in the air which gave them the impetus to their final struggle for freedom.

We were successful in many aspects; we acquired a good reputation and our income was satisfactory. Our social life increased and we made many a friend among the British,among the Muslims and among the Hindus. Also among the missionaries and mong the other foreigners. There were also many Germans in Lahore, those who represented German industry and commerce , but we did not meet or know them. And they did nt want to know us. We were not important enough for them even to fear any anti-German sentiments we might create among the people of Lahore. They tried to shrug off any of the news or any of the information which might make the Germans appear uncivilized or without culture. The people in India, white or coloured, couldnot care less about what happened to the Jews in Germany and gladly accepted the local Germans' explanation that the rumours were only a special form of jewish-bolshevist propaganda. After all German cars and German technology were superior to anything else. Was that not enough ? You think this is a non-sequitur ? But, my dear ! This was the argument we heard everywhere whenever we talked about the new Germany,the barbarous Nazi-Germany.

Only once did we have contact with the Germans: when a Siemens apparatus we had brought with us did nt work. The local Siemens engineer, a certain Riethmueller came to repair the machine and he never even charged for his work. I do not know what the C.I.D. thought about this contact . They must have wondered ? (After the war had ended this fellow Riethmueller came back and he never forgot to mention during the many years he stayed in Lahore thereafter, how his morale had been strengthened when he got his first business from us - I ordered our first x-ray machine from him - and through us he got much more business thereafter from hospitals etc. Imagine ! He had feared that Germans would be considered parias all over the world for generations to come and that he and Siemens would be ostracized for ever. Imagine !)

And so we lived in Lahore and worked quite happily. After a year we gave up the house in Jail Road and shifted to a bungalow in Egerton Road. It was a much bigger place,much more central,

situated in a huge garden and watered by a Persian Wheel. We lived in that bungalow, built in the typical imperial-style beloved to the builders of those times past until 1941 when we were arrested and interned.

In those four years we learned much but,apparently, never enough. We had all opportunities to see but apparently never saw. And we were made to pay for our inability to learn and our incapability to see. We spent the summer seasons in Kashmir and the winter months in Lahore.

In January 1939 Pipsi was born and in October 1940 Michael. And thereafter that simple and trusting life(when we did not want to learn from experience and did not want to accept the unpleasantness of limitless trusting) we led in Lahore came to an end. When we took up our work again in Lahore 5½ years later, we did not start our life on that point and in that manner in which we had ended in Lahore. However, I cannot say that I had yet learned my lessons even after 5½ years internment, when I had ample opportunity to do so, to digest,to reflect,to comprehend . This is a rather shameful confession - don't you agree ?

Some reflections.

Let me add some reflections about the period in our lives about which I have written just now, those years in Lahore before the war. These may depict the way we saw the world, the manner we handled our luck and the thoughts we had about ourselves.

We had come to India at a time when the British Raj acted still as a mighty lion; his skin was somewhat moth-eaten, it is true, and his roar somewhat hoarse, but he was still powerful and strong. So strong he was still that at times he could also be lenient; he could be magnanimous in many an instance. Even in the last hors of his power his actions and reflexes were never dictated by fear or the acknowledgement of weakness. Let us be clear about it. Only later, very much later, a very unpleasant trait come into the foreground demonstrated by many an official here and there: pettiness, revengeful hitting below the belt. However, much of these small and petty faults were erased by a deep sense of shame and remorse.

We Jewish refugees were treated well; we were treated better, most likely, than we nerritted. We were treated by the British as " Europeans" , as " Whites" and though were a few rungs below the British in every way, we were always made to be seen by the "natives" as Europeans. and respected as such. They treated us as refugees, it is true, but also as Jewish refugees, if you know what I mean. They never accepted in full the truth about the Nazis. They knew that the Jews who gave the British so much to do inPalestine were the same Jews as we were. The Indian Government , after all, reflected the policy of the British Government from where it received all the informations and intelligence - and you know the attitude of the British Government to the Nazis before the war and to the Jews before, during and after the war. In the last years more and more Indians had been placed into responsible positions in Government and these did not cherish to see also other Europeans - especially Jewish Europeans -placed into the"raj-posture" they accepted as reserved for the respected and mighty British only.

Looking back I am surprised about the way in which we took everything for granted and especially the way in which I demanded to be seen and to be placed . I did in no way feel less or lower than anybody else. I felt we were as good as the best among the British and the Indians - and if the truth is to be told - I felt I was in no way inferior to any of the doctors or professors, whatever their

position or their colour. Let me be still more truthful: I had no respect for anyone of these colleagues and I felt I was more and knew more. Imagine this conceit of mine which was in no way justified ! But I suppose this way of thinking and acting or reacting, this kind of compensating and posturing must have carried me along on the waves of euphoria, must have given me a lot of confidence andmust have in timepositively and favourably influenced my surroudnings and must have acted upon my patients.

To my shame I must also confess that I was in no way impressed by people in high positions or with great riches if they had not earned these by hard labour or their own efforts at least or ahd not acquired them by their specific qualifications. What the had inherited, what had been handed to them on a platter,was theirs it is true,was their's to own and claim, but was in no way sufficient to commandeer my respect or my awe. This was a very wrong attitude! this was a very dangerous outlook. I did not see anything special- except something queer,something funny,something exotic in the many native princes and grandiose people with whom I came into contact - but I was not smitten,was not bowed down with awe. Unfortunately, this attitude I have never lost, and I must have appeared wrongly placed or even hostile, when I showed scant evidence of being over- powered in the presence of royalty. Luckily they all could not care less about what I thought about them. I was for them,especially withi the crowd they faced,something very negligeable. Only once, I think, did I cause some bad blood: when I was for 4-5 days in constant con- tact with and company of the Earl of Cadogan (when he visited Lahore and I met him in London) I never addressed him as " My Lord" or as "Your Lordship" as I was supposed to do. Somehow this was for me too much to swallow. I quite realize that I was a fool; I did feel a fool already then. And while I am writing this, in 1978,shortly after my return from London where I had been again in direct contact with a few of such Lords occupying high ranks in English Freemasonry as o right by birth, I realized that also now do I have this block which prevents me from acknowledging even in such a formal way,such a non- committal impersonal manner,that they are "My Lords".

K a s h m i r

I have already mentioned that initially one of the primary reasons why I selected Lahore as our residence, as the place in which to work,was its "nearness" to Kashmir; one had to travel only some 350 miles to reach Srinagar - and 35o miles are a small distance in that cast subcontinent of India.

The summers are hot in the Indian plain, very hot indeed. In Lahore already in April the temperature begins to rise to nearly 100° and it can reach 115° in June. As a rule the monsoon rains begin in the early part of July but we have there no proper monsoon, the rains are not as sustained and as regular as in the southern parts of India; they bring only some relief for a day or so, when at times the temperature drops below 100°, but thereafter, when there is a break in the rains for many daya at a time, the high humidity which reaches often 96% and the steadily increasing heat make life quite unpleasant. I was one of those who prefer the dry heat of 110° of May or June to the days when the thermometer indicates only 95° while the humidity reaches nearly saturation point. Do not forget that the blessings of airconditioning were still unknown in those days ! I installed a very large, very noisy and rather inefficient unit in 1947 or 1948; I was one of the first in Lahore who risked the uncertainties of this new mechanical gadget for the sake of some relief from the heat.

In those years of which I am writing now we sat the huge 2-or 4-bladed ventilators suspended from the roofs of every room fighting bravely to help us keep cool. These monsters kept the air ,along with the dust, in constant movement; they did not, of course ,lower the temperature, but they made one feel cooler because they increased the evaporation of the sweat which perenneially covered one's skin. These electric fans represented

already a very great technical progress which usually only people living in the major centres could enjoy, and I witnessed on many an occasion how the old established ways of vemtilation,of moving the air were still used; a large canvass sheet,framed in bamboo poles suspended from the roof and across the room was kept in constant movement through a string which was passed through an opening in the wall into the veranda outside and fixed to the big toe of a coolie who succeeded by the constant movements of his foot to keep the canvas sheet in constant movement - until the man was overcome by too deep a sleep which then was regularly interrupted by a string of shouted curses from the " sahib" inside the room the moment he woke up bathed in sweat.

Many a a hypochondriac have I met who preferred to have his sweat run in rivulets from his face down to his toes in order to avoid the "colds" or "rheumatics" these fans were accused of causing, but I certainly belonged to that majority who blessed the enormous constantly whirling blades overhead and later did not mind the racket the early airconditioners caused , since everything which brought relief from the heat was welcome. (Kate belonged to an "intermediate" group: she did not love or bless the fans, but she tolerated them, while the first airconditioners induced her to take an oath never to tolerate such a monsters in the house - and if this was unavoidable in the name of peace and harmony,she would never allow such a machine to disturb the quiet in her bedroom. Fortunately technical progress absolved her from her hasty oaths).

One of the hazards of being constantly bathed in sweat, were the burning,stinging,cutting skin eruptions by which the skin pores,clogged by the dried crystallized sweat,protested and which were popularly called "prickley heat". This sounds nicer than the medical appellation "miliaria". Interestingly,many patients referred the latter diagnosis,especially when there were secondary infections from the constant scratching and the often poor personal hygiene of the suffering skin. "Prickley heat" was rather rare among the native population; this was entirely due to the sensitive way in which the Indians dressed, in which they permitted their skin to breathe, and also the intelligent way in which they drank small amounts of water at regular intervals, mainly in the early hours of the day and in the evenings when they were

less likely to perspire inexcess. A European had to "dress" in shirt,tie and jacket in the evenings as soona s the sun had set, whenever he took part in social activities (to which he had been looking forward all day). He had to be dressed in this "formal" manner whenever he entered his club,whenever he visited his friends,even whenever he visited the local cinema. No European -or any of the westernized Indians who so assiduously aped the British - would not only not remove his jaket or his black tie in the evenings, he would consider it even a danger to the British Empire if he would so so during the day while seated in his office or in his car or on his horse on his regular inspection visits in the country site. This was the custom, this was the way people lived and this way in which the Empire was ruled. I did not mind the way the British dressed and moved about - this was their own responsibility -but I was shocket to see that they forced their babus,their clerks and other employees in the offices and the households, in the banks,the courts etc, to be dressed in coats and ties, or in ashkans i.e. coats with closed high collars,even during the hottest hours of the day. They did not permit Indians without coats or ties to enter their houses,buses ,trains in which Europeans,lived,worked or might happen to stay at trhe very same time.

No wonder that in order to keep the machinery of administration going,the custom had been established that during the summer months, from May to September,one escaped from the hot plains to the cooler mountains. The Governments shifted all their main offices to the nearest hillstations - the Central Government of Delhi and that of the Punjab to Simla, that of Calcutta to Darjeeling etc - as othrwise governments would have been unable to function. Even the most imperiastically minded and motivated official could not have survived the seven years which passed between the vacation trips home to England. Already the Moghul Emperors had recognized the need for such regular migration into the mountains, and every spring they began to move from Delhi to Kashmir. The magnificient Moghul Gardens in which these mighty rulers and their retinue rested during their journey give witness even today of the comfort,the planning and the wisdom man can develop in times of need and under conditions of stress.

My dear friend, I could write and write about the summers,the heat,the migration and the "hillstations" and also about all manners and customs and experiences connected therewith. Of course, not everybody could leave his house,his duties, his work_ in the plains to spend the hot summers in the coolness of the mountains,in the Himalayas,in Kashmir,in srinagar or in Dalhousie or in Mussoorie or in Darjeeling or in OOtacamund etc. as the many summer places in India were called. Many of the men in Government or in military service or those engaged in business,banking etc. had to remain at their posts in the plains or they could spend at the most only a few weeks at a time here and there in the mountains; but as a rule they sent their families ahead and many a young wife spent most of the hot weather away from her husband. Many a heart was broken,many a marriage ruined during those summer months in the hills,when the young or the not so young wives to whom alcohol had since many a year already become a good friend__ found additional companionship in the arms of the many young and also not so young men,officials and officers,who were lucky to be stationed with their Governments,with their regiments or in persuance of other duties in those hillstations where so-called social life was no less exuberant but certainly less restricted than in the usually stiff and officious social whirl which the courts of the Viceroy or hos diverse Governors prescribed and controlled at other times of the year.

During the winter months 1937/38,the first year we spent in Lahore, we began to collect information about Kashmir, about the technique of transferring oneself and one;s requirements to Kashmir etc., and as usual most of the advice we got was inadequate and inappropriate. Our main source of advice was Dr. Benjamin, a German dentist who had settled sincea year or two in Lahore and had already spent one or two summers in Srinagar. He supplied us with most of the information and he was ably seconded by Dr. Lessheim who had never been to Srinagar and knew everything best.

We rented from our neighbour, Mr. Ram Lal, a Justice of the High Court, his summer house in Srinagar amd in May 1938 we packed a large part of our personal and professional belongings onto a lorry and travelled to Kashmir. We realized from the onset tht the advice we had received from Dr. Laemmle in Bombay had been excellent,that we had been wise to follow his advice and that

we werelucky and fortunate to spend a large part of the year in one of the most beautiful parts of the world.

W e did not hurry and took two days to reach Srinagar. We took the road the road via Murree and Baramulla. Like everybody else who is privileged to see Kashmir,we were overcome by its beauty, by the majestic mountains and the lovely valleys. I feel inadequate to write more about this experience; many are the books and the films which give you a better picture of the grandeur of Kashmir, although also in tjis instance as in other parts of the world modern traffic,modern toruism,modern business have robbed Kashmir of so much of its original,of its natural, of its primitive beauty.

Srinagar, the Capital of Kashmir, is situated at a height of 5500 feet. It nestles within a valley filled with gardens and lakes and is surrounded by a circle of mountains part of whom are covered with eternal snow. A river flows through the town and the seven bridges which cross the river give the twon a particular character. The last one, the "Seventh Bridge" is since many centuries famous as the endstation for the caravans which come from Tibet with local treasures and return there loaded with salt and tea,the main necessities the peoples of the North need to import from the "civilized" parts down in the south which they reach after so man months of ardous journeying.

Kashmir "belonged" to the Maharaja Hari Singh, a scion of the Dogra caste. He had been in the early 1920s the much ridiculed central though innocent of a scandal which kept England fascinated for many a month. (And all about a matter which one would hardly view today more than a prank and would make you feel only sorry for the poor "Mister A", the poor guy). The experiance had left a permanen grudge and the Maharaja was not counted among the best friends of the British, or for that matter of the white man in general. However, he was wise enough not to break the rules or to disobey the instructions which the Viceroy passed on to him through his local representative,the British Resident , or to give expression to his true feelings except in very intimate circles. Hari Singh lived the way a Maharaja of his time used to live and it would never have entered his mind that anything he did within his State could be wrong or inappropriate. The courtiers and the many other parasites who surrounded him belonged to the picture of a Maharaja and it was in no way diffe-

rent from the princely courts in times gone by or their equivalents of today. Such courtiers do not care or dare to change the primeely habits of their master,even if they are still medieval in character, and in the case of Hari Singh the many Europeans who fawned on him had hardly gained enough of his sympathy or friendship and thus influence to make him realize the injustice his feudal habits represented in modern times. Nobody could make him feel the need to introduce changes soon enough and of the kind which progressive times demanded and were about to force on him.

The"poor guy"had been unlucky most of his life. He had been told by soothsayers studying his horoscope that his first and second wives would die soon after their marriage and he tried to cheat fate by marrying his sword as his first wife and an apple tree as his second one. Only his third wife was a real woman as biology defines this gender. However, he or she did not succeed in producing an heir. His wife did not become pregnant whatever his efforts,how specialized the medical consultations, and how numerous the medicaments used. At last a miracle happened and she did become pregnant. This occurred after a prolonged sojourn abroad and many were the rumours which tried to explain the wonderful news. There were,however, rumourmongers who attributed this success to the company of the Household Minister who had also on other occasions and in other circumstances proved a very efficient man in matters of fertility.

During the four summer seasons we spent in Srinagar we have never been invited to the Palace; nor havewe otherwise been considered worthy of the Maharaja's attention. I do not know why - and I have never bothered to know. I entered my name every year as courtesy demanded into the book opened for callers at the gates of the Palace and this was the only "social contact" we had in that quarter. From casual remarks dropped by one of our patients, who was one of his intimate friends, I understood that His Highness actively hated me, but I never learned the reason. Many years later,when we visited Leo Conville in his house near London,he told us that the good Maharaja was upset because I was a Jew and that he hated Jews and that he regretted

that he could not find a cause to make us leave his State. Leo was a good friend of the Maharaja and his good memory never left him, also in old ageI try today to find some cause for this princely antagonism. Who and what had turned him against us ? The Maharaja could hardly have learned anything negaive about us. Many of the elading Kashmir families, many of his won entourage were our patients, and the British Resident, whose family we had been treating from the first days in Srinagar,would have been the first man who the Maharaj would have asked about us and he could not have given any unfavourable information about us. He may have been ioculated with antisemitic ideas during his youth in England. He may have had bad experiences with Jewish doctors. He may have been influenced against us by the British doctor, Col. Harper-Nelson, who lived and worked at that time in Srinagar This man certainly did not like us. I do not know. It is possible that some remark I have made here and there in a careless moment had been brought back to him - but this would have certainly been a cause and reason to kick us out of his State. As I said; I do not know.

I saw the Maharaja occasionally driving thrɑgh the narrow streets of the Capital. I saw him during th yearly parade of his " army". Only once were we officially invited as guests to a "durbar". This was in 1947,when Lord Mountbatten ,the Vice-roy visited Srinagar. He was actively engaged in furthering Nehru's aspirations against the interests of Pakistan and he had come to wave the Maharaja into his scheme of politics. I suppose were invited at that time because there were not many foreigners left in Srinagar and a certain crowd is always necessary to decorate a durbar.

As you might already have realized, I did not like the Maharaja. In general I did not - nor do I now - like any of the feudal left-overs who claim divinely appropriated rights which are anathema to all thinking men of today and which are based on concepts and morals rooted in a past long gone by. That man was a fɑdal despot as were all Indian rulers of his time,as were all feudal barons,lords,princes and what-nots not so long ago everywhere in the world and are today so many of the rulers,prime ministers and even the appointed officials of our own days. I resented that the Maharaja saw himself above law and justice. I

resented the fact that all electric lights were switched off in Srinagar whenever a feast, a ball, a party happened to place in the Palace, because the amount of electric current generated by the leectric supply company was insufficient for town and palace to be lit up at the same time. I resented the fact that the main streets in town were closed whenever the Maharaja or his family wanted to see a film in the local cinema. But let me be honest: this is not an anarchistic trend in me. This resentment is directed against every abuse of power and position. I equally resent now the fact that I am without bread,or light,or newspapers or mail whenever one of the trade unions decides to strike; and I rsent the fact that the streets of Jerusalem are closed for many hourswhenever some official visitor honours us with his presence or whenever official money is thrown away for some show or parade.[1]

The house we had rented in Srinagar in the first year we visited Kashmir, was situated on top of a hill. It was, next to the Palace the highest situated house in town. It was built of wood in the typical Kashmir style which was, after all, only the way Swiss chalets are buiøltǫ__ It was a beautiful house. It stood in a large garden in which 1500 fruit trees had been planted. Our contract stipuhated that we could eat as much as we liked from these fruit trees provided we did not take any supply back with us to Lahore or did not use the garden produce to make jams or preserves. But it appears that we did eat so much of the fruit grown in the garden, that the contractor who for many years had purchased the harvest of this huge garden,refused the contract with Justice Ram Lal in case we were to rent the house again. I cannot balme him. Although 15oo trees are a lot of trees, and although they bear a lot of fruit, we appear to have enjoyed the produce of the garden far above the expectations of our landlord and his contractor and I cannot blame the poor contractor that he felt he had lost money through us. During the five months of that summer we must have consumed quite a lot of fruit. The garden was built on a slope and wherever you sat on that slope you faced branches of a tree loaded with fruit. And if there is no effort in volved in plucking fruit from a tree you do eat and eat and eat - and enjoy a splendid digestion. We might have,however, violated the spirit of the contract which we signed with our

landlord (that Judge I mentioned and with whom we remained good friends until partitoon drove him out of Pakistan. He finished his career as Indian Ambassador in Rome). We ate more fruit than he had anticipated and we did invite our many friends to enjoy with us the evening hours on the slope in front of the trees. I still remember the cherries,the plums,the greengages,the apples the peaches,the pears,the almonds and the walnuts suspended there in front of our eyes and eyes for us to pluck with such ease.

In the following years, 1939 and 1940, we lived in another house, a very nice house, very centrally located (next to the British Nursinghome to which I was not admitted due to the veto of the lcal British doctors), and which could boast the nicest garden in Srinagar. The owner, the widow of a British general, moved to Gulmarg when the summer started. She was a pleasant landlady and it appears she never had any reason to complain about us. A t times it did hurt when her gardener ravaged the garden to fill the weekly load, a tubful of flowers, for the decoration of the local church.

In August even Srinagar became too hot and we moved up to Gulmarg, about 9000 feet high. There we spent a month. We lived in Nedou's Hotel, a very comfortable place, and I continued to see patients there. However,that month in Gulmarg was mor or less a holiday. Our Kahsmir patients were quite different from those we had known in Lahore. They were not only Kashmiris of every walk of life, but also visitors, British and Indian, from every part of India. Many British families spent their summers in Kashmir,where they preferred to live in one of the houseboats anchored in one of the many lakes or in the river. Kashmir was also the preferred vacation spot for Maharajas,Nawabs and other people in exalted position whenever for some reason they could not travel to Europe for the summer vacations. Do not forget that a journey to Europe was still a major undertaking. I took about three weeks by boat to reach England and most of the foreign residents and many of the princes undertook such a long journey rarely more often than every 6-7 years.

Work was never heavy, and at the same time it was very interesting. There was always time to spend the weekends in the countryside. The evenings were passed in social intercourse with

friends and acquaintances of which we had soon collected quitea number. And there was always the Club where everybody gathered in the evenings.

It will not interest you to hear about the medical side of my experiences there in Kashmir, of strange cases, of suspected murder cases,of rare diseases etc. Suffice it to say that we never saw a case of malaria in Srinagar (except for an occasional recurrence of infections acquired in the plains) because mosquitoes do not live above the height of 5000 feet. I consequence I saw plenty of patients with tertiary syphilis of which I had hardly found a case in Lahore (but I had met plenty of them in the University Clinic of Rome). Only later, when malaria had been introduced as treatment for the later stage complications of syphilis did I understand the intercation of my observation.

However, I never understood - nor do I so now - why I saw so many cases of duodenal ulcers in Kashmir and never a single one in Lahore. (One day two patients with peptic ulcers came from Kashmir to visit me and I presented them as worthy of such a demonstgration to the Lahore Medical Society). Was it the pan they chewed ? the Food they ate ? the heated charcoal stove they pressed against their stomachs in winter ? What was the difference in the way of life of a Kashmir and that of a Punjabi I do not know . (Let me add that after the war medical conditions changed radically. There were gastric and duodenal ulcers aplenty to be found in Lahore too. Was it the changed psychological environment ? I would not accept a 100% this theory. You may rest assured that the fight for survival was always very fierce and tough in Kashmir and there was no greaty difference in the fight for survival among the punjabis before and after the war. There did not exist any paradise anywhere in India).

And so for three years we travelled every year in summer to Kashmir to work in that pleasant climate. We returned for the seven cooler months, the "winter season" to take up our work in Lahore.

In 1939 we were already better organized. Kate and Ruth Mueller (our office assistant) travelled ahead with the office equipment and when I turned up in Srinagar a few days later, the

office had been set up and we could at once start functioning. Life became more complex and also more compact when Moritx and Regina Neumann,Kate's parents, and later also the Segalls joined our menage. And when Pipsi was born the family was truly formed and began to fucntion accordingly.

We continued in this way until 1940 when the war was already a few months old; and when it stopped being a " funny war" and turned into a "serious war" the world at large came at last to realize that it was facing a grave danger.

Of all this, and how it affected us personally - and in the final analysis also you - you will learn from the following pages.

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Begum Shah Nawaz.

We were very lucky that we came into contact with Begum Shah Nawaz and her family so soon after our arrival in Lahore. Banasinski, the Polish Consul General in Bombay, who I had visited when I was in Bombay to meet Kate on her arrival from Italy, gave us an introduction to this lady who he knew and whom he called his good friend.

Begum Shah Nawaz was at the time we came to know her the leading woman in politics in Northern India. This was the more remarkable as Muslim women were expected to remain closed within their houses and to care fir husbands and children; they were not supposed to face the public unveiled and to take part in active politics. Ara Shah Nawaz was the daughter of Sir Muhammad Shafi, the first Indian ever to become a member of of the Viceroy's Cabinet. The sympathy the British Raj felt for Sir Muhammad was reciprocated by him. He was praised for his unstinted support for the rulers of his country. This loyal attitude he taught also his daughter whom we trained to take on a leading role in the coming political events, the undoubtedly coming changes, in which he hoped the Muslims would gain that rightful share and his family a leading position.

Begum Shah Nawaz had become widely known to the public in India and abroad at the time I met her as she had been in 1935 an Indian delegate at the Round Table Conference in London where for the first time discussions about the coming partecipation of the Indians in the politics of the subcontinent had been made possible. Unfortunately I was not privileged to know Sir Muhammad Shafi who had died a short while before we arrived in Lahore; but we knew his wife for many years and Lady Shafi was worth knowing. She was a very headstrong woman, very wise and very experienced and well versed in the intrigues of the East. She had had many disappointments in her life, mainly because of the failure of her progeny to achieve the leading positions they had aimed at , and she suffered greatly from the failure which everyone of her family in the end came to represent.

The Shafi family had not been blessed with much money;

they belonged to the junior branch of a very old and rich family of landowners who had once upon a time been the gardeners of the Moghuls and had been enriched by them for their faithful services. (The Iftikhar-ud-Din family who had inherited the major fortune represented the senior branch of the family. I shall in due cour= se write about them too). The oldest son of Sir Muhammad Shafi, Rafi , was the Head Clerk of the Indian Parliament in Delhi. Ara, the oldest daughter whom we knew so well and to whom we owed so much, was married to a rich lawyer,Muhammad Nawaz, many years her senior, who by the time we came to know him, was already ailing and bedridden, soon to die of his chronic kidney infection. The second daughter, Geti, had been married into a very respected landowning family and I shall tell you about her and her husband, Mian Bashir Ahmad, in a short while. The youngest son, Iqbal, tried his luck in politics and law for a short time, but he soon realized that he was not made for such strenuous work and he was made to fit into t British shipping company where he served to the best of his capabilities.

Begum Shah Nawaz had four children. The oldest, Riaz, was in truth her stepson, the son of the first wife of Muhammad Nawaz and - as I have seen in many a case in the East - there was none of that tension and hostility one finds so often in Europe between a stepson and his family. There were ,however, other reasons why there was little harmonious contact between him and his relations, as while a student in England he had married a not very intelligent nor sensitive English girl and theirs was one of the mixed marriages which as a rule never functioned well.

Then there was daughter Mumtaz Ara, who tried to enter a political carreer too, had ambitions as a writer and might have become an accepted leader in the post-war world of Pakistan; but she perisched in an aircrash over Ireland on her way to Washington there to make her marriage to Isfahani,the Pakistani Ambassador, official. They had been secretely married for a long time and thought the moment come to let the few into their secret who had not yet known about the arrangement.

The other daughter, Nassim Ara, fo course persued her own political ambitions and was looking for the fulfillment of these under the red banner of Stalin. She was married to Muhammad Akbar Khan , of whom I shall have to tell you soon also. She

failed because she was far too stupid for such an enterprise as the revolution she planned with her husband - and in addition too talkative too. She was lucky that she and Akbar Khan did not end their lives at the gallows; they were saved in the last moment.

The last of Ara Shah Nawaz children was Ahmad, who was hardly 14 years old when the came to Lahore. He was,understandably his mother's darling. He fell ill with septicaemia and the surgeons held out hardly any hope for him, even if his right leg,the source of the severe infection, was amputated. In the circle of doctors assembled in consultation I was the only one who objected to this form of surgical intervention and I succeeded in curing Ahmad after an illness lasting many months with the help of the recently discovered sulfanylamides. Only a stiff knee remained to recall the ordeal the boy - and we all - had to go through. Ahmad later on studied physics, took the degree of a D.Sc. in London and he became one of the best known industrial consultants of the country.

You can imagine how grateful his family was for this favourable outcome which I owed more to luck than anything else, althgough the risk I took - albeit with the full consent of the family - was considerable and might have caused us great harm, especially as all this happened so soon after our arrival in Lahore.

No sooner had we settled in Lahore than we called on Begum Shah Nawaz and we were received by her with great warmth. We were given good advice at every stage and we were introduced into her large family circle, to all her friends and the great number of her acquaintances. This ensured not only that we soon became known but that we could also develop sooner than anticipated a very good practice. Many of the relations and friends of the family were very important figures in the Punjab. There was among them not only Sir Abdul Rashid,the Chief Justice of the Punjab (he was the brother of Lady Shafi), but there were also many highly placed officials in the various government offices, in the police as well as many important political figures. The gratitude of the family for our treatment of Ahmad - the injury had been caused to his knee while playing cricket - and the many manifestations of kindness and goodwill, were often very embarassing.

Undoubtedly we owed very much to Begum Shah Nawaz during the first crucial years of our stay in Lahore. And when we were released from the Interhment Camp in 1945 it was she who made us return to Lahore and helped us to become again sucessfully settled. She arranged for us to find at first asmall flat and thereafter a bungalow,formerly belonging to a Hindu, of which Mian Mushtaq Ahmad had taken possession by virtue of his being the first on the scene to grab it. Unfortunately,this bungalow- for us a very vital matter as it was for many years impossible to find another suitable accomodation on the open market - became that issue which ruined our friendship for ever. After the death of her husband, Ara had entered into a liaison, a "secret ,marriage" with this Mian Mushtaq Ahmad, a senior forest officer. Their marriage was kept secret for many a year although everybody knew of this association. One day Mushtaq decided that the bungalow at 55 Lawrence Road, in which we had lived for so many a year already, was in reality his property and he attempted to get us ejected. He did not succeed and for this I was never forgiven.

In this way our friendship ended and all our attempts to restore it failed. I still feel bad about all this and I still wonder if I had made enough efforts to bridge again the gulf which had separated us. I am sure this poor woman was badly in need of friends. Her political carreer was cut off when other women,more ruthless and the protegees of the ruling clique surfaced and felt they had to eliminate her from the political life before they themselves could succeed. Her oldest son Riaz died under miserable circumstances. Her daughter Mumtaz died in an aircrash. Her daughter Nassim was in jail and only by great luck escaped being hanged along with her husband only because Liaquat Ali,the Prime Minister was murdered in just the right moment and Ayub Khan, his successor,showed unusual leniency to those who failed where he had succeeded so well. Her sister Geti became mentally deranged, and there were so many othe r tragedies in her family too many to recall.

And so she ended,the victim of a breast cancer, forgotten and avoided by all who counted.

The Bashir Family.

Among the first families we met in Lahore were the Bashirs. We met them through Begum Shah Nawaz,who was the sister of Geti Ara, the Begum Bashr Ahmad. The bashirs belonged to the leading families of the Punjab. Mian Bashor Ahmad was a very cultured man,very well read,very intellectual. He was without any ambitions , and in the world in which he lived this was a great disadvantage. He was the scion of an old and rich family. There was much intermarrying over many generations ,with the result that the family showed an accumulation of degenrative diseases.

I never met the father of Bashir Ahmad, Sir Shahabuddin who had been a Justice of the High Court, but I was told that he had been a leading legal light in his days. Bashir wrote his father's biography and from this I learned to respect father as well as son.

Bashir's sister was married to Sir Shafaq Ahmad, who at the time of partition had joined Nehru's Cabine. Shafaq was murdered by some zealots who objected to his politics. This tragedy was the onset of his wife's mental derangement and she never recovered, not eaen after a lobotomy.

Bashir had another sister, who had been married to the older brother of Begum Shah Nawaz. Begum Rafi was a manic-depressive whom, with the help of the Cardiazol Shocks at that time in vogue, I got into a remission soon after we settled in Lahore. She died during an electric shock applocation in the early 1960s.

I also met Bashir Ahmad's mother, a charming old lady, whose courage in the way she faced her many misfortunes I always admired.

Bashir had four children. I knew the oldest son only for s short time before he set off for Cambridge to study at the same Colle his father and grandfather had frequented. I am told he was an exceptionally gifted boy, a poet, a writer. He died a miserable,unnecessary death: while punting his friends and colleagues threw him into the river although he shouted and cried

that he could not swim. An d this was true: he could not swim. He proved this by drowning.

There were also two daughters; the marriage of the older had an unhappy ending, while that of the younger was at least still within the normal limits as far as marriages go.

And then there was Manzar, Manzar Bashir, the youngest, but he merrits a separate chapter. Have patience, and you will hear about him too.

I liked Bashir Ahmad. I liked all the Bashirs,otherwise I would not have had so much patience with them. And you had to have a lot of patience as they loved to talk. They could talk for hours at a stretch and they talked in such a way that your could not drowse off or think about the incometax problems you had to face the following week.

Bashir never earned a penny in his life; neither did his son Manzar when he reached the age and the stage where one as a rule starts to earn a living. They owned much land and many houses, and whenever the income from these properties did not suffice they sold some land or a house and carried on for some time with the capital thus realized. This went on over the years and though the administrators they employed were found to have anything but honest, and although inflation and dowries, confiscations and taxes made big inroads into their fortune, they were still very rich people as long as I knew them.

Only once in his life did Mian Bashir AHmad some real work. This was during the three years that he functioned - or was made to function - as the Pakistan Ambassador in Ankara. And I was told that he was a well liked and respected ambassador. He got his once-in-a-lifetime appointment because he had been for many years before partition an ardent supporter of Pakistan,of Mohammad Jinnah and the Muslim League. In appreciation of this support Jinnah appointed him to the post of amabassador in Turkey It is a pity that Jinnah did not show the same appreciation for the dedicated work Begum Shah Nawaz did over the years, but it appeared that her family had been tainted byhaving been too much and too outspokenly supporters of the British Raj in the past.

When we left Pakistan in1971 this family which ince upon a time had been leading in the Punjab,was broken, was thrown on the rubbish heap for social failures.

M a n z a r B a s h i r

I am writing of Manzar in this separate chapter, because he had taken up a separate chapter in our lives. Also this chapter, this personal chapter will show an ending in failure. What a pity ! Also in this case I must confess tht I failed because we were very important to Manzar and we must have been a great disappointment to him, far more than we try to make ourselves believe he was to us.

He was a very precautious, very precarious and ver y delicate boy of nine when we met him first. He had been suffering since birth from digestive difficulties and he was treated as a very delicate child all his life because he had a "situs transversus totalis" (a not very rare anatomic anomaly in which the chest and abdominal organs were transposed from one side to the other). He appeared to be very proud that his heart was on the right side of his chest. Hedemonstrated to a maximum degree the familytrend to talk without cessation whenever he was given the opportunity.

When we met Manzar for the first time we did not agree with the attitude of the family that the boy had to be fed like a baby,that he had to avoid normal food etc. We felt that the clinical picture was too much loaded with psychosomatic characteristics and we thought that we would do a very good deed to break this preoccupation with his health,particularly his digestion. I had no doubt that Manzar could not be placed in many aspects with other robust,other normal boys, that he showed definite evidence of th degenerative effects of so much inbreeding, Still: we decided to give our convictions practical application and we made the boy stay in our house as a kind of adoptive son. We planned to keep for at least six months away from his environment so that we could make a "Mensch" of him. Alas ! Manzar stayed with us for only three weeks, then we had to send him home again as I came down with typhoid fever and we did not want to expose him to any avoidable risk. I must confess we saw in my typhoid also a blessing as Manzar had become by that time quite a head-

ache,mainly because he demanded our constant attention, was always in need of an audience and it was far too difficult to satisfy his unlimited curiosity.

However, since that episode in 1937 we have always been good friends and in many an instance we have acted in loco parent

Manzar went to Oxford to study, but he left before he is could complete his studies. He tried his hands in politics and always succeeded in backing the losing side. He somehow became synonymous with failure. He was on Butho's side when he was in opposition, and opposed Bhutto when he was about to win. He stayed in jail longer than anybody else for reasons nobody could ever explain. I hope he felt at last some satisfaction in this masochistc way of organizing his political life.

In due course he married. She was a beautiful girl from Karachi, fair-skinned because her mother was a Scotish woman But Nassim never got pregnant. Manzar was found to be sterile, poor fellow. He was desperate and his father even more so. He made his daughter-in-law the offer to impregnante her in Manzars stead as he had proved by his four children tht he was capable of such a feat. She refused, of course. He invited her to take a lover, any lover, only to produce a son on Manzar's behalf. She refused. Do not think the old man was a leecher - no, he was a desperate man looking for an heir, for a continuation of the family line. Nassim had now enough cause and reason to force a divorce. She married her boyfriend who had replaced Manzar since such a long time but had not been careless or generous enough to make her pregnant. I had the impression that Manzar was not too unhappy when his marriage broke up. He did not grieve too much. Thereafter his masochistic political activities started in earnest but he never got the satisfaction of being taken serious by any of his opponents. His imprisonment appeared to him.therefore, a kind of personal satisfaction, a kind of recognition.

Finally,with the years, Manzar appears to have learned to be careful. Yes, that young man learned at last that caution is a wise characteristic in one's life,especially in a country like Pakistan, and particularly in a man who has still some political ambitions left in his otherwise wasted life. Unfortunately he applied this newly learned lesson, this caution in his relati-

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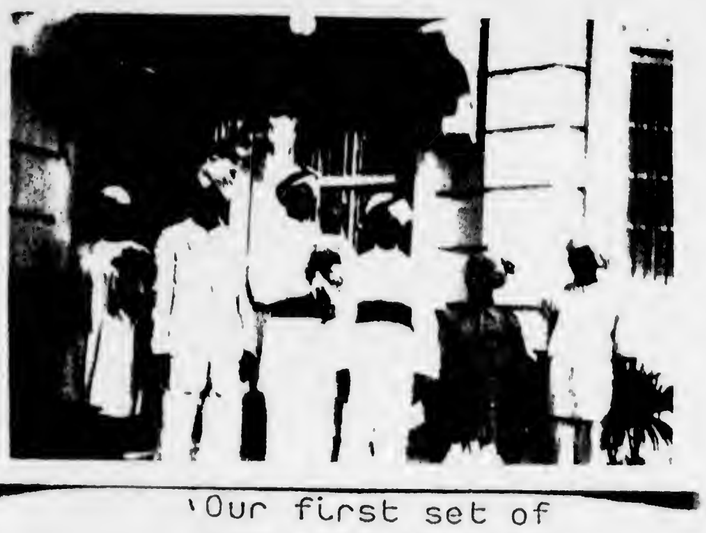
Heinz having a swim

Kate, M. Kalisch with Bashir children



Our first set of servants in Lahore

Kate and Manzar Bashir

Kate and Ruth buying from a Tibetan

With Benjamin and Heinz

onship with us: when in the years 1969 to 1971 we were under constant attack in the local press, he must have agreed with the many other people,so many of our former friends, who tried to avoid being in any way identified with us, with the Jews, with Freemasons and what else you might want to mention. He kept away from us. He never came to see us again during those years. Andso we left Lahore, left Pakistan in 1971 without even having had occasion to say goodbye to him.

The Iftikhar-ud-Dins.

They were one of the first families we came to know in Lahore and this is explainable as they belonged to the tribe to which also Begum Shahnawaz,the Bashirs etc. belonged. Although Iftikhar was a young man then (we were guests at his wedding), he was notwithstanding this more or less the head of the family as he was the oldest son of the oldest son or something of the kind; and as he had inherited the major part of the family fortune he was from every point of view a rich man.

As was customary in those days, the sons of the rich families studied law at Oxford or Cambridge and on their return home entered politics, not out of any deep convictions or for any philosophical reasons - they turned into politicians as this was the only occupation an indpendent young Indian of good family could take on.

Iftikhar entered headlong into politics. He admired all his life everything British and he became the most outspoken enemy of the British Raj. He became a follower of Ghandi and a pupil of Nehru. Muslims belonging to leading families were welcomed by Ghandi to join the Indian Congress Party to prevent them from joining Jinnah's Muslim League Party which aimed at organizing an indepenedent Muslim State. Iftikhar became the leading Congreesman in Lahore. He was always at the head of the unending demonstartions against the British rulers. He was the untiring organizer of the passive resistance movement in the Punjab. The British-Indian Government thought this problem could be solvedby the imprisonment of the leaders, but it soon became a badge of honour to have been imprisoned and it became the aim of every Indian politician to spend a few months in jail. It must be conceded that even in this respect the British were at times not playing the game according the rules: they refused to imprison those whom they did not like too much and granted the honour of a stay in jail to those whom they respected and honoured most.

Iftikhar was most likely one of those who was most often imprisoned and as his Party had made it a rule that whoever offer-

ed Satyargraha, i.e. who offered himself to be jailed jad first to be examined medically if he was at all fit to go to jail, and as the Indian politicians did not like to consult a British doctor and for reasons I cannot explain did not like to consult their own doctors either, our office became a kind of institution for these politicians and on many a day the waiting-room harboured quite a number of men and women who came to enquire if they were medically fit to become guests of the Viceroy in one of his jails.

Ifthikhar was always fit whenever I examined him for "jail-fitness" . For reasons I do not recall his wife did not like his frequent absences from home and she tried to prevent his political activities; one day she even appeared in my consulting-room while her husband was undressing for the examination and she beat him up worse than any British policeman might have dared to do. I had quite some difficulty to separate the couple.

When the war had ended,Iftikhar, in khadi shirt and trousers and a Ghandi cap on his head was still in the political forefront. He was also still active in local politics and he became a Minister in the first Punjab Cabinet which Governor Moodie, the last British Governor we enjoyed, had set up. He became more intolerable and conceited than ever while he carried a minister's hat, and he saw himself already as the saviour leading Pakistan into the sphere of influence of his new guru Stalin - for our Iftikhar had in the meantime becomea convinced communist He thought himself superior to very other minister or politician, he saw himself above every law and convention. However, after a few weeks of a behaviour which those in power thought unbecoming to a minister, he was sacked. It took some time before we were again on speaking terms as it took him much time to come down from his clouds. The main reasons why we had clashed was on of his first cats as a Minister: he confiscated the very centrally located Freemasons' Hall which he wanted to transform into his Ministry of Refugees. He could,of course disregard the protest of people like myself, but he should have known that a British Governor, even if he was not a Freemason himself, would never consent to such an act of plain robbery.

In the following years Iftikhar became a political factor to be reckoned with. He was at the head of the Communist

Party and it was strange to see one of the richest men of the Punjab preaching with such enthusiasm the tennets of communism and to continue to live in great luxury. (One day we met by chance in Paris. He was staying with his wife,his three children and a Nanny in the Bristol Hotel. I asked him how he could justify his political ideas with his way of life and he replied - in all sincerety and full of conviction - that his ideal was that every Pakistani peasant and servant should be able to live in the Bristol Hotel of Paris).

He founded a newspaper, the "Pakistan Times" which was a good paper indeed. Although his Chief Editor,Dr.Faiz Ahmad Faiz was a no less convinced communist (he received even the Stalin Prize),his paper was very cleverly managed,never too outspoken and never offering the authorities, i.e. the governments ruling under martial law, any cause to intervene. Of course, when Ayub Khan came to power, he did away with any nicety one might demand as a democrat or communist in opposition and he simply confiscated the Pakistan Times. It was later proved that the money for the newspaper and other political activities of Iftikhar did after all come from Moscow, even if it had been channelled via Peking. Iftikhar imported enormous quantities of coal from China into Pakistan and the money he received from the sale of the coal he never transferred back to China.

When Ayub Khan came to power he not only confiscated the newspaper but repeatedly put poor Iftikhar into jail. I use the epithet "poor" as it was now no more an honour badge to have been imprisoned by the Government in power.

Iftikhar started to drown his sorrows in alcohol and when one day,while on a visit to London, he sustained a mild heart attack which required morphia injections for some time, he turned into a morphia addict. For quite a long period he succeeded in misleading his physicians in London and also in Lahore. For on his return home he began to visit one doctor after another with the complaint of an impending heart attack or a severe form of angina pectoris etc. Many of the doctors did not bother to investigate Ifthikhar's complaints and they gave him his "shots". I realized after 2 or 3 such visits what was going on and thereafter refused to prescribe or to administer any more drugs.

Unfortunately for Iftikhar, he had no difficulty to get as much morphia as he wanted and it was a shock to me to see well placed physicians give him regularly his injections and charging enormous prices for their "help". He came often to see me and I saw him many a time in his house when he or one of his family members were ill, but very rarely did he approach me again for an injection of morphia or its equivalents. He had now other and more complacent sources. I begged him to go to London to be admitted to a specialized Nursinghome (we had no suitable kind of nursinghome in Pakistan and I had sent similar patients to Dr. Glatt in London who was considered the leading expert). I even offered to travel with him to London and to hand him over myself to Dr. Glatt. He promised but he nevr left.

And one day he was carried into my surgery. It was already late in the evening and the office was closed. He was dead when his driver carried him into the room. I learned that he had gone by taxi to one of the doctors who he regularly frequented (his own chauffeurs were forbidden to take him there); but he had the impression that the doctor had deceived him and had not injected the quantity he had demanded; whereupon he had the taxi drive him to another doctor who in turn gave him another large dose, and when the cab returned to the house he was lying unconscious on the floor of the cab. His own driver brought him to me, but we did not succeed in reviving him. What a waste of a very good human material ! Of course, nothing ever happened to the doctors involved.

I still see the family,relatives, servants crowding into my office. I could write a book about the individual reactions the exhibited. But what is the use and why should I waste more of your time ? Let me only say that his wife looked with disgust and full of hatred on the prostrated man in my study. Arif the oldest son. had a smug triumphant look on his face. Sohail, the second son came storming into the room, a wild look on his face,asking me with a threat in his voice: "So ! He is dead now ? Did they at last kill him ?" His daughter Sima was in shock - I thinkthe only one among the twenty odd persons in the room to react in a normal way.

Let me complete now the Iftikhar chapter.

If ever you want to paint a picture of a tragic family, use these protagonists. Begum Iftikhar-ud-Din was in a state of depression most of the time I knew her. She hated her husband with an intensity I can hardly describe and she transferred this hatred onto her son Sohail. She loved to lament her fate and she had ample material and opportunity to do so. Arif,who had apparently been a good scholar in Cambridge and had for a year or so been the Vice-President of the Students' Union, dived into active politics as soon as he returned home. He was elected as member of the Pakistan Parliament but nobody had any doubt that the votes had been bought and that thæ lection had been rigged. He tried to be the Demosthenes of Pakistan and he failed. He failed not only because Pakistan did not require a Domesthenes but also because even a Demosthenes has to be honest and show respect for the people he addresses. He also failed ultimately because he had could not control a habit which he had brought from England. He turned into a confirmed drunkard. He became the laughing stock of the town. His marriage to a girl from a leading family of Karachi - the granddaughter of Ghulam Mohammad,the first President of Pakistan - broke up and Arif never again became a normal man. Sohail remained an unhappy lonely boy. He was a clever boy, you may say an intellectual. He could not overcome the fact that his mother hated him - and he ended his life with his own hands. Whereupon the Begum never overcame the guilt feelings which the suicide of her son had crystallized and she deteriorated into a mental wreck. And Seema ? I do not know what became of her, how she developed,if she succeeded to get away from her mother,from her family.

Do you feel like writing a story about this family ? It represents some interesting material, don't you think ? And if there are many gaps your fantasy can easily fill these in.

Heinz in variations.

Of course, we met many a man and many a woman of whom much could be told. If I should start on such kind of human material, I would not know where to stop. Let me tell you only about people with whom we had prolonged contact, with whom we became friends, whose circles intersected withours , those where there is some scant evidence that we interfered with each other's kismet.

I have told you about Dr. Benjamin who had arrived in Lahore and had stayed in Kashmir a year or two before us. He was a dentist from Dramstadt. He had hardly completed his final examinations before he left. He was a very indifferent dentist - not much of a competition for the local dentists,some of whom were foreign trained - but he loved to consider himself an accomplished musician. The musicians said of him that he was a good dnntists and the dentsists that he was a good cellist. At least I said so. I made up this remark and it came to cost me dear. Becau se Benjamin heard about this stupid wisecrack of mine and in order to console him and to rpove to him that I had faith in his dentistc qualifications, I had him extract two of my wisdom teeth two perfectly healthy teeth. I sacrificed them so that his hurt pride could be restored. I said that our circles did not intersect. Of course they did: I had often occasion to regret these unnecessarily extracted teeth, this unneccessary wisecrack of mine I think most of dental problems later on were the results of these extractions. And there was also the other "encounter"" Benjamin married my office assistant, Ruth Muellerheim. If you should ever ask him or her - in the unlikely case you should ever meet them -they will say that I was created,sent to Lahore,made her come from Berlin .so that she might meet Benjamin and induce him to marry her. If this is fate's planning,let us bow our heads and accept it in all humility. But let me hope at least in compensation that all this was arranged by fate so that some offspring of theirs will one day move the world from its hinges.

We also met in Kashmir - possibly through Benjamin - good old Heinz. His name was Karl Marte Heinz, but as his family

TO SALE
103

F 37301 With Heinz in Kashmir

F 37304 Kate and her Munshi

Kate ? Benjamin in Kashmir

F 37302

F 37305 In Kashmir 1938

F 37303 Pipsi 1939

Three genenations F 37306

name was also a "christian" name, we all called him Heinz. He was not a Jew; he was an architect from Czechoslovakia. He was that rare case of a non-British European who was not a refugee. He had come on his own free will and accord to India in the last years of the 1920s and had established quite a reputation as an architect. He was also known as a somewhat strange and excentric man and in addition everybody appreciated him as a good-hearted fellow.

I like the story he told us. We were driving one day in his car and he hit a pie-dog who had taken a dislike to one of the wheels. "This will show them", he shouted with satisfaction. " Now these bloody dogs will stop bothering me. When I was in Hyderabad I killed one or two of these stray dogs when they ran into my car, and this had become known among the dogs intown and thereafter no dog everywhere in the State ever bothered me"

(This reminds me a similarly clever dog story: Iqbal Dr.Iqbal of whom you will hear one day more, told us that he never bought Kababs from certain places in the City,even though all Lahore thought them the best in town. " Have you noticed",he asked us once," that everywhere there are dogs near khubab coos, but in that place where you want to go and eat khubabs you will never see a dog. This means with absolute certainty that the cooks use dog meat in their khubabs. The dogs smell this and do not come near the place").

In Henz' company you could always find Tilly Siddiqui, a German woman, a pharmacist who during her studies in Frankfurt had met Saleem-uz-Zaman Siddiqui,and Indian student, whom she married and accompanied to India sometime in the late 1920s. I do not doubt thta the affair between Heinz and Tilly was known to,continued with the consent of Saleem - quite a courageous attitude in a Muslim in those days.

Saleem was a verygood pharmaceutical chemist. He worked in India for many years after partition had taken place,until his friend Jaharwal Nehru advised him to go to Pakistan as he could not "keep" him any longer in Institute of Science of India. I think the main reason that Saleem had become undesirable was the fact that his older brother,Khaliq-uz-Zaman, was one of the lead-

ing politicians of Pakistan. Saleem soon became the Director of the Pakistan Science Institute. He received an honorary doctorate from Frankfurt,was made a member of the Vatican Academie of Scie ce. He did some very interesting scientific work, though his ds- coveries were limited in therapeutic scope (one of the is Ajmalin a cardiac drug,which he called after his only son Ajmal). His main regret was that he had discovered ,synthezised and published many years before the formula of Rauwolfia,but had never realized the scientific,therapeutic and commercial benefits he might have gained.

I saw the Siddiquis later on repeatedly in Karachi where they lived in peace and harmony. After partition Heinz some- how disappeared from our field of vision. Kate visited him once in Delhi. He had married a rather intellectual type of a woman and seemed changed thereafter. Though he remained in contact with the Segalls who lived also in Delhi in those years, we never took up contact with him again. And Benjamin ? He lived happily thereafter. I think somewhere inAmerica.

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01	Carpet 4x3 = 12			
01	Carpet 5x3 = 15			
	336 Sq.Ft.		151	20
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	Total...		161	20

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Signature

My colleagues did not like me.

No, they did not like me. I explained to you that the Lahore doctors did not like me and those of Kashmir did not like me better. With " they " I mean the British doctors who had been working for quite some years in Kashmir, in Srinagar and outlying places, as missionaries and who next to their missionary patients attended also that class of indigenous,foreign and visiting patients who were able and ready to pay for the medical services they rendered. There is no doubt in my mind that they were dedicated doctors who did a good job in the missionary hospitals, that they had sacrificed their time,their years in order to treat that miserable portion of mankind which would otherwise have been left without any kind of medical care in view of the lack of interest and also the absence of the necessary financial means which are usually supplied from government sources elsewhere in the world. The income these doctors and these institutions got from private patients did as a rule not go into their own pockets but was used to help,support,extend and improve the always very insufficient budget of the mission hospitals and their allied institutions. No wonder, therefore, that our advent, our appearance on the scene meant an often appreciative lessening of the number of their patients and a considerable reduction in the income of these doctors. And notwithstanding all their attempts to apply the charity,the christian charity they preached, they could not supress the ever mounting resentment against the Jewish doctors who had come from abroad and had begun to usurp a field of activity and a source of income they had until recently they had thought they had staked out for themselves. I think that in the course of the months and years we succeeded in making these doctors - men and women - realize that we were hardly a drain on their sources of income as we did not care for surgical and obstetrical cases which was their main field of work and has remained the domainof the mission doctors everywhere, and which was also the soil on which they could plant those seeds which they hoped would one day

result in conversion to christianity or would at least serve as an additional approach to that aim as also the schools were mostly under the management of the christian missionaries.

There were also many local doctors, of course, Kashmiri or Indian, who without exception became our friends and loved to collaborate with us. The reason for their sympathy may have been the generally very friendly atttitude we showed them, the fact that we hardly represented a competition to them, but most likely it was the fact that they preferred a " German doctor" to an English one in case they wahted consultation or shared responsibility in a hopeless case.

There was in Srinagar in addition to these foreign mission doctors and to the local medical practitioners I mentioned also another medical man. He was a very important medical man and he hated us with all his heart. You will understand that he was a very powerful and important enemy if I tell you that he was Col. Harper-Nelson. He had been all his life an officer in the Indian Medical Services. His last job had been that of the Civil Surgeon of Lahore until the middle of the thirties and he had retired from this remunerative office at the age of 55 with much money, a few spoiled children and the hope that he was going to enjoy the coming many years of bliss and play which a rich, ex-colonial medical man usually expected to be his on retirement. Unfortunately for him and me, Harper-Nelson was the exception to the rule. It also proves that one can acquire a class of enemies at times for which one is not responsible and which subtle situations in life are only acceptable if one sees in them the hand of a predetermined fate. Within a short time of his retirement, Harper-Nelson had lost all his money in horse racing and stock-exchange gambling, suitably helped by his children. The poor man was all of a sudden faced with a fate he could not dare to contemplate: to spend the remaining years of his life within the limits of his pension which, though generous enough, could not pay for that life of leizure he and his children demanded from life. This good man, aside from other characteristics good or bad, showed that he strength,courage and faith - or as the English say: he had " guts". He decided to return to India, to start as a private medical practitioner in Kashmir with the absolute certainty that he would earn enough there to be able to return

His Highness' Government Jammu & Kashmir.
Office of the Director of Medical Services.

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D.O.NO: 2151/

Jammu,
12th December, 1940.

Dear Dr. Selzer,

Reference your letter of Dec: 1st. You are unduly worried about the proposed Medical Registration Act for Kashmir. The Act has been referred to a Select Committee and I do not know if this committee will propose any amendments. In any case as you are already on the Punjab Register, and this State is bound to reciprocate registration in other Provinces in India there is not likely to be any difficulty regarding admission to the Kashmir Register.

Yours sincerely,

J. Thapar-Nelson

Dr. H.M.Selzer M.D.
Lahore.

home again after a few years of work - pleasantly filled out by good fishing, abundant hunting and cheap drinks - with a second fortune and the newly gained experience which assure him that he would be less negligent in future with his money.

You can, therefore, imagine his angry surprise, when he saw us appear on the scene, when he noticed that so many of the patients he had considered his "own", that so many of the rich and titled Indians and so many of the British visitors and residents began to frequent our consulting rooms. He decided to make for us as difficult as lay in his power. Do not tell me that I must have suffered froma persecution mania. No, my friend, Harper-Nelson himself said so, not only to others but also to me personnally when I called on him as the senior man on the scene to show him the respect I thought was due to him. There should not be any doubt in your mind that he tried his best. He made sure that we were not allowed to admit our patients to the local Nursinghome, a small but neat and well-run hospital in which the residents and visiting British could be treated by the British doctors. On one occasion he did not refrain from an act whch one would consider unethical even in the primitive conditions which prevail in the jungle. One of the most distinguished British citizens of Lahore, a lawyer named Bevan-Petman , was very ill with a virus infection which in time led to aweakening of his heart muscle and in due courseto his death - a decourse of the illness which I could not change with the medical knowledge then available. Harper-Nelson went to the house of the patient and complained to Mrs.Bevan-Petman that she had not called him into consultation and that he felt ashamed when " people asked" if he had been called in and that he felt slighted. I made a mistake: I should have realized myself that it would have been wise to ask Harper-Nelson's advice. Of course, I readily agreed to his "coming in on the case", but the wife of the patient did not want him to "come in" as her husband had from former experiences and contacts a strong aversion to the Colonel.

I must confess that I enjoyed my " victory" over Harper-Nelson/ This shows you how stupid one can be at times. Of course, s I can bring forth the excuse thta I had no experience in intrigues that I did not know the ways the Mafia works,the methods by which

12th May, 1955.

Col. J.J. Harper-Nelson,
Achaban House,
Fionnphort,
Isle of Mull,
Argyll,
Scotland.

Dear Col. Harper-Nelson,

I have just received your letter of 29th March from which I was extremely sorry to hear that you had received no acknowledgement of your letter of resignation nor a receipt for the £ 2/15/3 which you forwarded in November 1954.

Dr. H.M. Selzer has now been installed as W.M. in my place and I am therefore sending him a copy of this letter together with a further copy, enclosing your letter in original to our Secretary, Mr. G.U. Inglis who, I am quite sure, will send you a communication on this subject in the very near future.

Yours faithfully,

AECG:MS.

(A.E.C.Gibson).

Copies to: Dr. H.M. Selzer Esq.,
Lahore.

G.U. Inglis Esq.,
Lahore.

the British Empire was managed - but I should have had the innate knowledge that I was not going to get away with this "victory". My rejoicing over the Colonel's defeat was shared by many other people in Srinagar whose aversion against Harper-Nelson came to the foreground on this occasion.

Of course, Harper-Nelson did his best to pay me back. Of course, he tried to slander me wherever and whenever he could. He got his chance at last when war broke out and the Government of the Punjab approached him to take up again his former job as Civil Surgeon of Lahore. A Civil Surgeon is a very important man in the medical field everywhere,especially in a place like Lahore where he had to attent not only to official medical business but had also to treat all the major and minor ailments of all the officials and their families. Bowing to his patriotic duty Harper Nelson agreed to take on the office of the Civil Surgenn of Lahore but he put forward one condition: that Government get rid of me. " You will have to get rid of this fellow", he told those in power "if you want me back".

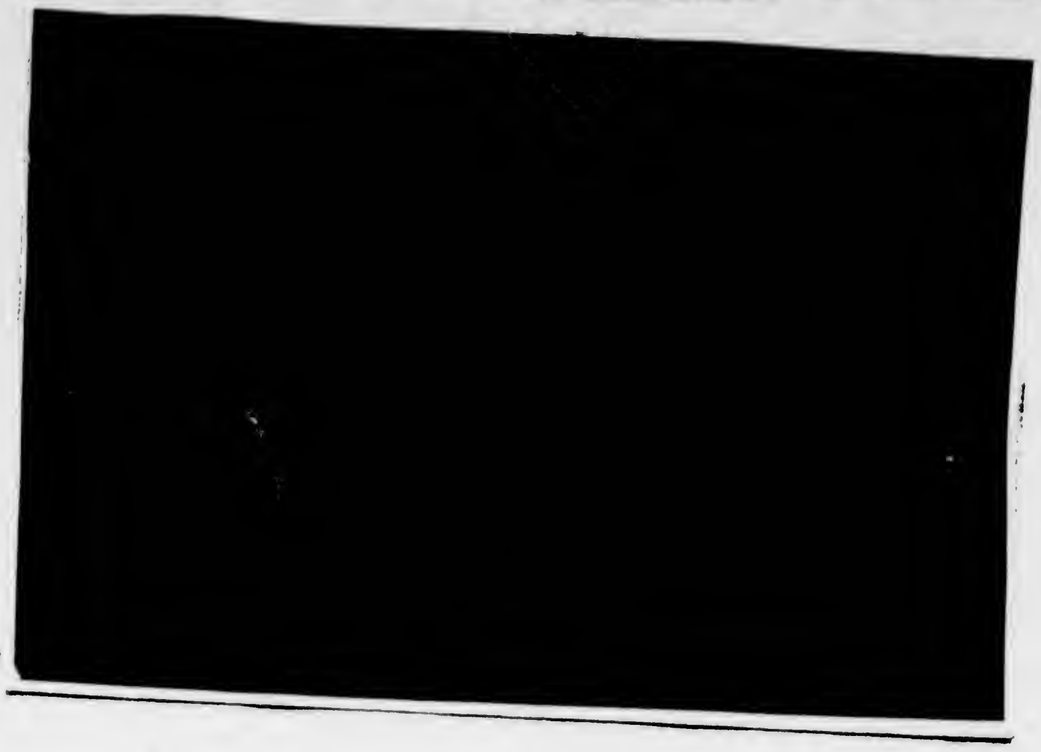
Government of India did indeed get rid of me,ind due course and Harper-Nelson came back to Lahore, in due course. I accept even after all my negative experiences with the Government of India and the Government of the Punjab, and after reading all the disclosures which to appear now in print about the way the British Government looked at and looked after the Jews, how they reacted fully knowing what went on in the Concentration Camps in Germany etc, that I was not interned, was not"got rid of" purely to please Harper-Nelson. There were surely in addition many other reasons, but I have no doubt that when the other reasons had proved futile,weak or wrong, we were not released from internment like so many others,especially other doctors, because this would have displeased Harper-Nelson, my special friend.

I hope he has led a satisfied life and has made enough money to spend in his second retirement. He must, however, have experienced on at least another occasion quite some heartache because of me. He was a member of Lodge Prince Albert Victor long before I was initiated there in 1949. When in 1955 I was placed into the chair of the Lodge as Master, Harper-Nelson sent

in his resignation. Poor fellow , he could not live with the fact that I had become the W.M. of his own Lodge. He must have felt regret that he did not interfere when there was the right time, when I was proposed as a member in 1949. I hope he never learned of the fact that I made still greater advancement in Freemasonry, when I was appointed the DGM of the entire District. This would have been surely too much to make him keep his trust in God and mankind.

This is a story which would be worthy of a longer "digestion" and a more profound digestion, because so much could be learned from all that has happened . But let me stop here. Enough is enough,especially of Harper-Nelson.

TO PAGE 110



F37307

Mara, Argos and Ruth

F37308

A Sikh Raja

Mara F37309

Our home in Epalinges, France.

Muhammad Asad-Weiss

F37311

F37310 Pipsi

RUTH MÜLLER-HEIM

Mohammad Asaf - Weiss.

Let me tell you about an extraordinary man whose path we crossed and who might one day be worthy of a detailed biography.

This man, Leopold Weiss, was born in Vienna, into a religious galician family. He was a restless individual and could not sett le down to any occupation or to any sustained study course, and he set - to my mind wisely - to make use of his unusual capabilities in a rather unorthodox manner. He had always been attracted by the Near East, by the romantics of the desert, by the mysterious Bedouins and all the other dreams which a young man in those days made use of to persuade himself, that he could never ben happy in his family environment nor in the bourgeois armosphere surrounding him.

He left home and travelled to Palestine where he stayed for some time with his uncle,a physician, but he soon found uncle, Palestine and Jews not the kind of atmosphere he had been searching for. He went inot the Arabiandesert, met Bedouins whom he joined. He lived with them,learned their language and their customs,converted to Islam. He gained the trust of King Ibn Saud in time became a kind of advisor to the desert king. He considered it a great honour that he was permitted to marry a daughter of the king. There is much more to be told about these developing stages in his life, but you can read about this, if you care, in one of his books, among whom "The Road to Mecca" may prove most likely the most instructive.

We met Asad early in 1938. He lived in Modeltown, a satellite suburb of Lahore. In Arabia he had arosed the suspicion of the British Authorities who did not believe his declarations of innocence and preferred to consider him a spy or that , at least, he exerted a bad influence on the Saudi King and his curroundings. Asad was arrested in Egypt because some forged papers and counterfeit money were found in his luggage. I have no difficulty in accepting Asad's version of the events, viz:- that these incriminating forgeries had been planted by the British Secret Service. Nothng much happened to him, however; he was not placed before a tribunal or otherwise

treated like a criminal, but he was expulsed from the Middle East, confined to Modeltown where he was given a bungalow and the strict order not to travel further than Lahore,some five miles distant,without the permission of the Police Authorities.

When we first encountered Asad he had been living already for four years in that bungalow with his Arab wife and Talat,his son of five years, and his intimate friend and trusted guide into the intricacies of Arab philosophy and language: Hafeez, a blind man of about fifty years. Asad had come to Lahore with a considerable sum of money. He invested this money into a printing press which he imported from Germany, and in a large stock of ink and paper. His program was to print a translation of "El Bokhari", one of the most important islamic texts of which so far no good english translation existed. It was a very beautiful printing job, one side showed the arabic text and the other the translation in English. I was told by experts that the translation was as beautifully done as the text looked, and that Asad spoke a very beautiful Arabic. I can testify that his German and his English were not only perfect but also extraordinarily beautiful. This is the more impressive as he never got more than elementary school education. He never studied at a university. Inthe first years in the East he had earned some pocket money by regularly sending articles about his journeys, his impressions and his experiences to some of the elading newspapers in Europe, who liked his writings and were happy to appoint him their roving reporter. However, Asad was not the man to work hard or in a sustained way. After some time he stopped sending articles to these newspapers, which was not a very nice way to behave, because he stopped sending articles after he had accumulated a considerable amount of debts due to the advance paytments he had received from these journals. I have seen myself letters from the Frankfurter Zeitung and the Neue Zuericher Zeitung in which the editors requested him to start again to send articles of any kind as their readers had never ceased to claim for his writings. The editors wrote that they would gladly forego the money he owed them for the advances he had received in the past. True to form Asad wrote that he was broke,that he would write again for them if he could get some new advances. (I do not think that the modern system of agents and syndicated columns were known then). Asad did receive about L.Sterl.200.- as advance from these newspapers - and again true

to form - never wrote even a line for these papers. And of course,he never returned the money he had ◦received as advance.

I cannot recall to have ever seen a man as lazy as Asad, as trusting in God and man,and as assured that the next day's bread would,in due course, somehow appear on his table. For a year or more I served as his source of income, as that representative of Providence in which he believed so fervently. He would turn up at regular intervals with one excuse or the other, as for a "loan" of a few rupees,stay on for one hour to tell us one or more of his always fascinating st ories and then leave again. He always came with his blind friend in tow and it was touching to see with what care he treated - and fed him. Or he would appear early in the morning, share our breakfast and inform us with a mysterious mien that he was on his way to see a very high government official at around ten or eleven and that he would spend the interval redding the newspapers as this would assist him in digesting his good breakfast. When I returned for my lunch, he was as a rulestill there,stretched out on the sofa, reading with admirable concentration a novel or a detective story he had found among my books. After lunch = which he ate with great appreciation - he found that it was not worth his while to return home as he wanted to complete the reading of the book he had found so fascinating. And whn I returned from work to dinner ,there he was again or better still, and after sharing our supper he would mostly succeed in persuading us to take us to a cinema wher e according to his information a very inst ructive and well reccommended film was shown. This was repeated for many a day. It may be that in the end he did visit that important government official, but I do not recall the outcome of any of these episodes.

I told you that he was engaged in the translation and printing of the " Bokhari ". He had planned to issue the book in 32 parts and he had sold over 3000 copies by advance subscription long before he had even printed the first page. (I recall that the Nizam of Hyderabad alone had ordered 600 copies - and paid for them).All subscriptions had ,of course, been fully paid in advance. In 1937/38 he had had already printed and sent out 12 or 13 of the 32 parts he had planned, but as he had already spent all the money he had been advanced, as he had no more money to pay for paper,ink,postage etc. to complete the next fascicle, he had come to the decision tht it was wiser to do nothing ,not to bother about subscriptions, press

and and printing, because of his certainty that somehow somtimes Allah was going to help him solve his problems.

In a certain way he was not going to be disappointed in his trust in Allah: when war broke out he was at once interned in the Camp in Dehra Dun and his wife and son were sent to the Family Camp in Purandhar.

When we met her there we were surprised at the changes she had undergohe; from the submissive wife who had knelt before her husband - whom she called Siddhi,my Lord - to remove his shoes, she had turned into a europeanized version of an Arab lady. She spoke now an acceptable English, could read and write English, had started to use lipstick, and she dressed in the way all european women in the Camp did. She was not too pleased to meet us again as she had woven a most fantastic picture of her background in Arabia and Lahore We did not feel inclined to correct her tales that she came from a rich background, had lived all her youth in a palace in Arabia, that she owned a very big bungalow in Lahore with many servants, that her husband had earned a big income as a writer and so on . I am sorry to say that in her fear that we might somewhat correct her fantasies she tried to avoid us as far as possible.

And for similar reasons also Asad avoided us when he was at last permitted to join his family in Purandhar. It did not take us long to realize why he was sent to the Camp and why it was wise for all concerned to avoid his company: he had become the stool pidgeon, the informer, for the commandant. This fact was only definitely proven after he had done already a lot of damage.

When the war ended he was one of the first to be released. His release had been requested by the Punjab Government and the already powerful Muslim League Party under Mamdot who saw in Asad an interesting and important person. You can imagine our surrpise when we returned to Lahore in 1946 to find Asad installed as advisor to the Government,the Muslim Government of the Punjab; and when Pakistan became an independent State he was made into the "Director of Islamic Reconstruction" whih title and office meant that all questions of religion and its application in the newly created State were decided by him,that he was to give the new government and the new state and islamic character as Allah demanded and circumstances permitted. He acted indeed for quite some time as supreme specialist and arbiter in islamic questions.In one instance I was myself

responsible for one of his solomonic decsions. A Roumanian-Jewish female dentist had come from Indonesia after the war,had settled in Lahore and soon formed a liaison with the most desirable - possibly only available British bachelor - the Director of the Mental Hospital. Unfortunately he had a wife in England who did not want to divorce him even when our Roumanian dentist (we called her the "Rose of Sourabaya") had compromised him to a sufficient degree to make him honourbound "to do something". In a playful mind I advised the Colonel to become a Muslim and to marry our dentist as a second wife. He placed this idea before the Director of Islamic Reconstruction who did not see any objection to such a step. Our Colonel became a Muslim, married the Rose of Sourabaya as a second wife and all were happily disposed thereafter, except for the British wife who at last granted her rival the pleasure to own the Mental Specialist in his entirety. Happiest of all was our dentist - as she herslef told us in her moment of triumph: one hour after he marriage she was the proud owner of a British passport.

I am sure Asad had many such decisions,such evidence of signal wisdom to report, but after a year he appeared to have had "enough" or the situation might have appeared a bit to incongruous to all concerned. (I cannot judge this first hand as Asad felt it safer and wiser not to know us anymore). But Asad saw the moment come when he could realize one of his pet dreams: to put his fingers again into the political pie. He was appointed to the important post in charge of the Middle East desk,resp. the Arab Desk in the Foreign Office in Karachi by his friend and mentor, Sir Zafrullah Khan,then the Foreign Minister. I am sure he was a very knowledgeable and clever expert in the Foreign Office. After some time he yearned for pastures more green and he had himself appointed a member of the Pakistan Delegation at the United Nations wgere he functioned for many years, first as deputy leader and later even as ambassador.

However, in the meantime the political leadership had changed in Pakistan at more or less every level and Asad had become an embarrassement. He appeared not to have known the limits a wiser man less drunk with power and self-importance would have recognized. However, he was a tenured officer of the Government and he had still some mighty friends - along with mighty enemies - in Arab countries. It proved not so easy to get rid of him. At last,after all ,the oppor-

tunity came at last when he had grown too big for his boots (or is it better to say slippers ?): he divorced his Arab wife,settled her and his son in London as far as possible from New York as he could arrange, and he married a Polish journalist. He married her without the permission of his Government as the book of rules prescribed. This slight ommission was blown up into a very great offence - and Asad was sacked.

He spent a year or more in America on a speaking tour and earned much money in this was, as he told me when one day in the 1960s he truned up in my office in Lahore. I am sure he did earn much money in this way as he is one of the best speakers I have ever known. He came to Lahore with his Polish wife,a new big American car and big plans: he wanted to settle in Pakistan,somewhere in the hills near Murree,where he was going to build himself a bungalow for which he had brought along the most modern fittings and the latest electric gadgets. He was going to spend the next few years writing books and articles for which he had already lined up important publishers.

Poor Asad ! He had planned his future without taking into account the Pakistan Government where he was,most apparently,not much liked,where his personal file appeared to contain material which was not to the liking of the generals in power.He was told in plain words that he was not welcome,that his presence in Pakistan was undesirable,that he should pack and go away again. Surprising,is it not ? He was after all a Pakistani. Why did they ban him in such a categoric way ? Were certain religious powers interfering ? He was not even a Qadiani, an Ahmedi or a Shia. I really do not know why he had to again into exile.

Friends met him later in Geneva in Switzerland. Mohammad Asad,formerly Leopold Weiss, a good Muslim and formerly a not so good Jew, had found employment as Public Relations Officer for the Arab League with the specific duty to "to counter-act Israeli,Zionist and Jewish propaganda".

Lt.-Col. Sir Muhammad Akbar Khan
The Nawab of Hoti.

I like now and then to tell stories about Maharajas and Maharanis . Usually I met them as patients,mainly in Kashmir, where they had been spending the summer months. We had no such abundance of Maharajas i.e. independent rulers of princely states in Pakistan or in the Punjab (of course, before partition Patiala,Jind, Nabha etc belonged to the Punjab too, but afterwards they were already "abroad" for us). We had, however, quite a number of Nawabs,i.e. Muslim princes who in many a way differed from the Hindu or Sikh equivalents; they were as a rule poorer,less flamboyant,less picturesque.

None of the latter epithets,however, applies to one of the local brands of Nawabs who became our patient quite early in 1938. He was a giant of a man,endowed with a terrifi voice - more a roar than a voice - and unbounded energy although he had already passed the age of 60. He was also a nice man. He was an ex-Army Officer, very well read and an inexhaustable source of tales and facts. History was his speciality and he never tired to tell me that the people of the Frontier Province were the ten lost tribes of Israel. He himself belonged to the Beni Benjamin and he was intimately related to the Beni Yusuf,another tribe living near Peshawar. This faithful friend and patient was the ruler - one could even say owner - of a small State in the northern part of the country,called Hoti. He had next to reading a strange hobby: he considered himself a genius a great historian. in mechanics and an inventor. He presented me with his luxuriously printed genealogy: Adam figured as number one, King David as No. 70, Prophety Mohammad as No.136 and he,the Nawab of Hoti as No. 138.

One one of our visits to his estate I was impressed by his library: the walls of about a dozen rooms were covered from floor to roof with shelves filled with books and I came to accept his statement that he had read every one of these books. He must have had also otherwise a lot of time at his disposal as his main hobby, his mechanical inventions must have kept him very busy. Everything in his large house was mechanized; by pressing a button he would walls, shift screens,open staircases. He had half a dozen cars but it was impossible to specify their branc; they looked like mongrels.

TELEPHONE: 83 MARDAN

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LAHORE

HEAD OFFICE:
HOTI
(DISTT. MARDAN)

No......

4th April, ...*19* 62.

Dear Dr. Slazer,

Perhaps you might be remembering that you had treated my wife some two/three years ago during the time you were in Lawrence Road.

My wife has been sick seriously for the last three months and inspite of giving her the treatment here through various doctors, she has not improved and the condition is considered to be very unsatisfactory.

I am therefore contemplating ~~to~~ to take her to Lahore and consult you in person.

It is therefore requested that you will be kind enough to let me know any day and time convenient to you to examine my ailing wife in Lahore at your new address, any date after Sunday next or Monday next. On receipt of information from you, I shall bring my wife to Lahore and see you at the appointed time and day.

Thanking you and looking forward to your early reply,

Yoursfaithfully,

(Capt. M. Z.Abbasy).

Please address me as under:-

House No. 676/C, Nanakpura,
Mardan.

Each one of them,after they had come into his possession new or used, had been completely taken apart and rebuilt with many other additions to serve manifold new purposes. To give you an example: he showed us a Cadillac which had been lengthened by five feet,had been enriched with two more doors and six seats, and the diverse ashtrays, cupboards,footstools etc. inside the car obeyed faultlessly the manifold buttons he invited us to press. He was especially proud of the enormous meatgrinder in which he could process the meat of one entire oxen at one time; the grinder and knives were driven by a man pedalling a bicycle-like contraption. A similar mechanism was used to turn 120 long iron pins placed over a large bed of charcoal, and when these pins were covered by the kubab meat produced by the meat grinder, and the charcoal was aglow in tha large tray, a man on the pedalling contraption at the one end of the machine could cook nearly a thousand kubabs at a time. Our Nawab boasted that with the help of his inventions he couldfeed an entire regiment withinm a short time. Such mechanized wholesale installations explain the frequently repeated and insistently extended invitation of the Nawab that we come on a prolonged visit and bring with us 300 of our friends as his palace had 300 rooms in which 300 beds were available and he could provide 300 guns for a nice hunting expedition for 300 people at a time.
I took it for granted that all my 3oo friends would have been adequately fed with kubabs and chapatis - the tasty flat bread eaten in Pakistan - for which he had invented an equally imposing machine of great dimensions.

One of his main pleasures in later life,i.e.the 2 or 3 years during which we knew each other, appears to have been the visits to my surgery. He came to visit me on an average once a week and he had the decency to produce every time a new symptom or a different complaint or to come along with one of his sick relatives so that he and his visits never became monotonous. However, I had come to dread his appearance,because the "medical" side of his visit did not take up more than half an hour at the most, but as soon as the "business" side had been dealt with ,he let go in his booming voice about the many topics which made up his special interests and by implication were supposed to fascinate also me. On every occasion he told me without fail about the ten lost tribes of Israel now living in the foothills of the Himalayas and there was never a visit when he did not tell me how famous he had been in his younger days

in the Army when he could take a pony with his rider in his arms and lift both shoulder high.

All this would have been tolerable, if his stories would not have gone for 2 and often three hours without my being able to interrupt the flow or to otherwise indicate to him that there patients waiting outside to see me. Believe me, I was exhausted and also desperate by the time the Nwab took his leave at last and I could call in a servant to remove the ashes and the stubbs of the twenty or so cigarettes he had smoked during his visit. It had come to such a state that I dreaded the man's coming and as he hardly ever announced his arrival in time to permit me to re-arrange my schedule, it happened many a time that my secretary sent the patients waiting in the room next door home with the request to come back in the afternoon.

One fine day the scene was again going to be repeated. There in front of me stood the huge man, smoking and sputtering, telling me of his exploits in his youth, of his discoveries in history, his inventions in some field of mechanics, and proving to me that he had the solution to the many philosophical and political problems which were baffling mankind at the moment. I looked through the window of my surgery onto the lawn and yearned for a miracle which would transpose me there into one of the garden chairs while the Nawab continued with his monologue.

Suddenly I had a brainwave, induced by my father-in-law sitting peacefully on the lawn, smoking his cigar, while the two Alsatian dogs rested peacefully at his feet.

" Nawab Sahib", I interruptedmy visitor. " Mr.Neumann, my father-in-law, that gentleman you see sitting in that garden chair, has heard so much about you, about your exploits, about your researches, and he has so often expressed the wish to make your acquaintance and to learn from you about the many things you have so successfully researched. By chance, I see him sitting there on the lawn. Would you be willing to tell him about the ten tribes which have sett led in the North, about the Beni Yusuf, the Beni Benjamin. He would be very much interested to hear about all this from you "

Sure ! The Nawab was only too pleased to meet Mr. Neumann, and he was only too keen to explain to him the results of his life-long studies. I took the Nawab into the garden, introduced him to Moritz Neumann and then went back to my work.

My father-in-law was a happy man,a self-satisfied man whose main pleasure was to sit in the garden and to think about whatever things might come into his mind,all the while munching on his cigar.He was lucky he could indulge in this habit,this passtime or whatever you may call it, as he was deaf and could not be disturbed by whateverwent on around him. Of course, hedid not speak a word of English or Urdu (when we advised him to learn a few words of Urdu so that he could communicate with the servant who took care of the dogs, he thought this unnecessary and in his opinion more adequate thatthe servant should learn the necessary German. This the servant did and this was the way in which he communicated with master and dogs.)

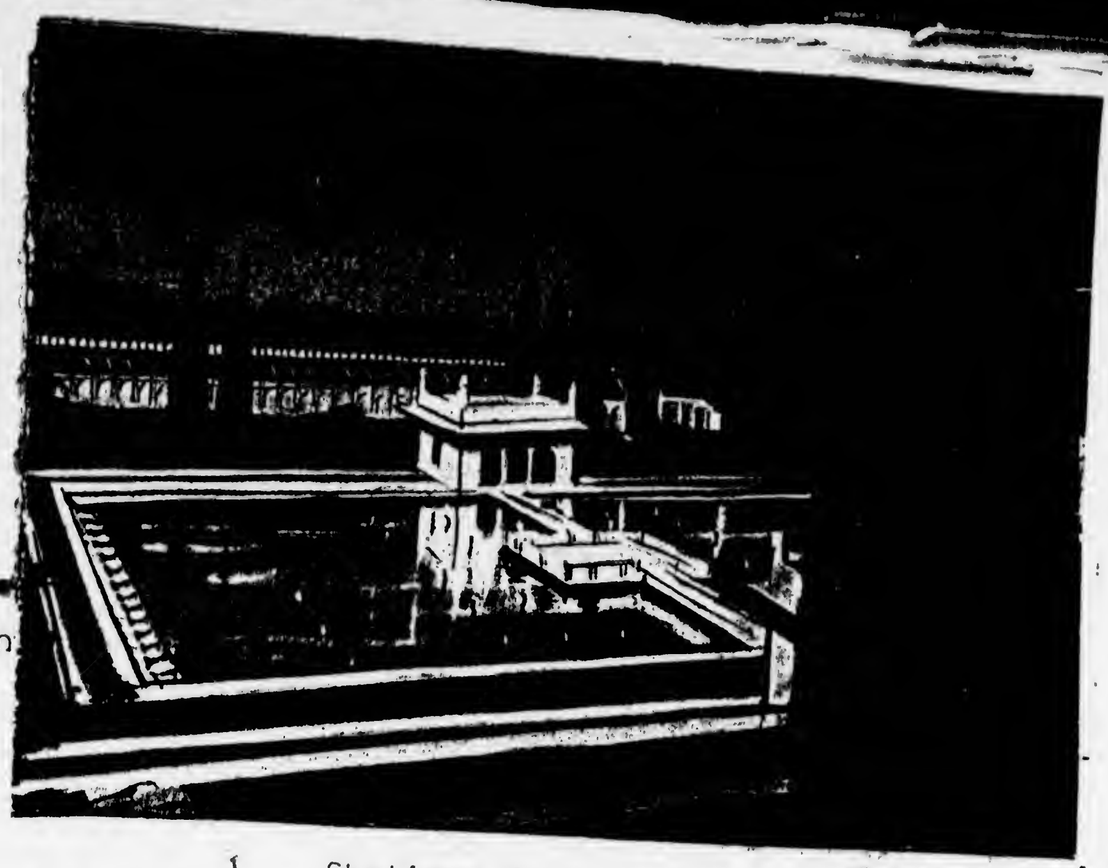
Moritz Neumann had found that he could escape all and any problems which might approach him by shaking his head in agreement. He did this assiduously whenever he was addressed, even though he did not understand or hear a word. This policy or strategy he applied now also to the Nawab, who began to tell Moritz his personal life story,his exploits and theories . And when I came into the garden t hree hours later, after the office was closed for luncheon, there stood the Nawab before Moritz Neumann, booming happily along, while Moritz Neumann sitting in his chair smiled in his friendly way, chewed on his unlit cigar, and continuously shaking his head in agree ment.

It appeared that the Nawab had become tired too now, because he was glad to see me.

" You know", he said, "your father-in-law is a perfect gentleman, a very intelligent and learned man, and we had a very thorough and satisfying conversation. I must say, I have learned very much from him"

Whenever the Nawab thereafter came to see me, I begged him to continue his learned discussions with my father-in-law.

Gisas children
1938
F37312



Shalimar Gardens Lahore F37313

F37314

Moritz Neuman's
tombstone

F37315
The Neumanns with Pipsi

Ruth Muellecheim
with Argos F37316

Pipsi with Grandmother, Mother
and Ruth F37317

Some more about Moritz Neumann.

My parents-in-law joined us in Lahore in spring 1939. They had been lucky to escape in time from Germany shortly before the gates were closed. Nevermind the financial losses they had to sustain. They were safe themselves now and could enjoy thei lives in the thought that also their children had succeeded in leaving Germany in time.

Moritz and Regina arrived to find us already well settled. They were also welcomed by their first grandchild. Pipsi had been born only a few months before. We lived in a comfortable bungalow in Egerton Road, within a big compound and a nice garden. We had furnished one wing of the house to suit as much as possible their taste; the tropical weather conditions forced the to accept certain changes which were unavoidable. Later on we rented for them a small bungalow a few hundred meter away as our living in the same house appeared to impose on them restrictions and limitations none of us enjoyed.

I am sure they were comfortable and happy in their new world and they took the absence of so much of their former comfort well in their stride. Pipsi was for them a great fount of happiness and the two dogs, a pair of beautiful Alsatians the Segalls had brought out for us, were to become the steady companions and a source of interest for Moritz. Also the fact that Erwin and Ilse Segall were with us - along with their daughter Eva - must have made the sudden and profound change-over into the tropics less difficult.

I think they also enjoyed their visit to Kashmir with us and one can well imagine their shock and pain when we were interned while they had to remain in Srinagar (they did not return with us to Lahore in 1940 as in theory Kashmir was an independent state while Lahore was part of British-India. I tried to get the Punjab Government's permission to have them join us in Lahore, but for understandable reasons the decision was delayed again and again and the permission was never granted). We fretted about their well-being alone there in Kahsmir more even than about our own state of affairs. (The Segalls were also at that time in Srinagar,but though

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...wilkes and Mendelsohn
Neumanns

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From

J.D.ANDERSON Esquire, C.I.E.I.C.S.,

Joint Chief Secretary to Government,Punjab

To

Dr.(Mrs.) K.Selzer, M.D.,

8 Egerton Road, Lahore.

No. 11845 B.D.S.B. Dated Lahore, the 31st October, 1940.

Madam,

In reply to your letters of the 14th of October, 1940, addressed to His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab and the Hon'ble the Premier of the Punjab, on the subject of your parents, I am directed to inform you that the proper course is for your parents to apply to the Aliens Advisory Committee, Home Department, New Delhi, recently appointed by the Government of India.

2. Pending the receipt of orders from the Committee your parents should not enter the Punjab.

I have etc.,

J. D. Anderson.

Joint Chief Secretary to Government,
Punjab.

this was some kind of consolation it certainly did not remove our anxiety. Fortunately we could arrange from the Internment Camp with the help of the Jewish Relief Association for the Neumanns to travel to Palestine where they joined their two sons settled there since years. I do not know if Moritz and Regina enjoyed their visit to the Camp in Purandhar to bid us farewell; it was certainly a depressing sight and experience for them but they tried to console themselves and us by rationalizing that we were safer than many Jews elsewhere. They would very unliekly have thought that this would be the outcome, that this would be our fate or their experience, when they first came to Lahore. They must have finaly come to the conclusion that it is wrong to generalize, to conclude from their first day in Lahore, from that first day in India, that we would be reduced to a state they had to witness in the Internment Camp or that they would have to leave in such a manner, alone and friendlless.)

But I hope that that day I mentioned,the day of their arrival in Lahore will have remained engraved in their memory with all the wonderment and pleasure they experienced.

It was a beautiful sprinday. It was pleasantly warm and there were everywhere flowers in the gardens and the fields. Kate and I had been invited for that very afternoon to a tea-party in the Shalimar Gardens on the occasion of the wedding of Iqbal Shafi,the youngest brother of Begum Shah Nawaz. The Shafi family had been for centuries the custodians of these magnificient Moghul Gardens and although nothing was left but a fictitious ownership -as the Government had since long taken over the administration - the family could still on occasions as this wedding claim the ancient rights of ownership. There had been festivities all through the week, but this tea-party had been arranged for the most intimate friends of the Begum only, and we were among the twenty or so guests who sat down on a lawn among the bushes and immense expanses of flowers, around a red carpet covered with white sheets. The Shalimar Gardens were at their best that day. I had asked Begum Shah Nawaz if we could bring with us Kate's parents who were to arrive that very morning and she told us with that very typical eastern politeness and hospitality that she and her family would be only too happy to see the Numanns among her intimate guests. You will hardly be able to imagine the surprise experienced by the two newly arrived citizens of Pyritz in Pomerania.

They had, of course,read of "nawabs,elephants and rubies" crowding streets, but here they saw the Orient at its best, as they had never imagined it in their most romantic dreams: a beautiful environment, women in silks and brocades covered with jewellery, men in turbans of all kinds,dressed in silks and brocades too,charming the European guests with their politeness and kindness. It may be that the heavy pastries and the oversweet drinks did not suit the Neumann's tastes, but from what I could observe they appeared to have quite a good appetite.

We sat on the ground around a carpet which was covered with many trays of pastries and drinks of many kinds, and the many servants hurried to replenish a glass or a plate they saw in need of replenishment. I watched Regina attempting to converse with her neighbours in her still rusty school englis (later on she succeeded in acquiring a quite considerable Englis vocabulary which she never hesitated to use) and not far from her I saw also Moritz "in deep conversat ion" with his neighbour, Raja Kishen Kaul - only in his case the conversaion consisted in his nodding his head at regular intervals with an amused smile in reply to the questions which his neighbour apparently put to him. The man did not realize that Moritz was deaf and could not hear even a single word addressed to him; and even if he had been able to catch a word here and there, he would not have got the meaning of that word as he did not understand anything but German and for him there was no difference at all if he was involved in a conversation in chinese,english or some obscure Indian dialect.

However , everything appeared to go well. I saw I had nothing to worry about the social contacts my visitors had established and I could relax and enjoy myself.

When at last the party was over, Raja Sir Kishen Kaul approached me. He shook his finger at me in mocking reproach and asked

" What is this, Doctor Sahib ? Why did you not tell us that you have the famous Professor Neumann from Vienna as your guests here in Lahore ?"

I looked at him in surprise. I did not understand.

" Why did you not tell us", the Raja repeated, "that Professor Neumann, the famous Ear-Nose-Throaf specialist from Vienna who had recently operated on the Prince of Wales is here in Lahore ?

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I am glad I have discovered this, as my son is badly in need of such a specialist and I have already made an appointment to see the good Professor tomorrow morning ."

" I did not know that Professor Neumann has come to Lahore", I was at last able to tell him. " I myself would have gladly called on him to make his acquaintance".

The Raja looked at me in surprise. And he had every reason to do so. He indicated with his hand father-in-law Moritz Neumann of Pyritz who was standing there near his wife,studying his cigar and discussing most likely with himself if the stub was worth relighting.

" But there is Professor Neumann with his wife. You yourself brought him along. Why do you try to hide him from us ? Is there any reason that you want him to remain incognito ?"

Raja Sir Kishen Kaul was one of the most charming and cultured Indians it had been my luck personally to meet and to acquire as patient. He often came to Lahore where he kept a "second establishment", i.e. he had a second wife there - a muslim woman one never saw in his company. She was socially not acceptable to the establishment as she had before her marriage been a well-known artist in the oldest profession. Kishen Kaul spent most of his time in Kashmir with his Hindu wife and in the supervision of his enormous safran fields from which he drew a very comfortable income . (He told me once that it took him seven days on horseback to circle his fields once).

You can imagine (please forgive me: I have the feeling I have been asking you a bit too often already to use your imagination in these last few pages) my surprise, and it did not long for me to reconstruct (again with some imagination but certainly without the application of too much fantasy) what had been going on to have the Raja make an appointment with Moritz Neumann to have him remove the tonsils of the Raja's son.

" I hear from our hostess that you arrived here in Lahore on this morning" asked the Raja after he had exchanged a few words with the lady to his right and had turned to Moritz at his left.

Moritz smiled and shook his head in confirmation.

" Did I understand well that your name is Mr.Neumann?"

Again Moritz nodded and smiled.

" Are you by chance Professor Neumann ?"

Moritz nodded.

" Professor Neumann from Vienna ?"

Smile. Nod.

" The famous ENT-Specialist ?"

Nod. Smile . Nod.

" Are you the Professor Neumann who recently operated upon the throat of the Prince of Wales ? "

Moritz nods. He smiles. He had apparently finished eating and drinking and he now put into his mouth the half-smoked cigar he had deposited at his side.

" Are you going to stay here for a few days ?"

Nod.Smile. And chewing of the cigar.

"Are you staying in Faletti's Hotel ?"

Nod.Chew.Smile.

"Do you patients while you are here in Lahore ?"

Nod. Smile.

" Could I in this case consult you about my son who suffers from a chronic throat infection and whose tonsils, our doctor says, should be seen by a specialist ?"

Nod. Smile.Chew/

" Can I see you tomorrow morning ?"

Nod. Smile.

" Would ten in the morning suit you ?"

Nod. Smile.

Now also the Raja smiled and nodded.

" Can I give you some more tea ?", he asks politely.

Moritz smiles and nods. His cup is filled.

" Have you tried this cake, Professor Sahib ? "

Moritz smiles and nods. He gets a piece of cake.

" Is this enough or would you like another piece of cake ? This kind is very good. May I give this cake too ?"

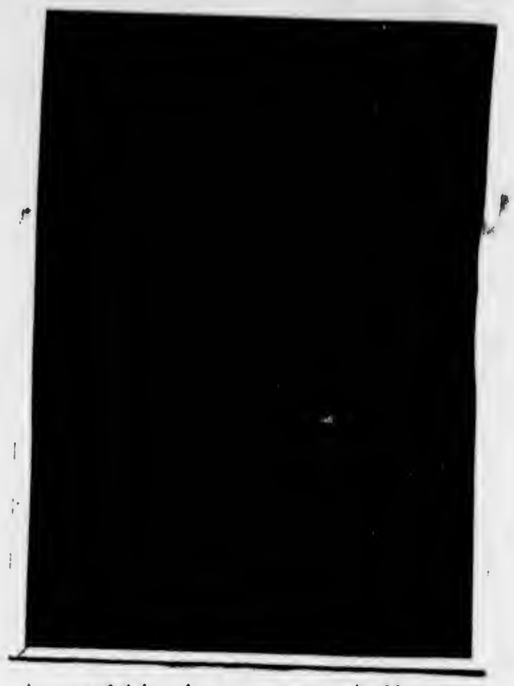
Moritz smiles and nods and chews his cigar. Soon he has a plateful of cakes before him.

He smiles and nods. Also the Raja smiles and nods and he turns to his neighbour to the right and tells her triumpahtly that Professor Neumann has been very kind and understanding.

Fortunately they were all nice people and when the mystery was solved and Moritz Neumann deprived of all his titles and appointments, there was general laughter and general goodwill too.

TO FACE
125

In Kashmir 1938 F37318



With Argos and Mara

F37321

Pipsi comes home

F37319

F37322

1939 in Lahore

In Lahore. With her Ayah

F37320

F37323

1939 in Kashmir

Hazel Eleanor Selzer.

Pipsi realized that her real name was the above for the first time when she was over six years old and started to visit the Convent School in Lahore. This happened in autumn 1946. Until then, during all the years in the Internment Camps she was known to all as "Pipsi" and for us she has remained so until today. (This reminds me of a very nice Hindu custom where the child is given a "pet name" at birth; this pet name the child, boy or girl retains until the age of about 18 when he or she can chose her own name).

How did she come to this funny name, you will ask ? It was the way her Ayah, i.e. her Goanese Nanny pronounced the German pet word " Pueppchen" which Grandmother Neumann had given her.

Pipsi was only a few months old when the Neumanns arrived and whatever problems they may have had to face, whatever worries they may have been unable to shake off - the loss of their fortune in Germany, the separation from their two sons in Palestine the trasnplantation into a new world, the different kind of cigars Moritz had to smoke and the lack of accustomed household duties in the case of Regina - the company of their granddaughter acted as a catalyzator for their happiness. Motitz was fortunate that he had the two Alsatian dogs who grew attached to him and Regina the Ayah whose habits she did not like too much.

One could , however, notice the pleasure the Neumanns experienced when one watched them in their twice daily rpocession - Pipsi in her pram pushed by her Ayah, flanked on each side by one of the Alsatians, followed by grandparents Neumann. One could see Regina mostly laughing happily because the child attracted the attention of the passersby who all congratulated her on her grandchild, and one could watch Moritz also smiling most of the time while chewing happily on his locally manufactured cigar which he found surprisingly good.

I have oftgen experienced some misgiving, amounting even to guilt with regard to ourtwo children, mainly because we could not offer them that free, relaxed, uncomplicated life other children

Form No. 3

MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, LAHORE.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH.

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Annual Serial No.	Date of Birth.	Sex. Male.	Sex. Female.	Name of the father or parents and of grand-father.	Place of Birth	Occupation, caste, religion and residence of the father.	Name of informant.	Name of child if any	Date of report of Birth.	REMARKS
80.	2-1-1939.	-	F.	Dr. H.M., Selzer M.D.	Lady Willingdon Hospital, Lahore.	Doctor, Jew, 10:8 Egerton, Road Lahore.	House Surgeon	Hazel Eleanor.	~~19k~~ 19-1-1939.	

Dated LAHORE
The 11th June 1941. 19

Municipal Medical Officer Of Health and
Municipal Registrar, Lahore.

The Silver Printing Press, Beadon Road, Lahore.

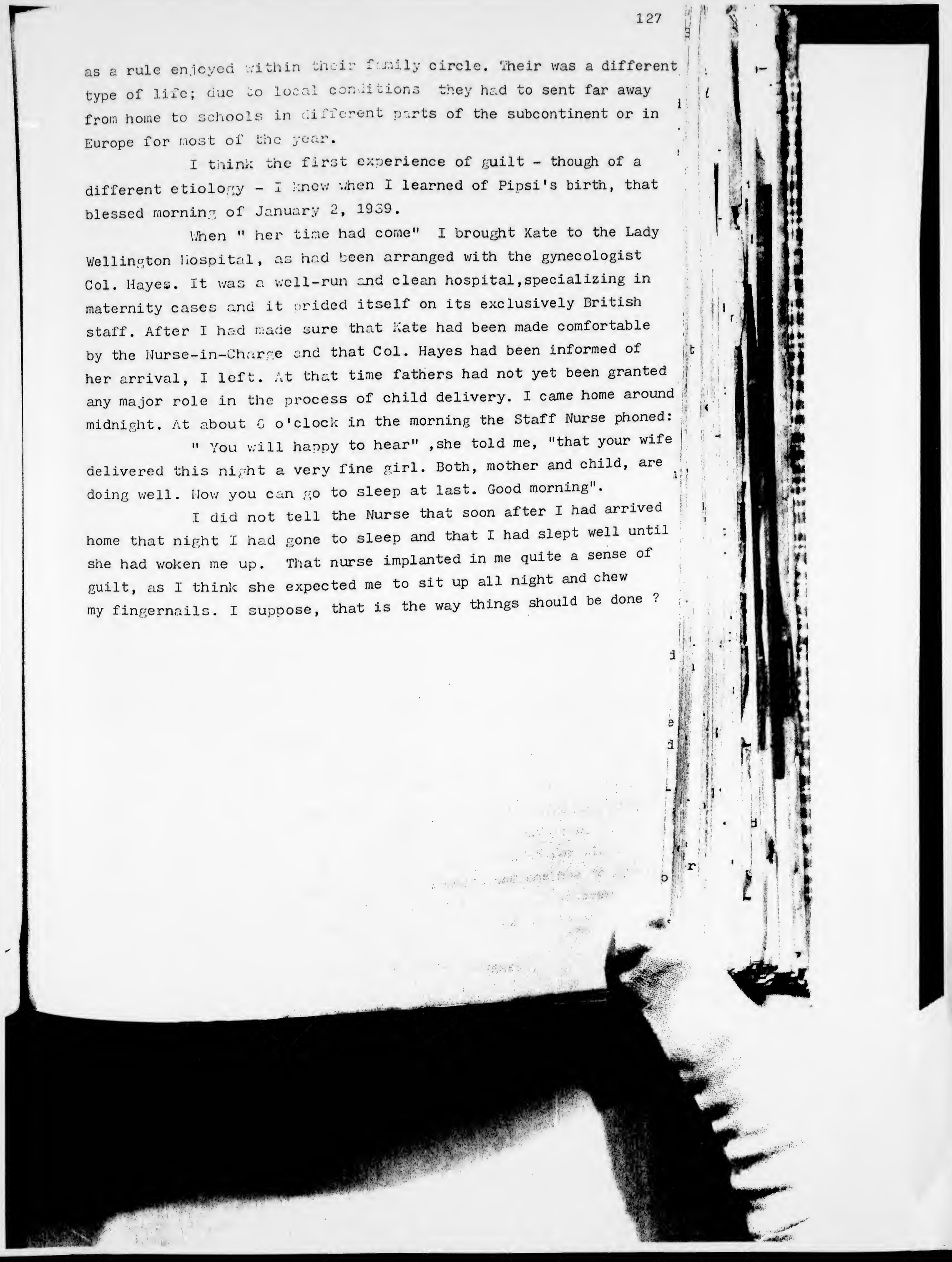
as a rule enjoyed within their family circle. Their was a different type of life; due to local conditions they had to sent far away from home to schools in different parts of the subcontinent or in Europe for most of the year.

I think the first experience of guilt - though of a different etiology - I knew when I learned of Pipsi's birth, that blessed morning of January 2, 1939.

When " her time had come" I brought Kate to the Lady Wellington Hospital, as had been arranged with the gynecologist Col. Hayes. It was a well-run and clean hospital,specializing in maternity cases and it prided itself on its exclusively British staff. After I had made sure that Kate had been made comfortable by the Nurse-in-Charge and that Col. Hayes had been informed of her arrival, I left. At that time fathers had not yet been granted any major role in the process of child delivery. I came home around midnight. At about 6 o'clock in the morning the Staff Nurse phoned:

" You will happy to hear" ,she told me, "that your wife delivered this night a very fine girl. Both, mother and child, are doing well. Now you can go to sleep at last. Good morning".

I did not tell the Nurse that soon after I had arrived home that night I had gone to sleep and that I had slept well until she had woken me up. That nurse implanted in me quite a sense of guilt, as I think she expected me to sit up all night and chew my fingernails. I suppose, that is the way things should be done ?



My private Relief Association.

It all started in such a simple way and it all appeared so simple and straight forward - and it all ended so badly because I over-extended my "credit" and it all certainly contributed to render me suspect in the eyes of the Government.

It all started when I was in Bombay in 1937 and had contacted the Jewish Relief Association for advice and information. This Relief Association provided help to destitute immigrants, placed them in jobs somehwre in India and in case of need assisted them during the first few months after their arrival. There is no doubt that much good work was done by this voluntary organization. It is also to be acknowledged that most, if not all, Jews who had escaped from Germany did make substantial financial contributions which,however, in no case represented a sacrifice.

However, there is also no doubt that this Organization, the Jewish Relief Association in Bombay functioned in the way the Judenraete in the ghettos functioned: whenever there was the case of a destitute for whom work could not be found, or who for one reason or the other could not keep his job, or who did not live according to the way those in charge of the Relief Association thought a refugee depending on the goodwill of other Jews should live and behave,these Jews in the directorate of the Relief Association advised the Government Authorities that such individuals should be better removed fromcirculation and placed into an internment camp. There is also no doubt that many cases of jealousy and rivalry were solved in this manner. There is further no doubt that there was a satisfactory collaboration between the Police Officer charged with the supervision of enemy aliens and the Relief Association, and that the latter provided the former with a list of suitable names whenever the Authorities expressed dissatisfaction with the small number of aliens interned or the large number of aliens not interned. Of course, those interned were not used for slave labour, nor were they sent to the gas chambers and one has to agree that many a case was better off in the camps. Still...whenever I learned of such goings-on I felt to take these Jews of Bombay of Bombay at their throats and shake off their smugness.

2, Sir Zafar Ali Mansions,"
Canal Bank, Lahore.

12th March, 1939.

My dear Dr. Selzer,

Herewith the two guarantees. I have not yet heard from the gentleman who knows the job of making hand-bags, etc. He has not seen me.

Yours sincerely,

Encl: 2

Dr. H.M. Selzer, M.D.,
Egerton Road,
Lahore.

However, this is not the issue I want to deal with at this moment.

2, Sir Zafar Ali Mansions,
Canal Bank, Lahore.
12th March, 1939.

This is to certify that I guarantee herewith for Mr. Hermann Spiegel, actually in a Concentration-Camp in Zbaszyn and his wife, Mrs. Hella Spiegel of Berlin the necessary capital to start in some place in India, most probably in Lahore a shop as a watch-maker. When Mr. and Mrs. Spiegel arrive here in India they will be taken care of by me and my friends who will offer them and be responsible for the necessary means for their well-being. Their expenses up to Bombay will be paid by themselves.

D. Chaman Lall
Barrister-at-Law
M. L. A.

2, Sir Zafar Ali Mansions,
Canal Bank, Lahore.
12th March, 1939.

This is to certify that I guarantee herewith for Mr. Josef and Mrs. Rahel Tischler, of Berlin, necessary capital to start in some place in India, preferably in Lahore, a factory for chocolates and sweets. When they arrive in India, they will be taken care of by me and my friends who will offer them and be responsible for the necessary means for their well-being. Their expenses up to Bombay will be paid by themselves.

Dharam Lall
Barrister-at-Law
M L. A.

61

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

Palais du Conseil Général

GENEVE (Suisse)

1 CM17329

ANDEUR — ANFRAGESTELLER — ENQUIRER

Dr Selzer

ian name - Vorname 8 Egerton Rd.

Strasse & Lahore

lity - Ortschaft

County - Provinz Brit. India

- Land

smettre — Mitteilung — Message

aximum, nouvelles de caractère strictement personnel et familial) — *Worte, nur persönliche Familiennachrichten*) — (*not over 25 words, f strictly personal character*).

Bitte um Nachrichten

12-II-40

ESTINATAIRE — EMPFÄNGER — ADDRESSEE

Frau Kaiser

stian name - Vorname

Strasse 19 Lenotzow Strasse

lity - Ortschaft Berlin

unty - Provinz

y - Land Deutschland

MSEITIG.
ch schreiben.

RÉPONSE AU VERSO.
Prière d'écrire très lisiblement.

REPLY OVERLEAF.
Please write very clearly.

I Josef Tischler geb 19/12 1889 in Lamberg Staatenlos früher Oesterreich
Rachel " geb Spiegel " 7/6 1896 " Mann Ehefrau "
Julia " " " 1/3 1924 " Berlin Kind "
Hilde " " " 23/4 1928 " " " "

Anschrift: Josef Tischler Berlin Neukölln Bürknerstr. 20

II Gisela Kaiser geb Spiegel geb 23/3 1901 Synowodzko Polen
Arno " " " 31/7 1927 Berlin Kind
Dago " " " 13/7 1929 " "

Anschrift: Gisela Kaiser Berlin N 87 Lortzingstr. 9

However, this is not the issue I want to deal with at this moment.

Of course, the "Jewrelief" as the Association shortened its name, knew that we had settled in Lahore and it was understandable that they soon approached us with the request that we make use of all our contacts in our new environment with the request that they provide jobs, any kind of jobs, for Jews still confined in Germany. We received many such requests from Bombay and these were only a small portion pf the constant stream of petitions and applications from Jews in Germany which hounded the Jewrelief in Bombay. At regular intervals the Association begged us ro find jobs of any kind or type for any kind or type of potential emigrants from Germany. We felt we were duty-bound to heed to these appeals for help. We had already acquired many friends and had already a good number of patients and we approached them all to ask of the the opportunity to employ in their diverse kinds of enterprises suitable Jews still in Germany and we forwarded whatever positive reaction we received from any potential local employer to the JRA in Bombay. Our collaboration must have appeared to them unusually enthusiastic and must have surprised not only the JRA in Bombay but also those officials who organized the emigration in Germany. From my experience I can say that it is a mistake to generalize the well-known trend,urge,readiness of Jews everywhere to help correligionists,onto German Jews in general. If it had depended on those Jews who came to be classified as " German Jews" neither the waves of emigrants from Russia and Poland in the past century nor of those who tried to escape fromHitler's Germany would have salvation or a home. T his is can clearly say about the many German Jews I encountered in those very years I am writing about. They were ready to give money - within limits,of course - they were ready to help other Jews escape from Germany as they themselves had successfully escaped - provided these refugees did not settle in that very place in which the first-comers had settled , and provided also that no further personal involvement was demanded of them. In short: the obligation a Jew might feel towards other Jews was as a rule satisfied by donating a sum of money to a charity.

It must,therefore, have surprised not only the JRA (the se Secretary,Mrs. Wartenberger was one of the few good-hearted persons I have met in that environment), but also their counterparts

in Germany,especially in Berlin, because the number of "cases" I received from Bombay and later on directly from Berlin grew from months to months and soon we in Lahore began to function as a kind of branch office of the JRA. We must have been instrumental in bringing at least twenty emigrant families to India. It was understood by all that we were not to take these jobs offered by local businessmen and landlords,too literal and that we or they would never be called upon to live up to the guaranties we had to give in every case of a visa which prescribed that we would be responsible for the maintenance,the behaviour and the possible future repatriation of those who had come to India on our responsibility. The main purpose was to get as many Jews as possible out of Germany. Once they were outside the range of Nazi threats we would have time to think and plan further. I must state here that we were in general lucky in those who reached India with our help. They never became a reliability. We did not even meet most of them personally as they usually proceeded straight to Bombay where the JRA looked after them, provided them with jobs or arranged for their onward journey to Australia, America etc.

Only one case proved troublesome. The office of the Jewish Community of Berlin sent me once an application of a young lawyer,called Silbermann, and his wife who had for some years been employed by the Jewish Community in the distribution of old clothng to those in need. The letter said that the young man had been a very dedicated social worker for many a year and that he claimed now "with justification" that he had done his duty and that he in turn should now be given the opportunity to emigrate. (The letter painted a very impressive picture of this couple but when we met them in person we could not imagine it justified. No wonder ! The fellow confessed later that he himself had written that very letter and had succeeded in making all the arrangements in Berlin without anybody in charge there knowing about it all). I succeeded in finding a job for them as managers of a boardinghouse in Murree, a hill-station above Rawalpindi.

The couple arrived in due course after many postponments. I was shocked. I could not have imagined a more typical Nazi - by all means a Jewish Nazi - than Silbermann. And his wife fitted well into this picture. Not only their looks,not only his brown boots, but also their behaviour,their reactions,their language reminded us of the Nazis. It turned out that they had belonged to the "Naumannn

Group", an association of Jews who imitated the stormtroupers and had for a long time nourished the hope that they would be accepted and recognized by the Nazis. Of course,they were soon to learn that whatever aryan look and behaviour these Jews adopted,they remained "Untermenschen" in the eyes of the Nazis.

As the Silbermanns had again and again postponed their arrival and as the owner of the boardinghouse had been pressing us to produce the manager we had promised, and as she threatened to cancel her offer of employment, we had found for her another couple of refugees who had arrived in the meantime and this couple was now safely installed in the job which Silbermann was supposed to get.

I explained this to the Silbermanns and I promised them that we would have no difficulty to find soon another job for them; and I assured them that this change would not represent any inconvenience for them as I was going not only to pay for their maintenance during this interval but that I would also pay them their salary from my own pocket.

Silbermann rudely refused. He insisted that he had come from Germany for a specific job and that he was going to get that very job, Otherwise, he threatened, he would take legal steps against me and he cited laws and paragraphs with which he had, apparently already familiarized himself.

It was a very hard and unpleasant task but I ultimately did succeed in dislodging the couple who since some months had begun to work in the boardinghouse and to make the owner take on the Silbermanns.

I met the Silbermanns again in the Internment Camp. I saw him strutting around in his brown boots and his belt, In the camp he did not feel anymore the need for restraint and the opinion he expressed about the other Jews in the Camp, about Jews in general were worthy of a Goebbels. The Silbermanns soon left for Australia with the help of friends who lived there. The Government of India must have been very glad to get rid of them.

We had also applied to the Government of India to grant immigration visas for the Segalls. Erwin Segall, a lawyer, was married to Kate's cousin Ilse. In November 1938 Erwin had been sent to a Concentration Camp along with his father-in-law; the latter did not come back alive. The only chance to get Erwinb

F 37324

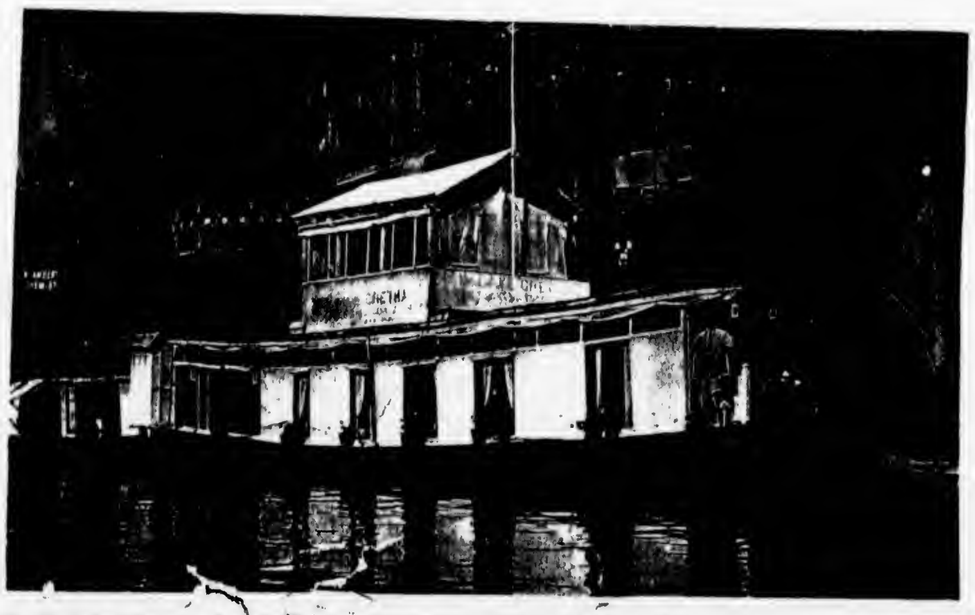
The Segall Family
Erwin, Ilse, Eva ✓

F 37325

Erwin Segall ✓
1931

F 37326

Hermann Spiegel and Family



A houseboat in Kashmir F 37327

released from the Concentration Camp would have been his ability to produce evidence that he could emigrate to some foreign country. We did provide the visas for India for him,his wife and his daughter. The Segalls had many a difficulty to overcome before they reached Lahore. (The family had already embarked in Hamburg on a boat for India when the Gestapo appeared and took Erwin off. They took him back to Greifenhagen ,his home place, where he was made to sign away the family property,flour mills etc to an important Nazi neighbour. This task completed,he was permitted to leave. He joined the ship which had in the meantime left with his wife and child, in Genoa in Italy). They arrived penniless,but had succeeded in bringing with them a pair of thorough-bred Alsatians. (Ruth Muellerheim too had taken with her from Germany a pair of dogs - - Pekinese -but the Nazi officer on board considered it unsuited for Jews to own dogs and threw the poor creatures into the sea).

For the next ten years the Segalls had a very difficult life - but they never complained. Soon after their arrival he started to work in a hotel under very humiliating conditions. Later on he took over the management of a fruitfarm in Kashmir, In this job his standard of living imporved to some degree,but never enough to free him from financial worries. When we were interned,my first and main worry was to arrange that the future of the Segalls was safeguarded as I feared that the unscrupulous owner of the fruitfarm would make use of the changed situation and abuse Erwin still more.

I wrote to the Maharani of Cooch Behar and asked her if she could find a job for Erwin in her State. She did find a job: as manager of the palace gardens in Cooch Behar. Later Erwin was promoted to the office of Food Controller of the State. There in Cooch Behar Erwin lived all through the war years, never complaining and respected by all.

When the war ended he returned to the management of the fruitfarm in Kashmir whose owner had come to appreciate of not the legal at least the horticultural capabilities of Erwin.

One day a leading German businessman from Bombay visited Kashmir and heard of the existence of Erwin and his work environment He at once contacted the German Embassy in New-Delhi and made it clear to the Ambassador that they were here confronted with an in stance where the German Government had a definite and urgent task

and duty to make ammends. Professor Mayer,the German Ambassador - whom I came to know later as a very decent man -who left the diplomatic service (which he had interrupted during the years in which Hitler was in power) and he ended his carreer as a member of the Bundestag - acted at once and Erwin found employment in the Embassy in Delhi. In due course he rose to the rank of Second Secretary in the Commerce Department. Erwin died suddenly but I am glad that his last years had been happy years. Ilse and Eva live now near London - Ilse an obsessive neurotic expressing in her neurosis regrets about the lack of kindness she had mostly shown to her husband.

I have already mentioned that mentioned that we had arranged for the Kalischs,the Rosenbaums,the Neumanns and Rita Muellerheim and her friend to come to India.

Yes, we had been quite extensively activein helping people come out from Germany,settle in India and live happily thereafter. As we did not expect any gratitude we could not be disappointed. As we did not believe that we should be compensated by gratitude we could not work aup any great sense of regret whenever there was cause for disappointment. And as we had so often reason to regret wat we had done, we felt we had nobody but ourselves to b lame. No ! Let me cut out this "we": I had only myself to blame for my stupid belief and trust in the fundamental goodness of man. And even now, in the evening of my life, I have not changed that attitude I always had and the opinion I always expressed: it was worth having gone through all these disappointments and not to have lost the belief in the ultimate goodness of man.

I do not know if I am justified in writing this, as there is a pain, a great pain, I have never been able to overcome. I would not have been exposed to such pain, had I not messed in all this "relief" work which after all was so much a selfish, a self-satisfying undertaking.

Because I never succeeded in helping those who were nearest to me and whose cries for help reached me too late.

There was Hermann Spiegel, my cousin,who with wife and two children had been deported in the hard winter months of 1938/39 from Berlin to the Polish frontier where they had to camp in No-man's-land for many months because the Poles did not allow them

to enter their country. When they at last allowed them into Poland they were put into a camp where they perished. Hermann was always my hero. I still see him before me on his return from the First War with the gold and silver medals of valour pinned to his chest.

Then there was Gisa and her family. Thenthere was Rachel with her family. They all asked me to help them,to get them immigration visas for India. I applied for those visas, I had lined up friends in high positions - one of them was Chaman Lal, a leading politician,a leading parliamentarian, and later an Indian Ambassador - but Government of India replied that they could not accept any further application of guarantees from me.

And so they all died atthe hands of the Nazis - while the Silbermanns and others lived because we helped them. Speak of fate, of kismet, of karma; speak of circles which have to cross each other and of other circles which under no circumstances should again made to cross.

About brotherly love.

You must have seen in your life many poor people; I am certain that you will have many more occasions in your life to see poor people, very poor people. You must have seen at your doorstep, in Brooklyn, so many a street which makes claim to the dubious honour of being the poorest environment in the USA. I have no doubt that in Cambodia, in Thailand,in Vietnam or somewhere in Africa people are so abjectly poor that one feels like a criminal whenever one eat a regular meal. Perhaps you will again travel and have occasion to see in the world foci of poverty which are beyond anybody's imagination. Maybe.

I do not claim to have seen the poorest of the poor in my life, but I have seen poverty which I believed and still believe to be the maximum under which a human being can survive. I have seen extreme poverty in Bangla Desh, but even there never of such a degree as I experienced in Kashmir. Because there so much of the poverty was man-made, man-tolerated; because it was accepted as willed by Allah and beyond my and your right to change. (This is a grudge against Islam I have not overcome, while a similar attitude of the Hindus does not catch me by the throat in the same way).

I have seen in Kashmir an entire village - not more than 100 miles away from the luxury and the surfeit of Srinagar - which existed year in and year out on the grasses,roots,beans and wild fruits collected in the surrounding forests. We had been on a fishing expedition and a man was brought to me with a deep wound in his knee caused by an ax he had used to cut down a tree. (He was brought to me not because he knew that I was a phsyician but because all white men who had in the past come into contact with the indigenous population were as a rule missionaries and these made the bible digestible and the baptesimal water effective by carrying with them a supply of medicines - and the effect of quinine and aspirin, of castor oil and opium made surely a better impression on the natives than the stories of Jesus and his apostles would have had without the additon of the pharmaceutic industry). I had with me a good supply of sulpha drugs and the external and internal

application of this new "wonderdrug" did help: the wound showed good healing when we left. The man,his family,the entire village showed their gratitude by offering us a present: an egg, a potato and a few walnuts - most likely a valuable gift in their eyes.

I have seen poverty and indifference to poverty, to malnutrition and to death from starvation in Bangla Desh. It was a general attitude,sustained and carried forward in a self-perpetuating ideology nourished in turn by the malnutrition which made indifference a philosophy of life and reluctance to react a divinely inspired morality. This made it possible for a small group of the strongest to to hord the food supply dropped by planes among a group of hundreds of starving men,women and children during one of the regular floods, made it possible that these few dozen of the strongest ate their fill while around them undreds died of starvation. Morality was measured by that same yardstick: when the Authorities offered three rupees for every body washed ashore to be buried by those same survivors, these same bodies were excavated again during the night and reburried against another similar payment by these same poor people who had learned not to starve.

But whenever a well-fed man scolds you,curses you because you apply European standards of morality,decency, honesty to his way of life, you have only the right to shrug your shoulders and to accept the prevailing way of life, if you do not want to make yourself the laughing stock because you wanted to change an old-established religion-granted style of life - or you can pack your bag and leave for a world where its kind of "natural selection" has permitted a law of morality to grow up which the natives you have left behind consider the most stupid invention of a decadent race.

However, let me not induce you to believe that after a short while, after a few weeks (or months at the most) our appetite was no more spoiled, our moral equilibrium no more disturbed. In the first few weeks in Srinagar we hired ,like everybody did, horses for our daily ride. After a short time I did not mind anymore that for the miserable sum of Rs.15.- ($3.50) I not only hired the horse for a month but also its owner, who not only had to feed the horse from the Rs.15.- he had received, who not only had to run after the horse where and when we wanted to ride (so that whenever

we dismounted he was handy to look after the horse) but who had also during his sparetime to collect fire-wood in the surrounding forests for the fireplaces in the our house.

Belive me: in the first few weeks we did ride slowly and only short distances ,rode loaded down with a sense of guilt - but thereafter we rode as quickly,as long as we wished. There was no more that sense of guilt,of shame which we had though in the beginning would choke us.

And we soon forgot our initial spontaneous decision not to order anymore firewood from a certain contractor in town - a decsion which was as infantile as it was useless and which would have interfered with the delicately balanced economy of the country.

As a rule one required far more firewood for house and kitchen than even 2-3 horse owners could supply. We soon learned how to go about to get such firewood: we were advised to arrange for a contractor to supply us with wood whenever necessary. The first time the man came with a cartful of wood proved a shocking experience.(Shamefully I have to confess that on later occasions we did not feel anymore the upsurging need to protest even) In the afternoon of that day when the wood supplier was supposed to come I was sitting on the verandah of our house, when I heard at a distance a monotonous chant sounding like "allah ! Allah !" accompanied by the steady screetch I knew the wheels of local carts produced approach along the steep road which lead through the garden to the top of the hill on which our house stood. After a quarter of an hour I noticed the big cart with its wooden wheels and filled with wood, which was pulled by four bearded old men in grey long shirts. At the next bend of the road I noticed that four other greybeards pushed the cart from the back. The contractor walked at the side of the cart and he indicated the rhythm of the chant "Allah ! Allah !" by beating the side of the cart with his long stick; sometimes he also hit the back of one of the coolies who, as he explained to me later did not "pull his weight". When the sweating,panting,coughing spitting men had at last arrived in front of the house and sat down to rest before unloading the wood, I asked the contractor:

" Haji Sahib:" - this title belong to those who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca is granted -if justified or not - outo f politeness to every senior muslim,especially if he sprouts a

large beard - " you are an intelligent man, there is no doubt about that. Muslims like you, human beings like you, do this terrible work which is fit only for animals. You must agree with me that it would be more efficient and also far kinder if you use one or two oxen to pull the wood uphill instead of these men ".

" Hazoor", he replied (Hazoor, i.e. Heavenborn, was the preferred way of address this learned man used), "you talk like all the foreign sahibs, even though you are not an Englishman. Every Englishman asks me this very question the first time he meets me; later on he has learned enough about the way we live here not to worry anymore about these coolies. I am sure you too will soon learn and will not worry anymore about us".

He asked for another glass of water from my servant, and after having emptied it with a murmured blessing,he continued.

" You see, Sahib, a pair of oxen would cost me a lot of money ,something like Rs.200.-. The would also consume a lot of food. And what am I going to do if one of the oxen dies ? Do you know what a damage this would be for me ? But these men ? I pay them four annas (= 6 USA cents) each per day. The cost me nothing in the way of food. I assure you, I do even a good deed,pleasing to Heavenr because I provide them with a job. If one of them dies,this does not mean a loss of investment to me. There are hundreds of other coolies who would be happy to replace the man who dies."

I had to accept the theory of divine and mundaine economy the man tried to teach me.

When the coolies had completed the unloading and demanded in a whining choir to have their salary replenished by a baksheesh "in the name of Allah" I felt I had to give them a substantial sum to help them maintain their trust in Allah and to allow the contractor to sleep at night with a good conscience.

Justice must be done.

There lived in those pre-war years an Austrian in Srinagar. He was not a Jew and he had come to Kashmir as advisor and manager of a theosophical establishment a rich American woman had created. One could see nearly every day this man drivethe town and the countryside in the white Packard belonging to his employer.

One day, driving wildly and in a drunken state, he killed a coolie. The rules prescribed that he could request, as a white man, [illegible] to be placed before a tribunal of white judges, and accordingly the Resident, the representative of the King of England and the Viceroy of India, became a High Court Judge and the Residency was turned momentarily into a High Court of Judicature. The accused Austrian produced expert witnesses, medical men from the local government hospital, that the coolies would in any case have died within a few months even without the contribution of the accused's Pakcard, as he had been suffering from advanced tuberculosis, was riddled with cancer and was suffering from many other lethal infections. The Austrian was fined the sum of Rs.400.- and this sum was generaously handed over to the widow and her six children.

You are mistaken if you think that the Austrian had learned his lesson. Not long afterwards he was driving while drunk in his mistress' car and there was another accident: he killed the shepherd dog of a British visitor. Again he appeared before the Resident turned High Court Judge , This time he was fined Rs.1000.-

In loco parentis.....

During our second summer in Kashmir we felt we had to contribute our share to the wellbeing of the local population. It had been our custom from the first day in Srinagar to treat any poor man or woman who presented himself or herself as a patient,free of charge or for a nominal fee only. As you can imagine this became soon general knowledge and we found every morning a large number of such poor people sit outside our house,on the street or inside the garden,begging for medicines and calling the blessings of Heaven upon our heads ,especially on that of our daughter who ,sitting outside in her pram,appeared to be fascinated by the crowd. The daily routine soon proved to be troublesome, not only because these people took up so much of our time and so on, but also because the semll assaulting us from those unwashed bodies was often unbearable.

We found a solution which we thought would be beneficial to all concerned. I rentedthe first floor pf the annexe belonging to the house of the leading general merchant in town- Mr. Jamsetjee - and made it known that I would henceforth receive patients free of charge every day from 11 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon; and that I would in future not accept anybody in my private surgery who wanted to receive free treatment. On the advice of friends I asked the Rev. Biscoe,the Principal of the large Missionary School, to reccomend us a suitable young man, who could act as the Secretary and Receptionist of the "free clinic". The Reverend blessed me for having decided on such a worthgy plan andxsoon soon a young man, a graduate of the mission school,belonging to a "very distinguished and honest Brahmin family" presented himself. The letter he brought from the Principal told me that the young man would serve me faithfully and that I should pay him a monthly salary of Rs.200.-. This was a very good salary for a young fellow of twenty years in those days, if you took in consideration the large blue turban he was wearing and the bigger than usual mark of a Brahmin on his forehead not to mention his toothy smile and his servile behaviour.

We rented a few pieces of furniture for our Clinic. In the larger front room the Pandit sat behind a table on which an appointment book, an array of pens and a bottle of ink were placed There were also sufficient chairs and benches to seat the patients and their family members who usually accompanied the patients on their visit to the doctor. In the second,smaller room I had placed the necessary table,bench and cupboard and I had brought also a number of instruments I thought I might require for my work. The Babu - this is the honorific given to a clerk in India- was instructed not to accept more than fifteen patients every day, to tell the patients that I would examine them,treat them without any fee whatsoever, but I had to make this dependent on one condition,viz:- that every patient was to have a bath and to change into clean clothing before presenting himself or herself for the examination.

This kind of arrangement proved satisfactory and continued for about three months. I usually finished my work in my private practice to start the free work at 11 o'clock. In three hours or so I managed to see all the 15 patients the Babu had booked days, or even weeks ahead. These people were often so poor that they could not even pay for the cheapest medicines and I could help them also in this respect with the free medical samples I collected or through a special arrangement with the local pharmacists.

I was pleased to see not only tht the Babu appeared now a satisfied man but also that his weight had increased and that the former strained,watchfully cautious expression had gohe from his face. Every few days he sported another large and colourful turban and I am sure this was duly appreciated in his family and among his freinds as a symbol of status and prosperity. In the short time he had been working for me his voice had acquired a self-assured ring and even his authoritative behaviour was impressive when he greeted me on my arrival with a "Good morning,Sir" and thereafter barked at the waiting patients to jump to their feet "with alacrity".

One day an elderly man, tall and heavy, leading a small boy by the hand, bowed himself in,one hand on his stately beard and the other placed on his chest. After having acknowledged the blessings from heaven he so abundantly evoked on me and my family, I could proceed with questioning him about his symptoms. After the completion of the examination, I told the congested looking,slightly

panting man that he was an asthmatic but that I was not sure to what degree also his heart was responsible for his clinical condition. I proposed that I take a sample of his blood and that I wanted to see him again the following day when I would be able to give him the diagnosis and the treatment. He poured forth some more assurances that one day Allah would repay my kindness and when he saw that I accepted his promises without demurring he asked me to examine also his grandson who had come with him. As the time was short I promised to do so when he came to see the next day. After many further expressions of gratefulness and of future divine compensations for my good deeds,the pair left the room.

Instead of my next patient, the Babu entered.

" Doctor Sahib", he enquired, "did this man you saw just now,pay you your feee ?"

" My fee?", I asked in surprise. "You know that nobody pays any fee here. If you thought that this man could have paid my regular fee you should have sent him to my bungalow. You know that only poor patients are to be admitted. Why did you not send him to my private practice ?"

"sir", he told me, waving his hands," I told this man that he must go to your house because he is a rich man, but he r efused to obey my commands and he forced himself upon you and me".

" " He is a rich man ?", I wondered. " Why did you not come in earlier to tell me so ?"

" He is possibly the richest man in Kashmir. Last year his father died and left him and his brother 90 lacs (90 million) rupees inheritance. As his brother is in jail for life because he murdered somebody,this Haji Mohammad Bashir has all the money and all the estates for himself. I told him that he has to pay you, but he threatened me, and as I am a poor man I have to be careful of his threats".

I waved the fellow out of the room. Soon also the morning session was over.

The next morning the Haji and his grandson appeared again. The man was again smiling and bowing,coughing and panting. Again he started on his outpouring of divine blessings.

" Sit down,Haji Sahib", I interrupted him. "Sit down and tell me the honest truth this time. I have learned that you are

a very rich man, possibly the richest man I have met here. I have been told that you have inherited not long ago ninety lacs from your father. Is this true ?"

With a sorrowful look and a shake of his head he lifted both his hands.

"Hazoor" ,he wailed, " you know how people like to tell lies in this country, how they try to damage God's creatures !"

" Let us stick to the question I have asked,Haji Sahib" I interrupted his lamentations. " Is it true that you inherited last year ninety lacs or not ?"

" It is not true,Hazoor. I swear it is not true that I inherited 90 lacs from my father..."

" I know", I agreed with him. " I know how people like to exaggerate. It may have been only eighty or seventy lacs or even less. Tell me quite frankly,my friend, have you become richer by at least ten lacs through the death of your father ?"

" Yes, Hazoor", he panted, looking at me imploringly with his bloodshot eyes. " It was something like that,possibly a little more...."

" And still you dare coming here implying that you are a poor man who cannot pay the normal fee of a doctor, taking away the place of a poor man...?"

" I realize,Hazoor, that I should have told you that I am, not as poor as the others outside there in the waiting room. I understand only too well that you are now angry with me. And I know also only too well how you learned about me and my money. It must have been that Hindu swine,that Babu in the other oom,who told you about me !"

His eyes questioned me, but I kept quiet. " That dirty Hindu fellow", he continued, the spittle flying from his mouth. How dares he complain about me ? He ismore dishonst even than I. He is supposed to admit people free for your advice, but whoever comes for an appointment has to pay him a rupee as otherwise he will never be admitted. And whoever wants to be given an early appointment and does not want to wait his turn, has even to pay two rupees and sometime even more. And in addition all these poor people have also to bring him a chicken or a bag of rice as it can otherwise happen that they will be asked to return another time. As I

know that nobody has to pay here, I insisted on my rights. I forced him to admit me to your Hazoor's presence without my paying him the five rupees he demanded. And now he has the damned cheek to report on me that I am a rich man with nonety lacs".

Even before I could stop him he had run out of breath and I could have my say.

" Haji Sahib, you have grieveously erred. You have cheated me. You have abused my kindness. But all this you will have one day to defend before Allah. Now, while we are still here on earth, I am going to see that justice of a far simpler kind is done. You will pay me now my usual fee of Rs.16.- for yesterday's visit before we continue with our conversation."

" Oj, Hazoor", he wailed, wringing his hands." Now you start to punish me also. I know that I have behaved badly,that I have wronged you. I am ready to pay you Rs.10.- to make ammends and then you will forgive me".

After raising his bid to fifteen rupees he had in the end to give in and he paid the stipulated Rs.16.-. But I continued with my punishment where it hurt most.

" Now you will have to pay another Rs.16.- for the bloodtest. We do such tests free for poor people, but private patients have to pay for them in addition".

It took some more complaining and begging until the now truly suffering man handed over the additional payment. He received the prescription along with some other instructions regarding diet and exercise. Then he left,crying and sighing, a broken man. The poor little boy was holding on to the shirt of grandfather. Only too late did I remember that I had promised to examine also the bewindered child. but I did not want to call the pair back once they were outside the room.

I rang the bell for the Babu, and when my Pandit appeared he congratulated me with a self-satisfied grin:

" I heard what you said to that circumcized miser.Sir. I congratlate you from all my heart,Sir,on your having made him pay the fine sum of Rs. 32.-,Sir".

I leaned back in my chair and silently scrutinized the elongated face of the young fellow,his long nose and his thin lips. For some time I did not say anything and I noticed with

satisfaction that he began to look less sure of himself, that some apprehension had crept into his eyes.

" I am very pleased,Panditji;" I said at last," that you appreciate when dishonest people ar given a lesson. And I am also please to see that you find me appreciative of honesty and sensitive to decency. Keep quiet", I barked at him,when he tried to interrupt me," and let me finish what I have to tell you".

" You have been instructed to accept only the poorest people here, only those who cannot afford to pay a doctor. You have been told that the medical service and treatment they receive are completely free. I hear now that you charge from every one of these poor patients one rupee or even more which you put into your own pocket, and that you make them bring you chicken and rice as additional bribes. On the advice of the Rev. Biscoe I pay you a very good salary so that you might not give in to temptation. But I find now that you have not been able to resist temptation. You were dishonest. You have cheated me and my patients. There is only one answer and one solution to all this. Your services are terminated from this moment onwards. You are dismissed. You will get this month's salary and this will finish our association. Cancel all our appointments and tell all those outside that the "free clinic" is closed forever."

If I had expected to see my Babu shocked, to see him cring or beg, I was going to be disappointed. He stood there, relaxed and indifferent - possibly even insolent - as if I had addressed him on some trivial matter. He was possibly paler than usual but he continued to smile and this gave me the impression that he had not understood what I had just told him. But he had understood allright.

" You cannot dismiss me,Sir", he said. " You cannot sack me. You are now my father and my mother. You have to know that you are responsible for me, even if you do not agree with the private arranÞgements I have made with the people who cometo consult you"

I could not believe my eyes. Did I hear allright ?

" What did you say ?", I stammered. " I cannot sack you? I cannot punish you for your cheating ?I cannot do what I want ? You want to tell me that I have to keep you in my employment ?"

" Yes,Sir. You said it right." He beamed with satisfaction in appreciation of my intellectual capacity." You are right. When you engaged me you became responsible for my wellbeing. You are now my father and my mother. It was your Karma to be born into this world,to come to Srinagar,to offer me this job, so that I acquired a good income and with it this security. Do you realize the responsibility you have taken on ? In these last three months I have earned enough so that I could open a small shop for my father, so that I could buy a bicycle each for myself and my father. Soon I hope to get also a bicycle for my younger brother. I am sure that you will be pleased to know that I could achieve all this because you have provided me with a good job. How can you ask me now to give up my job ? What is going to happen to me,my father,my family all ?Do you realize that you are now the father and mother of all of us ? Do you realize the responsibility you have for us all ?"

By that time I had fully understood.I understood that I did not agree with him. I told him so. I told him also to pack up his penshis ink and all his other belongings. I told him that the clinic was closed and I told him that he was sacked.

But this was not the end. Not only father,son and brother reminded me every day thereafter of amy hermaphroditic duties, also the Rev. Biscoe and his own son and successor came repeatedly to my house to persuade me that the Pandit was justified in his demands, that I should not shirk my duty,that I had irrevocably taken the responsibility for the entire family onto my shoulders, that I was the father and mother of them all. Notwithstanding these repeated instructions into these for me new moral concepts I stood firm and did not agree with their interpretation and the newly acquired paternity.

Neither did I give in when a few months later father and son visited me in Lahore,having travelled all the way from Kashmir on their bicycles . They did not succeed in persuading me of my paternity nor of their concept of Karma during all that week during which they camped outside the gates of my bungalow.

Muslim Patients in Purdah

I have mentioned not long ago that I was rather taken aback when I was told by the Naidus, my Hindu informants, about the difficulties a doctor may experience with Muslim patients. In Hyderabad, they told me, women and men cannot sit in the same waitingroom and a doctor has,therefore,to provide to such accomodations A male doctor can, as a rule, not touch a female patient,although in some rare cases, when "modern and westernized people" are involved, he may do so; however, also in such a case he has to examine the woman without ever having her undress, or have her even remove the additional protective layers of cnothing she has added for that very visit.

For us, in certain aspects, much of the problem was less restrictive due to the fact that Kate could have taken on these female patients, could at least have described to me what she saw,found,felt while examining such cases. In practice this was the way how things did work out even in Lahore and in Kashmir,but as most of the patients who asked for Kate's advice were women with gynecological or obstetrical problems, cases of abortions or of sterility, Kate soon lost all interest in this one-sided kind of medical practice and she began to concentrate on labpratory work, on biochemistry etc.

Initially I did not know that this problem existed also elsewhere in India when I decided not to select Hyderabad for just this very reason. This problem of purdah existed to a greater degree in all muslim States,less so in major towns. But there were everywhere large Muslim populations who "kept purdah", i.e. where the women went about veiled outside their houses,where men did not permit their womenfolk to be seen by other men who did not belong to the nearest family.

In Lahore we had many an experience in this respect. It must be said that in the course of the years these experiences were far less unpleasant and tht we had less occasion to show our

aversion to such kind of "veiled" relationship with our patients. In our conceit I thought we had succeeded to "educate" our patients but I have no doubt now that the changed attitude of the muslim husbands - usually they and not the wives were the responsible elements in this conservative attitude - was due to my getting ol= der and therefore less likely to arose the jealousy of the husbands The reason may also have been in many a case that those patients who did not like to be "educated" by us,did not come to us as patients.

Still we encountered many an instance where we were taught how profound the custom of purdah is anchored in the life of the Muslim and how little education has in so many a family has been able to eradicate a retrograde trend into medievalism, - for this is basic way I see the Purda System.

One evening, it must have been during our first or second year in Lahore a young man requested us to come to the bungalow of his father. This young man was known to us already; he had returned only a short while ago as a chartered accountant from London where he had studied for six years. I think we would have called him and his charming wife the most westernized couple we had met until then. Anwar Qadir - this was the man's name- had already been appointed to a responsible position in a leading British bank. His father was Sir Zafar Ali, a High Court Judge of very good repute. He too had, of course ,been educated in England.

The reason Kate and I had been asked to visit the bungalow of Sir Zafar Ali, was for us to examine the youngest child of the Judge, a girl od 16 years. The girl who usually lived in the ancestral village some 120 miles from Lahore, had been brought to Lahore because she had been ill for five days with high fever,abdominal pains,vomiting etc.

When we arrived at the bungalow, I was made to sit outside the house where on the lawn a group of men, all relatives of the family had assembled around Sir Zafar Ali. While I was told the history and the symptoms of the illness of the girl, Kate was taken into the house; ther e she found the patient placed on a bed inside the entrance hall. The patient was covered from head to foot with blankets and Kate was not allowed to see her face. But she was allowed to ask some questions,was permitted to take the

pulse of the girl,was even allowed to place her hand on the abdomen of the patient underneath the blankets. Then Kate was supposed to come into the garden to tell me her findings and had again to go back to confirm one symptom or the other and again to consult with me - until we came both to the conclusion that we were confron ted only with a case of gastro-enteritis. We prescribed what was usually prescribed in those days for such a condition and we had the pleasure to hear later on that the child reacting to the treat- ment was judged cured within a week or so.

However, I was deeply disturbed by the entire "bnsiness" and that very evening when Anwar Qadir,the brother of the patient took us back in his car, I asked him:

" Do you agree with the way your womenfolk are kept in isolation and that even during an illness they cannot get that treatment which is only possible after a thorough examination ?"

" I think you do not understand us yet. These are old traditional ways and I feel strongly that we should not change them", he replied.

" We have seen and treated here already many women who observe purdah, but in no case have the conditions been so strict as in the case of your sister. At least Kate could in each of the other cases talk directly to the patient, could see her face,could thoroughly examine her"

" In our family nobody can ever see an unmarried girl after she has entered the age of puberty,except for her nearest relatives. Therefore you too could under no circumstance ever get the permission to examine her in the wau you examined other women".

" Fortunately the symptoms we found in your sister do not indicate any serious illness. Buttell me ,Anwar: let us suppo- se this had been a surgical case, say an appendicitis, and your sister would have to undergo an operation. Would your family have permitted such an intervention ?"

" Formerly they would not have agreed, but we have advanced with the times and in such a case, with the observation of certain restrictions, a lady doctor might have been allowed to operate upon her".

" But, as you know, there are very few lady doctors, and particularly female surgeons available. Even in England the number is still restricted. Let us suppose no female surgeon would

have been available, would you have allowed me to call in a male surgeon to handle the operation ?"

" We would under no circumstance have given you such a permission ".

" But this means that the patient would have to die ?"

" You are right. In this case she would have to die".

" Do you personally agree with these ideas, these antiquated concepts and their consequences ?"

" Of course ! I fully agree with them and I think they are justified whatever the consequences."

Years later, again in Lahore,again in the house of a Judge, this time the Chief Justice of Pakistan Sir Abdur Rehman whom I had been treating over many years and whose sons also were our constant patients, I was asked to see Lady Rehman,the wife and mother of these my patients. I entered her room. It was empty, but after a few minutes Lady Rehman appeared. She was covered from head to toe by a black purdah. She entered the room with majestic steps mounted the bed as if she ascended a throne and then squatted down. I looked at her. I looked at her husband. I looked at their son who was also present.

" Does this mean that I have to examine her in this state ?", I asked.

" Yes,as you see keeps strict purdah", was the reply.

" Also in front of me, a doctor ?"

" Yes, but she is ready to show you her tongue if you think this is necessary".

I looked again at those present, shook my head in amazement, took my bag and marched out. " I am sorry" ,I said on exiting. " I cannot examine,diagnose or treat a patient I cannot see"

But I did examine,diagnose and treat her because husband and son came running after me to tell me that the patient had relented and would let me see her after all without her veil. What a concession ! But if the real reason she hid her face under that veil was not to hurt the esthetic feelings of a possible onlooker, she earns full marks.

In another instance I knew from the onset that I had better not even try to force the patient and her son into modern age In such a case where one knows there is no other solution one sees the patient as quickly as possible and gets out into the fresh air as sson as possible.

During the unrest and upheavals of the partition year a rich Nawab and his family were among those who had been lucky to escape to Lahore. The Nwab bought a bungalow which with the help o: stolen railway sleepers he had transformed into a fortress, not against robbers, Sikhs or Hindus, but in order to prevent a male to violate the modesty of his women by catching even a glimpse of their faces.

The Nawab asked that Kate and I come to the house because his mother was ill. The largest room of the bungalow was divided lengthwise by a huge carpet hanging from the roof. Behind the carpet the patient was resting on her bed. Kate was allowed behind the curtain while I had to remain on the other side. Kate saw the patient, probed her here and there on the aching chest and the uncomfortable abdomen. As I was interested in touching at least the pulse of the woman whose age the Nawab gave as"over eighty" because Kate described to me this pulse in a way I could not well visualize, the Nawab agreed that the old lady,his mother,pushed her hand underneath the lower edge of the dividing carpet into my part of the room; but as soon as I saw the whithered hand and wanted to grab it,the son stopped me with a threatening gesture: I was not to touch the lady directly. He placed a silk handkerchief aroun the wrist of his mother's protruding hand and made me take the two ends of the kerchief into my hand and thereby to "feel"diagnose the quality of the pulse through the silken transfer. I diagnosed that the complaints of the patient were due to old age which was most likely the right diagnosis and prescribed some harmless medicines. For ourselves we decided never agin would be agree to be placed in such an unpleasant situation where you have to base a diagnosis on guesswork mainly. In any case with our diagnosis surely in a great part justified we could exit with dignity.

The Maharani of Baroda.

She was a very remarkable person indeed, this old woman who had been so influential in the corridors of power in her State and who had to live through so many disappointments in her later life; but ,unfortunately, she had neither the character nor the grace to face them with dignity. However, if she ever be in need of a defender I am ready to act as such, as I somehow liked that dragon who appeared to have enjoyed her reputation of being a dangerous and spiteful person. She was a very unhappy,worried person. She may even have been a good person though she certainly does in no way correspond to the figure which Bromfield had painted of her in his book " When the Rains came".

Whenever the Maharani did not travel abroad she spent her summers in her palace in Srinagar and her winters in the one she owned in Bombay. Next to these two palaces she had been provided by her stepson,the ruling Maharaja of Baroda, with a truly royal income, but he had stipulated that she was never again to put foot in his State. The Maharaja knew quite well what he was doing: he tried to protect his and his children's life as far as circumstances could permit this, as the old lady had on more than one occasion tried her best to have him murdered. He was the only surviving son of the First Maharani of Baroda, while the Second Maharani, the one of whom I am actually writing, had sons of her own and she was very much interested that one of them should inherit the throne. This could not be achieved without an early and final demise of that very stepson who at that very time was the Ruler of Baroda. Now you will agree that one should not blame him tht he banned that old woman from the State- and that he kept her under constant supervision as many of her servants in the pay of the Maharaja regularly reported about her activities and contacts.

One day her Chamberlain turned up in my office and informed me that the Maharani requested me to pay her a professional visit. She wanted ~~me~~ to consult me about her various ailments.

I went to see her that same afternoon. The Old Lady received me in her bedroom. Her sharp eyes scrutinized me for quite some time before she invited me with a gesture to sit down beside her bed. I started on the routine questions by which one tries to form an initial impression of a new patinet and about her main ailments, but the Maharani did not want me to proceed.

" There is not any need for all this, young man", she interrupted me. " I suffer from high bloodpressure and I want you to take care of this. That is all".

When I started again to put some more questions in order to elicit any of the symptoms or other complaints associated with hy½ertension, she interrupted me again:

" Don't worry about anything else, young man". A brusque movement of her right arm underlined her words. " You have only to worry about my bloodpressure".

Of course, there was only one wise reaction possible under these conditions and I complied with her wises. I opened my bag and lifted from there my stethoscope and my bloodpressure instrument. Again she stopped me with a commanding gesture.

" Frida", she shouted to a women, a European who had been standing on the other side of the bed. That was enough. Frieda knew what her mistress wanted. Frieda ran off and reappeared with a small leathercase which she handed to me. I opened it and found that it contained an otherwise commonplace stethoscope but whose metal parts were made of gold anda regular-sized bloodpressure measuing instrument made entirely of silver. I took the costly instruments from the case and placed the rubber cuff around the patient's arm. Then I fitted the stethoscope into my ears and placed the membrane beneath the cuff on the Maharani's arm. I heard the pulsations quite well but in a sudden fit of perversion I removed the stethoscope from my ears and told the old woman that I was onlyused to my own tools and that I was afraid I would not get any reliable readings should I use her instruments. The sharp eyes of the Maharani scrutinized me for a few seconds than she gave me her rather unfriendly consent that I use my plebeian instruments. With the help of these I completed my examiantions. Her bloodpressure was indeed high; I wrote a prescription, gave Frieda the necessary addiitonal instructions and took my leave.

At the foot of the staircase leading from the bedroom floor stood the Chamberlain waiting for me.

" Doctor Sahib", he greeted me with his toothy smile, rubbing his hands in a servile gesture. " Her Highness has expressed the desire that you continue her treatment until she is cured".

I expressed my appreciation of this graceful offer and told him that under such circumstances I would for the near future have to see the patient at more or less daily intervals.

" Her Highness is fully aware of this", the pompous man informed me, " but could you ,please, tell me, Doctor Sahib, was your charges are going to be for such treatment ?"

" My charges for a house visit are Rs.32.- and for an office visit Rs. 16.-"

" Thank you,Sir", he concluded the interview with a deep bow. " In duecourse I shall communicate to you Her Highness" wishes".

That same afternoon he did so. He told me that the Mahara ni would visit me every morning in my office for as long as I might think necessary, "and she agrees to the payment of Rs.16.- for every such visit".

In the following weeks,every morning at exactly ten o'clock,the marron and mauve coloured Rolls-Royce was driven into my garden compound by her English chauffeur, and as soon as he passed through the gate he would inform me of this fact by a penetrating blast on his horn. This implied that I was to leave all my work of the moment and come into the garden,enter the car ,seat myself next to the Maharani and examine her bloodpressure.

In the beginning these visits were interesting and entertaining; it was not only fun to sit in this world-famous car in which every metal part inside the passenger compartment was made of pure gold, but also because the Maharani herself was an interesting and impressive personality.However, after some weeks the novelty of all this had worn off and I was happy when the bloodpressure had come down to a steady and acceptable value and when I could inform the patient that there was no further need to continue with the daily visits, that from now on only some sporadic check would suffice.

The old lady was outraged. " How can you say that I am well now ? What about my gout ?", she asked. "MY pains are certain-

ly not better! On the contrary, I would say that they are worse than ever".

" Your Highness", I began. "You will remember...."

But she did not let me continue. " Young man, don't argue with me ! Treat my goat instead !"

This I did. The treatment of her gout proved less difficult than that of her bloodpressure as we had in those days enough suitable medicaments available.

I learned later from Frieda the reason why H.H. had changed her mind. (Frieda was a Czechoslovakian maid who had been in the service of the old lady for more than ten years; and althoug she should have over the years become immune against the peculiarities of her mistress,she at times felt she could not continue, especially when the sadistic Maharani discovered some new methods to humiliate and persecute her. The Maharani and Frieda had served both as models in"When the Rains Came" but they both certainly differed quite markedly from the romantic figures Bromfield created

Frieda told me that on the very same day the Maharani had consulted me for the first time she had also called in a Sadhu - one of those migrating,safron-clad Hindu saints who roam the town and villages of India - to treat her gout. The Sadhu gave her seven small packages of herbs and seven papers on which he had written holy formulas in red ink. His instructions had been that the Maharani wake up at sunrise daily for seven days,descend to the river bank on bare feet,burn there every day one of the packages of herbs on a silver plate,throw the remaining ashes into the river,after which she had to wash off the writing on one of the papers in a glass of milk and thereafter she had to drink the milk sanctified in this manner. After this course of treatment lasting seven days the gout of the Maharani had neither improved nor worstened, but the Sadhu who had demanded and received a seizable sum of money in advance for his advice, had in the meantime disappeared and selected new hunting grounds.

The Maharani of Cooch-Behar.

If you ask me whom among the women of India I met, whom among the Indian patients I appreciated,liked,admired most, I shall without hesitation name the Maharani of Cooch Behar. And I must add that I have every reason to be also grafeful to her in addition for all she tried to do for us.

She was a woman of great charm,of strong determination. I appreciate most that she showed great strength of character when she was faced by difficulties - nevermind that these were to a great extent due to her attitude to life,to her remaining immersed in concepts of Indian philosophy,often so numbing. As I mentioned many of her difficulties in most other spheres of life had to a great extent been of her own making.

She was the daughter of the late Maharaja of Baroda. Of her mother I have already told you. Our Maharani had been promised in infancy as the bride for the son pf the Maharaja of Gwalior,one of the leading States in India. (This had an important political implication. The rulers of Baroda, mighty as they were with regard to size fortune and importance of their State,counted very low in the Hindu hierarchy. They originated from a very low caste; the founder of the State had been a shepherd. The Barodas were never accepted as equals by any of the high caste Hindu families. A liaison by marriage with the family of the Gwaliors would have very much improved this situation). However, when the young prineess had reached maturity and the wedding day had been arranged, she eloped to England with the Crown Prince of Cooch Behar,the scion of a relatively minor State in Bengal. In London the couple lived for many years,accepted socially only some quarters,considered outcasts by others,fascinating "High Society" and embarrassing Government. Whenever the interest of the London and the Indian Society in the young couple began to flag,the Princess foudn some opportunity to rekindle this interest by some minor or major scandal of one kind or the other The most unpardonable faux-pas was her elopment from the marital mansion with her english chauffeur.

I met the Maharani in the first year we spent in Kashmir

and she was my faithful patient for many years . She proved our good friend when she tried her utmost to get us released from the Internment Camp. I mentioned already that she employed Erwin Segall in her State at a time when he was badly in need of a steady income Above all she consulted me over many years,even while we were interned and she showed her steady confidence in me as a physician. I shall often still have occasion to speak of her to you.

In due course her husband,the Prince of Cooch Behar was installed on the paternal throne. In due course also the young Maharaja died and our Maharani was widowed. She continued to rule her State even when her oldest son came of age. There is no doubt that the State and her people benefitted from her administration. One of the miracle sof the century openly recognized as such was her continuing to bear children even years after the death of her husband. She was a good friend of an equally charming and cultured man, Nawab Khusroo Jung, a noble of Hyderabad State, who lived in Srinagar and was the advisor and confidant of the Maharaja of Kashmir. When it became known that the Nawab had suddenly married a not so young Parsee lady of slightly damaged reputation I was called to Bombay by my Maharani to explain to her the Nawabs strange action, which I tried to do with the help of the theories of Siegmund Freud as best as I could.

For many years I was the physician of the Maharani Indira Devi of Cooch Behar and she confided in me her innermost worries and problems.

She asked me on one or more occasions to come to see her in Delhi as she did not want to undergo the stress and humiliation of a journey to Lahore in Pakistan. But I did not accept her invitation : for me such a journey was equally difficult and at the same time even dangerous.

She still is a personality people who knew her like to mention , to talk about.

THE LILYPOOL
SAWAI RAM SINGH ROAD
JAIPUR
RAJASTHAN

10th April 1977

Dear Dr. Selzer,

Many thanks for your letter of the 26th of March. I was so pleased to hear from you and I thank you for writing.

I remember very well how you looked after me in Kashmir and also my younger sister. Even after my marriage in Risalpur you also looked after me. I am so glad to know that you have not forgoteen us.

As far as Isreal is concerned, you are quite right that it has been the victim of Realpolitik as far as India is concerned. But there are many of us here who feel that things should be different and we have a lot of admiration for your country. Amongst these are some famous persons like Zubin Mehta. If it is ever at all possible you can be rest assured that I shall come and visit you.

With best wishes to you and your wife,

Yours sincerely,

Gayatri Devi

Dr. H.M. Selzer, M.D.,
10 Rehov Caspi,
Jerusalem, Isreal.

Ayesha of Jaipur.

I knew and treated also a third generation of this remarkable family, the granddaughter of Baroda and the daughter of Cooch Behar. I treated all the children of the Maharani of Cooch Behar, those born in and those our of wedlock. The three youngest, all girls, I saw regularly. One was to become the Maharani of Dewąs junior, one was to become the Maharani of Jaipur. The third one, called simply "Baby" was piously accepted by all as the daughter of the Nawab Khusroo Jung. I do not know what became of he:

Ayesha was a beautiful girl, simple and unpretentious, liked by all. I remember that she never insisted that I admit her to my consulting room the moment she arrived for her appointment or that she insisted on any kind of preferential treatment as so many others did who boasted "princely blood"; instead she would unselfconsciously walk in the garden or sit on the steps of the house until I was free.

She later married the Maharaja of Jaipur as his third wife. I was a surprise that a woman like her should accept such a usually low position but it appears that the first two wives did not attempt to make her life difficult and I am sure that Ayesha knew how to handle her position. Already during the lifetime of the Maharaja and more so after his death she was actively engaged in Indian politics. She succeeded in becoming an enemy of Indira Ghandi - which speaks well for Ayesha. Indira Ghandi had her even jailed under some pretext or other, in order to humiliate her. When Mrs. Ghandi was deposited as Prime Minister I congratulated Ayesha and expressed the hope that she might visit Israel some day. She was honest enough to agree that such a visit depended on factors on which she had no influence.

Recently Pipsi sent me a book Ayesha had written with "some help". I would not advise you to believe all she has written - or let me say there are so many things she has ommitted that the true picture of her and most of the facts distinguishing her unusual family background have been lost.

India's Past and Present Conspire in an Outbreak of Corruption

By MICHAEL T. KAUFMAN

NEW DELHI — Late last month, in an unusual radio broadcast to the nation, President Sanjiva Reddy deplored what he described as a sharp drop in public morality. "The values and sanctions which had in the past enabled us to live together in peace appear to be losing their hold," he said.

There is ample evidence for Mr. Reddy's lament. Influence peddling is widespread. Businessmen regularly pay off politicians to assure themselves of uninterrupted electricity for their plants. Huge sums of untaxed income circulate in a rich and varied black economy. Last month, the chief executive of booming Maharashtra state had to resign after a court found that he had collected millions of dollars for allocations of bags of cement to favored contractors. In another case, policemen in the countryside blinded suspects and went unpunished. Other police officers are accused of forming alliances with criminal gangs. Self-proclaimed reformed murderers rent their support and presumed influence to rural politicians.

This rich panoply of venality and graft is revealed daily in the press. Editorial writers and social critics advance explanations for it. Some view what appears to be a rising tolerance of graft as a more or less unavoidable consequence of development in an economy of scarcity. Others see the situation as reflecting feudal patterns still dominant in rural India. Yet others believe corrupt behavior is somehow linked to Hindu beliefs.

The Economist, the British newsweekly, advanced the cultural argument to explain the generally cavalier way in which Indian public opinion absorbed the news of the Maharashtra cement-for-money scheme. "Throughout the centuries, India has always been a feudal place in which rulers enjoyed absolute power and were entitled to ignore canons of justice laid down by religion and tradition," the article said. "The use of office for distributing patronage and making money is part of feudal culture."

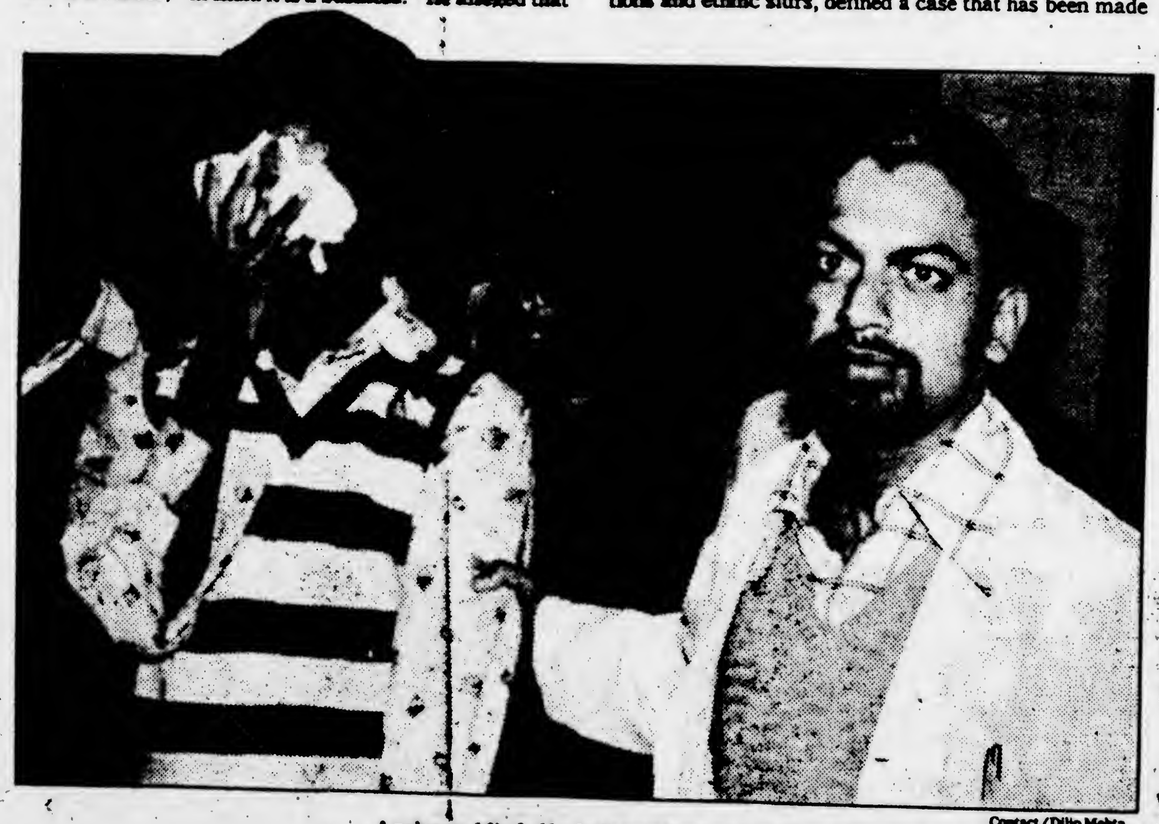
The article, entitled, "One man's corruption is another's feudal virtue," argued that under the rule of the Westernized Jawaharlal Nehru, a veneer of British respect for due process was imposed, but this gloss has worn away. It said the fairly high standards of public life prevailing under Mr. Nehru have declined under his daughter, Indira Gandhi, because she "has proved a shrewder and more accurate judge of the Indian ethos."

Similar Anglophile arguments formed the basis of a document written within the British Embassy in New Delhi three years ago. Resorting at times to sweeping generalizations that verge on racism and spill over into arrogance, the paper portrayed a society where self-interest and power relationships supercede ethics. "In Hinduism, there is no good or evil as in the case of the dualist religions such as Christianity, Judaism or Islam," said the report, which was obviously intended only for internal distribution. "A natural concomitant of the absence of sin is the lack of ideals about truth. To a Hindu the truth is usually that which most suits his convenience at any given moment." Elsewhere the document said, "There is little place in the Hindu ethos for truthfulness, unselfishness, social service or moral courage. The preoccupation is with the internal development of the individual."

The writer asserted that while in every country, politics is a career, "in India it is a business." He alleged that the first responsibility of those starting out in electoral politics was to get back the money invested in their candidacies. Similarly, he wrote that nepotism, far from being a vice, is considered a social obligation in India.

In the same vein, the document claimed that "the old-style British rule, a kind of benevolent autocracy in which the individual was assured of law and order, stability and impartial fair treatment, was better suited to the Indian character." The writer even added, "However, it required just and impartial foreigners to carry it out. The Indians themselves have not in general fully appreciated the spirit that lies behind the working of democracy."

The British analysis, for all its sweeping generalizations and ethnic slurs, defined a case that has been made with greater sensitivity and less chauvinism by others. A number of Indian social scientists have noted that individual rather than collective redemption lies at the heart of Hindu practice and that, as a result, social responsibility is generally narrowly defined. Most analyses of the caste system describe it as comprising hierarchically arrayed endogenous groups that vie for influence with each other. Clearly, the modern Western notion that all people are born equal remains less than universally appreciated in a country whose dominant social system emphases maintaining caste and group purity.



Contact/Dilip Mehta

A prisoner blinded by Indian policemen in 1980 arriving at a hospital for treatment.

Scarcity Is at the Root

Another factor may be the relatively higher value assigned to subjective thought processes in India. In a brilliant tour of the Indian psychoanalytic landscape, "The Inner World," Sudhir Kakar, an Indian former student of Erik Erikson, commented that there is very little pressure on the Indian child to view the world from outside his immediate experience. "Compared with Western children, an Indian child is encouraged to continue to live in a mythical, magical world for a long time," he wrote. Others argue that this mentality continues into adulthood and places a subjective cast on questions of truth, falsehood, obedience to law and due process.

Helpful though they may be as guides, such explanations of the forces shaping the Indian character may be less important in accounting for corruption than the simple economic realities that there are too many people and not enough things. Had cement not been rationed in Bombay, no builder would have been induced to contribute to the chief minister's fund. If there were enough jobs for all the college graduates, there would be less reason to cheat on exams or pay off monitors to look the other way.

Scarcity — of jobs, food, money, health care and position — is at the very root of corruption. In the scramble for the fruits of development and progress, people seek advantage by offering advantages to those they believe can help them. It is so in Nigeria and Zaire and other countries where new paths to power and wealth have been cut through traditional societies.

Of course, since India is an idiosyncratic society whose network of castes has no counterpart elsewhere, the shape of corrupt practices here is often as stylized as Kathakali dancing. The heavyset politician with his hangers-on called chamchas, or spoons, who dispense boons and punishments at his behest. The touching of toes to show deference. The politicians who are simultaneously businessmen, ward heelers, religious or community leaders and feudal chiefs.

The style is all very Indian; the impulse, universal.

Jindhiana.

Before you are overcome by the nedd to yawn or feel constrained to tell me that you have heard enough of Maharajas and their breed ,let me tell you about one more such specimen: the Maharaja of Jindh.

One day an impressive looking gentlemanly Sikh came into my office and after a few minutes spent in the exchange of polite remarks, he asked me about my "regular professional charges for an office visit". I had already learned that such kind of enquiry was in no way unusual and certainly not offensive because doctors - not only foreigners but also wellknown Indian doctors - were known to charge exorbitant prices whenever they smelt a rich patient. I can honestly say that we never followed this practice.

I told my visitor that I charged Rs. 16.- for a consultation in my office,whereupon he bowed,smiled and departed with a hearty "Thank you, Sir". I must say, that his reaction surprised me, but I supposed that he had been "shopping around" and that the fee I had mentioned and which was charged by "top-rated" doctors in India was too much for this man.

However, I was mistaken. A few days later ,while Kate and I were eating our lunch,we heard shouting and other commotion from the nearby waitingroom which should have been closed and empty at this time of the day. I left the table and on entering the waitingroom I saw a short,thickset bald man dressed in a sweat shirt, crumpled cotton trousers and soiled tennis shoes shouting and gesturing at my visitor of a few days before. Next to him stood a young Sikh in a green turban and sprouting the first few hairs of his future hopefully heavy beard. The two younger men not only did not reply to the shouting older one but by their submissive attitude showed that they were in fear of him. The moment I came in, still holding my napkin in my hand, my erstwhile visitor bowed to me with his pleasant smile and politely enquired about my welfare. I told him truthfully that I had no complaints to make in that respect but that I was curious what gave me the pleasure of their company at this time of the day. Thereupon, without replying to my

question he started on the following dialogue:

" Tell me ,please,Doctor Sahib, are you endwoed with a foreign degree ?"

" Yes, my dear Sardarji, you may be assured that I am a fully qualified physician and that my degrees are recognized and registered by the medical authorities here".

" This is very fine, Dr. Sahib. Now tell me one thing more: do you treat patients with bronchitis ?"

" Yes, I have in the past had many patients with bronchitis".

" Do you also treat patients with syphilis ?"

" When a patient comes to me with such an illness, he will,of course, be treated by me".

" Do you also treat patients with diabetes ?"

By that time I had enough of this kind of interrogation and I answered with feigned surprise:

" Diabetes ? What is that ? I have never heard of this kind of ailment. What is diabetes ?"

My Sikh interrogator was decent enough to accept my reply as a feeble attempt to make a joke and he burst out into a hearty laughter,into which the other two who appeared to have followed the conversation with great interest,joined.

" And what are your fees,Doctr Sahib", was the next question.

" I told you already a few days ago, dear Sir, what my fees are. I charge for a visit here in my office Rs.16,- a visit".

The Sikh smiled; he shook his head in approval. The he took a writing pad from his pocket onto which he wrote in large letters: " He confirms Rs.16.- for a visit" and then he showed what he had written to the bald-headed man who nodded his head in confirmation and uttered in addition a guttural "Ha !" in apparent agreement.

" The my Sikh interrogator deeply bowed and with a flourish pointing to the older man,introduced him:

" This is His Highness,the Maharaja of Jindh. You must excuse that he is deaf unfortunately". The indicating the young man with the few hairs on his chin he told me that " this is Capt.Sadhu Singh, his A.D.C.", and finally bowing still deeper he intorduced himself: " And I am Col. Harbans Singh, the Household Minister of His Highness".

In the following months and years the Maharaja of Jindh and his family were very frequent and grateful patients of ours. The maharaja came every summer with a large staff of courtiers and servants to Srinagar. He owned there a small palace on the bank of the river and two large houseboats on the river. As soonas the climatic conditions in the plains made his 350 dogs feel uncomfortable, he loaded about a hundred of them - those he loved most at the moment -onto specially built trucks and brought them up to the cooler climate of Kashmir. In the two unique houseboats his dogs were cared for by well-trained veterinarians and a large number of servants.

Let me at this point anticipate an event which may add to the picture you are forming about the Maharaja.

As I mentioned already we had a pair of well-bred Alsatian dogs brought out from Germany. Whenever the Maharaja saw me he asked me to sell him the dogs, but it never entered our head to sell Argos and Mara. However, the Maharaja was welcome to buy one or two of the litter Mara produced yearly, and this satisfied him to some degree. When we were interned and had the additional worry of finding a home for the two Alsatians, I contacted the Maharaja of Jindh who knew to make use of our unfavourable situation and as an act of favour to me agreed to take the dogs over from us for a ridiculously low sum. What else could we do ? There was no time nor the mood to find other interested parties. At least we knew that Argos and Mara were in good hands.

The Maharaja had a very lovely daughter, called Ruby; at least with regard to her he forgot to be a miser.

One day ,early in October, Col. Harbans Singh appeared in my office.

" On February 8 of next year" he anniunced after we had exchanged greetings, "H.H.Princess Ruby coming from Karachi on her way to Sangrur, the Capital of Jindh,will pass through Lahore. Her private couch will be detached from the Karachi train at the Lahore Station and will remain at the railway station for two hours before being attached to the Frontier Mail again which will be made to stop at Sangrur. His Highness desires you to go to the railway station on the day and at the time mentioned to examine the Princess".

" My dear Colonel", I objected, "you want me to make no an appointment for a day which is four months away. I can impossibl make an appointment which is so far away. There is really no need to worry about this today. I shall ,of course, do everything in my power to please His Highness, but it would be much better if you write to me a month or so ahead. That will be time enough to make a definite appointment".

Harbans Singh found my argument reasonable and we agreed that he write to me around Christmas for definite arrangements. Then came the inevitable question:

" And what are you going to charge for such a visit ?"

As you will understand,my experience had so far not included visits to private couches at railway stations,nor did my medical education provide for such an eventuality. Weighing the circumstances and considering the environment I thought that double my usual fee for a house visit would be an adequate charge. The Household Minister agreed to a fee of Rs. 64.- and he agreed also that the fee was not exorbitant. We separated with the agreement that I would hear from him "in due course".

However, I did not hear from him "in due course" and when the 8th February arrived the matter had totally slipped from my mind. You can understand that I was quite surprised when a few days later a letter arrived from the Colonel,complaining bitterly that he and the Princess had been waiting in vein for two hours at the Lahore railway station for my appearance, that His Highness the Maharaja was very upset about my not having kept my appointment and that in consequence his,the Minister's position and future were in jeopardy.

It was easiy to visualize that my friend,the Colonel, had not told his master the truth,had not confessed to him that he had blundered. I replied at once claiming that I was entirely innocent and in no way to be blamed. However, in order to save him and his family " who would be disgraced and destitute" ,as he so pitifully wrote in his letter, I offered to come myself to Jindh,there to examine the Princess for the very same fee of Rs. 64.- which I had stipulated for a visit to the railway station. I was sure that the Maharaja would feel honourbound to refuse this proposal and would instead offer a more adequate fee, but the reply which came by return of post informed me that the Maharaja accepted my kind offer and appreciated my gentlemanly behaviour". There was nothing

left but to swallow the pill. I asked, however, that I was to be fetched by one of the Maharaja's cars,whereupon a phone call advised me tht this would be too inconvenient, that I should instead hire a taxi for the journey at the expense of the State of Jindh. I blundered again by deciding that I would come in my own car, a Hilman 10 HP. I asked the Automobile Association about the roads I had to take for my trip to Jindh and was given a road map in which a thick red line leading straight from Lahore to Sangrur promised a first class road. I calculated that I could expect to reach my hosts at the latest after four hours' travel. Unfortunately Kate and I realized only too late when we crawled in our car labouriously through the sands of the desert that the road on the map did not exist but was supposed to be"built in the near future".

It took us 12 hours before we hit the metalled road leading into and through the State of Jindh. A few miles before we could expect to reach the Capital of Jindh,we saw on our left a beautifully lit small palace. The moment we passed the palace a posse of soldiers sprang through the gate,their guns lifted high, signalling us to stop. I did not feel like taking on at that late hour the Jindh Army for any kind of confrontation,complications or explanation, and pushing down my foot on the gas we passed soldiers, guns,palace all.

When the road signs showed that we were only six miles from Sangrur, a front tire burst. I stopped the car and started to change the wheel. Within a minute also the jack broke. Tired as we were,there was nothing else to do but to lock the car,link arms and march on to Sangrur, nevermind the howling of the wolves and the complaining of the jakals. The air was beautiful,the sky full of stars. But no more heroics wee_in store for us that night. We had hardly marched half a mile when the jeep-like hunting car of the Maharaja overtook us and the four officers inside bade us welcome to the State.

The Maharaja had once been told by a holy man that hw would die should he ever stay in one place for more than three month and in consequence he shifted residence at regular intervals from one of his palaces to the other. He had forgotten to inform me , however, that he had left his place in Sangrur and was now residing in his "Monjolie" Palace twelve miles outside Sangrur. Although we were already eight hours late ,he had not given up hope that we would eventually turn up.He had his palace fully illuminated to

to act as a beacon, and he had his guards allerted to stop us the moment they saw us pass. We did not stop and he sent his four men in pursuit to bring us back.

We were glad we had been spared the walk through the dark countryside. Next morning I examined the Princess and thereafter we spent an hour touring the palace. We admired the excellent dog-kennels,greeted the many veterinarians,saw the shabby small hospital for the humans in the State, had a talk with the tgwo doctors. We had an enjoyable and instructive time.

When we were called to have lunch with the young menof the Maharaja's family and some princes from neighbouring States, we had to pass a large semieround terrace in front of the pavillon which harboured the official diningroom. The Maharaja, who was a vegetarian and always ate by himself, was seated at a small table outside the entrance to the dining room,undoubtedly enjoying his solitary meal. About forty officials, ministers and officers,stood with their hands folded over their abdomen in a half-circle around the plaza facing their master, laughing when the Maharaja laughed, looking with surprise when he looked surprised, clapping their hands when he belched. When we passed the Maharaja he welcomed us with a nod of his head and a few friendly words and the forty men around him also nodded their heads and murmured in confirmation. When I placed my hand on his arm in recognition of a joke he had attempted, a gasp broke from the forty throats and eyes were opened wide in surprise; but all forty broke into laughter when the Ruler himself started to laugh.

And so ended a memorable weekend excursion.

Other princes big and small.

Trust me: this is not an effort to write about Maharajas, Rajas, Nawabs and their irk; this is not my job, nor am I qualified to give you a complete picture. Enough literature exists about these people. Nor do I want to boast about my having been the physician to such kind of patients as I do not find any reason to be proud of having met men or women who were born to high positions or to riches as long as they in themselves were not worthy of being praised or lauded, hated or despised. However, also this is not the scope of my labouring on the typewriter.

I have already mentioned here and there some of my exoeriences with such rulers - small and big - and let me two more introduce to you, before I stop . I realize you have heard enough about this category. And it is not even of any significance in my writing about such people if I liked them or not - it is far too much of a personal matter to give room to such feelings.

I met the Maharaja of Kapurthala, an ageing Sugar Dady who spent his summers in Europe with a large retenue of servants to many of whom he had given the rank of minister and whose main duty was to provide for the various pleasures their master appeared to long. They did this in a very efficient way and they saw to it that sufficient crumbs would also fall in their direction.

The winter months the Maharaja spent in his State - amongthe people whose standard of living and health were in obverse relation to the sums of money the Maharaja spent on his pleasures. During these winter months a number of more or less young but usually beautiful grils would arrive from all parts of the world to help the Maharaja and his entourage overcome the long and depressing season. Nobody doubted the kind and altruistic nature of these ladies who came to India as the guests of H.H.The Maharaja of Kapurthala. It is interesting to record that whenever these visitors arrived by sea in Bombay or Karachi -air traffic was not yet known- and produced German, French, Italian or American passports, they were allowed to land and to proceed to Kapurthala in the car provided by their host. However, when the caucasian visitor produced a British passport or any other passport which indicated that the holder

was a citizen of one of the Commonwealth Countries, they were unceremoniously sent back without their having been permitted to set their usually fashionably shod feet on Indian soil.

Let me also mention another ruler of an Indian State, who occupies the other end of the princely scala. All these men and women with whom I had come into contact,disappeared from our field of vision after partition as they all lived in India - and we in Pakistan. There were so many rulers of tiny states who had the right to a gun salute whenever they visited Delhi - but had not the money to pay for the ammunition used which was theirs to pay for. One of these was the young Sikh prince with the tuberculoship who was the nominal head of a tiny state but whose income - a hundred rupees in all - had to be augmented by the Government of India so that he and his small family could pay for the grocery.

John Slattery.

Our first year in Lahore was made easier by John and Mary Slattery. They soon became our friends and they were possibly the only ones who understood our status as Jewish refugees. This may be explainable by the fact that Mary Slattery's family came originally from Vienna and she was - if not herself a Jewess - originating from Jewish stock. Thinking back to our relationship I feel that initially this interest in us had been requested by the British Intelligence Services, but I may be wrong. I know that when " the clouds were collecting" and there was the likelihood that we were going to be interned, during the time when we were looked upon with suspicion by the powers that be and were the objects of much discussions in Government circles, the Slatterys spoke on our behalf,explained our background,our situation. They could do so only because they were certain that we were genuine refugees. Once they arranged for me to meet the Chief Secretary and though this meeting was not a success - the man appeared too antagonistic from the onset - this shows the goodwill of the Slatterys.

You can call the Slatterys an interesting family . John had been Senior Superintendent of Police and he had committed the worst crime a man of his Service could commit: he accepted a bribe once. (You may be surprised that I call this such a heinous sin. It was most unusual for India , while - as I learned later on - this was commonplace in Palestine and other Colonies. This sin Slattery committed became soon known to the Authorities and Slattery had to appear before the Governor of the Punjab who told him approximately that " you know quite well that I can break you here and now and this will mean that you are ruined for all your life. But for the sake of your wife, your son in Oxford and your two daughters I am going to give you one more chance. I am going to appoint you the Chairman of the Public Service Commission where you have far better chances to take bribes, and in addition the bribes by which you are going to be tempted are of a magn itude you have not known so far as a policeman. As you know this app-

ointment rates even as an advancement, a promotion for you and carries a far higher salary. You will make use of this higher income to pay back over the next five years to charities I am going to select tenfoldthe bribe you have accepted. But let me warn you if you cannot withstand the constant temptation this new job brings with it it will mean the end for you. You will end in jail and there will be nobody anymore who will think of the wellbeing of your wife and children".

From that day on John Slattery was a good administrator, an official of proverbial honesty. He was never again involved in any kind of scandal. During the war he was appointed Prime Minister of Chamba, a State in the Punjab and he managed the affairs of this small State while the Maharaja was still a minor. Even in this office he could not be tempted to accept bribes and he must have been the only one appointed to this kind of office who never did. I met the Slatterys in Lahore on our return from the Camp in 1946 but we never got "warm" again. His wife had not yet recovered from a mental breakdown she had suffered in Chamba. The main interest Slattery showed in me was his effort to sell me his old beautifully maintained aluminum-coloured Rolls-Royce open tourer. Unfortunately I had not the money to pay him the Rs.8000.- he demanded. And I have regretted this since.

To complete the story of Slattery and to give you some more background, let me tell you a small episode.

Slattery was the Chairman of the Punjab Public Service Commission composed of two Englishmen,two Hindus,two Muslims and two Sikhs. This Commission interviewed and engaged candidates for government jobs of any kind in the Punjab Province.

One day a Hindu patient came to see me and explained to me what had brought him back sooner than I had expected.

" I am not here as a patient today. This time it is more or less a private visit. Yesterday afternoon when I came to consult you I saw in your waiting room Mr. Slattery,the Chairman of the Punjab Public Service Commission."

" Yes, this is true. He came here yesterday afternoon"

" Do you know this gentleman well ? From the way you greeted each other I had the impression that you have a relationship which is above that between doctor and patient".

" Yes, you may say so. John Slattery is a quite good friend of mine".

"If this is so ,you may be of help to me and also to him. Could you give Mr. Slattery a message from me ?"

" This should not be difficult, but first of all let me know what it is all about before I commit myself".

" You see", said the visitor,"next week my son will be interviewed along with many other young men by Mr. Slattery and his Commission for one of the ten engineering jobs the Government is offering this year".

" And what do you want me to do ?", I asked,well knowing what the answer was going to be.

" The Punjab Engineering Service is going to engage ten new men and my son, along with many dozens of the newly graduated engineers will compete for this job. If Mr . Slattery arranges that my son gets such a job I am ready to pay him Rs.3000.- and I am also willing to pay the same amount to you for your help".

Rs.3000.- was a lot of money in those years and I wondered:

" How much does such a job in the P.E.S. pay ?"

" The starting pay is Rs.60.- a month sor such young engineers".

" And you are willing to pay hundred times the salary, i.e. the salaries of the next eight years in order to see your son employed by the P.E.S. ?"

" Oh ! This is of no significance. Once my son has such a job he will make enough on the side in form of bribes, gratifications etc. to pay me back these six thousand rupees within a year"

Needless to say that I did not mention this man's offer to Slattery and I myself never got any bribe from the good-hearted father either. I do not know if this young man got his job, if he found another way. I might even suppose that he got into the P.E.S. in a straightforward and honest way.

"The Clouds Are Collecting"

This is the phrase writers usually use to indicate that war is approaching, that people are about to pass through periods of tension or that they begin to show the first signs of madness. I use here these words to tell you that we knew that we were in for a difficult time.

In 1939 we were spending our second summer in Kashmir. We felt happy there and we were of the opinion that everybody knew of our status,knew that we could not and would not be identified with the Germans who had created conditions in the world which made one feel the inevitability of a coming disaster. We had friends among the British residents and we believed that this was due to a great part because they understood our position. We had also many friends among the native population - those who were residents and those who were visitors - who took a different posture: they thought they could please us with their admiration for all things German. We had quite a task to explain to this group our true opinion, our experiences, but I doubt if we did succeed in changing the attitude of even the educated classes.

There is no need to tell you about the state of affairs which prevailed all over the world in 1939; they were not very much diffierent from the conditions which dominated life in India and Kashmir. Everybody had finally come to believe that war was inevitable, and when it was announced on September 1, 1939 that an important message of the Prime Minister of England was going to be broadcast,everyone of us assembled on the terrace of the Srinagar Club that afternoon was sure that this was going to be the official declaration of war. There we all sat,depressed and apprehensive, drinking our drinks. Everyone present knew the others present. Everyone considered the other his friend. When the word came through over the loudspeakers that England had declared war against Germany, all this changed. We, Kate and I were suddenly no more the friends,the acquaintances or whatever categorization

you may want to use in this direction. We were suddenly enemies of all those who sat with us on the terrace of the Srinagar Club. Even though most of them knew that we had Polish passports - we had so often in the past pointed this out to them - they saw in us now their enemies. From the chilliness suddenly to be felt, from the looks they gave us - was it hatred,was it embarrassement , one could interpret those looks as one wished - we were given to understand that we should leave the place. We returned home and next day I received a communication from the Secretary of the Club that it was " desirable that for the duration pf the war" we should not make use of the Club premises. Of course, I sent at once my resignation.

Along with us there were at that moment some other 25 German Jewish refugees in Srinagar,most of them visitors who spent their vacation in Kashmir. Among them were the Moritz Neumanns,the Ede Rosenbaums,Ruth Muellerheim, Dr. Benjamin . All the males were arrested that very night but as there was only the Kashmir jail available fortheir internment, and this would have been the most unsuitable and at the same time the most degrading place - reflecting unfavourably on the white population,including the British had the jail been used for these internees - these men were interned in the annexe of the Neou's Hotel. This solution was made possible by the offer of Willy Nedou,the owner of the hotel, whose Swiss ancestors had started the chain of hotels in Kashmir in the beginning of the 19th century. I very much appreciated this gesture of Willy Nedou and when man years later he had lost all he had once owned and he lived in Lahore with his cousin Croal, I looked after them free of charge over many years.

As I had a Polish passport I was not interned, much to the chagrin of those who had been restricted inside the hotel annexe. It was a rather funny situation, a rather embarrassing situation for the British: they had to make the local population see that these were "enemy aliens",that these men were enemies, but at the same time they had to treat these same men as "sahibs" so that the natives should alos in this case never overlook the dividing line.

Within a few days most of the internees were released, only the non-Jews and those who were in one way or the other suspect,were retained in custody and were soon sent off to a camp in India.

No. 1-7-40-

From

The Deputy Director General,
Indian Medical Service.

To

Dr. H.M.Selzer, M.D.,
"Kilcarron",
4, Gupkar Road,
Srinagar, Kashmir.

New Delhi, the July 1940.

Memorandum.

With reference to your application for military employment in connection with the War, you are informed that your name has been registered in this office and that you will be addressed further if and when your services are required.

2. You are requested to keep this office informed of any change

Lieut.-Colonel, I.M.S.
Deputy Director-General, I.M.S.

Form

MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, LAHORE.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH.

MUNICIPALITY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPTT. LAHORE

2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	
Date of Birth.	Sex. Male.	Sex. Female.	Name of the father or parents and of grand-father.	Place of Birth	Occupation, caste, religion and residence of the father.	Name of informant.	Name of child if any	Date of report of Birth.	RE
16-10-40	M	-	Dr. H.M. Selzer, M.D.(father). Mrs. Kate Selzer, M.D. Nee Neumann(mother).	Lady Willingdon Hospital, Lahore	Doctor, Polish (Nationality) Jewish HO: 8 Egerton Road, Lahore.	Dr. H.L. Selzer, M.D.	Michael Ivan	21-10-40	

Dated Lahore

The 11th June 1941. 19

Municipal Medical Officer Of Health an

Municipal Registrar, La

The Silver Printing Press, Beadon Road, Lahore.

permitted to return to British India . They had to stay on in Kashmir and were never interned. We were allowed to return to Lahore - and were interned.

It was a difficult journey back. Kate was pregnant. She had been looking forward to have her mother near her. Michael was born October 16,1940, and though I felt already the hostile atmosphere crowding on us, I did not permit this or anything else to lower my pride,my self-esteem,my insistence on my rights. Let me give you an example:

I had registered Michael's birth in the Municipality but when I received the birth certificates I was surprised: I got the document that office used for their indigenous people, especially Hindus. Michael had been entered on the form as Michael Ivan (I had asked the Babu to enter Michael as Michael Ian,but the clerk had misunderstood me, he did apparently not know of Ians but had heard of Ivans), belonging to the caste of Beni Israeli and the subcaste Yehudi. I sent a protest note to the British Administrator (the Lahore Municipality for reasons I do not recall was run by such an official who had been appointed by the Government in place of the Mayor) and this man fully concurred that this was a babuesque misstep which I was justified in refusing to accept. The Administrator ordered at once that "neutral" certificates be printed, but for "technical reasons" it was impossible to make an Ian out of Ivan.

handed over to the individual. More than 99% of the inmates received only Rs.10.- from their allowance as their pocket money; the balance was handed over to a contractor who provided htree meals a day. The cheap food prices of the first two years of the war and the not too generous amount and quality of the food he supplied for the money he received, guaranteed a very good income to the Contractor - and also to the Commandant. Later on, when inflation eroded the value of the money and Government was slow to follow this trend with an increase of the allowances, the Contractor terminated the contract and refused to continue with the supply of the meals. The entire allowance was now handed over to the internees and they had to try to feed themselves now as best as they could. When I confronted the Contractor with my opinion that he was not justified in his claim that he could not continue feeding the camp inmates with the amount of money he received from the Commandant,and I proved to him that including all possible expenses,all the cost of food etc., there was still a profit margin of 20% for him, he looked at me with surprise as if he doubted my sanity and asked me, why I did not also calculate under the heading of expenses the 25% of the total the Commandant kept back as his share and the ten percent the policemen claimed as their due.

With the progress of the war our subsistence allowance was insufficient notwithstanding the increases we got from time to time and all of us had to face financial difficulties. Those of us who owned cameras,jewellery and other valuables had to dispose of them; others,less fortunate, had to be supported by the Jewish Relief Association in Bombay at the cost of much self-respect. I still relive the happy sensation that we had because until the end we had no need to accept any financial handout from the JRA and if we were left without our cameras and some gold articles we had owned from before the war,this did in noway hurt us as an allowance from the Jews of Bombay would have done.

At the time of our arrival in Purandhar, food was still cheap and was, as I have pdescribed, supplied by a Contractor appointed byethe Commandant. The meals were served in two large dining halls, and these two dining halls represented also a social separation line within the Camp. It is a pity that I was anything but a detached onlooker and certainly not in the mood cooly to analyze with the help of purely psychological criteria the situation we found on

In early October we returned to the plains to start our "winter season" in Lahore. We found that things had changed in Lahore also. There was that martial air which you notice mostly when ex-military men,those in retirement and those far away from the fighting,are likely to exhibit; they were mostly imbibed with a burning sense of duty and affected by a heavy dose of patriotism. However, we ourselves did not encounter as much hostility as we had expected, because we were not yet classified as enemies, we were not yet enemy aliens. Still, the atmosphere was unpleasant in every aspect; the relaxed way of life had disappeared. The British Authorities were worried about the local population,the local politicians,the restless masses who expected that the war was going. to be restricted again to Europe but would have sufficient impact on India to bring about considerable changes,pissbly also freedom for the subcontinent.

It is an understatement if I say that I did not feel too happy. I was not as sure as I gave myself that we were not going to be numbered among the "enemy aliens" soon, as we had in reality no passport at all. We were technically stateless. About a year and a half before the war The Polish Government had deprived us of our citizenship. I do not have to remind you that even in those days when Poland was in mortal danger and also later when it was bleeding to death,their leaders never missed the opportunity to harrass and persecute their own Jews, as if Hitler was not doing enough for the Poles in this respect. The Polish Government had issued a decree that all those who had never lived in Poland,those who did not speak Polish,those who did not belong to the Polish cultural sphere but owned a Polish passport only due to the chance factor that they were born in territory which Poland had annexed after the first world war (or who now claimed to be Poles because they had neverr opted for Austria, or had more likely never bothered to do so,were to be deprived of their nationality and passports . This new law appeared to be tailor-made for us. The Consul General sent us a questionaire which we did not know to fill in except with the help of Kalisch, who not only had suddenly turned into a fervently nationalistic Pole, but who acted as if he was the local representative of his fatrerland. I am afraid tht the assistance which

Kalisch gave us in filling in these Polish questionaires on our behalf were our undoing, as he answered the questions in a possibly straight way but by using phrases which we were later told caused quite some damage. He once hinted in his private reports to the Consul in Bombay that it was beyond his power to give a guarantee of my "bona fide" status as a Jew and as a refugee. These events and circumstances made us suddenly stateless - and helpless. I refused to returne our passports,useless thogh they were now, as they were our only means of identification. It is true that with the destruction of Poland,the Polish Government-in-Exile in London in its desire to avoid any adverse publicity did not apply anymore the infamous decree which had deprived the "pseudo-Poles" of their nationality (This did not call back to life Hermann Spiegel and his family who had not been admitted to Poland because of this law and had to spend a winter in no-man's-land between Poland and Germany and when they were at last admitted,ended in a camp in Poland). Thus we could keep our passports, but they were not renewed when they expired. The Polish Consul even played at intervening on my behalf but I am certain that he did everything possible not to have us released from internment),

Soon I noticed that we were kept under constant surveillance. A few of our friends,especially the Slatterys (he was a high Government official, his wifea former Austrian,who understood well enough how liable we were to be misunderstood),informed us that certain interested parties did their best to insinuate that we were in truth enemy aliens and possibly even Nazi agents. Our friends tried to persuade those in power that these hostile allegations were not justified - but without success.

In summer 1940 the war was still not taken too serious. It was still called the "funny war". This was reflected also in the way officials in India adopted a relaxed and lax attitude to the war problems.

In May we transferred our practice again to Kashmir and we rented again the bungalow we had occupied in 1939. But things had changed; things were not the same anymore, and we were glad when we could return to Lahore. Yes, the Authorities allowe us to return to Lahore because we were not "enemy aliens", but Kate's parents,Ruth Muellerheim,Benjamin etc.the "enemy aliens" were not

CONSULATE GENERAL
OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
IN BOMBAY

Nr. 763-b/W-T/22.

Dr. H. M. Selzer,
c/o The Commissioner of Police,
L A H O R E .

Dear Sir,

Confirming receipt of your telegram dated the 5th Instant about your and your family's internment I have to inform you that I have taken up the matter with the Government of India.

Yours faithfully,

E. Banasinski,
Consul General for Poland.

1479

Jind Camp,
Via Haldwani U.P.
24th February 1941.

Sir,

With reference to your wire of 20th February 1941 reading:-

gree Seven hundred please fetch dogs oonest from Mrs Slattery Lahore"

arranging to have the dogs fetched Mrs Slattery Lahore.In the mean time I ask:-

(a)If Argo & Mara have ever remained loose in the house.
(b)Are they clean?
(c) What their temperament is like?
(d) Are they quarrelsome with other dogs?

I shall be obliged for as much such the like information as you can give.

Yours faithfully,

Private Secretary.

Dr H.M.Selzer,M.D.,
Aliens Parole Camp,
Purandhar (Poona)

When the Police came.....

By the time we had returned to Lahore and Michael was born, the war in Europe had ceased to be funny. Also in Lahore the war was now seen with more "respect". For weeks I noticed that the bungalow was surrounded and watched by day and night, that I was followed everywhere, that I was under surveillance. I am sure we would have been arrested and interned on our return from Kashmir had Kate not been pregnant and the British so kindhearted to avoid complication the arrest at such a stage was sure to have caused.

And it happened. It happened what I feared was going to happen, which I hoped somehow was not going to happen. It happened of all days on my birthday, December 5, 1940. In the early morning hours of that day, while I had my shower, Kate called me with the news that a posse of policemen stood outside on the verandah. They wanted to speak with me. When I was dressed I went outside and came face to face with a Police Inspector who showed me a Government order addressed to the Chief of Police to the effect that Kate and I were to be arrested (let me not omit to point out that the order read: "Will you,please, arrest Dr. H.M. Selzer, his wife and their two children"),confined to the bungalow until we could be transferred that same evening to an Internment Camp near Bombay.

I told the policeman that it was impossible for us to leave that very same day, unless Government gave me in writing that they would be responsible for all the property I would have to abandon. I told him that I required at least another three days to complete my arrangements. As the Inspector could not grant me this permission, he took me to the Superintendent of Police,who appeared to have expected me and my request. He at once granted me the extension I had requested.

We were very busy during these three days, as you can imagine. While Kate began to pack with the help of the servants the minimum she thought necessary to take along, I had to run around, in the company of two policemen armed with guns, to find a store-

DR. A.J. KALISCH, M.D., D.T.M.,
SPECIALIST IN HEART, LUNG
& ABDOMINAL DISEASES.

8-B, Davis Road
Lahore.
21. May, 1942

Dr. H.M. Selzer,
Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

I have sent for credit with your a/c at Imperial Bank, Lahore a checque for Rs. 169-5-4, being one third of fees collected in April ~~for~~ from patients previously yours.
Please, acknowledge receipt.
This is also to inform you, that I have been given a commission in the R.A.M.C. and have begun my duties on the 15th May.
I have taken a partner, who will mostly run the practice with my wife, and that therefore my offer of giving you a third share of fees from your previous patients does no more hold good after the 15th may, 1942.
You will receive a share of fees collected for professional services rendered to your previous patients up to the 15th May incl.

Sincerely

room for our furniture,our equipment and all the many things we did not want to take along. I did find at last a man who was ready to rent me his empty garage in which we could store our furniture and boxes. I might have found a more suitable and safer storeroom but many a potential leaser refused when they saw me accompanied by the police guard, and the Hindu garage owner who did agree, trebled the rent he would otherwise have asked ,when he realized how helpless I was and how much in urgent need to find storage space for my furniture.

I went also to see Kalisch. He was the only one in those days who enjoyed seeing me in the company of the two policemen. I asked him to look after my patients in my absence. My request and the cause of my visit, though not as unexpected as he pretended it was mmade him a happy man that day. Don't tell me that I paint Kalisch as black as I do on purpose or that I exaggerate. Kalisch threw up his arms into the air,jumped into the air at the same time (his acrobatic feat reminded me of that of Hitler when France surrendered). " Now I am the only foreign doctor in Lahore", he laughed. I am asa rule pleased if anything I do or is done to me,makes people happy, but this was not one of those occasions. We agreed that he would take over my practice, that he would cash for me all outstanding dues on my behalf and that he would pay me for the first year 50% of the income he might have from these my patients. (He sent me a copy of a letter he had printed and circulated among my patients in which he informed them that I had been interned and that he ,Kalisch,was now replacing me). The arrangements did not last long. After four months or so he wrote to me that he could not be bothered anymore with this arrangement and he invited me to take any steps against him I might think myself entitled to.

For three days we had to live with the unpleasant situation. We camped among the boxes and cases. We were surrounded by some twenty policemen pr soldiers with fixed bayonet. We had to tell patients turning up that we were not anymore in practice. We had to accept the kindness visiting Indian friends showed us duringn our confinement in the bungalow

When the fourth day began, early in the morning, the Police Inspector whohad been in charge, handed us over to his sergeant. We were driven in a police car to the railway station; a

ONSULAT Generalny
OLITEJ POLSKIEJ
BOMBAJU

NSULATE General
UBLIC OF POLAND
BOMBAY

763-b/W-T/34.

"Rugby House", No.39, Nepean Sea Road,
Bombaj
Bombay 31st December 1940.

Dr. H. M. S e l z e r,
Aliens Parole Camp,
P U R A N D H A R, /Poona/.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 16th Instant I have to inform you that during my recent visit to Delhi I had a personal interview with the Government of India regarding your case. The Government of India have given me to understand that your case will be reconsidered.

Yours faithfully,

E. Bandsinski,
Consul General for Poland.

second car followed with six policemen carrying their guns and also four pairs of handcuffs and foot chains. We were accomodated in a large second-class compartment, along with the Ayah we had taken along,and the sergeant who came in uninvited, while the six policemen occupied the adjioming compartment. We left Lahore as prisoners of the British-Indian Government to be accomodated in the Internment Camp of Purandhar. The journey lasted 36 hours. All went off smoothly. None of us attempted to escape. It would have been difficult to attempt even such a feat,even without the guards,their guns,thei handcuffs and chains. Pipsi was less than 2 years old and Michael just 6 weeks. Not the situation to play heroics- and why ? In any case Michael can boast that he must have been the youngest prisoner ever considered dangerous enough to such a degree that his guards had to be provided with chains and handcuffs to prevent any escape.

The Frontier Mail carried us to Bombay. During these 36 hours which the journey lasted the train stopped not more than six times. Every time the train came to a halt the six policemen jumped from their compartment and surrounded the exit of ours in a half circle which permitted just enough space to walk 2 or 3 steps to the left and to the right, while it allowed at the same time the hundreds of people around uson the platform to gain an unrestricted view of us.

In Bombay a Police Inspector and his girl friend awaited us and took charge of us. The Punjabi Police group had to return home; it must have caused them great disappointment. We were transshipped to another train and arrived late at night in Poona We were at once taken from the station in a truck to the Internment Camp in Purandhar, an old Gujrati fortress very romantically situated at the top of a mountain. One was usually carried up that steep road in primitive chairs by coolies. Kate,the children, the Ayah and the Police Inspector's girl friend were carried up in such chairs, while I panted up the hill on my feet behind the Inspector. Only a hundred meter before we reached the gate of the Camp was the girlfriend made to vacate her chair, and I realized that the chair had been arranged for me but had been allocated by the Police Inspecttor to his girlfriend whom he wanted to show

a camp housing white prisoners (I am sorry now as I was sorry then when the girl was not even allowed to enter the camp; she had to wait outside for more than an hour until the Inspector was free to go home again. I was dog-tired from the climb, but I was majestically carried into the Camp. That episode with Inspector and girl friend showed me more than anything else how our status had changed and brought home to me that I had to adjust to a different life from than onwards.

The Commandant, Col Shah, was at the gate of the Camp to receive us. There were also many old acquaintances at the gate, notwithstanding the late hour, men and women we had known from "old times, among them Ede Rosenbaum and his wife. I can assure you,they were truly glad and even happy to see us among them.

AR 25045
Hermann M. SELZER Coll.

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Maturing years (copy)
Text, documents, photos
pt. II pp. 180 - 225

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Internment Camps.

It is one of the accompaniments of power politics, including wars, that enemies of the country, of the nation or of the regime are "taken out of circulation", that they are restricted to an area - usually far away from the centres of activity - where they are kept under surveillance, and were their activities and their contacts are restricted.

The internment of aliens, enemies, unreliable individuals in times of war is considered and accepted as a legitimate institution and regulated by international codes, conventions, agreements.

The Government of India was in no way acting against international law when she established internment camps and restricted the "enemy aliens" to live in these camps. It is also hardly a cause for blame that the Government did not differentiate between Jews and Nazis as the British Government so successfully did. This may have been partly due to the inexperience of the officials in New Delhi or the provincial capitals, partly due to the fact that the Government thought it had to be particularly careful and because it had to rely mainly on informations it received from biased quarters. In principle the Government applied the rule that it was better to placea person into an internment camp than to take the slightest risk, especially as any other kind of policy would have required far more agents and detectives than were available in view of the need of all such available and tpried personnel to supervise the Indian politicians and agitators.

The policy of "taking no chances" and " an internment camp in India is always preferable to a concentration camp in Germany or Poland", not only directed the policy of the Government of India but also that of the Jews in Bombay who had come to acquire great influence on the Government through the activities of the Jewish Relief Association. They made use of these camps to rid themselves of individuals who for one reason or the other had become a burden to them or who had aroused the enmity or suspicion of one or the other of the prominent Jews in Bombay or elsewhere.

Much misery resulted from the reliance the Authorities placed on the information supplied to them by the individuals who acted out of spite or for personal interests.

Is this anything unusual ? Certainly not ! This is system a condition, a side-effect of the abuse of personal power and influence which occurs all over the world at all times. It is only bitter it is only hurting if one is personally affected, if one is at the receiving end of punishment and abuse, and if Jews have been responsible for the sufferings of other Jews.

What contributed so much, to the injustice, to the suffering and the hurt was the fact that within this war, within this war effort, within British India and the British Empire the handful of Jewish refugees were of no importance, of no significance. If we Jewish refugees protested, wrote, cried, shouted, this made not the slightest impression in the prevailing vast disorder, the upheaval which World War II had caused in every sphere of life. At most they represented a nuisance value, a disturbing factor, an annoyance to some of the officials in Delhi - at least for a short while; but it did not bring forth any sympathy nor did it cause any persistent interest. All over the world the internee as a rule accepts his fate. This was the standard attitude of an internee in war times. Only the Jewish refugees saw an injustice in their having been interned. They protested that their rights had been violated. You can imagine how much displeasure this created in officialdom. However, these officials knew how to deal with this nuisance. They simply overlooked it, disregarded it. The official in question, sitting in his office in Delhi, may have spent an hour every week with this additional duty which had been crowded into his work schedule; he may have undertaken a yearly inspection tour of the camps mainly to get away from the dusty files in his office, but as a rule he left all the work, all the purely routine work to his clerks, the "babus".

Many a Jew was released from the camps and this appeared to be more a reflex action to the steady pressure friends of this man or woman could exert, than any thorough study of the case. Do not forget that the entire business of the internments had also another aspect: this was the first time that Indian officials and babus dealt without control and supervision with Europeans, had white people more or less depend on their mercy ! These Indian officials had always dealt with white people who were clearly their superiors,

be it in India be it at the time they were students at English universities ; here they had been given a powerful position ,could deal with Europeans as they wished more or less. I had the feeling that such factors played a great role, also in my case. Many an influential person agitated on my behalf but none was successful in getting me released. This made me understand that the chaims which kept us imprisoned,the reasons which made these efforts fail, were so strong, so powerful that they defeated anything attempted on our behalf. Not even the usual reaction of officialdom when faced with a bother, to get rid of it, applied here, i.e. to grant a release only for the sake of getting free of such a constant nuisance and at the same time to oblige some important person who might in turn one day prove useful. Most likely in our case the opposite appeared more important: to oblige a friend or a group of interests by keeping us inside the camp,to avoid any step which at a later stage might cause quesrries and annagnce should we have been allowed to leave the camp. Until this day I have not been told, neither officially nor privately, what had been the cause of our internemtn,what the reason was for our not having been released like many others. We had to fall back on conjecture,console ourselves with rumours and suppositions. You will agree that had Government really a solid,foolproof case against us,they would have had no scruples to disclose these,might even have taken stronger steps against me. All what I have said applies to the first 2-3 years of our internemnt only; later on a very large factor which which caused my being retained in the camp,was my having annoyed,disturbed,irritated the individual who sat on ourfile.

Immediately after the war had started,"enemy aliens" were interned; however, those who were known as Jews,as refugees, as trustworthy and were no considered dangerous, were soon thereafter released. In summer 1940 the policy changed again with the changing political and military situation in Europe. Many of those who had been released,thosw ho had no guarantors or who had no steady income or against whom the slightest suspicion or accusation had been raised, were again interned, and their wives and children were this time arrested along with them. Originally all over the sub-continent camps had been established, but in the course of that very first year the inmates of the many small camps were concentrated into larger camps: Purandhar was established as family camp for Jews and

and other anti-Nazis. In Satara a much larger camp for families had been built u,consisting of three wings: one for Jews and anti-Nazis, one for German Nazis and the third for Italian Fascists. The latter two camps were called Internment Camps while the one for ant-Nazis (like the one in Purandhar) was labelled "Internemt and Parole Camp" (though I have never learned what the difference was with regard to theother camps,what advantages it brought to its inmates).

As I have indicated,Purandhar and Satara were also designated "Family Camps" but again for reasons I cannot fathom also bachelors and spinsters were sent there as internees, as well as women with their children whose husband and father was either considered too dangerous or otherwise unworthy of any special privilegge and had been sent to the camp in Dehra-Dun.

The camp in Dehra-Dun was very large and harboured many thousands of men. They were Nazi civilians,prisoners-of-war,sailors arrested at the outbreak of war, and also Jewish refugees disliked for reasons unknown to me and them most likely too by the people in power. Other internees and prisoners-of-war had been sent to India from most other countries in Asia who were at war with Germany or Japan,to prevent them from falling into the hands of the advancing Japanese. It is understandable that the camp was divided into many wings, and be it said also here loud and clear tht the wings harbouring the German Nazis had all the privileges,comforts and possibly also the power because the British Commandant,his officers and all the other officials employed in the camp expected the Germans to win the war, and they wanted to make sure that they were going to get a favourable treatment as soon as Hitler and his Nazis had taken over the command in India. In Dehra-Dun even the Italians,though the were dispised by the Germans and no less by the British, had a more than pleasant treatment ,much more comfortable than prisoners-of-war usuallay expect,because they had built up a large underground distillery where they produced large quantities of alcohol which they transforued with the help of essences,rusty nails and old shoe soles into whiskey,brandy and gin, for which the Commandant had arranged outside the Camp a large and profittable sales organization.

The only wing which was made to feel the rigors of the life of a prisoner,internee,detainee (give them whatever label you like) was the Jewish wing which adjoined the Nazi wing. The Jews were not only exposed to the usual and expected taunts and abuses

of the Nazis, but also to the so regularly recurring spectacle (at least until Stalingrad) of every German victory being celebrated with drinking, singing, bonfires. From time to time whenever a major Allied setback merritted a special celebration, one of the barracks was put on fire. You will not be surprised to learn that the Jews and their barracks served very well for such acts of vandalism. Neither are you surprised, I am sure, tht no disciplinary action was ever taken against the Nazis in Dera Dun. It was understood that whenever the Nazis celebrated (they learned of the German victories from the Commandant who invited them to listen to the German bulletins over his private radio), no Jews was allowed to disturb them - nevermind the fact that the Jews had to pass the Nazi barracks whenever they wanted to visit the toilets.

All this changed the moment when the string of German victories came to an end, the moment the world learned of the bloody lesson Hitler got at Stalingrad. The Nazis were suddenly subdued, the singing of Nazi songs ceased, and whenever they did like singing, the Nazis preferred the old folk songs their forefathers had sung as children. The Italians suddenly turned into the worst enemies of the Germans and they behaved like heroes; they could only with difficulty be restrained to pay the Germans back for all the humiliations of the last four years. The British officers and officials began to look for alibis. They began to befriend the Jews, who believed they were dreaming. The Commandant had an inkling that he was not going to escape a court-martial after the war.

Suddenly the Jews after SDtalingrad began to walk through the camp, even to the toilets with their heads lifted high, always with a smile on their face, even if they had abdominal cramps and diarrhoea They discovered that they could again sing !

"Internment and Parole Camp Purandhar"

Purandhar is an old Mahratta fortress, situated on a mountain top, some 25 miles from Poona. On a plateau about 50 meter below the fortress, barracks had been erected during and after the first World War to accomodate British soldiers, their officers and the families of the latter. However, the camp had remained empty for many years, and the fortress had become a historic relic, not fit anymore for the confinement of political prisoners.

When war broke out in 1939, the military camp was reorganized into an internment camp. I can understand that thhe Authorities considered the place ideal for such a purpose, as it was far away from any major town, was completely isolated and easily guarded The way the camp was administered and guarded looked to us like a joke, like children playing at war. There had to, of course, at least one daily roll-call. Visitors were rarely admitted and the peasants who lived in the valley and the coolies who were employed in the camp were not only warned to beware of all the possible ways in which the wily prisoners might abuse the hospitality of the British-Indian Government, but they were also assured of a very substantial award should they be instrumental in frustrating any escape any attempt at smuggling, any contact with enemies outside the camp. I am sorry to say that no peasant or coolie ever earned an anna in this way. We have to accept the monotonous fact that nobody ever attempted to escape, nobody even thought of escaping. Why ? Tell me whereto could any of us ever escape ? (Only in Dehra Dun did this happen , and only once. With justification much was made of the heroic deed of the two Germans who succeeded to escape over the Himalayas).

Purandhar Camp consisted of an administrative building, some twenty barracks, two large dining halls, a shop, a church, a hospital and the bungalow of the Commandant. Fifty meter above the Camp one saw the ruins of the fortress proper and only with the permission of the Commandant and in the company of a policeman were we able to visit the fortress. The reason for this restriction was the danger that we might sabotage the two large water cysterns which

KONSULÁT
ČESKOSLOVENSKÉ REPUBLIKY
V BOMBAYI.

CONSULATE
THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC
IN BOMBAY.

No. 1805/43.

"WEST VIEW",
87, WODEHOUSE ROAD, COLABA.
G. P. Box 966
TEL. 35944

BOMBAY, the 15th October 1943.

Dr. H.M. Selzer, M.D.
c/o Parole Centre,
Satara /Poona/

Dear Sir,

The Consulate has received your letter, dated the 6th October 1943, and thanks for your offer to enter the Czechoslovak Armed Forces.

In view of the existing order by the Czechoslovak Government not to accept in the Czechoslovak Army nationals of enemy countries, or countries which have their own fighting forces with the United Nations, the Consulat is sorry that it is impossible to consider your estimable offer.

Yours faithfully,

for the Consul.

SERVICES OF SUPPLY
UNITED STATES ARMY
Caltex House
Ballard Estate
BOMBAY

5 November, 1943.

M. Selzer, M.D.
Centre,
(Poona).

Dr. Selzer,

Your letter of 26 October, 1943, to the American Consul, , was forwarded to this office.

We are sorry - but the Regulations governing the Armed s of the United States prohibit the services of anyone other an American Citizen.

Yours very truly,

S. P. CAUGHRON,
1st Lt, AGD,
Adjutant.

No.72/9/14/40-Political(EW)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.

From

V.Shankar, Esquire, I.C.S.,
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

To

The Superintendent,
Parole Centre, Purandhar.

New Delhi, the 17th February 1942.

Subject:- The application of Dr.Selzer for a vacancy in Ranchi Hospital.

Sir,

With reference to your letter No.317 dated the 6th February 1942, forwarding an application from Dr.Selzer for employment in the Ranchi European Mental Hospital, Ranchi, I am directed to say that the Government of India are not prepared to release him from restriction to a parole centre. His application has therefore been withheld and it is requested that Dr.Selzer may be informed accordingly.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

Sd/ V.Shankar.
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

Copy forwarded to Dr.Selzer, Parole Centre, Purandhar with reference to his application dated the 5th February 1942.

Superintendent,
Parole Centre,Purandhar.

OFFICE OF THE
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

3 JANTARMANTAR ROAD
NEW DELHI

January 25, 1943

Doctor H.M. Selzer, M.D.
Parole Centre
Purandhar (Poona)

Sir:

By direction and on behalf of Mr. Phillips I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of January 18, 1943. Since the internment here of Polish citizens is a matter of the Administration of the Indian Government, Mr. Phillips does not feel that he could properly take the action requested in your case.

Very truly yours,

Richard P. Heppner
Major, F. A.
Personal Assistant

Walco BEAD COMP
BEADS & NOVELTIES 37 WEST 37TH STREET · NEW YOR

May 29, 1941.

ermann Markus Selzer, M.D.
. Center
har (Poona)

Cousin:-

sponse to your letter dated April 18th and your cablegram dated May 16th, I cabled
s follows:- "Airmailing necessary affidavits tomorrow".

e taken immediate care of everything necessary to enable you to
days ago I instructed Dun & Bradstreets to air-mail my personal
to the American Consul at Bombay, India. Dun & Bradstreets is the
it reporting agency in America and the Government considers their
cial.

today sending the American Consul at Bombay, India, via Air-Mail the
3 copies of Affidavits similar to the one herewith enclosed.
3 copies of a letter from my bank, verifying that I am the president of the
Walco Bead Company, and also verifying the worth of the Walco Bead Company.
3 copies of my personal letter to the American Consul at Bombay, India, copy
of which is herewith enclosed.
1 Certified copy of my income tax report from my accountant.
1 Certified copy of the financial statement of the Walco Bead Company and what
interest I hold in it.
1 Cancelled check which I paid to the United States Government
first quarterly payment of my last income tax.

se cover all the documents required by the United States Consul to
ain your visas.

hope that everything will go along as
e the pleasure of seeing you and your

h love and regards from all your relatives in the

SECOND INTENTIONAL EXPOSURE

Walco
BEAD COMPANY
BEADS & NOVELTIES
37 WEST 37th STREET • NEW YORK CITY

May 29, 1941.

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e Center
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today sending the American Consul at Bombay, India, via Air-Mail the following:-
3 copies of Affidavits similar to the one herewith enclosed.
3 copies of a letter from my bank, verifying that I am the president of the Walco Bead Company, and also verifying the worth of the Walco Bead Company.
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1 Certified copy of the financial statement of the Walco Bead Company and what interest I hold in it.
1 Cancelled check which I paid to the United States Government covering my first quarterly payment of my last income tax.

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hope that everything will go along as smoothly as possible and that we will soon ve the pleasure of seeing you and your family in New York.

th love and regards from all your relatives in the United States, I am

Sincerely yours,

[illegible]

[illegible]

W:MW

Walco BEAD COMP...

BEADS & NOVELTIES — 37 WEST 37th STREET — NEW YOR...

May 29, 1941.

...rmann Markus Selzer, M.D.
... Center
...ar (Poona)

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...ove and regards from all your relatives in the United States, I am

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Wallach

SAMUEL WALLACH

Home Address: 480 West 187th Street
New York City

T GENERALNY
POLITEJ POLSKIEJ
BOMBAJU

ATE GENERAL
UBLIC OF POLAND
BOMBAY

763-b/W-T/358.

Bombaj 13th July, 1943.
Bombay

Dr.H.M.Selzer,
Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter dated the 2nd instant, I have to inform you that the Government of India have definitely stated that they cannot release you and your family. The matter is therefore considered as closed.

Yours faithfully,

E. Banasinski,
Consul General for Poland.

My dear Dr. Selzer,

I thank you for your letter dated 29/12/45 and as you will have seen from my telegram which I sent three days ago I have taken all the steps suggested by you.

Her Highness was most sympathetic and obviously everything in her power has been done. Unfortunately she was not successful and I received yesterday a letter reading as follows :-

> "Her Highness the Maharani Saheba of Cooch Behar has asked me to write to you that she has heard to-day from Cooch Behar that the Government of India has refused His Highness' request for Doctor Selzer's services in Cooch Behar State.
>
> Her Highness is very much disappointed and she is unable to do anything more now."

Moreover, I have approached the Consul for the Dominican Republic. He told me that he had been granting Visas to altogether eleven Polish refugees who duly left the country. After their departure his Government informed ~~them~~ him that the Visas are to be cancelled and no further Visas to be issued. Yet he agreed to treat your case as a special one and promised me to write immediately for permit for you and your family. A reply we expect in a fortnight de dato.

I shall see two more South American Consulates to-morrow, but I think that our main hope is St. Domingo.

Sorry, not to be able to give you more [illegible] and better news. But I have not given up hope

Sincerely Yours

Rodney

the heavy rains filled every summer and from where our annual requirements of water were satisfied.

There was never enough water to indulge in the pleasures which a sufficient water supply permits. Coolies brought every morning two large four-gallon tins of water to every family; one such tin had to suffice for a bachelor. The monotonously repeated circulars of the Commandant who advised to what purposes used water could still be applied, did not make the shortage felt less depressingly.

The scarcity of water was not the only burden. There were the monsoon months when the also otherwise disturbingly high humidity became excessive reaching 98%, and clothes and shoes could become mildewed within 24 hours if they were not kept dry with the help of a hurricane lamp placed inside the closed wardrobe. A hurricane lamp had also to be placed underneath a bamboo frame on which we made valiant attempts to dry the daily washings - a problem of quite a magnitude for those who had to care for small children. Can you imagine how one's last reserve of patience and optimism disappeared when a hurricane lamp placed inside a cupboard started to smoke and when, by the time this was discovered next morning, an inch-thick layer of soot covered the clothing, the linen and all other things inside the cupboard.

Of course we had no electricity in Purandhar; there was none even in Satara although there at least the Commandant enjoyed this modern comfort. We used kerosene oil and had to make with the quantity supplied to us at regular intervals for our hurricane lamps and the Petromax lamp we were allowed to use in special cases. When our children left the Internment Camp after 5½ years, they saw electric lights for the first time. They were very much impressed indeed by the minimal effort required to switch on a lamp, but after 2-3 days they had already accepted this new experience as a normal ingredient of their lives.

The Camp was ruled by Col. Shah, a Muslim physician who belonged to the Indian Medical Service. I do not think he had ever practiced his profession, he appears to have been advanced to senior rank mainly through the various administrative jobs he had occupied. This did not refrain him from giving us lectures on medical topics their standard, however, was within the castor-oil-aspirin range. I suppose he had been initially appointed to our camp to serve as commandant as well as physician, but when it was discovered that so

many interned physicians were available from whom to chose, and that a fulltime physician was required for the increasing size of the cam, the policy changed. We lost Col Shah after a few months. I do not think that except for a few of his friends, the " supermen" of the camp I shall describe later on, many were sorry to see this westernized type of an official go, whose attempts to impress us with his Oxford accent, hs alcoholic habits and his staggering gait did not hide his apprehension to impress the Europeans he had under his "command". It appears, however, that Shah was highly respected in the right quarters and his qualities appreciated. He was placed in charge of the jail in Poona in which Mahatma Ghandi had been imprisoned. Shah was replaced by a Mr. Holland, a retired Inspector-General of Police of whom there will be much to tell.

The Camp was guarded by police and not the army. The Inspector, a certain Mr. Marshall, an Anglo-Indian, had been recalled from retirement; he mainly managed the office work. The poor man was in constant fear of his superior who looked down on him, in constant fear of losing his job which augmented so nicely his pensio. and in constant fear of showing too clearly his sympathy for us prisoners who at least treated him in a decent way. The police contingent was supervised by Dalal, a sub-inspector; this Parsi police officer remained for most of the war in this post, while the sergeant of police was changed from time to time. Both these officers were regularly encouraged by Holland to "form friendship with the internees and to make them express their true feelings especially with regard to the Camp Authority", but they failed pitifully in their unusual task because they showed in their behaviour how much they disliked this part of their additional "duty"

Our life in Purandhar.

I have no intention to write the chronicles of this or any other "Internment and Parole Centre". There is in truth very little to tell, dear reader. The place was also called a "Family Camp" which will make you understand that families lived there, though there were also many male and female singles, whose presence did not give at any time cause to Government to regret this initiative. All those who had initially been confined to this Camp had declared themselves anti-Nazis; in the case of the Jews this was something onedid accept as "natural" but it was a very curagous step if taken by non-Jews at that time of the war when Germany was registering one victory after another. We accepted, thereafore, without much scrutiny all the non-Jews who threw their lot in with us, and who by word and deed declared themselves not only enemies of Hitler but who also expressed their belief in his ultimate downfall.

Initially the British-Indian Government appears to have had the intention to make the stay of the anti-Nazi internees in the different camps all over the country as comfortable as possible, to allow the usually European internees an adequate status and stand ard of life. Already in the course of the first year this goodwill vanishec and the camps and their inmates turned into a constant source of irritation, a nuisance at the best. So many more important issues and problems came to the foreground to occupy the time and mind of the Authorities that the entire question of the internment camps and of those confined therein was given very low priority. Only the critical eye of the International Red Cross, the fear of a possible retaliation by a victorious Germany, made the Indian Government maintain a certain level of interest from which the Nazi inmates profitted most. In the final months of the war only did Jewish Organizations in England become interested in us Jews still confined to the internment camps in India and it was mainly the visit of Mr. Silvermann, the English M.P. which induced the Authorities to make some ammends and some concessions.

Families were "accomodated" in the old barracks which had been divided into units consisting of 1-2 rooms to which a bathroom had been added. The few brick houses which had once housed the officer families at the time British troups had been stationed in Purandhar,

had been subdivided into 1-2 "flats" and allotted to families who had been lucky as first-comers or who had "found favour in the eyes of the camp-ruler". For the bachelors and the spinsters single rooms had been provided for in the barracks, and mostly two persons were made to occupy one room.

There was no clubhouse, but for a year or so one of the dininghalls was used for social activities, until the generalized mood of depression,the growing tension bet ween diverse cliques and finally the newly admitted Nazis made any further interest in any kind of communal or social activities no more attractive.

There was also a small church. This was the only unit never used in the Camp. On a small elevation stood the Administrative Building from which the Commandant and his Staff tried to rule the Camp - an easy undertaking as he had hardly ever to face any administrative or disciplinary problems of any magnitude. Those occurrences which did cause tension,unrest,muttering or ridicule were as a rule due to the inaptitude or the "imperialistic" posturing of the Commandant. It was not that the British official applied the methods and rules of a colonial system to us Europeans; it was not that the intellectual level of the prisoners was usually of such a degree that even the lower cadres were mentally and culturally superior to those who ruled and governed. It was the fundamentally abnormal attitude the Commandant had to his duties which caused most of the discont ent and the troubles. He felt called upon, so it seemed to us, from the budget the Camp was granted as much money as possible for the war effort. He frowned upon excessive use of kerosene oil, medaments,paper; he even issued orders that not more than one stamp should be fixed to our letters to the value prescribed and never smaller units to make up the postage of the letter. He ruled with the help of small slips of paper cut from old forms or circulars and always even here the minimum of paper. With the help of such paper slips he addressed the camp inmates in an unceasing flow of orders or comments. These slips were often the cause of much hilarity, and reactions of this kind to the august authority were eagerly reported back to Holland, who lived in a state of brooding and revengeful distrust.

In the beginning Government had provided for the maintenace of the internees the sum of Rs.70.- for an adult and Rs. 35.- for a child permonth. Only in very rare cases, e.g. whenever a person demanded the right to prepaire a special diet, was the money

handed over to the individual. More than 99% of the inmates received only Rs.10.- from their allowance as their pocket money; the balance was handed over to a contractor who provided htree meals a day. The cheap food prices of the first two years of the war and the not too generous amount and quality of the food he supplied for the money he received, guaranteed a very good income to the Contractor - and also to the Commandant. Later on, when inflation eroded the value of the money and Government was slow to follow this trend with an increase of the allowances, the Contractor terminated the contract and refused to continue with the supply of the meals. The entire allowance was now handed over to the internees and they had to try to feed themselves now as best as they could. When I confronted the Contractor with my opinion that he was not justified in his claim that he could not continue feeding the camp inmates with the amount of money he received from the Commandant,and I proved to him that including all possible expenses,all the cost of food etc., there was still a profit margin of 20% for him, he looked at me with surprise as if he doubted my sanity and asked me, why I did not also calculate under the heading of expenses the 25% of the total the Commandant kept back as his share and the ten percent the policemen claimed as their due.

With the progress of the war our subsistence allowance was insufficient notwithstanding the increases we got from time to time and all of us had to face financial difficulties. Those of us who owned cameras,jewellery and other valuables had to dispose of them; others,less fortunate, had to be supported by the Jewish Relief Association in Bombay at the cost of much self-respect. I still relive the happy sensation that we had because until the end we had no need to accept any financial handout from the JRA and if we were left without our cameras and some gold articles we had owned from before the war,this did in noway hurt us as an allowance from the Jews of Bombay would have done.

At the time of our arrival in Purandhar, food was still cheap and was, as I have pdescribed, supplied by a Contractor appointed byethe Commandant. The meals were served in two large dining halls, and these two dining halls represented also a social separation line within the Camp. It is a pity that I was anything but a detached onlooker and certainly not in the mood cooly to analyze with the help of purely psychological criteria the situation we found on

Office of the
Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar 8th July 1942.

Dear Dr.Selzer,

The law is that if an article is found it must be delivered up to Police or other authority. You complied.

When an owner is not traced the article found is returned to the finder.

None has claimed the Rupee note although a Notice was put out. So I return the same to you.

Yours faithfully,

C.W.Ballard

To

Dr.H.M.Selzer,
Parole Centre, Purandhar.

Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 8th Oct.1942.

Dear Dr.Selzer,

I thank you for your report about Mrs.Whitfield. She has been given every consideration and a separate closed quarter not available to anyone else.

2. If she cannot control herself and prefers to commit suicide that is her own affair. I cannot be influenced at all by these considerations. I have done all I can for her repeatedly and simply sending petition after petitions does no good but will in fact spoil her chances, since she is likely to be informed that no peitions should be forwarded. That will mean when circumstances are more favourable her chance will be blocked. She ought to think of soldiers and prisoners parted from their wives for years. I have allowed her husband to come and stay with her twice.

3. If she cannot appreciate good treatment then I have nothing more to say. I shall be glad if you will tell her accordingly.

Yours truly,

C.W.Ballard

To

Dr.Selzer, R.M.O., I.C. & P.C., Purandhar.

our arrival. However, within a short time I had recovered my balance and I could watch and gauge the currents which were agitating the minds of the people and were determining the social structure of the Camp. I have today other things to do, which is a pity, as otherwise a more detailed study, a research in depth,about the ½sychology of the different types of the inmates - Jewish refugees of diverse backgrounds and education, all and sundry plagued by differently manifested urges for recognition and acceptance - would undoubtedly be interesting. As in every herd formation so also in Purandhar one man tried to take the lead, and he had at least partially succeeded. The interesting fact is that he applied psychological methods which I have never encountered before - not in fact because my experience of and in such situations is minimal, but also from what I had learned and what I knew from the literature: the fellow of whom I am talking presented himself as a man a superior class; he had no reason or background to do so, but he states his superiority and others accepted it without objection. He formed a circle of lieutenants,followers,courtiers who felt honoured because he considered them worthy of his graceful acceptance. In the same frame of behaviour he condemned the remaining population as human beings of an inferior quality and he used unashamedly the Nazi classification of "Untermenshcne" which his lieutenants followed with relish. It is, I think, significant that this man of whom I speak, Fritz Thalmessinger, was only a half-Jew and in his action and behaviour showed a kind of mentality which would have best fitted with a Nazi uniform. I am sure that his fantasies expressed his desire to wear such a uniform. Thalemssinger had the ear ofthe Commandant,C Col. Shah, - and for sometime also that of his successor Holland, mainly because he was so effective in supporting their ego which at times needed support,especially whenever they contemplated their task ,their duty to lord it over masses of Europeans - an experience they had never known before but which became tolerable and manageable when they hear Thalmessinger classify these "Untermenschen" as unworthy of the respect usually due to white people.

Thalmessinger, who played the role of " Chief Inmate" had studied law in Germany for a few semesters; he had left Germany in time when he felt that he was no more welcome there as a half Jew. He joined his older brother,who had been living since many years in Cawnpore. At the outbreak of the war he was interned because he

had made sure that nobody identified with other Jewish refugees - and that he did not like Jews. In Purandhar he behaved like a Pasha, appointed his favourites,also his favourite woman who however remained attached to him mainly because the jealousy shown by the other women made her position appear an enviable one.

Thalmessinger was in a rather difficult position vis a vis us. He knew us well enough, not only from Ede Rosenbaum who fawned on him and who showed how honoured he was to belong to his court,and also from other inmates who had known us in the past. He knew us because his brother Maz had been a good friend of ours; he had visited us many a time in Lahore and Kashmir before our internment.(Max Thalmessinger,although he was paralyzed from his hip downwards by polio, was a very active man, constantly travelling abou the country for his business: he bought hides and skins all over Northern India for a large company in Europe). This fact, our friendship with Max,made it dfficult for Fritz to apply his usual attitude; also to us. He could not apply his usual categorization also to us, nor could he dominate us as he did others. Even when we showed him that we did not appreciate him in any way,did he ever extend his intrigues or diatribes to us. In short, of this man a sordid but alsc an interesting chapter ciuld be written. (To complete the "story": Thalmessinger was released after som time because his brother could mobilize the right kind of friends. We met him again when his brother was very ill and I was called to Cawnpore twice to attend to him. And once we met in1953 by chance,on the steamer taking us from Calais to Dover, and we found during the intervals when sea-sickness made clear thinking not too difficult that we had still nor anymore nothing in common.

A sociologically very interesting development was the designation of those who ate in the "Upper Diningroom", the domain of Thalmessinger,the superior element in the class structure of Purandhar, while the "Lower Diningroom" was considered the reserve of the "plebs". On our arrival we were given seats in the less crowded "Lower Diningroom" but as our barrack immediately adjoined the upper dininghall, we arranged after a few days that we could take our meals there (because in the monsoon weather walking the additional 50 meter to the lower dininghall became an ordeal for the children.) However, we made it clear that this change did not indicate that we had joined the"Thalmessinger Party". This declara-

tion came easy as just that week the new camp leader had to be elected and as the Rœenbaums ,who still ate in lower dininghall had openly declared tht they were going to vote for Thalmessinger, and as only two votes for Thalmessinger were found among the more than 120 votes cast in the lower diningroom ,all of them for Zuckerbaecker, the fact that we were shifting to the upper dininghall was accepted as a purely technical adjustment and not as an expression of allegiance to the "Upper Diningroom". Do not laugh about the pettyness of all this. These were extremely important matters in the life of the camp inmates.

There were many nice people in Purandhar, and there were many others you could not have cared to meet outside. ou did not have to meet the latter kind of people even "inside", yau did not have to be bothered by them and you could form your own circle, or you could join a social group more to your liking. It did happen that over the 2½ years we spend in Purandhar there were many people with whom we hardly exhanged more than the time of the day. This division became the more marked when the Commandant in his zeal and applying his concept of "divide et impera" which he must have remembered from his school days, could induce Government of India to have a sufficient number of Nazisand their families transferred to our Camp so that the size of the camp was more or less doubled. We understood the reasons for this move and we senior inhabitants met with representatives of the Nazi group and we agreed that we were going to foil the game of the Commandant and would try to prevent any clashes between our two groups; that we were going to settle any dispute which might arrise between ourselves and that we should do our best to refrain the hotheads among us from creating that kind of trouble which Holland had apparently hoped to provoke. We succeeded very well in this program to the chagrin of our Commandant.

We found a few very good friends among the People in Purandhar. Foremost among them I count the Zuckerbaeckers from Vienna. He was an engineer specialized in paper production and his wife Bertha, who was "Auntie Zuckerbaecker" to all of us, proved to be a strong support for Kate. I do not know how Kate would have coped with the situation without Bertha Zuckerbaecker's help. After the war the Zuckerbaeckers visited us in Kashmir, but after that we never saw them again. We remained,of course, in constant correspondence. They both died in the early 1950s somewhere in S.India.

I shall mention at other occasions other people we knew in the camp, but there were not many who made a dent in our lives.

In the first year concerts were regularly organized by those who played one instrument or the other, but even the depressing atmosphere of the Camp could not compensate for the quality of the players. There were regular lectures by one or the other of the inmates who talked about their specialties. There were also " social parties",entertainments of many a kind, in short all the happenings which the commandant of a camp and a camp committee will strive to organize in order to "improve the moral" of the camp. All this, however, subsided slowly but definitely. A cloud of depression settled over the Camp,caused not only by the unhappy atmosphere, by the dampness and by the financial worries but above all by the news from the war fronts. This despondent mood was interrupted only for a few days when we learned that Hitler had invaded Russia, as we all considered this adventure evidence of that megalomania which we hoped would one day destroy the Nazi machine. T here was above all the depression all of us felt increasingly because the camp was managed in a way which destroyed human dignity and this was compounded by the certainty that we,our fate,our existence were of no interest to anybody "outside".

By the time the third year of the war had started, all our hope had disappeared. Also that sense of a common fate which had motivated us for so long had begun to fade. The formerly nourished expectation that sooner or later the "outside world" would have to understand our particular, our exceptional position, had vanished. If there had been initially a unity, a oneness which even the intermecine fights and feuds could not destroy, this feeling had gone away,had ceded to a sense of depression and bitterness. Life became more and more difficult,for some even unbearable, and this unhappyness grew still more when in the course of the years large numbers of our people were released and we had to stay behind. Friendships, however, once formed tended to deepen whenever at least one partner showed in particular times of stress the strength which unselfishness conveys. Those who guarded us, those who governed us,those who were outside and had from time to time expressed sympathy for us,had shown interest in us, had sent some occasional gift for the children, began to lose interest in us. I cannot say now, if they were bored,

or if they thought it not worth their while to act against the signs and indications emanating from the gods of war. This depression, this surfeit of disappointments were compounded by the awareness that the Commandant had succeeded in planting spies in our midst, had won over some of our own people to act as stool piedgons. At last he did succeed in causing friction and dissension in the Camp.

The Commandant.

The first Commandant we met on our arrival in Purandhar,Col.Shah I.M.S.,was after some months sent to Poona there to act as Chief Warden of the jail in which Mahatma Ghandi had been confined by the British. In his stead came Mr. Holland. He had been a high police officer, an Inspector-General of Police, but he had been prematurely retired. One of the many reasons given why this man had been sent into pension at the age of 50 years - or one of the many rumours one heard - was that he had married an Anglo-Indian girl. Such a liaison between a high British official and a woman of mixed blood was before the war a sin which the Establishment could not tolerate.

May be that he was considered the right man; may be there was no other job available for a man of his seniority; may be due to his former sins he could not be trusted with any other duty. Whatever the reason, Holland was recalled from his retirement and given the command of our Camp. In the first few weeks he appeared rather bewildered. He had never faced a similar situation, but he soon learned to find his way. The right way for him to run the camp was for him to forget that we were anti-Nazis or Jews or white people but a great nuisance and a great expense to the Government. He was a very sensitive man only in one respec he insisted that his wife be given the honour and respect due to her position, and as we were mostly Europeans and were not affected by the prejudices a good Britisher is supposed to possess, th this was not a difficult issue. We had a few British internees and also some Anglo-Indian girls among us, and it was interesting to observe the interplay of these individuals with Holland. He expected the British to be true representatives of the Empire even when interned as potential enemies, and he did not allow the Anglo-Indians,most of whom were married or otherwise associated with Europeans (mainly Jews) to pretend that they were on equal footing with his wife.

Mrs. Holland was,unfortunately, a stupid and uneducated woman. W henever she tried to assert herself and wanted to appear more British than was expected from her,she produced reac-

C O P Y

OFFICE OF THE
COMMANDANT, INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE CENTRE
PURANDHAR 22ND NOVEMBER 1942

To
Mrs. Whitfield
Purandhar.

Dear Madam,

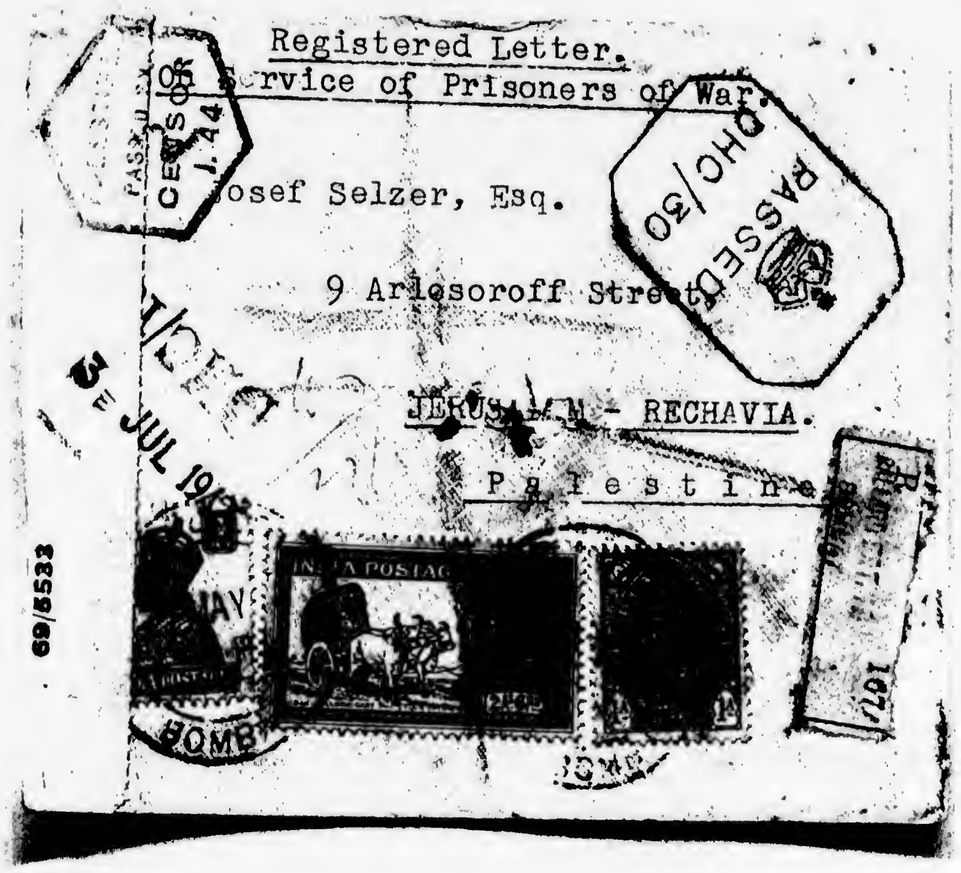
I notice that you are hardly ever in your own house, but that you spend most of your time at the Hospital and in the company of Mr.Safier, a Jew.

2. You are hereby cautioned to desist from this association which is unseemly for a married woman with a husband in the British Forces : and youaare further informed that if this association does not cease you will be removed from your present quarters and also Safier's quarters will be put out of bounds and eventually one of you will be removed from the Camp.

Yours truly,

(Sig. Holland)

Commdt. Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Purandhar.


Registered Letter.
On Service of Prisoners of War.
Josef Selzer, Esq.
9 Arlosoroff Street
JERUSALEM - RECHAVIA.
Palestine
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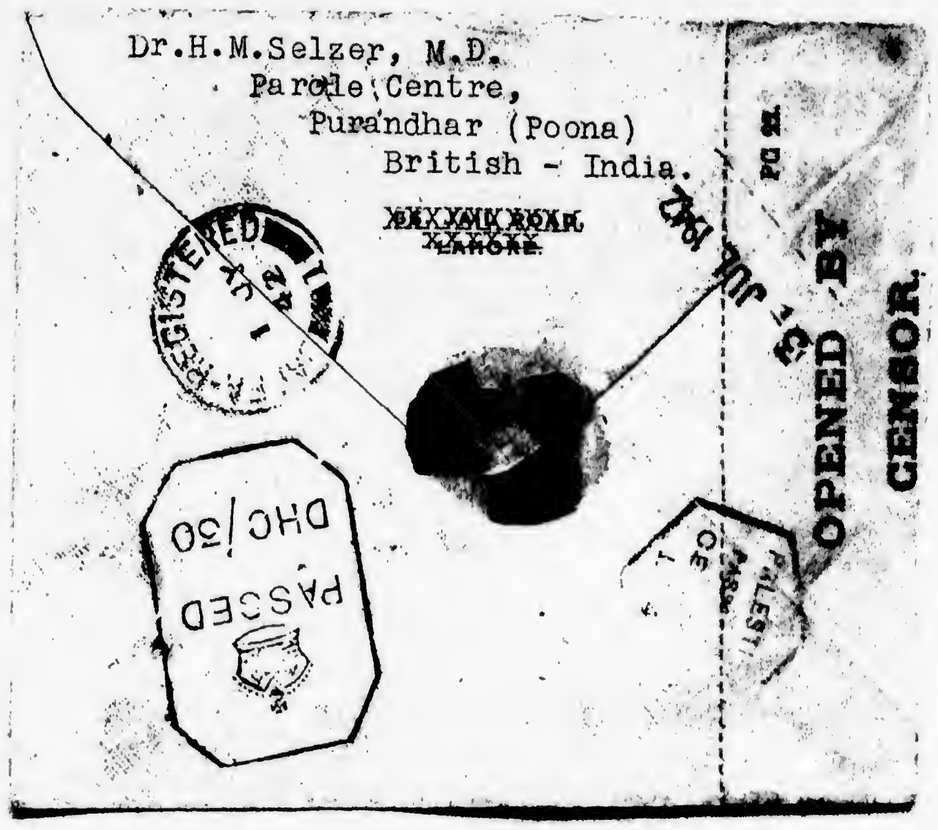
Dr.H.M.Selzer, M.D.
Parole Centre,
Purandhar (Poona)
British - India.
LAHORE
REGISTERED
PASSED
DHC/30
OPENED BY
CENSOR.

OFFICE OF THE
COMMANDANT, INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE
CENTRE, PURANDHAR 8TH DEC.1942.

MEMORANDUM

REF :- YOUR LETTER OF 7TH DECEMBER 1942.
RE :- GLASSES OF MR.ASAD WEISS.

Why did Mr.Asad Weiss not get ~~the~~ it done in Dehra Dun?

COMMANDANT,
INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE CENTRE,
PURANDHAR.

To

Mr.Selzer, Purandhar.

which produced their hilarious effects for the people of the Camp. The stories which began to circulate about the Hollands (this was an unpleasant and unnecessary trend of our people and aggravated an already difficult situation; but our people in the camp could not be accused at times even the minimum degree of acceptable sensitivity). All this created a situation which she and her husband interpreted as expressions of disrespect for her because she was an Anglo-Indian. Be it stated here to our shame that there were Jews - I recall mainly a Roumanian Jewish couple, also the Bergers a mixed couple, and also Mohammad Asad - who enjoyed to report back ,at times even with unnecessary elaboration, adverse remarks someone or the other may have made in the Camp about the Hollands.

Initially the Hollands were accepted as people who tried to make our life as easy as possible,and they made friends with our people here and there as far as circumstances permitted, but this friendly relationship deteriorated not only because they were like all of us affected by the changed mood in the Camp, to which he reacted by trying to tighten discipline in the Camp which did not require tightening, but because Holland had come to the conclusion that it would be more conductive to good government and to be respected, and they thought to achieve this if they were more exclusive in their intercourse with the inmates of the Camp. They reacted harshly against the many petty difficulties which are to be expected in a camp of this kind, which the growing atmosphere of despondency and of depression and anger is bound to increase. They reacted in the way small-minded people as a rule will react: they exhibited all at once a vein of spiteful antisemitism which in that set-up was a rather ludicrous behaviour. Holland succeeded also in having a number of Nazis added to our supposedly "Anti-Nazi Camp". If he had hoped for clashes now and then between us and them,if he had expected that his position would be enhanced and that he was going to play the powerful arbiter, he was going to be disappointed.

We, i.e. Kate and I appeared to have been initially on his list of preferred prisoners. I do not think he loved or admired us, but he certainly considered us worthy of a certain respect. We arranged in our"flat" one a week grammophone concerts in which we tried to achieve with two grammophones a continued effect with the 33-speed records then available. AMong the 12 to 15 guests who came to these evenings you could always find the Hollands.

Then some estrangement occurred. It appears that at last the gossip mongers had scored. I do not deny that we made among ourselves occasionally remarks about the Hollands which they could not have liked, but even without such remarks which I do not deny having made,many must have been in addition invented and reported back to Holland. W e discovered, albeit too late, that the wall which separated our flat from that of our neighbours,was only a thin wooden partition and that everything which was said on our side could be heard next door. I was at that tiem the Medical Officer of the Camp and it was by virtue of this office that we occupied half of one the brick-built officers' houses. We never understood why the other half had been allotted to the childless Roumanian couple for whom none of the usual preconditions for such a preferred treatment existed. Only too late did we realize that this was the payment for faithful spying services.

I also made mistakes in a different aspect. I had been on different occasions permitted to go to Bombay to see some of my former patients who had called for my professional services: the Mahar anis of Baroda,of Cooch Behar and of Dewas junior. I had also on two occasions to go to Bombay to see the American Consulate. From every such trip to Bombay I brought back some presents - and never did I dream that it was expected from me that Mrs. Holland had also to be on the list of those for whom I had to bring presents every time. I was of the opinion that "this was not done" that it would be offensive,that it could be misinterpreted. Only too late did I realize that Holland belonged to that category of policemen who considered such attentions their due. How do I know that this was the case, you will ask ? Not only did Mrs. Holland express her disappointment that I had never brought her a present,but when I had an argument with the Parsi Contractor who had catered for the camp and had suddenly announced that he would notcontinue to do so as he was losing money in this business, I could prove to him thaat he could very well continue to supply the meals for the Camp as from our calculations he had to make a profit of at least 20%. The man looked at me full of surprise and demanded to know why I had not included into my calculations the 25% of the total which he had to hand over every month to the Commandant.

OFFICE OF THE
COMMANDANT, INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE CENTRE,
PURANDHAR 7TH JANUARY 1943.

MEMO

Ref:- Your letter of 7th instant.

Official figures show that in England now there is one doctor to 2800 of the population. The position in Germany is worse : If then 250 people have received 400 visits ~~x~~ in 2 months, I can only deduce that they get a degree of medical attention far greater than they would get anywhere else - of course it is free here which makes a difference.

2 bottles Methylated spirit sanctioned.

Mr. Lazlo may visit the X'Ray doctor at his own expense on Tuesday the 12th January 1943.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

To Dr.Selzer, Purandhar.

I am sure that much of the fault for our ensuing estrangement from the Hollands, for their final hatred,for our ensuing difficulties and persecution and finally for our transfer to the Satara Camp,was due to my weakness to talk too much,to make deprecatory remarks,to crack jokes , to make allusions about the Hollands which a couple as they had every reason to resent. It is difficult to otherwise explain the developments. Of course,there were the activities of his spies, of his stool pidgeons who had to be productive to be appreciated. There wer e other mischief mongers who worked for the Commandant. I knew this. We all knew this. But I was never too careful. Never did I apply the necessary caution which that environment of idle,jealous,petty-minded,unhappy people should have made me adopt.

I am sure we would have been saved much unpleasantness, had I not ruined my position with the Hollands. They were our Karma. Who knows how things might have shaped otherwise ? Perhaps it was to our advantage,it was best for us,perhaps it all happened,had to happen in conformity with a destiny I do not yet perceive in full. If so, I had to do what I did ?

Religious life in Purandhar.

Of course, I mean Jewish religious activities. There were Christians aplenty in our Camp,but as far as I can remember there was never a Christian religious service of any kind, and the neat small church they could have used for prayers,christening or confirmation services,stood always empty.

But the Jews,religiously inclined elderly people tried to organize some kind of religious life ,some "Jewish life" in the Camp.They were,however,the uneducated Jewish types who murmured their prayers,followed certain stereotyped rites or rituals without in reality knowing what they did. We did not have any theologically educated people,men or women,who could have given us spiritual guidance,could have given us instructions in religion,philosophy or even history. We all felt the need to express the fact that we were Jews,that we were in a peculiar situation as Jews and that our personal destiny was microcosmically in someway a replica of Jewish destiny in general.

In the first two years we spent in Purandhar we organized a Pessach Seder and prayer meetings for the High Holidays. As I have already mentioned we had no Rabbi among us and there was also no purpose (and let me state here quite clearly did anybody ever think of doing so) to ask for such a man to visit us for such religious occasions from outside. W e did, however, get from the JRA in Bombay a dozen or so prayer books for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kipur.

As there was nobody else who considered himself capable of managing the religious services, I took over the duties and functions of a religious leader and I am sure that all present agreed that everything went off well and in an impressive way,although purists may have objected to many of the things which happened during the prayers or the seders. We organized the seders as a kind of happening around the banquet table; we associated past and present as a painful reminder and a hopeful indication, but we did in no way underline the negative factors to such a degree as to spoil the festive mood. We did not ask the charitable Jews of Bombay to send us Mazzoth as the chapaties,the kind of local bread the local population eats regularly is more typical of the kind of unleavened

OOPER & CO.

Contractors,

CAMP PURANDHAR,
(District POONA.)

Date...22nd Sept.....194 1.

My Dear Dr. Selzer,

On behalf of Sir D.B. Cooper Kt. and also on behalf of the Staff of Messers Cooper & Co., Purandhar, I take the opportunity on this Auspicious Occasion to wish you all the Members of the Jewish Community in Purandhar, a Happy New Year and very many happy returns. May the desires of you all bes soon fulfilled and May His All Almighty bring a sooner end of all the troubles and calamities befallen on your Community all over the World. Let us all pray daily and wish that our Defenders who are fighting this Gloomy Battle for the legitimate rights and Independence of the Minorities may soon come out Victorious and may your Community and others have the same privilege to live in peaceful love and in peaceful days: Amen:--

I do hope that you all have thoroughly enjoyed your Holidays and whatever little help we could render may be taken as a small New Year'S Gift. With the best wishes.

Yours Very Sincerely,
Shahpur D. Rao
(S. D. Rao)

To,
Dr. H.M. Selzer M. D.,
Speaker, Jewish New Year Function,
Purandhar.

The Weiners

January 1941 in
Purandhar

Family Sez

With the Zuckerbaeckers
and Ilse in Kashmir
1947

Birthday Party in Satara

bread our forefathers prepaired when they left Egypt in a hurry than the machine-made factory-produced squares and circles we consume today everywhere.

On Rosh Hashana and om kipur I was again the Chasan or Rebbe or whatever you might call it and I can assure you it was a "good service ", manyfold better than some I have witnessed since.

However, this custom was not continued afterwards,neither in Purandhar nor in Satara. "People could not be bothered", was the explanation.

There was also a sad occasion when I functioned again as the "Camp Rabbi". Among our inmates were the three brothers Geduldig and their mother. They were simple - you may even say primitive -but decent people and they never gave any trouble to anybody. They had been interned by the Authorities on the advice of the Judenrat in Bombay who could not find suitable jobs for the boys and by having placed them in the Camp the JRA could wash their hands of people who had become a burden. When old Mrs. Geduldig died of a pulmonary embolism the question arose,how and where to arrange her funeral. I advised the boys and the Commandant that from a religious point of view we could perform the burial in Purandhar. Holland generously granted a small plot of land to be used as a cemetery. Mrs. Geduldig had a very dignified funeral. Of course the entire Camp, about 350 people followed the coffin. Our contingent of policemen stood at intervals the root the procession took and presented arms when the coffin passed. The Commandant - who had donned his full uniform and waited with his wife,as advised by me, in front of his office - joined the cortege when we passed the administartive building. I said the prayers at the grave,Zuckerbaecker made an appropriate little speech,the three Geduldig boys said Kadish. Then we dispersed. During the following weeks the Commandant had a wall erected around the plot,the three boys with the help of Zuckerbaecker succeeded in making the small cemetery appear respectable. Zuckerbaecker designed an iron gate for the cemetery. These gates,manufactured in Bombay and donated by those who had been material in having the Geduldigs interned, arrived in due course and were installed by our people.

There were fortunately no other deaths in the Camp (except for a baby whose christian mother preferred to have it interred in Poona). I do not know what happened to the cemetery since.

People we met in Purandhar.

Let me again say a few words about Hans and Bertha Zuckerbaecker,with whom we were such good friends. He was a Viennese engineer specialized in paper production, a man of great intelligence and integrity. He was respected by all. His wife , a Christian, was an equally valuable person and I cannot imagine how Kate could have have carried through the first years of internment without the maternal support of "Auntie Zuckerbaecker". When they were released Hans found again suitable employment in the southern part of India, but from his letters it appeared to me that his capabilities were never fully appreciated by his employers. After the war, in 1947, they spent a summer with us in Srinagar. Following partition further personal contact became impossible. Bertha died soon afterwards and Hans survived her only for a short time. They had a daughter in England,but we never met her.

Then there were Rudi and Hilde Weiner. Also in this case the woman was christian and by far the most valuable partner. He had been a dentist in Calcutta and from all accounts he was a very good dentist. At times it was difficult to get along with him, but our friendship, though strained at times,never suffered ,even when he fell in love with a young woman in the camp, a Mrs. Dember,30 years his junior,when he became the focus of much attention,laughter and pity,especially from the moment when the clumsy Commandant felt called upon to act the moral judge. The "love affair" evaporated after some time and Rudi came to his senses. After the war they retired to Freiburg in Germany where he practiced his profession for a few years. We visited the Weiners in 1971
and have been in correspondence with them since. He is now over 80 and his age has considerably handicaped him. Also Hilde's health is not too good.

Among our friends were also the Brockes. Dr.Alfred Brocke had been the representative of Bayer in India. He had been a well-known and respected citizen of Calcutta where he ultimately was elected president of the prestigious Bengal Club, a great honour for a foreigner. He never hid his negative opinion about the Nazi

TO PAGE 202

The Weiners F37328

F37331

January 1941 in Purandhar

F37329
Family Bez

F37330
With the Zuckerbaeckers and Ilse in Kashmir 1947

Birthday Party in Satara
F37332

Government and this was the reason that he was never separated from his family as many other Germans at the time of their internment. We lost contact with the Brockes after our transfer to Satara Camp and when they returned to Germany. In 1971 we visited them also in Munich and it was a pleasant and happy reunion. We learned soon thereafter that he had died. I am glad we saw each other before it was too late.

There were so many men and women about whom I could write volumes, be it simple sketches be it larger constructions where facts are joined by the cement of fantasy. But I won't indulgein this kind of reporting now: it is too late to start and I am in a hurry to complete my task.

But let me mention the Dembers,Fritz and Marion and his mother. I have the suspicion that Philip Roth knew the Dembers,that he used Fritz and his mother as prototypes for his Portnoy menage. The girl was conscious of her charms and had many a liaison with men, married and single,in the camps. Her transfer to Satara did not change her activities, only the environment and her technique. I have no doubt in my mind that she adopted this promiscuous, provocative and at times nauseating way of behaviour purely and only to annoy her mother-in-law and to punish her husband. I learned recently that mother and son have joined their forefathers in the beyond, but that Marion is still around and "doing well" somewhere in Australia.

Let me tell you also about poor Dr.Laser, a physician who lived with wife and two children in a somewhat isolated part of the camp. I call him "poor" because if you ever want to have a picture of a fool worthy of pity more than of condemnation, Laser is your man. He was a Jew, his wife a Nazi. She insisted that her husband avoid any contact with the Jews in the Camp and she had the impertinence to tell me - and I learned also many others - that she prayed regularly for Hitler's early victory as her two brothers in Germany were high-ranking Nazi offcials who had promised her that her circumcised husband would be "acceptable" once Germany had taken over the domination of the world. I am not surprised,therefore,that she was impatient to return home as soon as possible to her brown environment. They did return in the end to a defeated Germany. We learned that soon after his return Laser had died. He was a relatively young man of 40. Poor man ! Did he die of a "broken heart" ?

Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar 2nd June 1942.

From

A.S.Holland, Esquire, I.P., (Rtd.) ,
Superintendent, Parole Centre, Purandhar.

To

The Secretary to the
Jewish Relief Association, B o m b a y.

Sir,

Purandhar has been the abode of Jews for the past two years. Recently we had a death - Mrs.Geduldig-and I arranged the funeral at Purandhar in a manner appreciated by all. It has always been my object to provide a quiet and seemly last resting place for the morral remains of Jews whose misfortune it was to die here. Accordingly I selected a very beautiful spot and have had constructed thereon at considerable expense and with very great labour - every stone has had to be carried a mile by head loads - a very nice cemetery as an annexe to the Christian Cemetery. The masonry door posts are complete, the walls will soon be completed.

2. Having put into this cemetery labour and materials worth Rs.700/- I appeal to the Jewish community, through you to provide us with a decent pair of iron gates that will be safe against ravage of time and which will harmonise with the rest of the dignified structure and beautiful surroundings. Can you help us? I cannot appeal to Parolees here who are themselves the guests of Government

3. I am sending this through Dr.Selzer who can express his opinion on the work carried out, and through Mr.Zuckerbaecker, the qualified Engineer, who can give details and measurements of t the gates required.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

A S Holland

Superintendent, parole Centre,
Purandhar.

Through Dr.Selzer,
Parole Centre, Purandhar.

Copy to :-
Mr.Zuckerbaecker with a request that he will measure up the gates required and prepare designs. The dignified gate posts and threadholds are complete and ready for the gates.

I had hardly any contact with this man - never with his wife. He presided over the dispensary and handled the distribution of the medicines when I was the Medical Officer; he assisted me also at times with his superior knowledge in obstetrics whenever this was necessary. For a short time we also formed a philatelic contact - until I found that in this case at least his superior knowledge did not conform with that minimum of honesty which would have made such contacts pleasurable. Unfortunately he became my enemy when his wif e was pregnant with their third child. He requested that I supply him with a catheter, He refused the glass catheter which I had available and he demanded a silver catheter. I refused to ask Holland that he order such a catheter for Laser. Laser sent an official complaint about me to the Government via the Commandant; the reply came "through official channels" that silver catheters were items used in times of peace, that those made of glass were used in times of war/ I still feel sorry for this man who put so much trust in his wife. I still see him slouch with bent back through the camp, a figure Streicher might have liked to picture in his "DER STUERMER".

Somehow we formed a small circle of three friends. We met once a week in our"flat" to discuss over a (self-brewed) drink or a cup of tea ,matters which had nothing to do with the Camp or its inhabitants, nothing with the intrigues around us or the war we had to live with. We met every Thursday,discussed whatever came into our mind. We never solved any of the metaphysical problems we touched, it is true,but we felt recharged in our belief that the petty nuisances and annoyances of every day camp life,of the Commandant, of the people around us,could not reduce us in our being humans. We have often been wondering what has become of the all. We knew that Paulssen - he had been a Junkersnegineer building hangars in Indonesia befoe the war - had settled in Delhi where he died. Paulssens wife was Jewish (she remained in Germany) but Paulssen never revealed this to his friends; we learned of this fact only l;ater on from his son who lived for many years in Lahore as the representative of Thalmessinger's hide purchasing business,until he was killed inm an airplane accident not far from Lahore. We never knew what has become of Kirschner,also a Christian, a tobacco planter from Sumatra,after he was released. But we came to know that the third man,Grossmann, a salesman for Salamander Shoes,had reached Israel after his discharge from the Camp,that he had left Israel again eigh

DAILY PRESENTATION
6

years later, after having been involved actively in the War of 1948 to settle in Hamburg,because the grass was greener there and business more promising. We learned about him and his fate from him in person when one day in 1978 he turned up in Jerusalem. He had been told about our whereabouts by the Weiners. But apparently neither of us felt the urge to renew our friendship.

However, to get pregnant and to produce a child is not enough; only a woman who produces a son is assured of an honourable and honoured position in the family and only she can look forward to a secured and comfortable life in her old age. A woman who produces only daughters is treated like the one who is barren. Girls did not count in the past and do not count even today in that part of the world as you might have already learned from your reading. You may also have heard that the dislike for female children in the primitive Indian society found expression in the same methods which were used and applied in many other parts of Asia and Africa: the useless infant girls were simply neglected if they were not outright killed.

A son, however, counted as a blessing for the parents. He was the pride of his mother and the guarantee for her secured life. No wonder,therefore, that so many women who wanted to bear a son,flocked to the office of the white man who, though he did not call himself a doctor,possessed a potent medicine in form of white powders packed in red paper,whicn guaranteed that the child a pregnant woman bore in her womb was going to be a son. Let me underline that this white man, Dember Sahib, was far too honest a person to claim that his powders could help make a sterile woman concenive. No, this he could not do - this was a matter the doctors and priests had to arrange; but he assured that the anxious woman that his medicine could change the sex of the child in her womb so that a male child was going to be born at the end of her gestation. Yes, this his medicine could do, provided the woman fulfilled certain conditions and followed certain rules without which the medicine did not work. There were many such conditions and rules and I am going to mention only the important ones,viz:- tht the woman had to be pregnat not less than three and not more than five months, that she was not to bargain about the price of the medicine as this would annoy and render useless that very medicine (I have the suspicion that Dember invented this condition as he was such a good and honest man thta he feared he might give in to the plea of many a poor woman which would accumulated to quite a great loss of revenue in the course of time); Furthermore the woman that she had to wake up every night for three nights, had to walk for an hour along the bank of the nearest river,lake or brook; that she had to carry a phallus of clay or wood in her right hand during this walk and that she had to concentrate her thoughts exclusively on the son she was

to produce. After the peregrinations had ended she had to swallow the powder with the help of a cup of water from the river,brook or lake nearby. Another very important condition was that on the day following the ceremonies the woman had to consume the lower half of a roasted cock or rooster inhaling all the time the smoke of a fire made from cow dung.

I have not to tell you that Dember Sahib had in a short time built up quite a good practice. Women of all classes and ages flocked to his house and they all paid the stiff price he demanded. They paid without demurring . AT times they paid even more than the Rs.300.- for the three powders; this happened when the woman had already passed the normal limit of five months during which the powders were most effective. In such cases Dember Sahib was ready,albeit reluctantly,to supply three powders packed in green paper which he promised helped also during the sixth and sevents month of pregnancy in the same way and with the same rules as the red-packed powders.

The important point, you must understand,for so much confidence the women had in Dember Sahib, was his promise that with the help of the red- or green-wrapped powders the women would"bring forth a male issue". What else can you expect ? Where else can you get such a cast-iron guarantee ?

The women came to Dember Sahib's bungalow and bought his medicines. ALso the poorer women came and paid the Rs.300.- for three powders. The paid the full price demanded and never bargained; and when the jewellery,the cow and other possessions they had sold did not suffice to make up this sum,there was always the Hindu money-lender in the village. All the women who conscientiously fulfilled all the prescribed rules and conditions were jubillant when their son was born, and they praised Dember Sahib and wished him many sons too. But there were also many women who brought instead a girl into this cruel world. They came to complain to Dember Sahib, who could in every case prove that the woman had violated one or the other of the main rules of the treatment and had thereby annulled the effect of the medicine.

To prove to you and all of us what a good-hearted fellow and what a gentleman Dember Sahib was,let me confide in you that in every case where his medicjn e failed,he refunded without any further discussion the money in full .

The story of a wrong diagnosis.

Let me tell you about Dr.Fedder in Stanford University; he worked as a neurologist in the medical college of this famous university. In a strange way his and our circles intersected.

In summer 1939 we were spending a very happy "season" in Srinagar. We had much work and we had also much time for leizure. One day a patient came to see me. He was a Mr. Hall who had been working as a geologist in Burma but as he did not feel well and as he had been working very hard, he had come to Kashmir for a good res· Today such a man would most probably buy a plabe ticket and spend his rest period at home or in some nice place in Europe or elsewhre. But in 1939 one did not sacrifice so easily an entire month of one's vacation time in travelling if one could avoid it. Even to come from Burmah to Kashmir Mr. Hall had to travel a very considerable distance, but as he wanted to see Kashmir once in his lifetime,this was the right opportunity.

After listening to his symproms and complaints I examined Mr. Hall. I was surprised that I did not find anything specifically wrong from an organic point of view. His weakness and headaches could be explained by overwork and I was inclined to consider his eye symptoms and his complaints about his legs more due topsychosomatic factors than to an organic disease. I did not get much help from the laboratory tests which were all within normal limits, nor from the eye examination which did not show any abnormalities. I thought I required an x-ray film of his skull. This was not such a simple matter,as there was only one old machine available in Srinagar,and this machine was worthy to be put to rest in a museum. One required a steady electric current of a good quality but this was only available at certain moments and one had to depend more on one's luck than on the generator's contribution.

I took Mr. Hall to the x-ray man's shop (yes, it was a shop where the doctor worked and x-rayed). With luck and patience we did get a frontal exposure of the skull and to my horror we saw in the centre of the brain a round shadow indicative of a cyst ora tumor. This finding spoke for an organic lesion and excluded the so

Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 22nd April 1943.

Selzer, R.M.O., Purandhar.

:-List of articles d/ 21.4.43 sent by Mr.de Fries.

---

items exeept 1 baby's bath tub, will be issued.
e Mr. Mathias is drawing Rs.600/- a month and cannot
ee confinement here. for his wife.
re is no baby's bath tub available and Mr. and Mrs.
provide her own.
Petromax lamp is to be used only at the time
ement.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

[illegible] to forward herewith [illegible]

Centre for favour of censorship and dispo-

. .

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

[signature] 15/9/42

for Commandant, Internment Camp
and Parole Centre, Datura.

much more comfortable diagnosis of "psychasthenia" so fashionable then and which was the polite form one used for hysteria or similar neurotic conditions. Here we had definitely to contend with an organic disease and in addition with one which we could not handle here in Kashmir,nor anywhere else in India.

I explained this to Mr. Hall and I put it to him that he would have to consult now a neurologist who had all the facilities of a modern clinic available to him.

" I can send you to my Clinic in Rome", I told him, "or I could refer you to a good neurological expert in London. There is no difference,really, where you go, as every neurologist worth his salt can now complete the diagnosis and arrange for whatever treatment that may be indicated".

" All this is good and fine", said Mr. Hall. " But if I have to travel somewhere to consult a specialist, I could do this as well in the States where,in case an operation is required, I could be near to my family and my friends".

I could only agree with this decision of the patient.

" Could you reccomend a good neurologist in the States", continued Mr. Hall. " I am living in the Los Angeles area and I would prefer to see somebody somewhere there".

Again I agreed with Mr. Hall that this was the best way to go about. But I did not know any neurologist in Los Angeles neither did I know of any specialist anywhere in America, and it would have been a sign of cowardice to escape from such an ignorance by automatically advising a visit to the Mayo Clinic.

" Come back in two days' time, Mr. Hall", I said. "In the meantime,while you make all the necessary preparations for your journey home, I shall not only have found for you a suitable man in the United States,but I shall also have completed the report which you will have to take with you".

That very evening I went through the last two years' editions of the monthly "Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry" to which I had subsribed, and among the many articles I scrutinized I found a very impressive one written by a Dr. A.Fedder of the Clinic of Nervous Diseases of the University of Stanford. I wrote a letter to Dr.Fedder,enclosed my findings,the laboratory results and the x-ray film and concluded that "although my first impression had been

KONSULAT GENERALNY -
RZECZYPOSPOLITJ POLSKIEJ
W BOMBAJU

Consulate General of the
Republic of Poland, in Bombay,

REGISTERED A.D.

Bombay, 26th March, 1945.

No.S-5/19.

The Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Satara.

Sir,

Referring to your letter No.1326 of 1945 dated the 21st March, I am returning herewith passport No.274/35 of Mrs.Selzer and the birth certificates of the two children after entering their names in her passport.

Kindly acknowledge receipt.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

Sd/- x x x
Consul General for Poland.

p.t.o.

No. 1499 of 29-3-1945.

Copy, together with the birth certificates of the ~~xxxx~~ two children forwarded to:-

Mr. Selzer.

Please acknowledge receipt.

Passport has been retained in this office.

Commandant,
I.C. and P.C.,Satara.

that we have here a man with a "psychosomatic condition", the x-ray findings exclude this diagnosis and suggest an organic basis for the patient's complaints".

Mr. Hall left with the report and the film.

Two months later I received a long letter from Dr.Fedder Mr . Hall had consulted him and Dr. Fedder and his colleagues entirely agreed with my diagnosis which I had based on the findings I had enclosed. However, when the patient was again x-rayed no cyst nor any other abnormal shadow could be seen. The puzzled and intrigued radiologist tried his best to find a positioning, an exposure and he used also other "tricks" to get a repetition of the findings on my film, and finally he found a certain exposure time,certain variations of the current and certain angle which enabled him to reproduce that very round shadow. In a very polite way I was told that the diagnosis was wrong although I had been justified in making such a mistake. " It was a very interesting case indeed. It p rovided all of us here also with a very important instruction and lesson. Let me also add that we were very impressed by the many difficulties you have to overcome in your part of the world. I hope you will one day pay a visit to the States and will not fail to visit us too. Should there be anything we can do for you, to help you in any way, please do not hesitate to write. Let me repeat, if there is anything we can do for you here,be sure to call on us".

There I was in the Purandhar Camp and when the Consulate of the USA in Bombay told me that I required affidavits, I did not think of the easiest solution ,that of asking Cousin Samuel Wallach to provide both such affidavits, i.e. to enroll anyone of his many relatives or friends in New York (only many years later did I find that he was a very rich man and that the sum he had mentioned in his affidavit as his income was a true statement and not a fictitious one as I had imagined in my refugee mentality). I asked Samuel to contact Fedder to whom I had also written reminding him of our contact a year or so before and of his offerto ask for help whenever there was need to do so. And this was such a need and Dr.Fedder did react in a very helpful and altruistic way.

But there was no need for these affidavits. American had entered the war by the time I had completed all the necessary preparations and enemy aliens interned in Purandhar no more qualified for an entry visa into the United States of America.

A pity ? Or my Karma ?

OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

account of Doctor Hm. Selzer
Egerton Road Colaba

at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

Auction Sale of the 12.10.41 193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
Cane matting &c	16	12	—
Small Carpets	28	6	—
— — ..	2	0	—
Tea	1	4	—
Frames, a wooden Shelf			
Almirah, 2 Chairs, Cupboard	37	—	—
Glass Almirah —	25	8	—
Shelf Almirah ..	20	0	—
Sewing machine	13	—	—
— — — .	9	12	—
Folding Bed Tab	11	0	0
Needle Work Stool	15	4	—
Foot Stool & Cover	5	6	—
Centre Table — ..	16	0	0
Ladder — — ..	2	10	—
Hanging Horse ..	3	4	—
Table Electric Lamp	15	8	—
Stand of Drum		12	
Glass bottle Stand	3	—	—
Table & Hanging &c	2	4	—
Co: Rs	327	10	0

37.

LE OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

on account of_____

_____

_____at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

e, Auction Sale of the_____193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
B.F.	327	10	-
all Tub & Electric [illegible]	2	-	-
Shelf Almirah	20	0	0
den Shelf Almirah 22/-, 21/-	43	-	-
rack - - -	2	13	-
Shelf Almirah	11	-	-
. . .	5	4	-
leather bed with	36	-	-
leather Set with 3 reclining leather arm & 4 Chairs arms, one table top, 1 teapoy Stool top a wooden Shelf &c	370	0	0
wooden Shelf with drawer 3 teapoy, a teapoy with Chair top &c 40/- 35/-,	75	-	-
Almirah bed .	7	8	-
table iron bed with leather & Side Almirah of 4 Cupboard dressing Table with top, & 1 Set Chairs &c	635	-	-
C/F	1535	3	-

LE OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

account of _____

_____

_____ at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

Auction Sale of the _____ 193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
Pd. F	1535	3	—
' Lieds with Mattress	41	—	—
Steel Steam Davenport	20	8	—
Almirah 4 Shelf Almirah	30	—	0
" 4 Canvas 15/-	13	4	—
" 3 Leather	4	—	—
Steel Steam Davenport	16	8	—
" Almirah	12	4	—
"	23	—	—
"	15	—	—
Easy Chair Leather	6	8	—
Canvas	2	—	—
Steel Steam Davenport	32	—	—
" 2 Shelf Almirah	1	12	—
Office Chair &c	7	—	—
Steel 2 Chairs & 2 Stools	28	—	—
Writing Table			
Steel Steam Davenport	40	8	—
" Almirah	17	4	—
Office Furniture	4	4	—
Steel Cupboard 7 Shelves			
" Shelf, 2 Canvas Chairs	15	0	0
Office Desk Drawers &c			
Table Service Complete	1999	15	—

...97.

...ALE OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

...on account of_____

_____

_____at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

...re, Auction Sale of the_____193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
B.F	1999	15	-
...ttery Set not Sold			
...ickens ~ ~ .	1	10	-
...ders work Stool	1	4	-
...Kitchen Small Table do			
...a Cans 1/5 ea Pot do	2	1	-
...4 Sitting Cans, 2 Bath.			
...do do ~ ~ ~	4	4	-
...ing Table . ~ ~	4	8	-
...ff do Stool ~ ~	3	6	-
...eck Chairs . . .	4	12	-
...r 7 Numbers do	1	12	-
...ery Round Stool, 1 Wooden			
...k, 2 Wooden Tea Pots do	7	6	-
...ail Table do ~ ~			
...t with Cutlery & 1 Hat	10	0	0
...Levels do ~ ~			
...4/ & 6/-			
...7 Mirrors & Wooden Stool	6	-	-
...Commodes ~ ~ .	7	-	-
...do, Wooden Stool	12	4	-
...Stool do Cushion	2	1	-
...Wooden Table ~	1	12	-
...White Table & Stool	4	8	-
...Wooden Wash Cushion	2	2	-
2/2 Co.	2089	11	-

LE OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

On account of_____

_____

_____at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

Auction Sale of the_____193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
B.F	2089	11	-
[illegible]	-	7	-
[illegible]	6	-	-
[illegible] Table	3	10	-
[illegible]	3	-	-
[illegible]	4	14	-
[illegible]	2	-	-
[illegible] Table	4	4	-
[illegible] Office Table			
[illegible]	15	-	-
[illegible] Table	7	4	-
[illegible]	9	-	-
[illegible]	3	-	-
[illegible] Table	28	8	-
[illegible] Table	1	12	-
[illegible]	220	0	0
[illegible]	280	0	0
[illegible]	27	-	-
[illegible]	not Sold		
[illegible]	3	10	-
[illegible]	not Sold		
[illegible]	90	0	0
C.F.	2969	-	-

E OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

account of _____

_____ at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

Auction Sale of the _____ 193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
B.F.	2969	—	—
...ckd a Chair	1	a	o
...Stand with Brackets &c	2	a	—
... — — —	43	—	—
...Bicycle No 99181	59	—	—
... No 334845	51	—	—
... No: 1511	32	—	—
...tric Fan — —	36	—	—
...Shelved Book Rack Lacquered	17	8	—
... Cracked	4	8	—
...Cooking Utensils & Hand Lamps	13	4	—
...Pot Rack, 4 Wooden Chairs &c &c	6	2	—
...Wooden Table, 1 Wooden Shelf &c	6	5	—
... — — —	31	a	—
...Iron Table — —	14	—	—
... — — —	—	12	—
...Cane Lounge &c	3	—	—
...Table with Glass Top	11	—	—
...Safe — —	3	4	—
...Packing Case	2	—	—
Co. Rs	370	12	—

E OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

account of _____

_____ at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

Auction Sale of the _____ 193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
B. J	3701	11	—
Bench - - .	3	6	—
Glass + 2 Stools etc	5	—	—
Kerosene -	not	Sold	
3 bottles + a E. lamp etc	5	—	—
- - - - .	6	—	—
2 medicine - - .	2	—	—
Glass Set in 3 pieces	19	8	—
2 pieces glass ware	2	4	—
1 tin box, Oil Cloth			
1 box, Coat hangers			
Cloth and a bottle			
Stands etc etc	5	6	—
2 bottles & bottles	15	—	—
Box + glass ware etc	4	—	—
- - - - .	5	8	—
Vases - - .	5	8	—
Electric lamp - - .	6	12	—
Electric Table lamp etc	6	—	—
Lamp etc - -	9	—	—
Clothes etc etc	2	9	—
Glass ware, tumblers			
Bottles, Brass lamp			
Stands etc etc	8	5	—
Carried Forward	3813	0	—

OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

account of _____

_____ at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

ction Sale of the _____ 193 .

Particulars. B·7	Rs. 3813	A. 0	P. —
[illegible]	7	—	—
[illegible]	6	12	—
[illegible]	2	4	—
[illegible]	3	8	—
[illegible]	10	9	—
[illegible]	—	8	—
[illegible]	8	—	—
[illegible]	—	15	—
[illegible]	2	14	—
[illegible]	2	3	—
[illegible]	3	—	—
[illegible]	8	12	—
[illegible]	4	12	—
[illegible]	4	4	—
[illegible]	29	—	—
[illegible]	5	2	—
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3944/[illegible]			

OF UNDERNOTED ARTICLES.

ccount of _____

_____ at Messrs. JAMSETJEE'S SONS,

uction Sale of the _____ 193 .

Particulars.	Rs.	A.	P.
B.F	3944	14	-
Cooking Range &c	25	-	-
Pipe &c	-	10	-
" "	4	-	-
Battery Box &c			
Bells &c &c	5	4	-
4 Cubes &c	3	6	-
Electric Goods &c	6	4	-
" " "	3	-	-
Plate " "	2	1	
Brass Rods &c	1	7	-
Saucepan (Porcelain)	1	2	-
Jars " "	2	-	-
Enlarger &c "	110	-	-
Glass Pipe " "	1	8	-
Rubber &c " "	1	3	-
Rubber &c " "	1	-	-
Total Rs	4113	8	-
Less Comm. 411/6/-	438	11	-
Balance Rs	3674	13	
Contractor's £	12	-	-
Carriage & Octroi Rs	3662	13	-

The children in Purandhar.

When we arrived in Purandhar Pipsi was less than two years old and Michael only seven weeks. Undoubtedly they noticed the change,the difference, the novelty, mainly from a negative apsect, especially as we, Kate and I,were in no way sufficiently at peace with ourselves and our environment, had not yet cooled down, had not yet resigned ourselves into a balanced state of mind. We had been given permission to take the "Ayah" with us from Lahore to the camp and she proved of great help to us all. Unfortunately,after ten days she was asked to leave and although this order of the Commandant may appear to you cruel, I think it very unlikely that we could have induced her to stay any longer with us.

Kate had to cope with the children on her own. I wasof little help,sad as this sounds. The children reacted with some signs of anxiety to their new environment due to the tension,the irritability,the depression which surrpounded them, but,fortunately,they soon accepted their new state of life and "sttled" down.

There were many children in the Purandhar Camp and our children soon found new friends. For a time a kindergarten had been functioning,but there was never a sufficient number of volunteers for such a task and the Government resp. the Commandant did not think it necessary to offer a sufficiently attractive salary, to attract one of the older girls or a woman to look after the children in the Camp. For some time we privately enagged one of the single girls to spend a few hours daily with Pipsi,but we had to come to the conslusion that neither was the girl interested in her job nor Pipsi in her companion. All in all, however, the children had always company and there was always something going on to keep them busy.

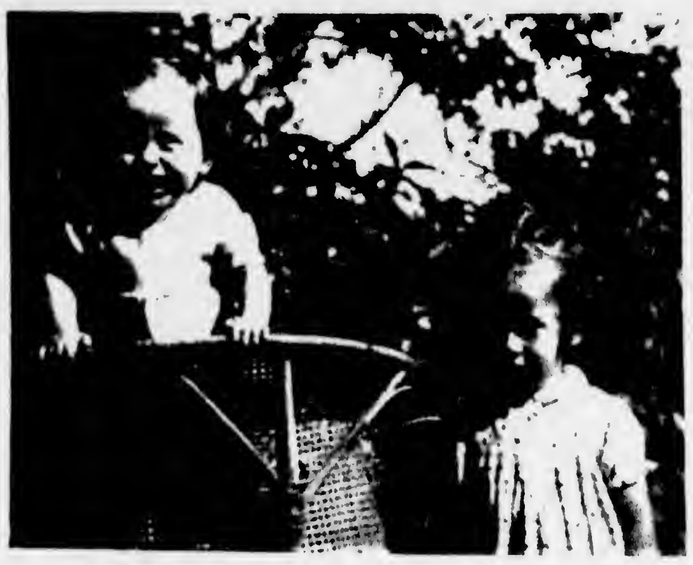
In Purandhar children had always to be supervised and guarded as the camp was situated on a hilltop and the many unguarded slopes and cuts invited an accident. Fortunately this was much different in Satara where the ground was plain,where no traffic of any kind endangered children playing in the roads and where the guards at the exits prevented the children from straying outside.

TO FACE 212

F 37333

Pipsi in Purandhar

F 37334



F 37335

Pipsi and Michael in Purandhar

Kate and the children in Purandhar

F 37336

F 37337

The Ayah and the children
Lahore ,November 1942

Michael 1942 in Purandhar

F 37338

Pipsi got her first schooling in the Camps and later also Michael. Many of the grown-ups liked to work as teachers,although most of the school facilities were found among the missionaries and the Nazis.

All in all I do not think that the first years of their lives which the children spent in the internment camps had been a disadvantage to them or had left them with a handicap. Of course, they missed many of the good things in life they might otherwise have enjoyed, but such technical advantages or any form of luxury living certainly do not make children into better people.

If you say that they must inevitable have felt the tension,the depression,the anger which were so specific for the life in such camps - especially in the early years - you are right. The children have felt it, at least for some time, but all in all they came through it all very well. They lived for 5½ years in such an atmosphere and they appear to have forgotten all of it in a short time,when we started a new life after the war. "In liberty" they experienced for the first time separation from us,when they stayed for weeks and months in boarding schools and their reaction to this separation was certainly evidence that they had not "forgotten" they years in the camps.

Pipsi found on her own the answer to the question she once asked when she was barely three years old.

" You always talk about Auntie Nazi ; but where is Uncle Nazi " ?

Fight for survival.

This heading may sound exaggerated to you. You may be justified in thinking thus. There was after no all really no need to fight for our physical survival: we were smoothly and efficiently taken out of circulation and dumped into a camp. What kind of survival was there to fight for ? You are right. Our survival, our physical survival was assured as long as we lived our lives according to the rules and regulations. Our lives were assured as far as anctuary can promise this on the basis of the available vital staistics.

I am talking of course of surviving in a state of a sufficiently balanced mind. I am talking of keeping sane. Of being able to face,to take in a situation which was made to disturb your mental balance. But is this true ? Is this a fact ? It does not seem to be true because in all the years during which we were interned, some 5½ years in all,there were hundreds of others in the same position and with similar problems,perhaps even worse one than ours, and nobody lost his mental balance,nobody got mentally deranged, nobody had to be certified. I n short : I have been exaggerating. I have been wrong to do so.

Let us ,therefore,look at the issue from another angle.

I was very unhappy all through the 5½ years we were interned. I think it is not necessary to enumerate all the causes and all the reasons. It was mainly the humiliation, the degradation I saw in our life ,in our environment. I could never overcome the hurt,the anger I felt and this was compounded by the helplessness, the powerlessness which we knew so well and which was constantly pointed out to us. We were ruled and governed by individuals who did not know us,who did not care about us, for whom we were numbers and to whom every reaction of ours,every protest,even if not expressed in words or deeds appeared as a revolt or at least an impertinence. We were surrounded by people who enjoyed advantages they in no way merritted because of their decency or because they had done acceptable deeds or because they possessed superior traits. The officials in charge of thec amps were our superiors in every sense of the word and they did their best to make us feel their superiority and they did this with greater sadism the more they sensed that

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To H.E.
THE AMBASSADOR
OF ABYSSINIA
LONDON

CORR-64

Date Stamp

e message very clearly below this line. Please see instructions on reverse.

ull name and address Dr.H.M.Selzer,M.D.
Centre. Satara.Bombay Presidency.
British - India.

Date 17th Aug.1944.

r Excellency,

I would be very thankful for detailed informations arding the possibilities and chances for a physician to settle thiopia at the actual moment or in the near future or after the . I would be very interested in such a prospect and would be glad there would be an opening there for me in my profession. I would course very much prefer the possibility of an employment in the ical Services of H.M. The Negus.

Could you please let me know if physicians are requi- in Abyssinia or for Government Service or as private practitio- s ? What the conditions offered and formalities required are ?

I am 35 years of age, Polish citizen, refugee, jew; physician, specialized in internal medicine and neurology; my e, is also physician, M.D. We have two children aged 5 and 3.

Should there not be any restrictions of export from I would be able to bring my complete medical equipment with me.

I would be very thankful for detailed informations.

I am, Your Excellency,

Your obedient servant.

Dr. S. Selzer

m

This space should not be used

If posted by a member of His Majesty's Forces, it should be franked here by the Officer Commanding or some other responsible officer of the unit. The rank and designation of the officer should be given.

1. The airgraph service is available to the United Kingdom, Eire, Canada, Newfoundland, Australi New Zealand, Fiji Islands, Tonga and New Hebrides.

2. Nothing should be written on this side of the paper. The whole of the message should be written on th face of the form.

3. The name and address to which the message is to be sent should be written in English in large block letter measuring at least a quarter of an inch in height and wholly within the panel provided.

4. A miniature photographic negative of the message and the address will be made at Bombay or Calcutta an sent therefrom throughout by air to destination where a photographic print, measuring about 5 inches by inches, will be made and delivered to the addressee enclosed in a cover. It is, therefore, important that th message should be written clearly. Very small writing is quite unsuitable.

5. To obtain best results, it is advisable to write airgraphs in black ink. The use of pencil is not recommended but if it is at all used, it must be a very soft pencil. A typewriter may be used, except for the address. The message may be written in any language as long as it is clear. The whole message should be in one medium only, whether ink, pencil or typewriter, but the address should always be in large English block letters and should never be typewritten. Communication in code is not permitted, except by authorised approved Banks which are permitted to use private authenticating cypher expressions as in telegrams or by the Field Controller and other Controllers of Military Accounts to Military Formations in the United Kingdom. It is not permissible to affix photographs, snapshots, artistic pictures, etc., on airgraphs; but manuscript drawings or sketches in ink or pencil, if harmless, are not prohibited.

6. If it is desired to send more than one airgraph, the name and address of the sender and of the addressee must be inserted on each such form and all the forms must be pinned together from inside.

7. The completed form should preferably be handed in at any post office or forwarded direct in a cover addressed to "Airgraph Section, General Post Office, Calcutta," if posted in Bengal, Assam, Bihar or Orissa, and to "Airgraph Section, General Post Office, Bombay," if posted in any other part of India. In the case of direct posting, a large size cover, which should not be less than 8 3/4 inches long, should be used. The form should be folded parallel to the printed instructions only and not more than twice. The outer cover addressed as indicated is not required to be stamped.

8. Airgraphs sent by members of His Majesty's Forces should be franked by the Officer Commanding or some other responsible officer of the unit who should also state his rank and designation in the space provided for the purpose on the form.

9. The original airgraphs will be retained by the Post Office and eventually destroyed.

H. M. Security Press, Nasik Road. [M-3-9-42]

Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 12th August 1943.
=======

Dr. H. M. Selzer, Purandhar.

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reuplies to your letter d/ 12.8.43 are :-

orders are Government orders.
transfer cannot be postponed. Travelling now is
pleasant. If Government employ you Satara is en-
to Kolhapur where the Polish Camp is.
may go to Poona for a day to purchase packing
als.
may join the central catering from Sunday. Please
Messrs. D' Souza & Sons, direct.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Purandhar.

Office of the
ndant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 20th May 1943.

:-

The Resident Medical Officer,
Purandhar.

Your report about milk shows the general tendency
the camp to grumble without realising facts. The
cts are that at this season milk is always short and
pensive. The Camp is in competition with supplies for
ona- suppliers divert their milk to Poona where they
n get better prices. At the corresponding camp in
tara the supply is 4 seers to the Rupee - not 4½
rs as here. That was verified 3 days ago.

It is untrue that curds cannot be made. I get the
e milk and get curds daily. I tried some (this
rning). I will look into the matter of specific
avity but when fodder is scarce as at present you
st get a poorer supply than at other seasons. The
ct, people here, mostly from Towns - do not realise
ntral catering is provided for those who cannot
nage on available free supplies. I cannot make
ws and buffaloes give milk.

People here do not realise that suppliers are not
ing to bring milk here. I had heaps of complaints
out poor quality milk before milk was centralised.
lk hawkers cannot be allowed in an internment camp
d to worry the suppliers will merely stop the supply
together.

De' Souza has supplied milk for British troops and
milies for 20 years and has more experience in dealing
ith petty suppliers than anybody here.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Purandhar.

spk.

Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 25th June 1943.

To :-

Dr. H. M. Selzer, M. D., R. M. O., Purandhar.

Sub:- Complaints about quality of Milk.

The habit of watering milk is ingrained in certain milkmen and i prevalent throughout India. The great danger is that if too high standard is imposed the milk supply will stop. Is D' Souza or any other person or persons prepared to accept responsibility for the contingency ?. If so the Commandant will gladly remove the control of sale of all such milk to such person or persons.

2. On 23rd January the specific gravity of known pure milk was publicly tested and found to be between .22 and .24. This can be taken as standard for this area.

3. Specific gravity of milk naturally varies with animals with the season, and with the quality of food. Accordingly on 23rd January 28 samples were tested and the lowest was found to be .20 and some were found to be very high (.27). The average was .2375.

4. Accordingly a standard of .22 is being imposed. Milk below that quality ~~is~~ should be shown at once to Mr. Dalal ~~x~~ who will test it and report the facts to the Commandant.

5. In the meantime the fact is brought to notice that better milk will be obtained at a better price. Are people prepared to pay ?. The most favourable rate obtainable in Poona is 3 seers per rupee.

P.t.o.

The Superintendent,
Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

I have the honour to forward herewith the letters written by the Parties of this Camp for favour of disposal.

Supt.

for those who advance money. At the SHIVAJI High School the milk contractor demanded 1½ seers per rupee and the contract was settled at 2 seers per rupee.

Are Parolees prepared to pay these prices ?. At present they get 4½ seers per rupee. The days of getting something for nothing are gone.

L. P. Marshall.

Asstt.
to the Commandant, Internment Camp
& Parole Centre, Purandhar.

Copy to :-
Mrs. Van Gessel, Purandhar.

spk.

No:—

Dr Selzer R.H.O
Purandhar

M-3

Notice No. 161
Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 27th July 1943.

All Medical Officers & Dental Surgeons at
Purandhar.

Medical officers and Dental Surgeons are requested to call at delay for service in Polish Refugee Camps.

Pay :-
(i) Salary :- Per mensem Rs.500/-.
(ii) Travelling Expenses :- Actuals to the Camp.
(iii) Quarters :- Free with furniture of a very simple nature.

(NOTE :- The Commandant is not sure if the above salary is for doctors only or also for Dental Surgeons).

IN ADDITION :- One doctor is required for DEOLI CAMP vice Dr. HAMBURGER - exact terms not known but probably similar to above.

Any applicant for these appointments should submit application for consideration to the Commandant before hours on WEDNESDAY the 28TH JULY 1943 setting out his qualifications (e.g. physician, surgeon, dental practitioner, opthalmologist etc.) and evidence of report.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Purandhar.

1. Dr. Laser.
2. Dr. Selzer.
3. Dr. Gross.
4. Dr. Seide.
5. Dr. Andermann.
6. Dr. Reich.
7. Dr.(Mrs.) Eklund.
8. Dr. Weiner C/o Dr. Goyal, Poona.

SH RELIEF ASSOCIATION
BOMBAY

PRESIDENT
SIR ALWYN EZRA, BOMBAY.

HAGUE BUILDING,
(2ND FLOOR)
SPROTT ROAD,
BALLARD ESTATE.

30th November, 1945.

H.M. Selzer,
role Centre,
TARA.

ear Sir,

I have again discussed your request for a visa for China with the Chinese Consul in Bombay, who told me that he has submitted the matter to his Government in Chungking and will inform me of the reply as soon as it is received

Yours faithfully,
For Jewish Relief Association.
M. Wardenburg

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE ASSOCIATION AND NOT TO INDIVIDUALS

though we bowed we did not accept their pretentious claims. We knew that in the files of the Government we figured as cases, as numbers and not as individuals of flesh and blood. We knew only too well that nobody cared about us or our well-being. We knew that our friends had long ago lost interest in us and that those who had initially at least and for some time shown some sympathy were only a fraction of those whom one had counted as one's friends.

The most painful experience,one which was repeated again and again,with monotonous and exasperating monotony was the disappointment of not being among those who were released from time totime. Now and then the rumour spread through the Camp that a list of releases" had arrived and after an initial day or so of painful waiting one watched the happy people who were called into the Commandants office to learn the good news. And one had to consóle oneself that possibly the next time.... And the next time never came. This was an experience many of us had, I agree, but I think I was the only one who never knew why we remained interned at all. Whenever others asked this question of themselves, they could always console themselves that they were after all "enemy aliens", that they carried German or AUstrian passports etc.while we thought,in our childishness in our self-illusion,shouted from the rooftops,that we were not to be classified as enemies. I do not know why I did not accept the fact, why I did not resign myself after many refusals that I was not going to be told what the Government of British-India believed to have against us, why I did not understand,that the factors I had on my side,that of being Jewish ,that I had worked on behalf of the JRA in Bombay when I had contact with foreigners or had them come to India, that I had a Polish passport and a Consul in Bombay to protect us,were of no value,were self-illusions. It would have been better had I never fought against this impossible situation, had I preserved my dignity and had I not offered those who "handled" us the pleasure to watch our discomfiture. Instead I made one application after the other,reacted to every rumour that applications for a job in some outlying place,for some military duty were invited and that a successful candidate would be released from the camp. You may think it would have been better had I never , or let us say after the first or second application for release Government had invited, againwritten any application. It is easy to judge this from your and my angle now,but in those days,months and years any straw

GENERALNY
TEJ POLSKIEJ
AJU

GENERAL
E OF POLAND
BAY

S-b/W-T/133.

"Rugby House", 39, Napean Sea Road,
Bombay
Sunday 9th October 1941.

Dr. H. M. Selzer,

PURANDHAR.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 3rd Instant I have to inform you that the Consulate General is unable to intervene with the Government of India regarding your case.

Yours faithfully,

K. Bohusinski,

Consul General for Poland.

2.

3) H 17 [illegible], 11 -J)

Paulo Cunha

Bernardes

Office of the
Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar 26th July 1942.

Dr.

Dr.H.M.Selzer,
Parole Centre, Purandhar.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your representation dated the 3rd June 1942 the Government of India in the Home Department in a letter dated the 18th July 1942 direct me to communicate the following reply:-

(a) that the fact that he assisted a number of Jewish refugees to come to India was not communicated to Dr.Selzer as the reason for his restriction,

(b) that on this fact alone Government would naturally not have passed orders of restrictions, and

(c) that Government are not prepared to disclose all the reasons for which they regard Dr.Selzer with suspicion.

Yours faithfully,

Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

Dr. Schrek,
Parole Centre
Parandhal

Office of the
Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar 11th March 1942.

To

Dr.Selzer,
Parole Centre,
PURANDHAR.

Dear Sir,

In a letter dated the 6th March 1942 the Government of India have replied to your application dated the 23rd February 1942 and they state " the decision to keep Dr.Selzer under restriction was taken by the Government of India after a careful consideration of the circumstances of his case and is final---any representations from Dr.Selzer for his release or matters connected therewith may be withheld by you."

The Government of India add that they are not prepared to disclose the reasons for their decision.

Yours faithfully,

Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

any rumour,any application kept up that hope without which we might have sunk into lethargy. There were times when I felt I had done my utmost and that I was not going ever to react again: when the notice went out that whoever wanted to be released should write an exposé to Government in which he should try to dispute any possible accusation he thinks might have let to his internemnt,that he should defend himself against any possible accusation he thinks might have been raised against him without his knowledge. Imagien ! This happened indeed and this time I refused to make a fool of myself. But in the end I did write a letter defending myself all possible imaginary accusations because Kate felt that no chance should ever be missed and that we might one day be sorry to have not taken part in this farce. On another occasion when the DyAsstt. of the Home Department in charge of the camps came on one of his sporadic visits and all those who wanted to talk to him - I had already twoce had the doubtful pleasure of having sat in front of this man - but Kate insisted that I line up in the queue too; when I was sent in by the Commandant I had to go through a few degrading minutes because I did not figure on the list of interviewees that fellow had in front of him. I still wish I had not listened and had not been taken in by these apparent efforts to kindle hopes for which there is no basis.

However, there were so many other instances where some hope was allowed. We read in the newspapers and learned also from notices emanating from the Commandant's office that medical officers and also volunteers for any other kind of service were wanted. I applied. It would take up too much time to tell you in detail about all those applications I wrote: to the French,the Dutch,the Poles, the Belgians,the Free Forces of all the countries Germany had occupied; to the Chinese,the Abessinians,to the Congolese and to the Egyptians. Many,if not all, replied that they had no place for me as along as I was interned; from others I received no reply which in many a case only meant that a positive or otherwise encouraging reply had been kept back by the Censor and in other cases by the Commandant 's office.

I wrote to many of my patients and asked for their intervention. I wrote to many Indian Princes and offered them my services. Some replied, others did not, and again I am certain that very often the reply was not to the liking of the Censors. The Maharani ofCooch Behar did her utmost to help me; she offered me a job in her State; she gave guarantees that I would in no way be able to to do any harm.

PUBLIC.

& 6TH
S

BOMBAY.
No 25082
TIMES)

CENTRAL BANK BUILDING,
ESPLANADE ROAD,
BOMBAY.

2nd May, 1941

No M/3487/41

Dr. H.M. Selzer,
The Purandhar Parole Camp,
Purandhar,
Near Poona.

Dear Sir,

The draft letter returned by you approved through Mr. Klein was duly despatched to the Government of India and we have now received a reply.

The Government of India state that you have been restricted to the Parole Centre at Purandhar under the provisions of the Foreigners' Act 1940. Government further state that your case was reconsidered in January last as the result of representations made on your behalf by the Consul General for Poland and decided that you could not be set at liberty owing to the fact that you are entirely German by culture and education and had been in contact with Germans suspected of espionage on behalf of the Nazis. We gather that the decision of the Government of India and the reasons referred to above were duly communicated to the Polish Consul General.

Having regard to the decision of the Government of India, there is nothing further that can be done by us.

Yours faithfully,

PS.

The organized other Maharajas to act in a similar way. Nothing came of all this.

I wrote and I wrote. I asked the Polish Consul General for his help. In the beginning he refused,saying he had nothing to do with me, but later on his attitude changed: he played the good consul for reasons I do not care to know, as I am certain that all my letters went in any case into his waste paper basket.

You will ask me why I did not learn from the first few results,from the experience of the first few months,why I continued to struggle,to fight,to write ? This iswhat I wanted to tell you at the onset of the chapter,that this writing,struggling,fighting kept us sane,kept us afloat,left us with that tiny amount of hope, even though for a few days,weeks at the most each time, without which we would not have anything to cling to,to support us.

Friends asked their friends to intervene on our behalf. Francis Klein, a very good friend, had Sir Maurice Dwyer,the Chief Justice of India approach the Home Secretary in Delhi who was responsible for our internment. I was told that even the Chief Justice did not succeed in learning the reason for our internment. I cannot imagine that this can be true; ~ut at the same time I do not say that such a refusal was at all impossible. I had a firm of English solicitors intervene on my behalf - and was told by them that Government of India had given as the reason for our internemtn that wehad been in contact with people suspected of Nazi sympathies. Who were they ?One should have thought that such kind of information could have been disclosed as without doubt that person with Nazi sympathies with who I was suspected to have been in contact had also been out behind barbed wire and the disclosure of his name could not have caused the war effort any kind of harm anymore. No, they did not want to tell me that contact was and where. Government could not have made a mistake ,given a wcong interpretation to an innocuous fact, could not have been a wrong information ? Government did not want to disclose....and there was nothing you could do. ou could only think that Government did not tell the truth. For some time you reacted with anger, but soon this dissolved in resignation.

And then one day we learned that those who could obtain an entry visa for the USA or any other country would be released without delay. I was told that we could leave the camp,the country

the moment I could present a visa to any country not at war with India; Government of India did not mind us leaving under such circumstances. We had no contact with anybody outside Europe, except for the USA. I wrote to my cousin Samuel Wallach and asked him for an affidavit. He sent me an affidavit. I required a second affidavit and I wrote to Dr. Fedder in Stanford University. He too sent me an affidavit. A short time ago I have told you who Dr.Fedder was and how I came to know him. I asked the AmeWrican Consulate in Bomaby if they would give me a visa for the USA and he promised such a visa assoon as I had completed the formalities,i.e. as soon as I had the affidavit controlled and checked and as soon as he could obtain for us a place on the "quota".

At last we had a hope to grasp. Fedder promised me ajob Samuel promised us all the help we might require to settle in the USA. I applied to Government of India for a week's leave so that I might return to Lahore,to sell there all possessions of ours still stored there. I was given the required permission. I travelled to Lahor. I disposed of all we had. I returned with some of our valuable things which we intended to keep and packed these into the few boxes which we intended to take with us. Again I applied for the permission to visit the USA Consulate General,as I had now all the documents ready,had the money to buy our tickets for the journey, had the assurance of Government that we could leave the country.

I was given an appointment by the American Consulate and when I arrived in Bombay and when I hopefully presented myself before the consul who handled our case, I was told that enemy aliens especially those who were interned, could no more admitted " for the duration of the war".

Why this sudden change of mind ?

It was just two days after Peral Harbour had been bombed by the Japanese. The United States herself was at war now.

Lahore Interlude.

Let me enlarge on my visit to Lahore. Another experience which one should have done without, bu which, bitter though this experience was, had been eased by the thought that within a not too long time I would be leaving India for the USA - and to hell with ALL those who thought they could laugh about us.

I had written to the only legal friend I thought we had, in Lahorew, Jai Gopal Sethi, to tell him that I was coming to Lahore to sell our belongings which I had stored in a garage there and I asked him to put me in contact with an auctioneer he could trust, who could make the necessary preparations for the auction before I myself was in Lahore. Sethi wrote back to say that he was too busy to handle this matter himself, but that he had asked jis Junior,Satdar Khushwant Singh, to help me.

Do not think that I blame Sethi for having avoided getting involved personally. This would have been stupid from my side, as he was the leading barrister in Northern India and he was undoubtedly a very busy man. We had been very good friends for the last two years in Lahore, and there was not a week when he was not a guest in our house or we in his. (Some years later the roles were reversed and he was the destitute and in a similar situation as I in . This happened after India and Pakistan were partitioned in 1947. I would very much like to know if he rmembered the time when he was a big man and I the one he was ashamed to be seen with).

Khushwant Singh behaved in an exemplary kindly manner. He wrote that he would make all the necessary arrangements for the auction, that he would meet me at the station and that he would help me also otherwise whenever I might call on him.

I arrived in Lahore and took a room in Faletti's Hotel. In the afternoon I went tosee Khushwant Singh. I had never met him before. He told me that been at the railway station that morning to take me to his home where he hoped I would stay as his guest, but he had not recognized me among the crowd of travellers and had therefore missed me. He had hoped that I would prove more intelligent as he had come to the station dressed as a lawyer in a black coat and striped trousers. I refused to stay with him

for fear that I might embarras him. He was a good friend. Also later on,when I was looking for a publisher to publish a book about diet in India I had written, he was helpful and made all the arrangements. After partition he disappeared from Lahore; he became a very successful writer and at this time that I am writing this page,he is the editor of the prestigious "Illustrated Weekly of India" in Bombay.

The auctioneers ,Jamsetjees and Sons, had indeed made " all the necessary arrangements and preparations." Wherever I went, I saw printed notices affixed to the walls,that they,the auctioneers had been "Honoured with the arrangements to auction the belongings of Dr.H.M.Selzer". They announced that the auction was going to take place on the following Monday in a place they had no difficulty to clearly specify. When I came to this place next Monday morning ,all the furniture we had brought with us from Rome, and also our medical equipment, had been arraigned on a plaza in the centre of the town,on the Mall near the High Court, and there was no doubt that many people were interested in buying the furniture they saw exhibited, because a large crowd had assembled already early in the morning and the bidding was brisk and the prices realized extremely good.

I stood behind the crowd,leaning against a tree, when I saw Jai Gopal Sethi arrive with his brother, also a lawyer. They looked over the furniture displayed and I saw Sethi point to a walnut table with a beautiful pattern which he had always admired in my house. " Look at this table", he said. I have always admired it in Selzer's house. But somehow I do not feel like buying it. It might remind me too much of them. How life changes ! A short while ago they were on the top of the world,and now their things go into auction".

I wonder if Jai Gopal remembered these words and the situation when in 1948 he took refuge in our house ? We stood ready to prove our friendship;we did not run away. Because as soon as he had pointed to the table and had issued that wise statement,he saw me standing nearby. He did not approach. He did not greet me. He pulled his brother by his sleeve and off they went.

" ...to look at the Queen...

It is certainly superfluous to elaborate on the fact that every change of scene,any kind of break in the monotony of our life was welcome when we were interned up there on the mountain top of Purandhar. A visit to Bombay "on parole" was definitely of major importance to me = and by proxy to Kate = during those years and it helped very much to make our life somewhat tolerable because it restored,for some time at least, our bruised self-confidence. I travelled some 5 or six times to Bombay on invitation of different Maharanis who lived there on and off,who had been my patients in the past and who wanted to consult me on or other medical problem they thought important enough to make my visit worth their while. I have also some vague suspicion that these good ladies wanted at the same time to give me a "a break" i,e. wanted to arrange a kind of vacation for me. I t is a fact that I always returned to the camp refreshed and reinvigorated. Most of the time I stayed with Francis Klein's family and I realize only now the courage and the kindness this implied. I must also make it clear that these visits of mine to Bombay had been permitted by the Commandant personally and on his own responsibility and that he had not referred the matter first to the Home Ministry in Delhi as he should have done. This is found out later when I was in disgrace,when Holland was apparently reprimanded for his independent action in this respect and it was decreed that "such visits to Bombay for professional purposes should not have been granted in the past and should have to stop in future" I have made quite some blunders, haven't I ? Or was all this only a show for my sake ? I know that whenever I went outside the Camp to Poona or Bombay, I was watched and every step recorded. Was there the hope of those in power that on such a visit outside the camp I would somehow give them material with which to prove anything they wanted to have proved ? You do not know these crooked police minds of the Indian Government people, if you think such an idea of mine ridiculous.

Of all these visits distinct memories have remained. I remember a most impressive - not only gastronomically - luncheon party of the Maharani of Cooch Behar where I met people whose

names had become byewords in Indian art and politics. I remember another occasion when I came to examine the Maharani and found her at 2 p.m. still entertaining her guests at a "Cocktail Party" which had started at 11 a.m.. When at last all her guests had left I had to agree with the Maharani that she was in no fit state to be examined medically and we had to postpone the examination for the next day. I remember the time I was called to see the Maharaja of Dewas Junior and his Maharani and I was their guest for two days in the Bombay Yacht Club. Believe me I found on that occasion how unfavourably accomodation and food in the Club compaired with the ones in Purandhar. I remember the visits to the Maharani of Baroda ,to her palace in Pedder Road in Bombay where not only had to examine her, make a diagnosis,prescribe a treatment, but had also to cross swords with her in arguments usually provoked by her; all in all these verbal fencings were quite entertaining.

One such visit to the Maharani of Baroda has remained in my memory for an episode which I have never forgotten, because it revealed a trait in her character which astounded me very much because it was so unexpected.

When I was called to Bombay that time to see the old Maharani, we deeided we should make use of this opportunity to consult Prof. Gans, a Frankfurt dermatologist,who had established his practice in Bombay, about a small skin blemish on Pipsi's face. The child, then about three years old, was very excited about this trip because we had given her to understand that we were not only going to visit the skin doctor who would take away the small red spot on her face, but that she would also have the opportunity to see a real live queen,somebody like the one of which the loved to sing:

"Pussycat ! Pussycat ! Where have you been ?"
" I have been to London to look at the Queen"

During all the days it took to make the necessary preparations and arrangements,the child never tired of asking for details about the queen,how the queen looked,how she dressed,what she was going to say to her. Patiently we answeeed all her questions and we made her also show us the courtesy she was to make when she stood in front of the august personality. (In Germany a child is supposed to courtesy to her elders,even to those without blue blood in their veins - at least this was the case before the war).

We were carried down the hill by coolies to the bus station at the foot of the mountain; from there the bus took us to Poona and from there the train to Bombay, where a taxi brought us to the house of the Kleins. All this was new for Pipsi, but her thoughts were far too occupied by the Queen she was going to see to relish the newness of all she saw. That very afternoon we visited Prof.Gans who with the help of an electric needle removed the blemish from Pipsi's skin for ever. Pipsi was a very good and docile patient because she realized that a child going to see the Queen was not going to cry because of a little pain.

" When are we going to see the queen ?", I was asked innumerable times during the day, and "We are going tosee the real Queen", she replied to all the adults she met and who asked her any question about herself,about her wishes, about how she was and how she felt.

I had on arrival phoned the Maharani to ask her what time would suit her next morning to see me for the examination.

" Come at eleven in the morning", she answered, "and you can afterwards stay for lunch with me ".

" I am grateful for your invitation, Your Highness", I replied, " but this may not be so easy this time. I have brought my small 3-years-old daughter with me who would very much like to see a real live queen. She has so often heard of the Queen in London whom Pussycat has visited, and as there is at this moment hardly the opportunity for her to go to London too, I told her that we have a real queen also in Bombay and as I was going to see her as a doctor, she could come along with me on the chance that the queen would be kind enough to receive also a small girl like her. I am now rather honour-bound,Your Highness, to ask you if you would be kind enough to permit me to bring the child along tomorrow ?"

" Of course,doctor, of course", came thereply over the phone,bring the child along. I could not imagine any greater pleasure than to see her". It was unmistakable that the old lady was very pleased to be shown as a real queen to my daughter.

Next morning the chauffeur of the Kleins drove us to the Baroda Palace. I had laboured most of the morning to get Pipsi's curls into a decent shape and I had succeeded in this better than the Kleins' Ayah who with her incompetent fumbling

threatened to spoil Pipsi's and my day.

"Are we going to see the Queen now,Daddy ?", she asked when we drove off.

" Yes, Darling. In a short while we shall see her. And do you know what you have to say to the Queen ?"

" Yes,Daddy. I shall make a nice "knicks" when I stand in front of her ".

" " That is all you have to do ?"

" No, Daddy. I give her my hand and say very nicely : ' How do you do,Queen'. Is this right ?"

" es, this is right".

This conversation was repeated more than once before the car deposited us in front of the palace, and where my old friend, the fat Household Minister greeted us and by his clumsy attempts at friendliness succeeded only to make Pipsi shy.

Instead of the private rooms of the Maharani as I had expected,the man preceded us to the large hall,where as a rule the great receptions or dinner parties took place and which I myself had never seen before. It was a large hall,about 25 meter in length, and it was bare except for a row of chairs along both side walls and a large throne-like chair standing on an elevated pedestal at the end of the hall. On this chair the Maharani was seated in her plain white cotton sari bare of jewellery and embriodery (as was expected from a Hindu widow whatever her rank). Behind her stood, a colourful background, three of her granddaughters,youg charming girls clad in beautiful brocades and silk saris They were all smiling at us when we entered and while they watched us walk slowly towards the dais,the child clinging nervously to my hand.

" Where is the Queen,Daddy ?", whispered Pipsi.

" There at the end of the room,Darling. You are going to see her in a few seconds."

" Where is she ?", asked the child a second later.

" There she is in front of you, the lady sitting in the chair. You know what you have to say when we reach her ?"

" Yes,Daddy. I know. But I cannot see the Queen."

By that time we had reached the pedestal and we stood in front of the Maharani.

" Good morning,Your Highness", I greeted her. " May I

present to you my daughter Pipsi who so much likes to see you ?"

The Maharani bent forward with a smile and extended her hand. Pipsi looked at her,looked at her hand and then she looked at me and asked with a frightened whisper:

" But where is the Queen,Daddy ?". She looked at the girls standing nearby and continued. "Is the Queen there ?"

No, Darling. The Queen is here in front of you. This is the Queen. Giver her your hand and do what you have promised me you are going to do ".

The child abruptly turned away from the extended hand, grasped my leg and cried: " This is not a Queen. This is an Ayah" and she sobbed in bitter disappointment. Only then did I realize that even if she might have forgiven the absence of a crown, she had expected the the queen to be young and beautiful, to be clad in silks and borcades and covered with diamonds. But she never could accept a queen dressed in a simple white cotton sari, a queen in addition who had not the slightest chance ever to win a prize in a beauty contest for ladies of advanced age.

To my greatest surprise the Maharani's reaction was still more startling. She turned to the Chamberlain who had been trailing us, and with a congested face shoe ordered him:

" Take her away from here ! Take her out of my sight. At once away with her !"

But before the old fellow could move,one of the three girls who could only with difficulty suppress her laughter,ran forwéard and took the sobbing child into her arms.

One hour later, after I had completed my official visit, I met Pipsi again. She was smiling now and she clearly had enjoyed her visit with the young ladies. She knew now that queens may not always be queenly but that princesses of whom she knew also from the many stories she had heard,were a reality.

Do you know, that I realize only now that this was the last time I ever saw the Maharàni of Baroda ? She never asked to see me again in my professional capacity nor did I ever meet her again anywhere else.

Office of the
..t, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar, 14th September 1942.

DEPARTMENTAL ORDER.

..ipation of the orders of the Government of

..ELZER,M.D., is appointed Resident Medical

..randhar, from 16th September 1942 inclusive

..bisch, M.D. transferred.

Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

OF THE COMMANDANT, INTERNMENT CAMP & PAROLE CENTRE,
PURANDHAR 5TH FEBRUARY 1943.

...sident Medical Officer,
Purandhar.

...ases of V.D.:- I have now heard from Government who will pay for treatment of all these cases of the ~~xxxxx~~ causation, so long as the treatment is carried out ...hospital.(Note :- Government reserve the right to impose ...the supply of special drugs and services.) Please note ...medical advice special hospital treatment is provided for a ...e other than the Camp Hospital (in this case the Sassoon ...egarded as part of the Camp Hospital) an Internee or Parolee ...ired to pay to the extent of his ability either the whole or ...ost of such special treatment.

...'s case :- I am not prepared to let this case go on with ...ment. Mrs. Weiner must go to the Sassoon Hospital where full ...available; if after treatment there the Civil Surgeon reports ...t required is not available but is available in Bombay, she will ...at Government expense to such hospital in Bombay as can deal with ...sa. This is the proper and right course; it is likely to give the ...and simultaneously be no financial burdeon on Dr. Weiner. The ...Dr.Coyaji's hospital is that it is a private institution and ...am here (who are paroless subject to certain restraints in their ...movements) are under no control in a private institution. This ...to Police objections. Secondly there is no control over charges ...necessary patients treated in a private institution must ...pay for special privileges and this may easily leave them with ...grievance that Government will not pay necessary medical charges. ...the case at all. Government will and do pay all charges for ...t taken in the Sassoon Hospital (Vide instructions above ...Mrs. de Fries and Capt. Kass are cases in point.

...b.t.o.

OFFICE OF THE
COMMANDANT, INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE CENTRE,
PURANDHAR 16TH DECEMBER, 1942.

ORDERS ON DR.SELZER'S REPORT D/15-12-42

CH:- The matter will be dealt with when the occasion arises. But misch requires treatment and accommodation outside what is by Government she will have to arrange privately. I cannot be to ask favours of private persons which I do not ask even for Mrs.Ermisch is much better off than before as she (i.e. her gets the following extra allowances :-
From Government as self caterers :-Rs.10/- each per month per mensem; From the German Red Cross :- Rs.40/- each per quarter - per 3 months = Rs.40/- per month - i.e. in all Rs.80/- plus Rs.40/- per mensem more than before.

POONA :- The following are sanctioned on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17- e apprised accordingly.

Dr.Andermann) FOR EYE TESTING.
Miss Liebermann) (It should not be assumed that
Dr.Rosenbaum.) Government will supply glasses
Dr.Jacoby.) free).

:- Also to be sent to Poona for heart examination - letter to accompany.

:- Another application for industrial Petrol will be made, and can be given if the license is obtained.

COMMANDANT,
INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE CENTRE,
PURANDHAR.

:-
Dr.H.M.Selzer, R.M.O., Purandhar.

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Hermann M. SELZER Coll. Text, documents, photos
pt. II pp. 226-256

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NOT ALL PAGES NUMBERED, NOT IN NUMERICAL ORDER

No.72/9/14/40-1-Political(EW).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
HOME DEPARTMENT.

New Delhi,(3); the 24th August, 1946.

O R D E R.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Foreigners Act, 1940 (II of 1940), and by section 2 of the Parole Centres Ordinance, 1943 (Ordinance No.XXI of 1943), the Central Government is pleased to cancel the order of the Government of India in the Home Department, No.9/5/44-50-Political(EW), dated the 6th September 1944, requiring Dr. Hermann Markus SELZER to reside in the Parole Centre at Satara.

(V. SHANKAR)
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

==========

NK./23.8.

UNITED NATIONS
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

LIAISON OFFICE
Room 82 'L' Block

Ref. No. U-India-206

New Delhi
7 February 1946

Dr. Hermann M. Selzer
c/o J.R.A. P.O. Box 47
Bombay

Dear Dr. Selzer:

I have to acknowledge receipt of the applications of yourself and of your wife, Dr. Kate Selzer. I am forwarding herewith our more comprehensive application forms, and would request you to kindly fill them up and return them to me. Dr. Kate Selzer may also do the same.

I would like to know if you have any objection to serving in any of the following countries:-

China
Austria
Italy
Germany
Yugoslavia
Czechoslovakia

Please also state in order of preference the countries you would like to be sent to, if selected. It is not the policy of this Administration to send husband and wife together for service and in view of this I would like to know whether there would be any objection to your going abroad, if selected, leaving Dr. Kate Selzer behind.

An early reply would be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

C.A. Seerma
For Henry R. Atkinson
Liaison Officer UNRRA

Enc:

ZER, M.D. Bombay, January 30, 1946.

B. Wood, Esq.
h Consulate,

ir,

I am writing to you to thank you again for
nd hearing you gave me on the occasion of my in-
w with you on 29th inst.

I must confess that the moral strength your
patience gave me will be invaluable as it restored
my old belief in the democracy of the Americans.

I am afraid you will have taken in only part
at I told you in my interview, and I hope you will
mind my repeating to you again in some short sen-
s my arguments against the allegations which are
ght sufficient by this Government to have taken
me and my wife our best years in life.

(1) It is true, I was educated in Germany. Thous-
s of Polish Jewish youths went abroad for their
cation, as the admission of Jews to Colleges and
versities was restricted to 10 % in Poland (numerus
sus). But in the democratic Germany of that time
lived as a Pole.

(2) It is true that my wife was a German; but she
also a Jewess by birth and faith. Her family like
s paid their toll in the Nazi gas chambers. Already
1933, she left Germany for Italy to continue her
dies.

(3) It is true that I went to Italy in 1933. When
as released from the Gestapo jail by the intervent-
of the Polish Government, I had to leave Germany
diately as otherwise I was certain to be rearrested.
id not want to return to Poland, as I was about to
duate and this impossible to me in Poland. Any at-
pt to secure the necessary papers for some other
ntry would have meant the loss of time and the risk
a concentration camp. The only country whereto a
e could go without a visa was Italy. In Italy I
er bothered about its politics; I lived only in the
nics and laboratories as a research worker and my
y scientific publications were its results. When,
ever, in 1937, Hitler's influence came to be felt
Italy, I left that country for a "democratic en-
onment", i.e.India in the British Empire.

(4) That I was known as a "German doctor" is true
not true. Before 1933 there existed 2 categories
doctors in India: English and Indian doctors. But
th the influx of refugees many German physicians
tled here and a third category was formed. Into this
up of "German doctors" all other white non-British
tors were included like Poles, Czechs, Rumanians,
.,by the public at least. I may have been called by
people a "German doctor" but certainly I never
led myself that; everybody knew quite well that I
a Pole and not a German.

(5) It is not true that I ever associated with Ger-
s. The only German who entered my house were:

(a) A certain Baron von Feldheim (or Veldheim) who came to a dentist living in the same house in Srinagar as I, 4, Gupka Road, but with whom I had nothing to do, save giving him once an injection of typhoid vaccine on request of this dentist,

(b) an engineer of Messrs.Siemans who had to repair my electric apparatusses as no Indian could do it.

Otherwise I never associated with Germans; I even fused to attend professionally to any German as there re other doctors available. I never talked to any rman even. The only Germans who came to my house were rman Jewish refugees. Legally these were also Germans t the accusations against me appear in a quite differ t light if these Germans are classified as refugees. body of these is anymore interned.

(6) It is true I associated with a certain Mr.Weiss ohamed Asad) in Lahore. He was an Austrian Jew, jour- list, converted to Islam. He behaved correctly toward , and was,of course, violently anti-Nazi. And why ould I not have associated with him, i.e. have him in- ted now and then in my house ? He was a free man and thing objectionable did I know about him. Why should have thought it an offense in 1938 and 1939 to have lked to him ? We never had any discussions which coul t have been heard by the C.I.D. Why should I have pre- med to be a crime before the war to associate with hi

he authorities themselves let him run about ? There even at that time sufficient laws available to have deported should he have been such a dangerous man. you will realise that in India one is glad to have chance to talk to that rare species - an educated intelligent man.

nd if my association with this Weiss is such an ar- nt against me, why have his best friends not been intern- And why is Weiss himself now free and back in La- ?

7) Government sonsider it suspicious that I myself emplated the possibility of internment. In Lahore e lived another ~~Inixxxkin~~ Polish Jewish doctor who had studied and graduated in Rome, and who also was ed a "German doctor". In summer 1940, he went for hot season to Simla while I was in Srinagar. As we had applied at the outbreak of war to join the Pol- or British Army, he wrote to me proposing an agree- that in case only one of us was called up he other ld take over the practise of his and share out a part the total income to the family of the one called up. greed and proposed to him to extend this agreement to the possibility of illness, accidents, invalidi- misfortune of any kind incl. that vague and ridicul- chance of internment. Why should I not have written ? I knew quite well that the letter would be read the Intelligence Service because it was notified in papers and every letter going to or coming from Sim-

ore the label "opened by Censor". I had nothing to
. I considered everything possible and in that hy-
ical state of this country, and knew quite well the
seful slander of certain English doctors round me.
should I not, having to think of everything, ment-
even the possibility of one of us being interned,
y wife and that of my colleague were pregant at
time. I never was seriously afraid of internment
who thinks of a fire or an accident when taking
an insurance policy ? At that time I was sure to
alled up and not of being interned.

If there had been any real suspicion, why
not my house been searched as in all the other cas-
? If there was really the slightest reason, why was
ot put into jail or into an interment camp as so
y other Jews and refugees ? Instead I was sent dir-
into a Parole Centre. Why have I never been given a
nce to defend myself ? Why did there arrive before
in the Parole Centre a letter from a doctor addres-
to the Commandant saying that a certain individual
ally succeeded in getting me there and asking the
mandant, a certain Colonel Shaw, also of the I.M.S.,
"give me hell" ? He did.

Every unbiased observer will have to ad-
t that these "reasons" are no reasons for a democrat-
country to keep human beings detained for so many
rs.

Why am I detained for so many years and

atened now with repatriation into Soviet territory,
t the same time Nazis, and real members of the Nazi
p, are now released and free, who have gone mad wit
while we were crying, whenever Hitler won a battle,
adored their Hitler's picture hung in their rooms
in the camps, who declared in writing through the
Cross that they believe in and keep trust with the
Government in Germany, who made lists of all those
tes of the camps who were to be shot in case of a
an victory ?

No! These reasons are no reasons at all;
y are only the clay structure which has become alive
active by being animated through personal hatred
tain persons professed against me and by wilfully
ng misinterpretation for the pure purpose of damag-
us. In the Parole Centre Purandhar I was Medical
ficer. I had to and did attend to Nazis and anti-
is with the same sense of duty, however without ever
hanging any friendly word with the Nazis. And the
port goes that I was "associating with all the Nazis
the Camp".

You should believe me when I say that
ere are certain people who want their revenge. And
y succeeded only too well. Not only have I been cut
f from my work, but they have also been successful
having the American Consulate help them in their
heme in spoiling our life and future and getting us
t to Russia.

I hope, that after reaching of t
ter you will have some quite different impress
the matter.

Thanking you,

yours truly

Herm Dr. Selzer

(Hermann M.Selzer)

NSULATE GENERAL OF SWITZERLAND
BOMBAY
IN CHARGE OF ITALIAN INTERESTS

File No. V.It.28.
(Please quote in reply)

Your No. .....

BOMBAY, 19th December 1945.

Maneckjee Wadia Building,
125, Esplanade Road,
Telephone 23738
Telegr. Address: Swisscolat

Dr. H.M. Selzer, M.D.,
c/o the Commandant,
Parole Centre,
SATARA.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 17th instant, I regret to inform you that I cannot grant visas to any one other than Italian Nationals who are being repatriated.

Yours faithfully,

for CONSUL GENERAL FOR SWITZERLAND
IN CHARGE OF ITALIAN INTERESTS.

17 O'Connell Street,
Sydney.

Doctor,

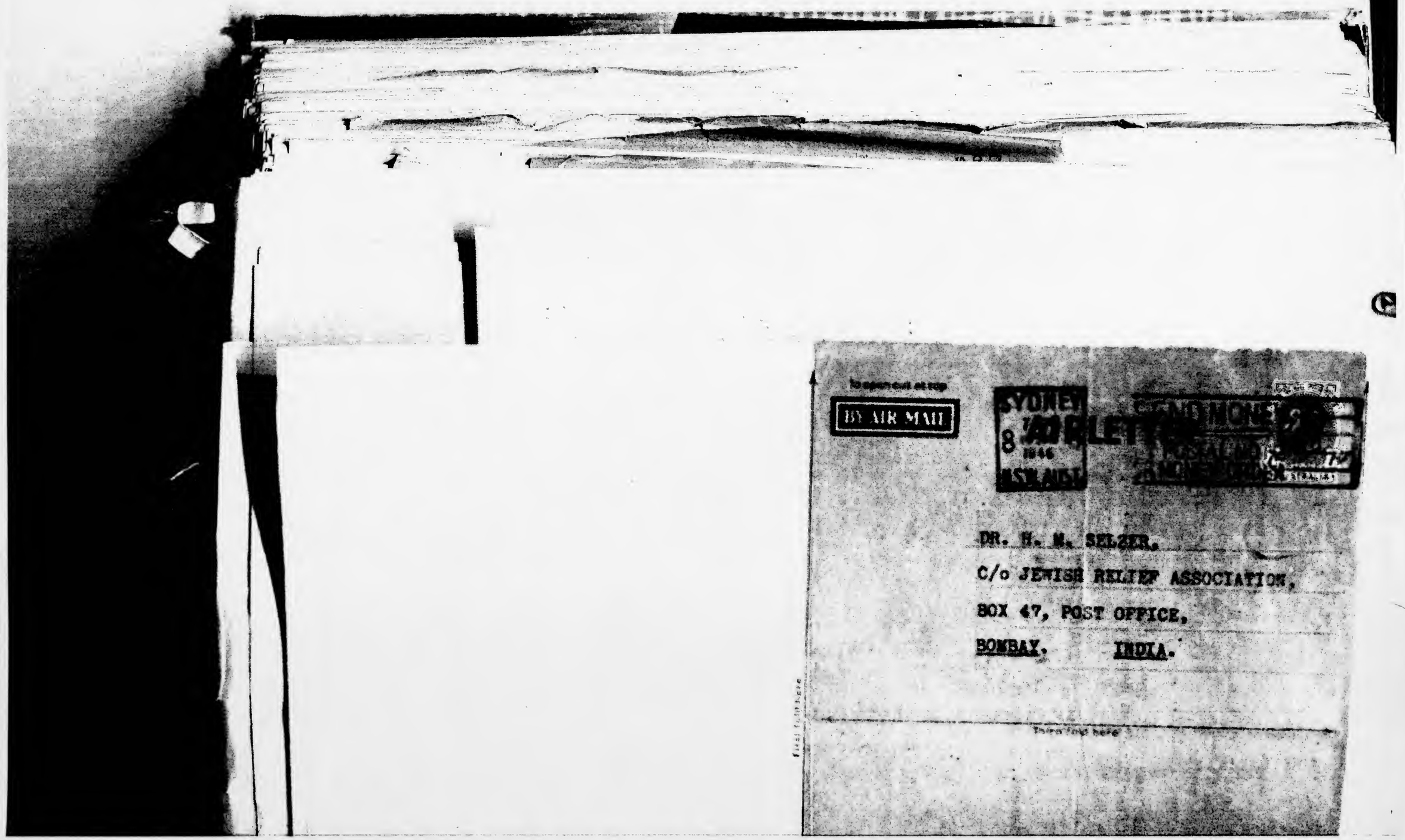
Further to our letter of the 16th May, we would appreciate
you could let us have photographs of all members of your
y, together with medical certificates concerning yourself
he members of your family.

Would you please see that the Certificate also indicates
you are not suffering from mental diseases.

Yours faithfully,

28th JUNE, 1946.

. M. Selzer,
ewish Relief Assn.,
7, P.O.,
Y.


BY AIR MAIL
SYDNEY
8
1946
DR. H. M. SELZER.
C/o JEWISH RELIEF ASSOCIATION,
BOX 47, POST OFFICE,
BOMBAY. INDIA.

SAMUEL H. SIMBLIST, B.A., LL.B., *SOLICITOR*

"Brook House", 17 O'Connell Street
Sydney

REF. GW.BM.

Dear Doctor,

Your letter has been handed to us by Dr. M. Joseph of the Association of New Citizens and we are taking immediate steps to obtain a Landing Permit for you from the Department of Immigration in Canberra.

We have however, to point out that the Department takes the view that Permits should only be granted at the present to applicants in extraordinary circumstances requiring immediate action. We have no doubt that we will eventually succeed in obtaining permission for you to enter this country, but it is the present policy of the Government to issue permits mainly in favour of displaced persons on the Continent, etc.

There seems to be some difficulty in achieving immediate results with regard to people in Shanghai and particularly in India because the Department of Immigration does not share the view which you say is taken by the Indian authorities, namely, that refugees of your description would have to be immediately repatriated from India to Germany.

However, we will make every endeavour to expedite this matter as much as possible and we will again communicate with you as soon as we are able to advise you what progress has been made.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. H. M. Selzer, M.D.,
C/o Jewish Relief Association,
Box 47, P.O.,
BOMBAY.

16th MAY, 1946.

34

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

C.

0 0A

Time of Prefix } Code

Rec'd. from By 28

Sent at _____ H. _____ M.

To _____

By _____

Office Stamp 29 APR 46

Handed in at (Office or Origin) Bombay J | Date 29 | Hour 14 | Minute 5 | Service Instructions | Words 42

Read. here at 18 H. M.

TO

Selzer care Camp COMS
Saturia

= Received following cable newyork twenty-third advise selzer secured letters stop every effort being

N.B.—The name of the Sender, if telegraphed, should be written after, but separated from the text.

N.W.R.—694,22—1945—50,000 P.

the father suspected were due to appendivitis (and his suspicion was justified;the child was operated upon that very night). Berger repied on the phone that he was very sorry indeed that he could not come to see the patient, as he was so very busy. He could give the patient, however, an appointment for 2o days hence.

When we left after a pleasant stay of about two hours the children carried large parcels with toys back home.

I have never forgotten this kind man; but when I wanted to write to him from Lahore that we had been successful in establishing ourselves again, I realized that I lost his name and address. It is a shame, a pity that I never again met or contacted this fine man and wife.

Copy forwarded also to :-
1. The Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Deptt., New Delhi.
2. The Chief Secretary to Govt. of Bombay, Home Deptt., Bombay.
3. The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch(CID), C.I.D., Bombay.
4. The Superintendent of Police, Special Branch, C.I.D., Poona.
5. The Chairman, Joint Cattle Registration Committee.

Reported arrival in Bombay on 22nd May

Registration Officer, Bombay

Reported the change of address from Habib Chambers to Noh. Mehmood Ground Floor Churchgate Mansion also taken up by A Byculla

for Registration Officer, Bombay

F37344

1946: after our release

BEFORE TAG
256

The time came when I was appointed M.O.

Among the internees of the Camp of Purandhar you could find quite a number of interned doctors and it was very convenient for the Government to appoint one of the as Medical Officer instead of sending a doctor from outside. Hamburg was the Camp Medical Officer when we arrived; he was soon thereafter released and Faibush appointed in his stead. After some time also Faibusch was released and a doctor had to be appointed for the vacant post from among those who were still in the Camp. It may be that Holland, the Commandant, tried to be fair; may be that life was so monotonous for him that he wanted to have some fun too. In a sudden upsurge of democracy he ordered a ballot to be taken by which the camp inmates could indicate their preference for a new camp physician. Unfortunately I got the majority of votes and with it the nomination. I say "unfortunately" because it would have been better for me had I kept my hands off this job. But this is not the only instance where democracy and its intrusion into our lives has caused much mischief for us.

The camp had been provided with a hospital: a small brick building in which the two large rooms could have accomodated six beds each; there was also a small entrance hall which could have served as waiting room and there was a small dispensary where medicaments prescribed by the doctors were stored and distributed. However, the hospital did not function for the simple reason that the Commandant did not see any need for such a hospital. In this way he avoided the need to increase the medical and nursing staff. He once told me in a week moment that he feared the inmates might take advantage of such a hospital and with the help of dishonest doctors spend too much of their time there. He must have had strange experiences in the past. He decreed therefore that patients could be treated equally well in their quarters and that all medical services could be applied as well in the private rooms of the patients as in any hospital. He did not deny that once in a while a serious case might occur and according to his calculations it would have been cheaper to send such serious cases to the Government Hospital in Poona.

Office of the
Superintendent, Parole Centre,
Purandhar 12th April 1942

H.M.Selzer, M.D.,
Parole Centre, Purandhar.

...release of Dr.Fabisch the appointment of ...Assistant Medical Officer will be necessary ... consult the whole body of internees ... would like because to my opinion, ... are the people most concerned. The voting will not be notified yet I shall ... influenced by such results ... to the Government of India ... are not bound by the result of ... You please therefore intimate ... if you want to be considered as a candidate ... You also would be willing & desirous to stay on (should you be appointed) when the camp is transferred into ... family camp (which will be not wholly but preponderatingly Nazi & Fascist families.) ... acceptance of nomination as a ... the vote must be taken to imply that ... to forfeit Rs.10/- to some War Charity, if ... secure 10 % of the total votes. Every ... will be allowed to give a vote.

... reply to this reference before Monday, ... April 1942 3 p.m.

Yours faithfully,

Superintendent, Parole Centre,
PURANDHAR.

Office of the
ndent, Parole Centre,
ar 13th April 1942.

M.Selzer,
Parole Centre,Purandhar.

r.

ference your letter of
il 1942.

You are nominated as a
ate.

If you get less than 10% of
es you will have to pay
-.

I understand your can-
are is for the camp as at
nt constituted - not when the
is transformed into a Basi

Applicant is without
ge to question of release.

Yours faithfully,

Supdt.Parole Centre, Purandhar.

And this was the way things were done. Whoever was in need of my services sent me a message to this effect and I visited the patient in his room. The patient would receive from me one or more prescriptions for one or more of the nearly 300 kinds of mixtures,powders or tablets stored in our own dispensary and the doctor who was in charge of this array of coloured mixtures and variegated powders would then dispense the prescribed medication. In that very rare case where surgery was needed or an x-ray required, I would apply in writing to the Commandant and it depended entirely on his judgement if my request was justified. His was the final and ultimate decision and it depended on his esteem for the doctor,on the opinion he had of the patient,any grudge he might harbour and also at times on his experience in "similar cases" among his friends,his family or his subordinates, sometimes somewhere in the past. I had the impression that much depended also on the state of his digestion as I could not otherwise explain in many an instance his opinion and his decision. In the exceptional case, however, when he agreed that the patient could be transferred to the General Government Hospital in Poona a further exchange of small notes between myself and Holland was necessary to settle if a litter carried by coolies was required or if the patient could use his own legs and walk the steep road from the camp to the bus stop and back again. It rarely happened that a litter was granted which is a pity as the coolies benefitted as much as the patient. I cannot rmember a single case where he ever granted the expenses for an ambulance although such requests for made many a time; for we had quite a few serious cases which we had to refer to specialists and also some minor surgical interventions which had to be done in the Poona Hospital. But all in all we were very lucky.

The medicaments I was allowed to prescribe were those used all over India in the primitive village dispensaries maintained by Government. Holland insisted that we had no right to demand a higher standard than the village dispensaries. I was allowed to order from a big catalogue issued by the Central Government Depot every six months medicaments to the value of Rs.5000.-. The majority of the supply I received consisted of the manifold digestive-,cold-,tonic-mixtures which the primitive pharmacopeia permitted. Of course there was also castor oil aplenty and also aspirin, while quinine and sulfa drugs could

Purandhar

To:- The Chief Secretary
to the Government of India
Home Department (Political)
New Delhi

Sir,

My wife is expecting her first baby some time in May.

Apart from the natural apprehension and worry accompanying a first pregnancy, her mind has been adversely influenced by recent misadventures to other wives now residing here, premature confinements, Caesarean operations, and the like, resulting in the babies' death and endangering the mothers' lives; misadventures which my wife firmly believes were a consequence of the different camps' isolated positions, in cases where a few hours or an untimely removal can be decisive.

Another consideration, however, enhances my own anxiety. Certain internal complications from which my wife has been suffering previously make it possible that the confinement may not take an altogether normal course so that the facilities at the disposal of our Camp Medical Officer may prove inadequate in an emergency.

My wife having been at the Satara Parole Camp before is much impressed with the hospital arrangements there, particularly as the nearness of the hospital minimizes the chances of accidents. To our greatest regret we heard from our Commandant that he cannot forward the petition for our temporary transfer to Satara for my wife's confinement and for a period of two months before the baby is expected.

I am most anxious to remove from my wife's mind any undue apprehension in her present condition and if, therefore, our temporary residence at Satara for her confinement cannot be granted, I am even willing to be transferred there permanently although I am anti-Nazi and should for my political views have preferred residence at Purandhar.

It is my petition, therefore, that you may be kind enough to allow us to go to Satara, either temporarily from early February to my wife's confinement, or permanently if this is unavoidable.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

Purandhar the 14 January 1943

To:- The Chief Secretary
to the Government of India
Home Department (Political)
New Delhi

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I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

PURANDHAR 15TH FEBRUARY 1943.

To

Dr. Selzer, R.M.O., Purandhar.

Dear Sir,

Regarding the nursing and medical arrangements I would like to say at the outset the arrangements are not improvised but distinctly good. This is not Berlin, Vienna or London and any one who comes to India must be prepared to accept the medical arrangements prevalent in the country. The whole country is divided into " districts " each of 4000 to 5000 square miles. Each district has a population of between 7,50,000 and 12,50,000 people. There is one Civil Hospital at Dist.Head Quarters and small Government dispensaries located about the district. There are very few private medical practitioners and no nurses away from towns. All District Officers and their families who spend a good part of their lives on tour live in these medical conditions. If they or their families are ill on tour they call in the local Sub Assistant Surgeon (like the Medical Officer at Saswad). If they get more serious they return to their district Head Quarters and there get treatment at or from the Civil Hospital - nearly always at home by the doctor who visits. For more specialized treatments they must go to Bombay. There are as a rule no dentists. For dental treatment one must often go hundreds of miles. In Belgaum where I recently visited and where there is a big Cadet School (many Cadets are Medical) plus the usual Civil Officers, there is no Government dentist and only one private Indian dentist in the town. Those not satisified must go all the way to Poona.

2. By-comparison therefore the 300 people at Purandhar, with a R.M.O. and various other Honorary doctors and two part time nurses and a well supplied dispensary and a dentist, with further service available at the Sassoon Hospital 27 miles away, are very well off. I myself left a village in England with 3000 people (there were 12,000 in the whole area of about 6 miles round returns) and we had 3 doctors no hospital and one district nurse. Cases too severe for the local doctors were sent off to hospitals 25 miles away. The essential point to remember is the medical arrangements here are for all ordinary and emergent treatment. Hospital cases are provided for at the Sassoon Hospital where the various specialists - eye - E N & T, Skin, Radiologist

----p.t.o.

pathologists - are installed. We cannot compete with that on a hill top. Whatever is done, the patient will want to see somebody else. A certain patient recently went to Bombay and the Surgeon there wrote me " Why does not she get the operation done in Poona?" . Patients in Satara are sent to Poona, yet sometimes patients here who could go to Poona desire to go to Satara.

3. As regards the specific ~~part~~ pond of the two part time nurses, I am quite ready to accept the solution suggested in your pen-ultimate paragraph. The"part time nurse "/system was adapted at the request of the nurses who were unwilling to serve full time; then Mrs.Ghose to whom I put the question " How do you like your duties ? " replied " I like the work but have not enough to do ". This did not indicate a full time nurse was necessary. In this type of work there must be rush and quiet periods. One swallow does not make a Summer and one Pneumonia-case does not alter the position. If the case had persisted there on half a dozen places where the patient could be isolated - eg. in a cubicle in No.2 barrack with bath room attached and quite near to food arrangements. There is a closed room you once yourself suggested for Mr.Kleinzeller a sick patient. But fortunately the case is already a lot better, [illegible]

If Mr. de Fries and Mrs. Ghose are willing to x be engaged as " full time nurses " (48 hours a week), I am willing to engage both from 1st March 1943 on Rs.40/- each. Of-ten enough there will be no work to keep them engaged for the maximum period : they must be prepared to adapt themselves - sometimes to longer hours and sometimes to shorter.

Yours sincerely,

[illegible]

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Pamanzibar.

To .....

The Resident Medical Officer,
Purandhar.

Dear Sir,

I have considered your report on medical attention and no doubt strictly from the professional standpoint the criticisms are justificable But I do not consider them justificable on other grounds.

Firstly :- this is a very small community located in a Sanatorium with the best quality water, I have found in 30 years in India. (I have never had chlorinated water before - my water has come from an ordinary well into which people drop their buckets - we boiled our drinking water in a Kettle and had no trouble). The climate likewise is excellent. Soldiers and other families were sent here to recuperate. I find the medical attention is 9 times that available in England where the average is 1 doctor for 2250 people. In the area I left in England there was one Central Hospital and 2 or 3 small private hospitals for 100000 people. I know of no village like Purandhar with 250 people which gets a regular hospital. A country doctor goes for miles on his rounds and treats his patients at home ; here everything is within a mile.

previous - now 2750.

Secondly I consider people far too fussy and I am not inclined to encourage them in this. I suspect all these bacteriological examinations of certain persons who have or think they may have something help to create alarm. I see no reason why persons should not get the same home treatment they would get either in England or presumably in Germany. If the case is too serious it should go to Poona where they have all facilities - surgical, bacteriological and clinical.

People here have got to learn to help themselves and not run to the Government with every ache and pain : Where could they do that in the countries whence they have come ?. When a person is ill friends help. They have no other duties here : They have time for Bridge Parties - some from morning till evening : They must make time to help one another.

NURSES :- The last remark applies here. There is an adult female population of 100 and I have had the greatest difficulty in getting one female nurse. Finally after many changes one was obtainable as a part time...p.t.o.

a part time nurse. I am certainly not going to take any steps to import a nurse. I have never had a nurse to attend to myself or my wife at home in 30 years, often in bad climate and for the greater period when I was alone. When the Parolees of this Camp show some inclination to help themselves by providing one full time Nurse, it will be time enough to consider appointing two. At present the part time Woman Nurse has resigned. If Parolees cannot find a Nurse they will have to do without like I do myself.

In short 8 doctors and 2 nurses for 250 people I consider more than sufficient - in fact the very plethora of doctors tends to make people far more fussy than they would be with normal medical facilities. If any member of the European population in Poona is ill he or she will go to the Sassoon Hospital if they are too serious to be dealt with at home. But I notice in this Camp an aversion to this treatment, they want some special treatment. I cannot encourage these fancies in War time.

Yours truly,

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Purandhar.

P.S. :- In case of real emergency the set of rooms with bath room complete, formerly used by Mr.Berg can be used. It is near the Kitchen and has all facilities.

be ordered in limited quantities,by order of the Commandant. This restriction applied also to bandages,splints,iodine,spirit, syringes as these items were also required by the troups and the military installations in general. The final list which the M.O. submitted underwent some further reductions at the hands of the Commandant, but I have never been able to find out what criteria he used.

Thinking back to those times I am amazed how few and rare were the serious cases with which we were confronted. Do not overlook that we were every year exposed for many months to the riguors of a very severe monsoon,that we had no adequate heating,that we had to cope with all kinds of insects and bugs, that our nutrition though sufficient was in no way ideal, that the standard of medication available was below that one expected in the civilized parts of the country even before the antibiotic era, that we had many small children and many old people in the camp,that we lived under great stress psychologically and emotionally. Still, out of the 350 prisoners who lived on an average in the camp only one person died - Mrs. Geduldig,as I have told you already - and one baby of whom I am going to tell you now. The tale may give you an idea of the situation I and others before me ,had to face as M.O.

We had a strange couple among our inmates. He was a polish-jewish artist and she an anglo-indian christian. Both were about 40 years old. The woman became pregnant and it was quite clear to us that we were going to face great problems with her as this was going to be her first baby. During the months I watched her and handled the many minor complications, I became convinced that the patient should be transferred to Poona as we would not be able to handle her in the camp. Repeatedly I asked for the transfer and every time I was refused. When her pains started and after they had gone on for 24 hours without any progress, I requested an ambulance to take her to Poona. Holland refused. He behaved as if he considered an impertinence of the woman to have become pregnant. I was helped by Dr. Laser who had considerable obstetric experience and after many a bad moment - the least one ,the least problematic one, was that the nurse holding the hurricane lamp by the light of which we wroked (did I tell you that we had no electric light in the camp ?) hit the baby's head - the child was born. It died a week later,

It would also have died had it entered this world in Poona or had Holland agreed the severely ill baby to the hospital ,because in those days we did not know yet about Rh-factor and blood exchange.

I was paid a monthly salary of Rs.150.- and I shared this money with two other doctors: Laser who worked in the dispensary and Seide who accompanied me on my rounds or took on some work when I was otherwise busy. We were allowed the sum of Rs.50 for a nurse, but we managed to "engage" two of the women in our Camp who had nursing experience and we paid them Rs.25.- each.

And so I worked as Camp Doctor. On the slips the Commandant sent me I was pompously called the M.O. Most of the day I was busy,calling on the patients who asked for my visit. You may believe me: in the monsoon months it was no pleasure to make these rounds through the downpour whch could go on for days on end. But we survived. Unavoidably my medical activities brought me in contact also with the Nazi inmates. I was the only one of our group to do so. I must state here that the Nazis were always polite,always correct,even in the pre-Stalingrad days. At times they took pity on me and offered me a hot drink or a fresh cigar, but they understood quite well why I refused. To those who insisted I made my refusal clear by looking at the picture of their hero Hitler which adorned at least one wall of their room.

All my medical activities came to an end,not because I was released like all my predecessors,because there came finally the moment when I collided with Holland ,our beloved Commandant.

As a rule - as you have already noticed - I step aside whenever the cymbals clash and the trumpets sound in a wagnerian indication that a dramatic event is taking place and I look at myself with a muttered "You bloody fool". I have always thus sat in judgememtn on myself at every turn of events. At this stage I do so too, but I can assure you that this time I have the right to claim attenuating circumstances: there is a limit to humiliations even a man with a philosophical pair of glasses on his running nose can tolerate and beyond which he has to explode in order to keep his self-respect and his sanity. Understand in addition that at this stage in my life I was anything but a philosopher.

" Se tacuisses - sapientior fuisses "

Let me explain to you tht this is a Latin proverb, in case you have not realized this by yourself already. It means in good but free english translation: " You bloody fool ! Why didn't you keep your mouth shut ?" Had I followed this precept,had I asked myself this question before I opened my mouth, much might have been different. But I ask myself at times, who knows if it would have been better indeed. Perhaps, after all, my fate had to be pushed into a direction which though at times cruel in appearance was possibly in the long run the best march order for us ?

You must have been curious to know more about my break with the Hollands - let us say better,when they lost all kind of sympathy for me -about my demotion from the job of M.O. and about our transfer to another camp. Here is all the information you might wish to have.

One fine day the Camp was visited by Dr.Hubner,the Directer of the International Red Cross in Geneva, who had come to India to check among other things also on the internment camps The Red Cross did good work through all the war years, I am told; but such an organization can only function if there is a vestige of democracy or decency for them to deal with. I do not blame this organization that it had never insisted on checking the concentration camps in Germany. After all, also more powerful organizations like the churches and the allied governments did not show much interest in the fate of the Jews in the concentration camps - and these very organizations knew very well what was going on there.

It was a good thing that the Indian Government was aware that the IRC could at any time demand to inspect the ways the interned enemy aliens were treated. It was a very good thing that the camp commandants knew that the IRC representative could any day poke his Swiss nose into their affairs. This made it obligatory that a a certain standard of decency and a tolerable state of order was kept in these camps. The only deplorable thing was

the fact that the only visit a man of the IRC ever paid to the Camp had to happen while I was the M.O. ,when I was sick of all the frustrations and humiliations I had accumulated.

I was also physically sick when Dr. Hubner came. I was in bed with high fever and the visitor sat next to my bed.

After we had exhanged the appropriate polite questions and answers, he cameat once to the point.

" I have received complaints about you", he started.

? ? ?

" Not about you personally, of course,but about your work "

? ? ?

" I was told that you have treated your typhoid cases in the open cubicles adjoining the dining room "

This was true. Two months before we had a small typhoid epidemic, you might say a mild epidemic, which was soon over without any complications or causing us undue difficulties. It was also true that some of the victims,some bachelors, had been living in cubicles parrtitioned off the dining room. The dining halls were since long out of use as by that time the Contractor had already terminated his contract,but the bachelors had formed a cooperative and were using part of one of the dining halls. The remaining portion of the dininghall had been subdivided into cubicles for the bachelors who had never had single accomodations before and who had welcomed this arrengement.

" This is true, Dr. Huber", I replied. " We had a small typhoid epidemic and I had to treat the patients wherever they lived, and as some of them lived in the cubicles off the dining hall, I had to treat them there".

" Don't you think it was necessary to isolate these patients ?", he asked. "And don't you agree that of all places a dining facility would be the most unsuitable neighbourhood for typhoid patients ?"

" I fully agree. I agree with you in every detail. But under the given conditions this was the only solutan possibly. There was no other way to handle this epidemic. Of course, I would have preferred to send all such cases to the Isolation Hospital in Poona, but to think even of such a step is too ludicrous for words".

" I do not understand you", repleid Huber, and he truly

appeared puzzled. " You have a perfectly good hospital at your disposal,where you could have put up these patients; but when I went through the place I noticed that you have never used it, never even organized it. I was told that you never bothered to take over the place".

" Is this so ?", I came back,possibly more heated and more aggressive because I was not feeling too well. " So,you have seen the hospital. And you have also seen that the one large room contains a broken chair and the other a broken chamber pot. THis is all there is in the hospital. You want me to put patients into these rooms ? Did Holland tell you that you that I have on more than one occasion begged him to let me clean up the place, to put in furniture,in short to make that place into a real hospital. Did he tell you that also the previous M.O.s have tried to get the hospital going ? Every time we mentioned this subject we have been told that there is a war going on,that there is no money available for such luxuries, and that we have to be satisfied with what we have got ".

" I think your Commandant is right", was the surprising reply of the IRC=man "With the money you have available for medical purposes you could easily run a small hospital like this".

I looked at the man as if I was delirious.

" What do you say ? What money ? Have you also fever or am I so ill as to hear badly.? Do you know that I have to fight for every prescription which is beyond aspirin,castor oil and the eternal and useless mixtures ? Do you know that whenever I want to send a patient for an x-ray to Poona or whenever I ask for a specialized opinion from that hospital, I am told that there is no money available,that not enough has been budgetted for such extravagances ? Has Holland told you that last month I lost a baby because the Commandant refused to send the old primipara,who was so certain to have a difficult delivery,to the hospital in Poona ?"

I realized now and learned to mysurprise that Hubert had as much reason to think me incomprehensible as I had thought of him. It was very simple :

" I cannot agree with you", he told. " I know that everything is getting more and more expensive, but with a little

care and economy you can cover all your expenses,also those involved in the occasional transfer of a patient to Poona,from the monthly budget of Rs.5000.- at your disposal".

" Rs.5000.- ?", I asked. " Are you serious ? What are you talking about ? I have no Rs.5000.- a month, I have only Rs.5000.- every six months for the purchase of the powders,mixtures,tablets I have to order from the Central Government Depot. There is no budget for x-rays,for hospital visits,for any additional expense, for any hospital equipment".

To cut a long story short, I learned from Dr. Huber that there was a medical budget for the Camp. Rs.5000.- were avilable every month for the hospital expenses. Of the M.O.s salary which was fixed at Rs.1500.- a month I received only Rs.150.- There was also provision for two nruses at a monthly salary of Rs.350.- each but I knew only of Rs. 50.- for the two of them.

I do not have to tell you that I was surprised and shocked. I do not have to tell you that also Huber was surprised,though he did not appear shocked. This man must have had much experience in such matters, I am sure. His surprise was mainly about the chuzpa,the impertinence of our man Holland to take such a large sliceof the budget for his own pocket. As a rule others in his position were more modest.

When Huber left he not only apologized, but he also said:

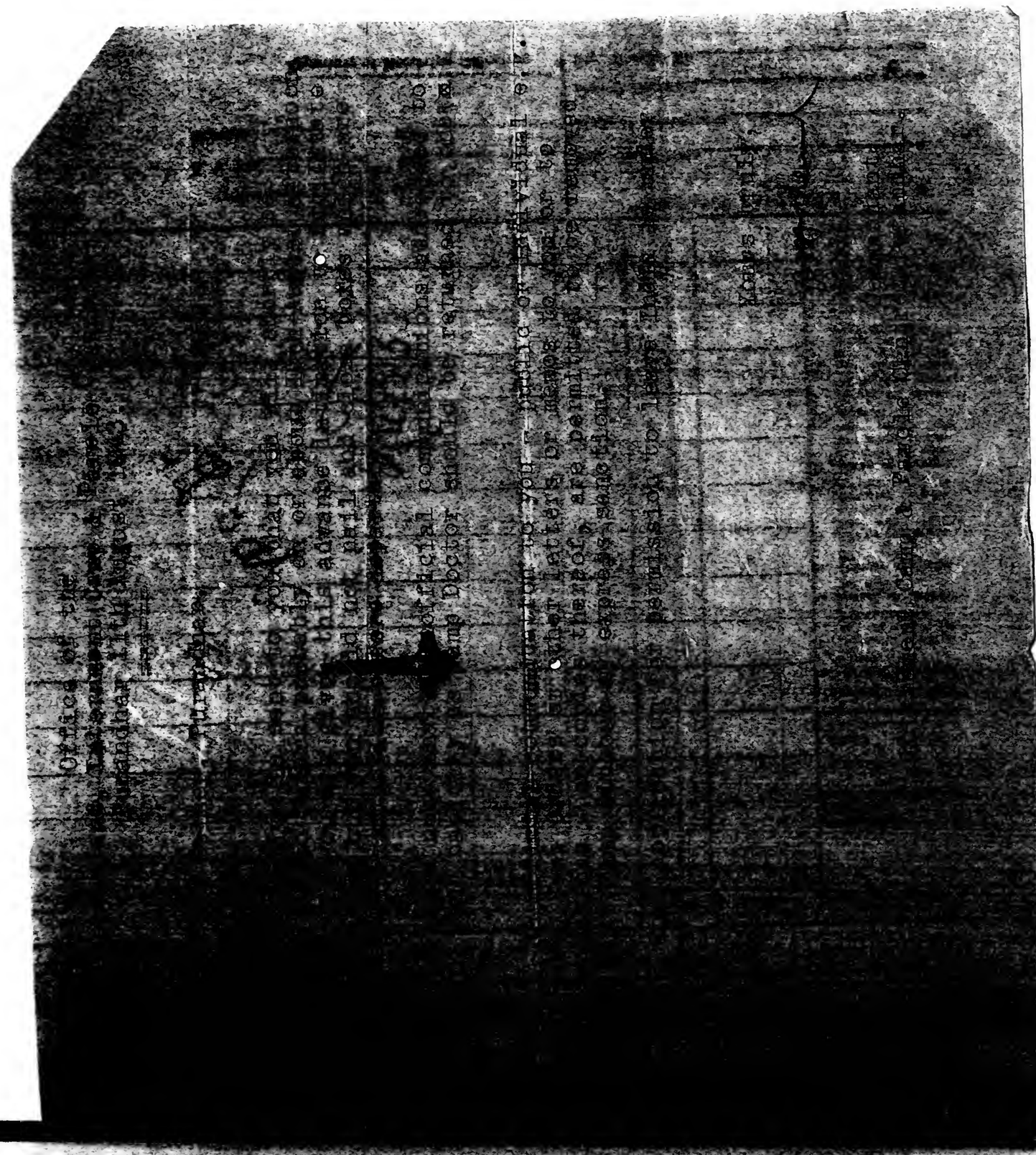
" You know ? Not only in Germany are human rights trample underfoot ".

" Se tacuisses ...." but I did not keep quiet. In my indignation,in my stupidity,in my search for revanche and exploding over the frustrations I had all along experienced, I told my friends about this interview. I was surprised that not everybody was surprised. Many had expected this to be the case and they pittied me for my innocence and optimism. What shall I tell you? Withing a few days, no within a few hours,everybody knew about the nice income Holland had made from his parsimonal treatment of the medical side of our problems. There was much anger and unrest, especially from the side of those who thought their health would have benefitted had the money been available which they thought could have been used for better medicines,for a visit to Poona etc

An order was issued from the Commandant's Office: I was suspended with immediate effect from my job as M.O.. My " assistant" Dr. Seide was appointed my successor. The consequence was that the unrest increased,that more protests were voiced,that people demonstrated - unfortunately mainly the Nazis - and that I was feeling very foolish. Holland could report to Delhi that I was causing riots and unrest,that the Nazis rallied behind me - and he demanded that I be sent to another camp.

Holland was, of course, not punished for his embezzlement. Government never does such things - at once. A year or so later when the time was ripe, and nobody might have thought there was any connection with his dishonesty - he was replaced.

It stands to reason that the moment Seide took over,he avoided an y further contact with me. Poor fellow. May he live long and happy. (He settled in Dacca, in East Pakistan, and came to visit us with wife and children one day in Lahore. He was as much a "nebbich" as he had been before. He emigrated from Dacca in the late sixties, I do not know where to).



No. 1962

Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar 23rd August, 1943.

To :-

Dr. H. M. Selzer, M. D.,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Satara.

Reference your wire of 22nd August, 1943.

Your kit has already left via. Jejuri yesterday and cannot be held up as we are responsible to deliver the same to the place where the parolee is transferred at Government expense and this is now done.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Purandhar.

spk.

Marching Orders.

There was unrest and agitation in the Camp.

It began in July 1943 and continued into August. People were angry and their helplessness made them express their anger in tones and words which only an intelligent commandant would have understood as harmless. People recalled now events and situations where the lack of certain medicines or the callous refusal of specialized treatment had caused unnecessary hardship and suffering. Until that moment a state of apathy,a kind of resignation regarding all that had occurred or had not occurred had become evident, but the news that the Commandant had pocketted the money Government had allottedfor the health and wellbeing of the internees,removed that apathy and made resentment and frustration again come to the foreground and to be voiced in protests. Prople grumbled, people protested. At the same time there was reluctance to associate even in these protest actions with the Nazis who in their exuberance and their expectation of the unavoidably coming victory never missed an opportunity to disturb the harmony of the camp or cause embarrassement to the Government.

I was aghast about the reaction I appeared to have caused It had become impossible to stem or to deviate what I had unconsciously started. Holland was well informed about every aspect of the situation; my neighbour reported everything she heard through the partitioning wall. Had she been provided with a listening device ?

I was, of course, immediately suspended from my duties and in early August the rumours started that I was going to be transferred to Satara. And so it happened. On August 22 we were sent to the Camp of Satara. We were allowed sufficient time to pack a few cases with our belongings, but as I had mentioned to one single friend only,to Hans Zuckerbaecker, that I was going to take with me all the hundreds of slips Holland had sent me over the months and from which sufficient material could be culled for a humoristic book, it could only have been my neighbour who had overheard us and had informed the

No. 1873
Office of the
Commandant, Internment Camp &
Purandhar

TRANSFER ORDER :-

The following transfer arrangements are made :-

I :- Dr. & Mrs. H. M. SELZER & 2 CHILDREN :-

PURANDHAR CAMP TO SATARA CAMP :-

(a) HEAVY LUGGAGE :- All packages should be ready by noon on THURSDAY the 19th August 1943 at latest. All packages be examined by Mr. Dalal and locked or nailed up and taken into tody as ready. If all the heavy baggage is ready before the above te it can be despatched earlier if desired.

(b) LIGHT BAGGAGE :- This is limited to 3 maunds for ch ticket (1 maund free on ticket etc. 2 maunds paid by the Government) s will go by Passenger Train. This should accompany Dr. & Mrs. er by the afternoon bus on FRIDAY . All baggage will be examined ore departure.

(c) DEPARTURE (AUGUST 20th) :- The party will ve under escort of a Head Constable on 20th August 1943 by the ernoon bus and will halt at Poona Station that night and catch the 7.30 A.M. Train - AUGUST 21ST :- arrive SATARA-ROAD about 11.30 A.M. or d will proceed by bus to the Camp. The Commandant of the Internment p and Parole Centre, Satara is requested to reserve accommodation the bus.

==========

II :- Dr. & Mrs. ARIAS from SATARA :-

The escort taking Dr. & Mrs. Selzer and two hildren will bring back Dr. C. R. Arias and his mother Mrs. Arias to URANDHAR the same day - halt the night at Poona Station (21st) and ome to the Camp by the morning bus on SUNDAY the 22nd August 1943.

==========

I :- is at Government expense.

II :- is at transferees' expense.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Purandhar.

Copies to :-

(i) Dr. Selzer, Purandhar, for information.

(ii) S. I. Dalal for information.

Commandant of my intention. He threatened me with the search of my belongings if I did not voluntarily return all these slips,orders, informations and demands he had sent me. I returned most of them,kept a large number of them. Dalal,the policeman who had been ordered to search our luggage ,never did so; it seems to me he felt ashamed on Holland's behalf.

On August 22 we were taken under guard by bus to the railway station in Poona where we spent the night, about 12 hours in all ,in the waitingroom of the station. We travelled next morning by train to Satara station from where an autobus took us tb the camp. The journey lasted all in all 25 hours,certainly not a pleasurable outing if you are accompanied by two small children. It would have taken us at the most three hours and would not have cost Government more, had we been taken by a bus straight from Purandhar to Satara. Clearly Holland did not want to forego this last opportunity to have his revenge.

It was a hot and humid day when we arrived but we were glad to have arrived. We welcomed even the dismal quarters we had been allotted. For I was told at once by Fern,the Commandant that orders from Government had made it clear that we were not to be given any facilities whatsoever which differed from those granted to the average internee, and that I was under no circumstance to be allowed to work as a physician.

No.9/5/44- 50 -Polit.(E).
Government of India,
Home Department.

New Delhi, the 6th September, 1944.

O R D E R.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Foreigners Act, 1940(II of 1940), and by section 2 of Parole Centres Ordinance, 1943(Ordinance No.XXI of 1943), and in supersession of the Order of the Government of India in the Home Department No. 66/15/40-Poll(E) , dated the 29th November, 1940, the Central Government is pleased to direct that the foreigner known as Dr. Hermann Markus SELZER -

shall, until further orders, reside in the Parole Centre at Satara; and shall, while residing therein, be subject to the provisions of the Foreigners (Parolees) Order, 1943.

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

-

(9.8.)D.

Satara Camp.

Also Satara Camp had formerly been a military camp and this made it easy to accomodate the large number of internees, to watch them and to keep them under control. As I have mentioned earlier, the camp consisted of three wings. We were taken to the "anti-Nazi wing", where Jews and a certain number of courageous Germans and Italians who had openly renounced their own governments, were accomodated. There were also a number of missionaries who for reasons I cannot fathom were considered a priori anti-Nazis although, with very few exceptions they were outspoken, some even ferocious Nazis, and above all they were all Jew haters. The centre of the camp was taken up by a large meadow around which barracks, small brick houses (formerly used by servants and some well-built brick-houses (formerly used by officers) were arraigned.

A half-mile away to the north was the German Nazi wing where similar baracks and similar houses harboured those who claimed Hitler their leader and Goebbels their mentor. This wing harboured also a large swimming pool and, fortunately, conditions were better here than in Dehra Dun as the Jews were allowed to use the swimming pool also in those times when Hitler's armies were victorious in Europe.

About a mile to the east was the Italian camp. The fascists of this camp tried to make up for the disrespect shown to them by their Nazi comrades and for the poor military showing of Mussolini in Europe and elsewhere by a greater ferocity in their antisemitic expressions and exhibitions. An avenue lined by more than a hundred old trees leading from our to their camp was shown to have been mapped in anticipationof the coming victory I was assured that also my name, newcomer though I was, figured already in that map insofar as a tree had also been reserved for me to be hung on during the first day of the victory celebrations.

The Commandant of all three camps was Fern, a retired

Police Inspector. I have not understood then nor do I so now how the Indian Government,even if intending to downgrade the internees,to spoil their morale or to humiliate them,could have appointed such a low-ranking policeman who was in addition such a crude, illiterate and vicious old man,to such a job. (I can only explain this gesture by visualizing the Dy.Secretary of the Home Department,V.Shankar, making in this way a demonstration of his true feelings with regard to Europeans ,in respect of his experience in England in his youth and the constant sense of humiliation and frustrations he must have experienced even in his exalt ed position of the moment). Fern was an Anglo-India,grossly overweight, and if ever at any week moment a spark of sympathy might have been awakened in your breast when you stood in front of him, facing this clearly unhappy individual, you may be sure that this sentiment would have been killed at once by the gross language he liked to use. He had many enemies, the worst among them his own wife who never missed an opportunity to make him appear ridiculous. She did not hesitate to curse him in public and to make him understand in the presence of our people that his exalted position was in her eyes nothing but a crude joke afflicted on all ,him and her included, by some joker in Government. If he tried to revenge himself on her by flirting with the blondest of German women (he pointed out to everyone at least once that his first wife had been image of such a blond woman) or ifshe had begun with her vilifications of his manhood only in consequence of his behaviour, is beyond my knowledge.

I do not know how much Fern"made on the side" , how much he took in bribes; there were many rumours,many had even clear proof, but such kind of behaviour was expected from a man of his kind and in his position. In any case, he was certainly more experienced and more adapt in this game than Holland . I personaly did not pay him ever any bribe, but had after some time to give in to his hints and allusions,his demands even, that I had to sell the Voigtlaender and Leica cameras we owned and which he kept in safekeeping. We had to give in after holding out for a long time and we had to let him sell the cameras on our behalf.He brought us back a very ridiculous price, but what could you do ? He sold our cameras and the hundreds whoch belonged to the other internees

to a shop in Bombay . This shop was owned by his nephew and he was himself a partner in the business.

Officially we anti-Nazis were supposed to be also "parolees" but this was a prerogative on paper only. Hardly ever was one of us permitted to go to Poona to buy urgently needed items for the children; hardly ever was anybody of us ever sent to the hospital in Poona - but the Nazis were given all these facilities. They could go on such trips to Bombay; they could bring in food and alcohol without any control. In the evenings they visited the Commandant in his bungalow there to listen to radio bulletins from Germany. They were always sure of Fern's protection whenever a Jew or anti-Nazi complained about them. In one case Fern forged even medical certificates to the effect that a certain Mrs.Schlueter,one of the blood Nazi women who resembled so much his first wife,was dying of cancer with the result that she and her husband were released so that"they could spend her last few weeks of life in freedom". Schlueter who had been the representative of the large pharmaceutical concern Schering A-G,had also been the commissar for "Rassenkunde", i.e. the specialist of the Nazi Party in India for racial purity - he decided who was an aryan and who not- was released along with his wife, who thereafter was miraculously cured and di not die as expected. (In 1949 Schlueter came to visit me in Lahore telling me of the good health of his wife; but since that visit I have for many years stopped prescribing any medicament of Schering's which Schlueter tried to make me patronize).

Satara was a sad camp. It was even sadder than Purandhar. Though the heat was often unbearable in summer,climatic and living conditions were preferable to those in Prandhar. But it was a sad camp. People were depressed,listless; they had lost that spark of hope which makes you accept with tolerance which is intolerable. The rude Commandant,the strutting Nazis,the string of allied defeats of which we learned from the newspapers (we were allowed local papers but not a radio),the waning interest of friends outside in us, and the growing surfeit of us the JRA could not hide. However, there was no bickering in the Camp,no fighting among the people of our camp. They had formed themselves into small circles and groups; there was no strife, no competition, nor any interference between these groups Every one was friendly and helpful. Much was due to the fact that nobody tried to get favours

from the Commandant - it would have been considered shameful to count among his favourites - and there was hardly any informing.

Camp conditions were especially good for the children. Pipsi and Michael never had the feeling that they were missing anything in their lives. The camp was their world,they had no memories of the past,of any past. All adults were friendly and kind to the children, and there were always many children with whom to play. The camp was isolated,closed and there was no motorized traffic. Children could go and play wherever they wanted and we had not to fear that they might go astray. The school system was well organized,mainly by the Germans and although the school population was a mixture of Jewish and Christian,Nazi and non-Nazi background,nothing of all which agitated the adults and their world was ever allowed to reflect into the classrooms. This I must state in all honesty: although many of the teachers were Nazis or missionaries, they never tried to infiltrate their own ideas or otherwise to influence the children. I do not believe they did so out of decency or honesty -the fear that they might cause sufficient trouble to face the danger of being sent to the camp of Dehra Dun was most likely the strongest motive.

I am sure that our children had their best days while in Satara,not only because they had so many friends,not because they had a balanced life,but because we adults had reached that state of resignation which makes you appear at peace.

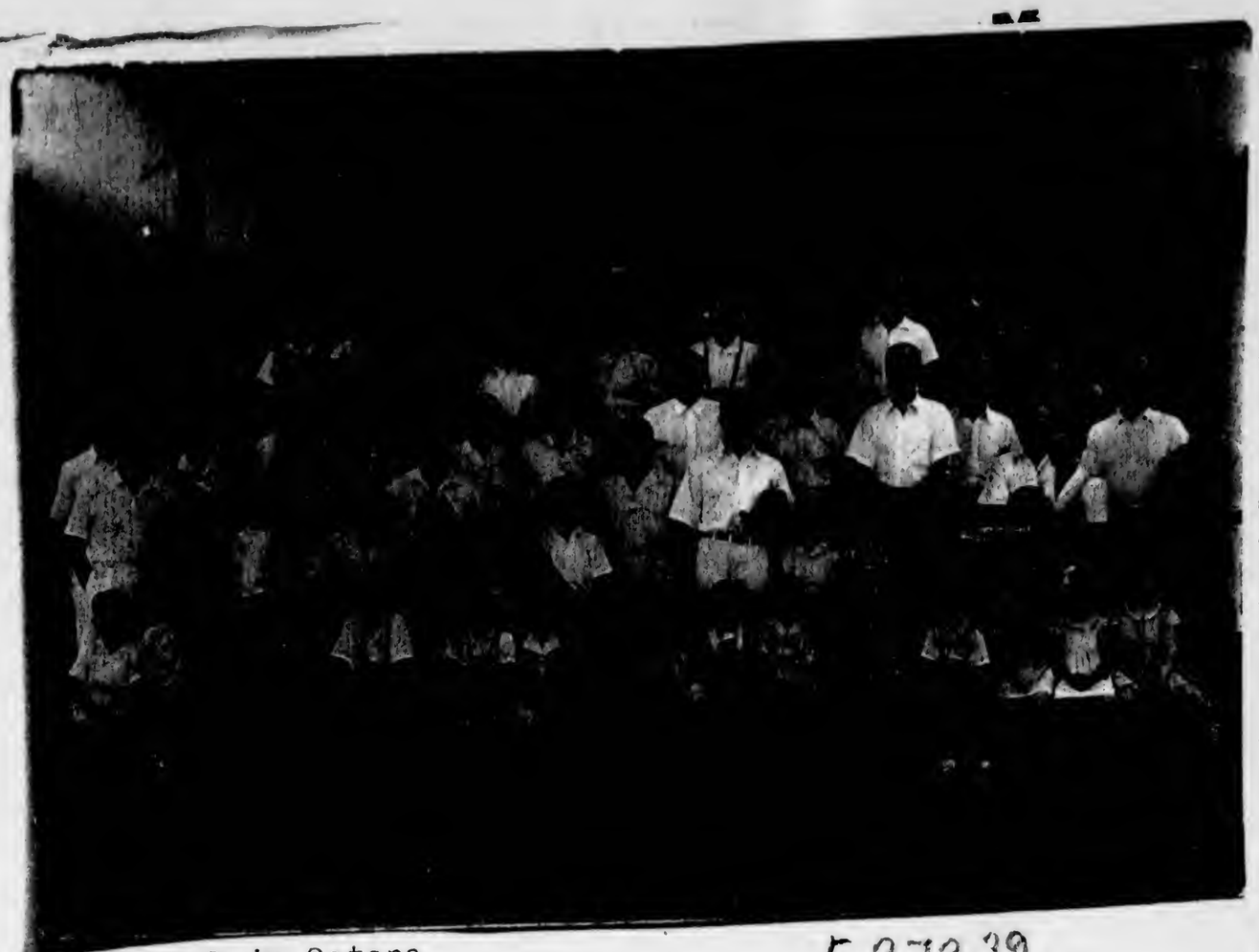
Rawalpindi and Murree (the latter place during the summer months) and we met them frequently .They were not successful,however,in their new habitat and they told me that they wanted to shift to Lahore. I had to tell them frankly that they would have no chance to compete with the Jack Sproul, the American, who had a very good reputation and an excellent practice since the many years he had lived in Lahore and that it was my firm conviction that they would earn even less in Lahore than they did in Rawalpindi. They never forgave me my "selfish" attitude and we lost sight of each other.

Opposite us lived the Bez family. Martin and Dora Bez and their five children. Mart Bez had been a missionary in South India but after a few years he changed horses and earned a good living as a homoeopath-naturopath. Dora was a very religious woman,one of the fundamentalist protestants but she never attempted to proselytize. We became very good friends, and especially Kate felt lucky to acquire this contact with motherly,pious,confident,patient Dora. I dd not see any incongruity in my being friends with a "quack doctor". He and his family were finally returned to Germany. After a year or so he wrote to ask for my help as he wanted to come back to the Indian subcontinent to settle in Lahore. I strongly advised against this and our friendship ended - but Kate and Dora continued to correspond regularly until recently. In 1971,on our journey through Germany, we visited them in Kirchheim and found Martin a prosperous citizen,owner of a Sauna establishment and a massage institution, and all his children well settled.

Notwithstanding all what I have told you about my pessimistic attitude, I continued to write to foreign governments offering them my services,but soon an end was put to this activity of mine as Government ,i.e. the babu in the office of "V.Shankar Esq." in Delhi could not be anymore bothered with me and my letters and instructed the Commandant not to accept any further applications from me.

I could not work as a physician which did not bother me unduely though the implied humiliation hurt my pride. How determined they all were to humiliate me you can see from their reaction when the Camp M.O., a Bulgarian pf whom I am sure that he was not a qualified physician,suddenly died of some virus infection. I was the only physician left in the Camp but Government preferred to overcome many difficulties and sent over from the Dehra Dun Camp a Nazi doctor who had already proved a dismal failure while in Dehra Dun.

AFTER PAGE 242



School in Satara

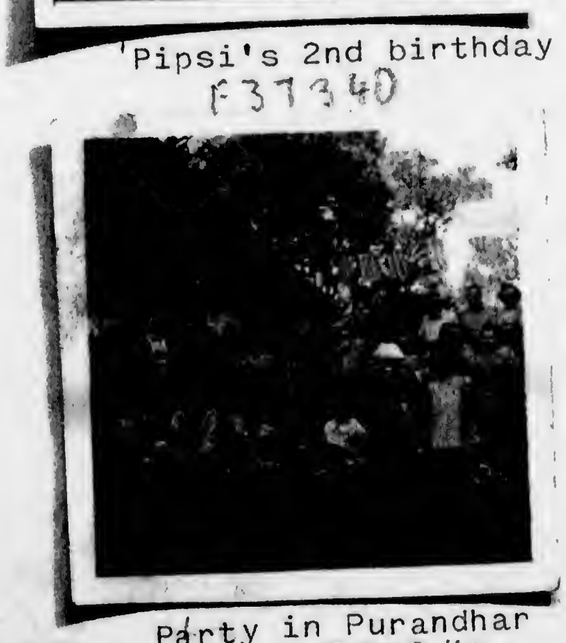
F 37339

Pipsi's 2nd birthday

F 37340

With friends in Purandhar
(Harry Kruschandl x)

F 37341



Party in Purandhar

F 37342

In Satara F 37343

from Rome 4 Dec 45
via Bari 3 Jan 46

Friends,

[illegible] in the time of the year when one
[illegible] to the farthest end of the globe
[illegible] friends [illegible] whose remembrance is still
[illegible]

[illegible] news from India since writing.
And how are you getting on?
Anyway are you in the family way? This last
letter from you, contained a photo of your
[illegible] dog other child has increased the [illegible]
[illegible] for everybody but. I have the only
[illegible] married women they would; but now, Chris
[illegible] are closing down: and I quite long till
the Millions. I must confess that it is very
[illegible] to be tied to a woman for ever? Often
[illegible] days of the week, a [illegible] to have to a
[illegible] wife.

[illegible] still able to practice as doctor?
[illegible] glad to hear what kind of life you
[illegible] Do you still like to be in Cairo?
[illegible]

[illegible] greetings for the New Year
to you

Love Gabriel

...TIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
BURMA AND CEYLON

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1946-47

...M.B., B.S., T.D.D.
...M.D., Ch.B.,
...F. (Lon.), D.T.M. & H.
..., M.D., M.C.O.G.
..., M.B., B.Ch.,
D.T.M. & H., B.A.O.
...M.D., C.M.

G. H. OLDFIELD, M.B., B.S., D.T.M.
P. D. SUKHNANDAN, L.C.P.S.
A. M. S. POLLOCK, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., F.R.C.S. (Ed.)
J. C. SAVARIRAYAN, B.A., M.B., B.S.
Secretary of the Nurses Auxiliary

TELEGRAMS:
OLIVER, ST. URSULA. NAGPUR.

ST. URSULA
NAGPUR, C.P.

May 22, 1946

...,

Your letter which was addressed to the President ...ion Council, Nagpur was forwarded to me, probably rightly. ...are a number of Mission Hospitals wanting help, they want ...stant doctors. However you might care to write to a few persons ... panel. Also they usually want someone to do surgery. I know ...somewhat short of staff in the C.M.S. Hospitals along the Frontiers ... have been in North India you will know the language. Write to ... Sir Henry Holland, Quetta, Baluchistan.

...is a doctor wanted by the C.M.S. At Lusadia, via Modasa, ... Dt. Write to Dr. Johnson there. She is a woman but a man doctor ... for it is general work among the Bhils, aborigines. As she is ...en the letter may be delayed.

...is also great need of a doctor at the American Mission Hospital ...tara Dt. Bombay Province. Write to Dr. Hume there.

...heard also that there is a Doctor wanted by the Church of ... Hospital at Bangalore, where they have also a tuberculosis ... cannot say anything definite about this but you might write to ... Parsons, C.E.Z. Mission Hospital, Bangalore.

...the places I have in mind at present,

Yours sincerely,

B. C. Oliver

Douglas N. Forman, M.D.
c/o Dr.A .E.Armstrong
299 Queen St., West
Toronto, Ont., Canada

Doctor Selzer:

I don't need to tell you that it was a pleasant surprise ceive your letter of April 6, 1946; but I am very sorry d to learn of the troubles you have had and of the bly difficult situation in which you and your family are eing "restricted". It really makes a person burn to ze even partially what you and millions of others have made to suffer.

Unfortunately I am absolutely helpless in the matter. not that your fine talents could not be used in some cular situation, such as one of our Christian medical ges in China; but the home mission boards are not willing t involved in the long and involved train of negotiations such a decision would call for.

Thenttoo, it is very seldom that they appoint anyone directly he field, partly because the board secretaries do not know nd partly because never having had his roots in the home oh and community such a person cannot establish that person- apport with the congregations here, which leads to generous ained financial support.

Occasionally the institutions on the field do employ who are in the country; but of course this would hardly your need.

We can only hope that by this time you are perhaps on way to Palestine and that you can carve a career there.

I hope you will not think that I am unsympathetic when that there is nothing I can do for you in this diffi- situation.

With warm personal regards and sincere sympathy for d your family.

Very truly yours,

Douglas N. Forman, M.D.

rmann M. Selzer
R.A. P.O.Box 47, Bombay

CANADA

AIR LETTER
PAR AVION

TORONTO
MAY 29
4:30 PM
1945
ONTARIO

Dr. Hermann M. Seizer
c/o J.R.A. P.O. Box 47
BOMBAY, INDIA

Armstrong
West

UNITED NATIONS
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

LIAISON OFFICE
Room 82 'L' Block

AIR MAIL

No.U-India # 374

New Delhi
February 25, 1946

rmann M. Selzer,
. R. A.
Office Box No. 47,
.

Dr. Selzer,

I thank you for your letter dated the 18th instant together with completed application forms from yourself and Mrs. Selzer.

Both these applications have been forwarded by this office to ashington Headquarters for consideration. If and as soon as reply is received from them, you will be communicated of the it.

Very truly yours,

C. A. SOORMA
RECRUITING OFFICER &
OFFICER ON SPECIAL DUTY

About 30 old and quarrelsome people had been crowded into the six-room flat the JRA had transferred into a "Home". The older inmates,mostly destitutes,some of whom had been there for years, refused,with justification to vacate their corners and rightly resented any attempt of the " Housefather " to give up their advantegous places to the newcomers. We were "accomodated" in a space underneath the staircase,protected from the eyes of the other inhabitants by a rag suspended from a string. Our welcome and also pur physical comfort in that new atmosphere of liberty were different from what we had anticipated, and the continuous fighting and arguing which went on around us,along with the poor food we were offered, appeared to us quite a come-down even from what we had experienced in Satara. I do not think we would have been been able to live this kind of life for long and Kate and I felt that our cup was about to flow over,when we could apparently the powers of the JRA felt that we should be treated differently and moved us to a room in a private flat belonging to a refugee couple from some eastern country of Europe. This solution was certainly more acceptable than the hole we had to occupy for more than a week. Only the children did not agree: they preferred the crowded home in Byculla,where every adult had become their friend.

I had written to people we thought were still our friends and we found that most of them were indeed still friends. We were offered jobs,assistance,advice and sympathy. At last we began to regain our morale and our self-confidence. The most attractive solution was offered by Begum Shah Nawaz in Lahore,who asked us to come back, to start our work where we had left off and who promised us that she wouldrender us every help and support she could muster. I am glad we took her advice because for some time we were tempted to accept offers of the job of Chief Medical Officer in one or the other of the large independent Indian States. A year or so later these States were no more independent and we would have been without a job again

We had no moneyleft but we still had some items of gold. We sold these and we hoped we would have enough money to start anew in Lahore,that we would not require any help from anybody.

In the first week of September we were back in Lahore, ready to start our life again.

This was the fourth time we started " a new life ".

ER TO
11.11

JEWISH RELIEF ASSOCIATION
BOMBAY.

APHIC ADDRESS:
'WRELIEF"
ONE NO. 32222
BOX NO. 47.

PRESIDENT: SIR ALWYN EZRA, BOMBAY.

HAGUE BUILDING,
(2ND FLOOR)
SPROTT ROAD,
BALLARD ESTATE.

4th April, 1946.

Dr.H.M.Selzer,
Parole Centre,
SATARA.

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 1st April with enclosed copy of the letter from the Polish Refugees Welfare Committee in India, Bombay, dated 19th March and thank you for the information which found my full interest.

I received to-day a letter dated 28th March from Mrs.Regina Neumann, 6, Mendelsohnstreet, Tel-Aviv in which she requests me to arrange for your immigration to Palestine. She further asks me to tell you that you should not sell your medical equipment.

I have replied to Mrs.Neumann that my Association is doing the needful in connection with your immigration to Palestine.

Yours faithfully,
Jewish Relief Association

Chairman.

P.S. I also received a letter dated 27th March from your brother, Mr.Josef Selzer, Jerusalem. He asks me to inform you that he is also trying to get certificates for you and your family.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE ASSOCIATION AND NOT TO INDIVIDUALS.

JEV

FRITZ VON DRIEBERG, F. I. B. D., F. R. S. A., LON.,
INTERIOR DECORATOR & DESIGNER.

9, Empress Road,
Gwalior, 17-10-45.
Telephone No. 2141.

DHN/8

My dear Doctor,

Now that all this terrible War is over, what is your position? Can I help you in any way? Please write and give me details of exactly how you stand now.

Please don't ever doubt that you are always welcome in my home, and that I will give you any assistance if you are in any difficulty.

With best wishes to Mrs. Selzer, the children and yourself,

Yours ever,

Fritz

Dr. H.M.Selzer,
M.D.,
Parole Centre,
Satara.

NOTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION

Applicant's name SELZER Hermann Jr
(Surname) (First Name) Middle Name)

Address Post Box 47, Bowlay

Quota POLISH Registration No. 16(a)

Date of Registration November 26, 45.
(including all co-registrants)

You are requested to notify this office of any change in your marital status; birth or death in your family; and any postponement or abandonment of [illegible] U.S.A. You should refer to the above

CABLE ADDRESS
WALBEAD—NEW YORK
CODE: BENTLEY

elco BEAD COMPANY

...DS & NOVELTIES
37 WEST 37th STREET • NEW YORK CITY

January 2, 1946

~~WA 5-6445~~ Res.
WI 7-1217 Offic

H. M. Selzer, M.D.
...le Centre,
...ra, Brit. India.

Dear Cousin:-

The last letter I received from you was dated October 27th. Since that time, as you already know, all the necessary affidavits have arrived at the American Consulate General's Office in Bombay, India.

A few days ago I received a letter from the New York Office of the National Refugee Service, through whom the affidavits were sent, that they were informed by their co-operating committee in Bombay that the United States Consul refuses to grant you visas. The New York office has written the co-operating committee for a detailed report.

Only two days ago I received a letter from the American Consulate General in Bombay, India, as per enclosed copy. I immediately called up the National Refugee Service to give them the information contained in this letter. According to their opinion the letter from the American Consul General looks very encouraging because the main reason for your failure to get the visa seems to be that you are detained in a parole centre by the Government of India. This means that the New York office of the National Refugee Service will prevail upon the co-operating committee in Bombay to do everything possible to get you out of the Parole Centre so that you will be eligible for the visa.

While it is true that I have not been writing you very often, please rest assured that absolutely no time was lost in getting these affidavits to you. All papers were sent via Air-Mail to save time. In fact I instructed the National Refugee Service in New York to spare no expense in order to save time. They have my permission to cable when necessary and do whatever is possible to expedite your case regardless of the expense. If I can be of any further service in any manner whatsoever, please advise me at once.

I trust that you and your family are all well. The family here are all well and are very anxious to get some satisfactory news about your leaving for the States.

With kindest regards from all here, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Sam Wallack

SW:LW

(NEW DELHI) MAHARANI COOCH BEHAR PEDDER ROAD BOMBAY

72/91/14/40 - POLITICAL - (EW) YOUR TELEGRAM JANUARY 20TH MUCH REGRET UNABLE DR SELZERS RELEASE ON PAROLE AS AGAINST PAROLE CENTRE RULES AND CONSTITUTING EMBARRASSING PRECEDENT

= HOME =

TRUE COPY

HEAD ASSISTANT, MAHARAJA'S
OFFICE, COOCHBEHAR.
Camp - Bombay.

Dr. Lotte Fink,
115 Macleay Street,
POTTS POINT. N.S.W.

9th March, 1946.

Dr. Milza,
Zoological Institute,
University Lahore,
INDIA.

My Dear Milza,

I still remember your last visit to our place in Frankfurt a/ Main in September, 1938, shortly before we left for Australia. Meanwhile, we have become Australian Citizens and are feeling happy that we escaped the horrors of Europe.

To-day, I am writing to you to ask you whether you would be able to help a former German Doctor who is staying with his family in Lahore, and seems to be in great trouble. I have found that personal contacts very often can achieve things with the local authorities in a way one could not do of oneself. I therefore, remembering our friendship in the good old days before Hitler would very much like you to help this unfortunate victim of Nazism.

We would very much like to hear from you and how you and your family are keeping. The same applies to Salim and Tilli. I tried at different times to contact you through some English friends in India but with no success. Since I am working here in an organisation which tries to help the remnants of scattered Jewry in all parts of the world, I came across a very sad letter written by Dr. H.M. Selzer and I immediately thought of you. I really hope you will be able to help the man in some way, so that he need not be thrown out of India before he has found another place to go.

With best regards, hoping to hear from you soon,

Yours,

Lotte A. Fink

ASSOCIATION OF NEW CITIZENS

SECRETARY:
JOSEPH

NATIONAL MUTUAL BUILDING.
350 GEORGE STREET,
SYDNEY.
TEL.: B 4933

19th March, 1946.

Dr. H.M.Selzer,
C/- Jewish Relief Association,
P. O. Box 47,
BOMBAY. I N D I A.

Dear Dr. Selzer,

I acknowledge, with thanks, receipt of your letter with an application for a landing permit and various annexures attached, and I am sorry to see that after the many years of distress you are now even threatened with "repatriation".

A friend of ours, Dr. Lotte Fink, has a good friend in Lahore who, in her opinion, might have some influence there. She wrote a letter to him (Dr. Milza, University Lahore) which I herewith enclose for your convenience in case you think it might be useful for you to have Dr. Milza's assistance.

As to your landing permit for Australia, the position at present is not clear enough to give you a definite reply. At present a scheme is in operation under which our people here can apply for admission of close relatives who are distressed persons as a result of Nazi persecution and the war. A few thousand of such persons have been admitted already and the scheme is still working.

There is not yet a scheme in operation for immigration of people who have no relatives here. However, the Australian Government has proclaimed that they will admit 70,000 adults and 17,000 children per year, and it is expected that the machinery for applications in general will be started very soon.

I have, therefore, handed your application with all your papers to a Solicitor and requested him on your behalf to make every effort to obtain permits for you and your family as soon as possible. His address is: Mr.A.Masel, C/o Phillips, Fox & Masel, Solicitors, 100 Queen Street, Melbourne, Victoria. Mr. Masel is the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and has considerable influence with regard to immigration matters. I suppose he will contact you in due course.

With best wishes, Yours faithfully,

(Dr. [illegible])
Hon. Secretary.

-encl-

لنبر مطلب

نمبر ۵۵۹ع
۴۳۴
نیته ۹ جون میاشت

ضمیمه

د (صحه) وزارت

د (تصدی) مدیریت
د (کتابخانه) څانګه

Kabul
Dated 9th May 1946.

ews Relief Association
Bombay.

irs,

Received your letter dated the 29th January 1946, introducing
e Selzer M.D. and his wife with their Medical qualifications , but we
rry to inform you that the Ministry of Health has already employed a
r of Medical Doctors sufficient for the civil Hospitals services and
resent is not in need of any more Medical men.

Thanking for your kind collaborations.

Faithfully Yours.

Ministry of Health.

Write the address in large **BLOCK** letters in the panel below.
The address must **NOT** be typewritten.

Parole Centre,
Satara, 26th September '45
British-India

H.M.SELZER, M.D.

King,
r,
l Health Administration,
ng.

. King,

From different notices in the medical press I learned that the next future and with the utmost urgency the NHA requires medical ied personnel. If you are interested you can dispose of the services my wife and I.

I am Polish citizen, born 5-12-1909 in Strjy, Poland. I attended chool in Germany and entered in 1928 the Medical College of Cologne ter that of Dusseldorf. In 1933, when Hitler came into power I was ed by the Gestapo and kept for 5 weeks, but in June 1933 I could escape aly where I specialized in Internal, Nervous & Mental diseases and where ed in 1935 the M.D. exam. I worked for 4½ years in the R.University c for Nervous & Mental Diseases and contemporaneally in the Mental tal -the inner Hospital. I made many scientific publications the titles st of which can be seen in the Index Medicus.

My wife, Kate Selzer nee Neumann, born 12-2-1910 in Pyritz in ny, studied in Heidelberg & Berlin and went also to Rome in 1933, where graduated M.D. in 1937.

In May 1937 we decided to come to India, as the political conns in Italy too began to deteriorate. We had a very good practice in re until December 1940 when we were restricted to a Parole Centre; we have r not learned the reasons for this restriction.

As we have now decided to leave India as soon as our restrictions annulled, we are looking for a new sphere of work. Should you think you d require us for the medical work supervised by you, we would only be happy to accept, as this kind of work is the one we prefer. But we would hankful for an early reply as we shall have soon to decide about our re.

I want to mention that during my years in Rome I have been larly lecturing to students as a kind of assistant lecturer.

My wife and I are Jews by birth and persuasion. We have two dren aged 3 and 4.

Hoping to hear soon from you,

Yours faithfully,
H. Hans L. Selzer

Write the address in large BLOCK letters in the panel below.
The address must NOT be typewritten.

must
ed

Dr. H.M. SELZER, M.D.,
PAROLE CENTRE & INTERNMENT CAMP,
SATARA, Bombay Presidency,
BRITISH INDIA.

PALESTINE POSTAGE PAID 15 MILS AIRGRAPH SERVICE

type VERY PLAINLY below this line. Wherever possible, BLACK INK should be used.

me and Address Prof.SHELOMO FRANCO, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Palestine.

Date, 30.II.44.

language.

.Selzer,

ho ricevuto soltanto due giorni fa la sua lettera del
embre. Naturalmente mi ricordo assai bene di Lei e sono assai
di poterle essere utile. Per rispondere alle sue domande ho
informazioni al Presidente dell'Associazione dei Medici
inesi e al Direttore dell'Ufficio di Statistica Medica della
,che sono nel paese le persone meglio informate in merito a
la interessa.
quanto posso riferirle:
) Per esercitare come libero professionista, e per la maggior
degli impieghi in Istituzioni, è necessario possedere la
nce" governativa che si ottiene entro un periodo variabile da
he mese a due anni.
) In generale le condizioni professionali non sono partico-
nte facili; molto tuttavia dipende dalle qualità personali e
dall'età, dato che largo numero di medici è già in età avanzata.
Ci sono ragionevoli possibilità di essere accolto in una
uzione pubblica o semi-pubblica come "Medico interno", dopo un
odo di pratica di almeno alcuni mesi.
te le condizioni attuali. E' possibile -e persino presumibile-
con l'affluire dopo la guerra di molti nuovi immigranti, si
ia più sentita la richiesta di medici. Spero che queste informazio-
saranno di aiuto nel prendere una decisione.
non le nascondo che un problema assai grave è attualmente rappre-
to dalla mancanza di abitazioni. Vero è che la Agensia Ebraica
la Palestina costruisce ora, in alcuni luoghi, appartamenti di
stanza e servizi, destinati esclusivamente ai nuovi immigranti;
ciò, per il momento, è in misura del tutto insufficiente al bisogno.
rte questa possibilità, non è ora possibile trovar un appartamento
te senza pagare 200 - 300 sterline di "premio" o arredi usagrati.
comincia tuttavia a notare una lieve ripresa nell'industria delle
ruzioni. Da parte mia sarò ben lieto di volerla fra noi in Terra
raele e di fornirle tutto l'aiuto che mi sarà possibile. Penso, tut-
e ritengo che, per ragioni generali e
ontare queste difficoltà

SURE THAT THE ADDRESS IS WRITTEN IN LARGE
NOTHING SHOULD BE WRITTEN IN THE

RN TO SENDER
[illegible]
SERVICE TO DESTINATION

L. Spiegel,
105, Ben Yehuda Road,
T e l - A v i v.

Tel Aviv, 4. April, 1946.

Lieber Hermann,

Am 27 Maerz erhielten wir Dein Schreiben vom 21. 3. 46, und, bevor ich den Versuch mache auf den Inhalt desselben naeher einzugehen, will ich zunaechst sagen, dass wir alle uns ausserordentlich darueber freuen, dass Ihr die Aussicht habt, in Baelde herzukommen.

Du hast versucht, Dir ein bisschen Luft zu machen, indem Du Schurken mit dem Namen Schurken bezeichnet hast, was eigentlich gegen die geheiligten "konventionellen Luegen" verstoesst, aber ich verstehe Dich ganz gut. Es wuerde mir garnicht schwer fallen, zu den von Dir teils aufgezahlten und teils angedeuteten Schurkereien noch eine ganze Anzahls von noch krasserer Faerbung hinzuzufuegen, aber letzten Endes mehr als ein kleines Ventil oeffnen kann man doch nicht, und deshalb ist es schon besser man faehrt mit dem nassen Schwamm darueber. Wie jener Jude, dem der Hahn den er am Erew Jom-Kippur zum Kapores Schlagen in der Hand hielt und der ungesittete Hahn etwas auf den Siddur fallen liess. Auf die Frage was tun in diesem Falle, antwortete einer: die Sache ist nicht so einfach, man muss nachsehen im Schulchan Aruch, fragen den Raw u.s.w.; der anderes, weniger problematisch veranlagte Jude antwortete: Was heisst? man nimmt ein Laeppchen, wischt das Siddur ab und man "dreht weiter" (gemeint ist, man dreht mit dem Hahn ueber den Kopf)..... Also, lieber Hermann, nicht stehen bleiben und viel fragen, sondern "weiter drehen"...

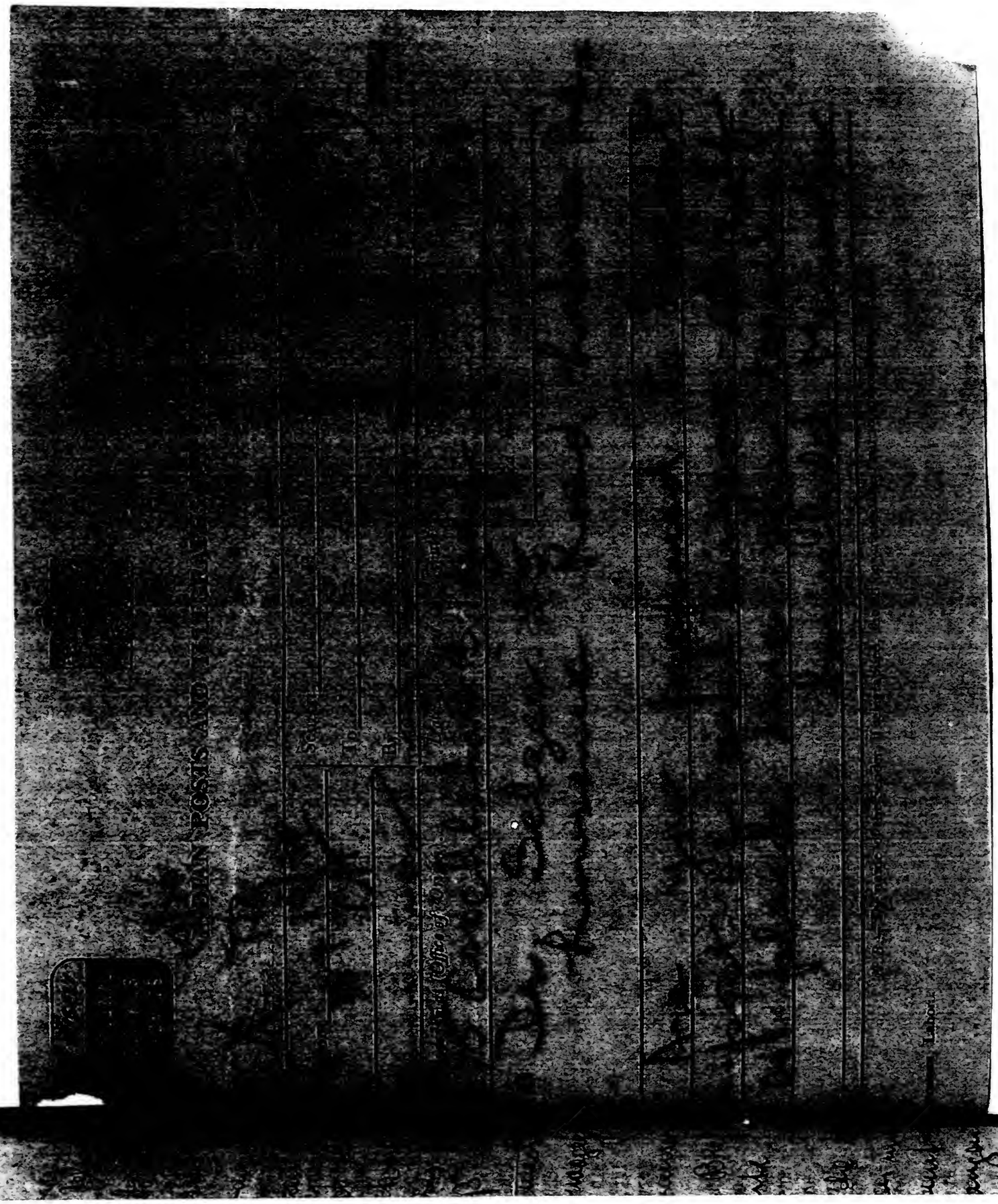
Du hast mir viel mehr Fragen gestellt als man an Seder Abend beantworten kann. Jedoch, unbeantwortet will ich Deine Fragen nicht lassen, obwohl die liebe Selma, die inzwischen bei uns war uns sagte, dass sie Dir alle Fragen ausfuehrlich beantwortet hat. Ich meinerseits will Dir nur soviel sagen: Wuetzliche Sachen fuer Dein Laboratorium, fuer's Haus, fuer den Leib u.d.gl. darfst und sollst Du alle mitnehmen. Fuer Waren aller Art, muss man einen Import Permit haben. Und in diesem Falle herrscht besondere Strenge. Mir ist zum Beispiel ein Fall bekannt - ich selbst habe ihn bearbeitet - da hat eine Firma um eine Import Licence nachgesucht und die Empfehlung einer der wichtigsten Regierungsstellen dazu eingeholt, trotzdem wurde das Ansuchen negativ beantwortet und im Ablehnungsschreiben der "freundliche" Vermerk gemacht und unterstrichen, dass falls die Ware hier gelangt, die Regierung sie beschlagnahmen wuerde. Nur wer [illegible] Beziehungen hat der kann auf diesem Gebiete etwas erreichen, sonst nicht. Auch darueber koennte ich Dir viele Beispiele anfuehren, aber das alles ist ja nur Gerede und dadurch aendern sich die Tatsachen nicht. Wie gesagt: "Weiter drehen".

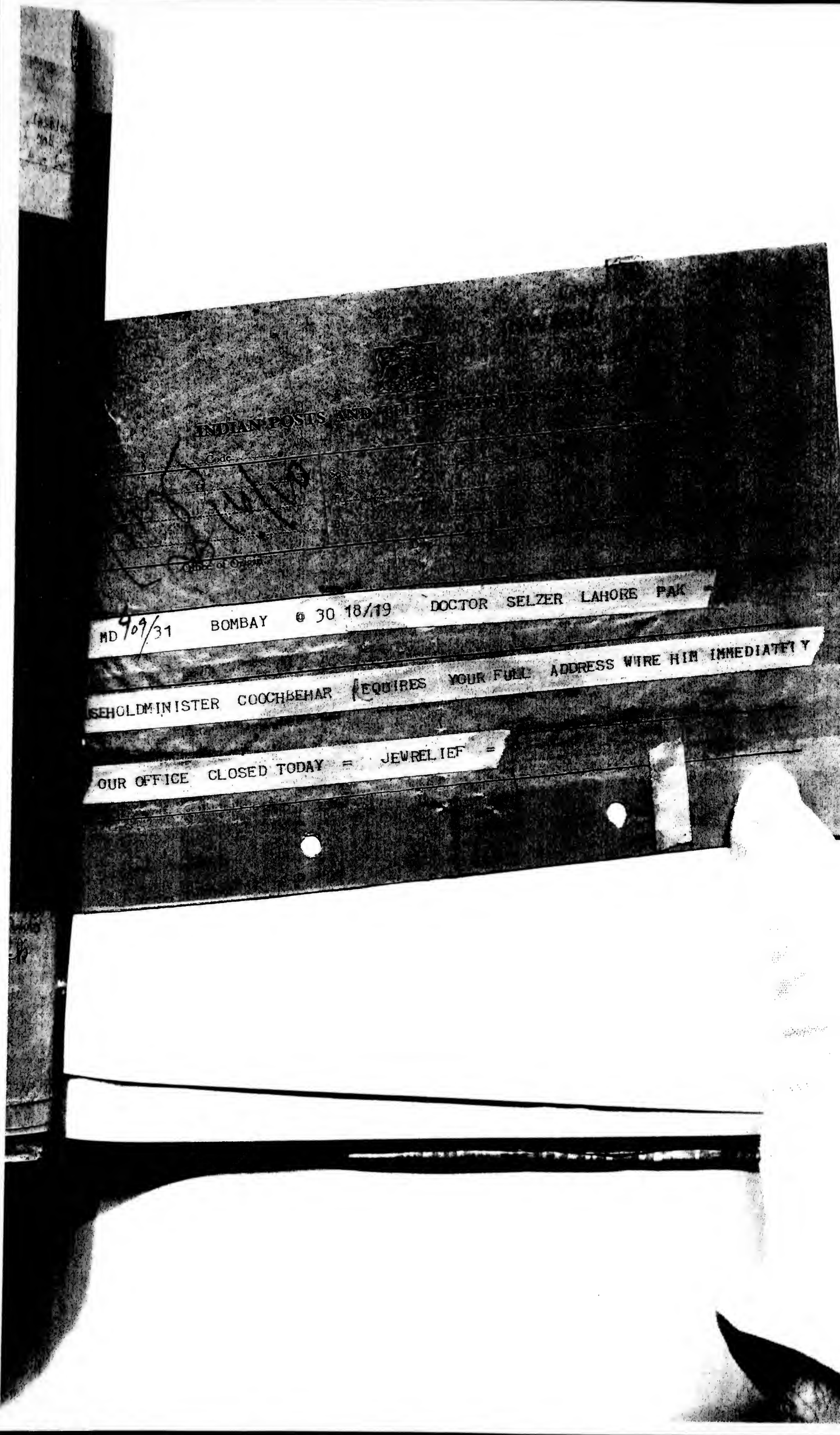
Und so bin ich zum Schluss angelangt. Ich begruesse Dich, die liebe Kaethe und Euere lieben Jerusalmer [illegible] herzlichste und wuensche Euch einen recht frohen Jomtow. L'Schanah haba'ah B'Jeruschalaim!

Ihr Leo

Ihr Leo

Ihr Leo




INDIAN POSTS AND
Code
Office of Origin
MD 9/09/31 BOMBAY @ 30 18/19 DOCTOR SELZER LAHORE PAK
SEHOLDMINISTER COOCHBEHAR REQUIRES YOUR FULL ADDRESS WIRE HIM IMMEDIATELY
OUR OFFICE CLOSED TODAY = JEWRELIEF =

Meine . Lieben,

Diesesmal schreibe ich euch schon
und morgen muss ich zum dispersal-
und werde aus der truce herausgeris
ches Gefühl, ich weiss ich bin fertig u
dort, aber es wird noch etwas Zeit
ich mich hier einleben werde. Vor
ich Urlaub, einige Wöche, weil pä
man nicht dazu, wenn man mit
anfängt. Meine liebe Mutter schreib
vielleicht ausgehe, und hoch die Nas
eine Mastkur durchgehen zu lass
ich mich aber sehr wehre.

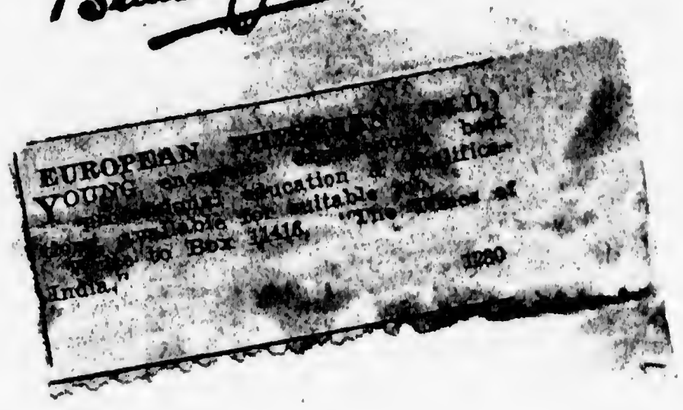
Da ich nun das junge Kind
bin, habe ich es übernommen
bei Neumanns abzugeben, ich werde
oder morgen hingehen.

Es freute mich riesig zu lesen, dass
Lieb habt nach Palestine zu
ich hoffe dass wir bald unsere
Heimat erwerben, Beziehungsweise
Männer, da ich weder Häftling noch
Meine Alle, Alles Beste und viel

Certified insertion in

The Times of India

Dated 19/7/46



THE CENTRAL JEWISH BOARD OF BOMBAY

President :
[illegible] SASSOON, Bart.

Hague Bldg., Sprott Road,
Ballard Estate,
P.O.B. 47.

Bombay, March 11th, 1946.

H.M. Selzer, M.D.
[illegible]le Camp,
[illegible]tara.

[illegible] Dr. Selzer,

I am in receipt of your letter [illegible]March 5th. Your matter as also of all the other [illegible]ernees has been taken up with all seriousness [illegible] Mr. S.S.Silverman, M.P., who is at present in [illegible]ia and has just left for Delhi, where he will [illegible] His Excellency, the Viceroy.

Unfortunately Mr. Silverman is [illegible]y a few days in India and though it was his [illegible]ention not only to visit Purandhar but also [illegible]ara, he was unable to do so for technical [illegible]asons. But you can rest assured, that all cases [illegible] the Jewish Internees of the Satara Camp will be [illegible]lt with as thoroughly as those of Purandhar.

As far as your personal matter is [illegible]ncerned I have already immediately after your [illegible]sit forwarded all details to the World Jewish [illegible]gress in New York.

With the best wishes to you and all our friends in the Satara-Camp,

I remain,
very sincerely,
Yours,

E. W. BLACK

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

X 3 C.

} ____ Copy B

Sent at ____ H. ____ M.

To ____

By ____

Date ____ Hour ____ Minute. Service Instructions.

from ____ of ____

Handed in at (Office of Origin).

Director Selzer Presidency
Hfds2
Do agnr still desire Immigrate to
Palestine
Jewalife

N.B.—The name of the Sender, if telegraphed, should be written after, but separated from the text.

N.W.R.—8943/22—1945 50,000 P.

SATARA Office Stamp 14 JLY 45

Kamal Mahal
Carmichael Road
Bombay

the 9th March, 46.

Mychael Dr Schyer

I cannot explain to you how much it disappoints me not to have you in Cooch Behar, and not be able to help you in any way in your difficulties. When are you likely to be leaving India ? I shall be sending you a souvenir to remind you of us, which I hope you will like and find useful. I do not know the present American Consul and so my request on your behalf may not have much influence, but I will try and find some one who may carry more weight with the American Consul.

You had recommended me Cibazol to take. May I know what it is for ? I hope this finds you and your family in good health. How much would you want as a loan to start off in a new Country ? Please let me know the amount and I will do how much I can help. I am truly sorry for your plight especially as it is mainly due to persecution by the nazis. With all best wishes for your welfare, Yours very sincerely Jindadevi

JEWISH RELIEF ASSOCIATION
BOMBAY.

PRESIDENT: SIR ALWYN EZRA, BOMBAY.

GRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"JEWRELIEF"
PHONE NO. 32222
POST BOX No. 47.

HAGUE BUILDING,
(2ND FLOOR)
SPROTT ROAD,
BALLARD ESTATE.

BUSINESS LETTER.

21st December 1945.

Dr.H.M.Selzer,
c/o. Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
SATARA.

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge receipt of your letters of 12th and 17th instant and noted the contents.

In the meantime I have also seen the American Consul and unfortunately received the same reply from him as you did.

I have also discussed your case on several occasions with the Consul for China, but regret to say that I have now been informed by him that you cannot receive an entry visa for China.

I am trying to suggest other suitable countries and am investigating possibilities, probably Palestine might materialize.

Regarding prolongation of your Polish Passport, I am in touch with the Polish Committee and shall let you know what can be done.

Yours faithfully,

Jewish Relief Association

Chairman.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE ASSOCIATION AND NOT TO INDIVIDUALS.

PALACE,
DEWAS STATE 2.

29th December 1945.

My dear Dr. Selzer

Many thanks for your letter of the 16th inst., which has been partially clipped by the Censor.

I am very sorry to hear about the trouble in getting the visas. I hope that you will be able to overcome the difficulty soon.

We shall always remember your services and the way in which you were able to effect good improvement in Her Highness' health.

I am sorry that the photograph had not been sent to you till now. Some of the photographs we had taken have been finished; we will be taking some very shortly and I shall arrange to send one to you.

Our best wishes to you and family,

Yours Sincerely,

Dr H.M. Selzer,
Parole Centre,
Satara.

Only on two occasions did the Commandant disobey Government orders and commandeer my help: once when a 2-year old child of an Italian journalist drowned in an open ditch (whih Fern had never bothered to close notwithstanding all representations) and once when Fern himself suffered from a swollen knee and di not want to accept the Bulgarian doctor's diagnosis of "general decay".

I am glad I could occupy myself with writing, and although my "writings" were not very successful they at least kept me busy - and sane.

The therapy of book-writing.

I am certain that the encouragement of bookwriting, of writing of any kind by people interned,imprisoned or otherwise confined is a useful therapeutic weapon. At leats I gained this impression. I wrote and worte during most of my free time in the camps. Much of what I wrote I destroyed, but much of what was left I hoped to see one day published. I did not try to be self-illusory and to pretend that I only hammered away at the typewriter for my own sake and pleasure. I was far too sure of myself and of inherent qualities I possessed to realize my shortcomings, the insufficiently researched work I produced. A reaction to this I realized only later, not only as a sop for my wounded pride when I understodd the low standard of my achievement, but when I understood only too well how my self-confidence of old,my strong self-assurance, my driving belief in myself had been undermined,damaged after 5½ years of gruelling humiliation. But whatever the ultimate outcome of my writing efforts may have been, these helped me very much ; they set a task in front of me when I felt I had no future; they made me feel that I could produce something when I began to fear that I had become useless; they gave me some sense of value when I feared I had nothing anymore to look forward to.

I wrote a " novel " which was, of course, immature and stupid. It might have had some value if the stuff had been rewritten, changed over, improved - but I have never touched the MSS since. I have no interest anymore to touch it now; the time has come to burn it I wrote a book about diet. I composed long lists of the caloric value of the mineral and other contents of every food item used in India (I could get all relevant publications from different sources) and I composed diets for every kind of disease and for every possible grade of health. I sent the MSS with the permission of the Commandant to Sardar Khushwant Singh,the lawyer friend in Lahore who after some searching found a publisher, an achievement indeed considering the scarcity conditions the war had already brought on. By the time all was arranged and settled the war had ended,the Hindu publisher who had not yet completed the printing job,had run away and the new Muslim owner at last brought out the book. In view of the changed circumstan-

No. 72/9/14/40-Poll(EW)
Government of India,
Home Department.

New Delhi, the 4th March 1944.

To

The Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre,
Satara.

MEMORANDUM.

Reference your endorsement No.690/ dated the 14th February 1944. Dr. H.M. Selzer is permitted to send the manuscript of his book "Diet in India in Health and Disease" to his lawyer Mr.Khushwant Singh, provided that the manuscript is returned to Dr.Selzer with the offer of the publishers when the negotiations are complete and that the final publication is ordered by Dr.Selzer and the same manuscript (which should be kept in your custody after the return from the lawyer) is forwarded to the publishers direct from the Camp. Please inform Dr.Selzer accordingly.

Sd/- F.Ward,
Under Secy. to the Govt.of India.

p.t.o.

No. 1076 of 11-3-44.

Copy forwarded to Dr. Selzer for information.

Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Centre, Satara

KHUSHWANT SINGH,
LL. B (LONDON) BARRISTER-AT-LAW
ADVOCATE HIGH COURT.
LECTURER UNIVERSITY LAW COLLEGE.

OFFICE 17, FANE ROAD,
RESIDENCE 1, QUEENS ROAD,
LAHORE.

Dated ..... August 23rd ..... 1945.

Dear Mr. Selzer,

I was surprised to note that you are still in detention. I suppose it is the usual red-tape unrolling itself in the proverbial slow-motion. I hope you are out soon and your plans for emigration to U.S.A materialise.

From various contacts I have discovered quite a lot about your late practice in Lahore. In the last few years all the once famous local doctors have either died or gone into senile decay. Added to this circumstance, your past reputation and the naive confidence which people have in a foreigner should get you going in a big way. The only snags are ① That it will certainly take more than one year to do so — and that year might mean forgotten investment. In case you are positive of going abroad, you may not find this expense worth your while. ② The problem of accommodation is acute. In fact it will be impossible for you to get anything at a reasonable price. You may get a part of a house at fancy rent.

If you were planning to settle in India permanently, I could have thought of a better place for you than Lahore. But in the circumstances you mention, you have to consider these two factors. In case you can afford to buy your way out of these difficulties, you might try. But one year is too

Short a period to recover anything but a nominal investment.

I am grateful to you for your kind remarks and hope that we will get to know each other better if and when you decide to come to Lahore.

My wife and child are in Simla holidaying. I am engaged in vacation work and hope to join them in September.

I trust you and your family are in the best of health.

Yours sincerely,

Khushwant Singh.

...T SINGH,
...L.B. (LONDON)
...STER-AT-LAW.

17, FANE ROAD,
LAHORE.

Dated 4 March 1944

Selzer,

I am in receipt of your letter and two containing your manuscript. I have forwarded the mems. Macrova publishers and they are sitting on will take some time before they are through.

I think Lahore is a good idea. I settled ...e when you had gone so I never knew what you ...aving – but from the accounts I hear, you must ...been doing gloriously. All the important physicians ...surgeons here are already too old to be of much ...There are none of the younger generation who ... to come up. This would be an ideal time to ...

Besides that we, like all other people, have ...outh in the ability of a foreigner. A specialist ...get away with almost anything.

The main problem will of course be of
Suitable house. There's none available
Govt has requisitioned every single one vacan
an ideal house on Queens Road between
Victorias statue and The Plaza Cinema
from Muick Jeweller. As soon as I got it,
took it over. With great difficulty I mana
possession of the flat above the shop (u
live). That house would be 'pat'
but one does not know when the Govt.
it. If you have contacts in Lo
them to fix you with a house. Give th
plans torpedoed by the house problem.

I am glad to hear of the prospe
I hope it comes soon.

Yours truly,

Churchwa

ces I changed also the title to :" DIET IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN IN HEALTH AND DISEASE ". I had a kind of success - it was soon sold out. When the publisher approached me to prepaire a second edition I did not require any further book-therapy.

I wrote also another "book"; I worked on it feverishly as if possessed. It was to be a diagnostic guide,arranged by symptoms and signs or groups of symptoms and signs, and its should facilitated the making of a diagnosis of even rare and obscure diseases. I was very proud of my achievement and began to view my internement as a blessing not only for myself but also for the medical profession. I was allowed to take the heavy MSS of more than 3000 pages to a publisher in Bombay ,specializing in medical literature. The man was very kind,very polite; he went through the bundle of papers with great interest for more than one hour,checking here and counter-chekin there. At the end he congratulated me on my work and showed me a book called "S MPTOMS AND SIGNS IN CLINICAL MEDICINE" written by a E.Noble Chamberlain which was much better and more complete than mine, which was not only a very successful book but which made any rival book a failure from the outset. And so this dream was washed away - but the help I had from working on this "book" was worth all the expenses in paper,typewriter ribbons,carbon paper and literature I had used up.

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S t a l i n g r a d .

Stalingrad ! I am sure you have heard of Stalingrad !? It is the name of an industrial town in Russia,called thus respectfully to commemorate the bloodthirsty Russian diactator in all eternity . But it is more ! It is today that point in history where during World War II a decisive battle took place. It is still more even ! It is now a concept. It is a turning point in history. It has come to personify hope and vindication on one side,end and defeat on the other.

Also in Satara this battle of Stalingrad,this victory of the Russians at Stalingrad,the defeat of Hitler at Stalingrad,the destruction of a myth at Stalingrad brought forth a great change.

Now we, the Jewish internees began to smile. We felt vindicated in our optimism. Also the anti-Nazi internees began to smile and to feel vindicated. It was now the turn of the Nazis to frown,to keep their eyes and their voices down. They did not anymore sing their Nazi songs. They did not sing at all anymore. The Italian fascists had already undergone a metamorphosis; they had long ago already started to fight among themselves and against the Germans. That infamous map on which every tree on the avenue bore one of our names, had long ago been destroyed.

A great change had also come over the Commandant and his Staff,that is his clerks and his police constables. They began to distantiate themselves from the Nazis. They began to refuse them favours,even if the Nazis were impertinent enough to ask still for such favours and to pretend that they had not read the signs in the sky. There was now and then a smile, a polite word for the anti-Nazis, and the occasional request for a journey to Poona was not anymore a priori refused.

The greatest change you noticed among the missionaries, many of whom were living among us in the anti-Naz camp. Had they insusted on this arrengement because they wanted to be near the Jews to convert them ,if possible, before Hitler finished them off ? If so, they had certainly been amiss in their duties,because not one of these missionaries ever had tried to have a personal contact with the Jews - until Stalingrad this is.

On our arrival in Satara we had been allotted two rooms in a long barrack where five more families lived. The partitioning walls between the different quarters did not reach the roof - it was imperative to leave some space to facilitate ventilation - and it was inevitable that you could hear every word spoken in the next rooms Our neighbours to the left, a missionary family composed of father, mother and seven childrens could indeed be heard to talk,tocry,to fight. I am sure they heard no less well all our own activities. All of us in the long barrack acquired the habit to talk with a low voice, to keep the children quiet so that one's neighbours were disturbed as little as possible. In this arrangement there was only one exception: thrice a day our missionary neighbour ate their meals and as it is the duty of a good christian to pray before each meal,they did pray before each meal but they prayed with such fervour and with such loud voices that all of us were forced to hear their prayers. And in addition their dialect often so difficult to understand disappeared and they prayed in clear and exact German before teir meals. They prayed not only that God in heaven ,that his son Jesus Christ in heaven but also their neighbours in the adjoing room could hear how they prayed. And how they prayed ! And how they begged God Allmighty to pour his blessing on their beloved Fuehrer. How fervently they called for Jesus' protection for the armies fighting for the glory of Hitler and the Fatherland ! They ended with proof that they were ecumenical in their prayers too: they begged their gods to make the stubborn Jews understand that the time had at last come when they were going to pay for their past crimes,for the blood of the Saviour they had spilled. They kindly asked their gods not to.punish us Jews in too harsh a way,us Jews in any case condemned to eternal fire. I did not understand that latter part of their prayer but I felt I could not very well ask them for an explanation. Did they beg Jesus Christ to regulate the thermostat in hell to such a degree that we were only partially roasted ? It is a pity that I shall go from this world without ever having asked them for a clear explanation.

All this changed after Stalingrad. The missionaries next door ate their meals as often as before - though I cannot vouch if their appetite was unchanged - and they prayed as often as before,but we wre not allowed anymore to hear what favours they asked from thir gods, Lord Allmighty,Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. They prayed without letting us know what they asked for us in their prayers. Ihav

no doubt, however, that their appetites were not reduced to the same degree as the decibles of their prayers.

The changed military situation recalled to the minds of the missionaries that they had also certain duties to fulfill. These people did not lack a primitive kind of cunning. A day or two after this change in the demandsthey sent upwards to heaven, we were sitting with friends in the small squareof garden we had planted in front of our portion of our barrack, when our neighbour and three of his missionary colleagues appeared at the fence. After wishing us a good evening in the name of the Lord, my neighbour,apparently the leader of the group,began to explain to us that Hitler and all the misery he had brought on this world were the fault of the Jews themselves,that the Lord,the Messiah would not return before all Jews had recognized Jesus Christ as their Saviour,that God had sent Hitler to make us Jews realize that we do at last accept Jesus and that they, the missionaries,had been given the duty to help God and Hitler in persuading the stubborn Jews. They did not mind using also some left-handed flattery: they realized that not only Jews but also the other heathen all over the world had to be converted to the belief in Jesus Christ as the Saviour to come, but that they,the missionaries,had so far not been successful in their task. This too was the fault of the Jews. God wanted first of all the Jews to become christians so that they could thereafter act as missionaries and there was no doubt in the minds of these men leaning over our garden fence that we Jews in our cleverness would be much better missionaries than they themselves ever could hope to be. Again they preached us ,with zeal and elevated finger that whatever had happened to us so far,was going to happen to us,was finally and ultimately the fault of the Jews themselves. Q.E.D.

But if you think that this chapter is ended, you do not know human frailty and missionary cunning. By the time these missionaries had completed their exposure our friends and we had sufficient time to gain our breath and composure back, and we told them in a way and with words I am still ashamed of that they should get out of our eyesight as otherwise we would not be able to guarantee their health and safety. They understood very well how we felt and fortunately they very quickly disappeared from our field of vision.

But what of their cunning, I mentioned ?

It appears that these German missionaries did not entire ly put their trust in God too often and for too long to look after their wellbeing. That very evening - it was already late and we were readying ourselves to go to bed - when somebody knocked at our door. It was my missionary from next door. " Could I give him a letter", he asked, "only a small note to the effect that he had always been an anti-Nazi,had always been friendly to the Jews ?" Such a note , such a certificate would be very useful in the coming days and months, he added.

I am afraid I was somewhat disappointed when the door which I closed with my foot did not hit into his face; he was too quick to jump.

The story of another missionary.

Let me tell you one more story of a missionary. He and his wife had spent the war years in the Nazi Wing of the Camp of Satara. I had seen him occasionally from afar,but had never exchanged a word with either of them.

One evening he appeared at the door of the small house in which we had been living in the lasty ear of our stay in Satara. The war had ended. Most of the inhabitants of our wing had been released. Only a few of us Jews were left, along with all the Nazis and F ascists,all the Germans and Italians who were going to be repatriated.

The missionary was accompanied by his wife. Though they had been married since eight years,she had not become pregnant notwithstanding all the efforts he and the doctors had made. Could I help them to get a child ? Though I was not allowed " to practice" in the camp, I was intrigued by the challenge a case of infertility often represents. I agreed to do my best. I asked all the many questions one asks in such a case. I examined them both, and I thought I had found the reason for their sterile marriage. It was simply a technical cause. A few months later they informed me full of joy that she was pregnant. Another short time later they were sent home. Another few months later a letter was forwarded to us via the Home Department to Lahore, in which the good priest told me that his wife had gone through the pregnancy "with flying colours" and that they were now the praents of a beautiful boy. They lived now in East Berlin and he described how bad living conditions were there - it was 1946/47 you must remember - and he concluded with the hope that I and my family were in good health and doing fine again.

I should have taken this letter and the interesting news from an old Nazi priest as the end of a chapter, but I did not. I wrote back to congratulate the couple and I sent them also a parcel with 2000 cigrattes (though they were the cheapest cigarettes available in Lahore, they were still 2000 cigarettes) as I knew from newspaper reports that cigarettes were the accepted currency in German y with which you could make life very comfortable. Indeed a few months later the Reverend told me that the parcel had arrived,that he had

at last been able to buy all the necessary linen,food,furniture with the help of the cigarettes,that there were enough cigarettes left to make life comfortable for him,his wife and his son,for some time to com

I was touched by the fact that with a small expense from our side we could make liøfe so easy and so comfortable for this man and his wife and especially for the baby "where I had also contributed" . I cannot help it that I realize how stupid I am when it is too late. To show my stupid Jewish heart I sent them a parcel, this time with 5000 cigarettes, and in due course I got the acknowledgement from the priest that the parcel had arrived, and again he told me how grateful he was. He described that for 5 cigarettes he could buy a dozen eggs,that for 10 cigarettes he had bought pots and pans, that he had exchanged 200 cigarettes for a bicycle and so on. He told me how many cigarettes were required for a motorcar,how many for a pram, how many for car tires, in short he gave me a pricelist of all and every article on the market,using cigarettes as currency. He concluded his letter with the hope that this letter would awaken in me the interest to go into business with him. He proposed that I send him from now on at shorter and regular intervals large packages of cigarettes and that we build up a business in partnership. He could with cigarettes buy land,houses,furniture,industrial goods and he promised me that I could be within a very short time a very rich man. Did I not agree with him, that it was God's will that we should come together by way of his fatherhood,should overcome the dreadful events of the past by our friendship, and should form now a prosperous association ?

I did not think so. I did not even bother to tell him this as I never replied to his offer.

Compulsory Repatriation of Detained Enemy Civilians

FIVE-YEAR BAN ON ENTRY INTO INDIA OF ENEMY FOREIGNERS

NEW DELHI, October 3.

THE Government of India have decided that civilian enemy foreigners kept in India under detention should be compulsorily repatriated, relaxation from this general rule being made in certain cases.

They have also decided that a five-year ban on the entry of enemy foreigners into India be imposed. Only technical experts will be allowed in the national interests.

A press note says: During the war civilian enemy foreigners in India, consisting mostly of Germans and Italians, have in general been kept in detention for security reasons. Some were exempted from detention, such as refugees from Nazi Germany, and some have been released from time to time as the war progressed. The latter were able to establish genuine anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist sympathies, and included many Italian missionaries.

Now that hostilities have ceased the Government of India have revised their policy in respect of enemy foreigners generally. They have decided that all those whose further detention is not necessary to keep in detention up to the end of the war should be compulsorily repatriated, but that individual applications for relaxation from this general rule will be considered on the following grounds:—

(a) Risk of persecution on return to own country;

(b) Length of residence and connections in India;

(c) Required in India for work of national importance;

(d) Those with wives and children who are British subjects; and

(e) Any other circumstances in which compulsory repatriation might cause undue hardship.

RESTRICTIONS REMOVED

Those enemy foreigners who were allowed to remain at liberty or who were released from detention were subjected to various restrictions. They were not allowed to move more than five miles from their place of residence [illegible] to be in certain [illegible] strategic areas or to [illegible] prohibited [illegible] radios and [illegible] from [illegible] except [illegible] to report [illegible]

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Now that hostilities have ceased the Government of India have reviewed their policy in respect of enemy foreigners generally. They have decided that all those whom it was found necessary to keep in detention up to the end of the war should be compulsorily repatriated, but that individual applications for relaxation from this general rule will be considered on the following grounds:—

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(c) Required in India for work of national importance;

(d) Those with wives and children who are British subjects; and

(e) Any other circumstances in which compulsory repatriation might cause undue hardship.

RESTRICTIONS REMOVED

Those enemy foreigners who were allowed to remain at liberty or who were released from detention were subjected to various restrictions. They were not allowed to move more than five miles from their place of residence, or to be in certain strategic areas, or to possess certain prohibited articles such as fire-arms, radios and motor cars. All these restrictions have now been removed, except that an exit permit will still be required for departure from India and that they will in future be treated as foreigners subject to the Registration of Foreigners Act and the rules thereunder and to the Foreigners Order.

The Government of India have also decided that a ban should be imposed on the admission of enemy foreigners to India for the next five years' at the end of which the position will be reviewed relaxation from this ban will be considered in exceptional cases, for example, to admit technical experts in the national interests.—A.P.I.

[redacted]

We are to be "repatriated".

This was the decision which Government of British-India communicated to us.

The war had ended and we stayed on in the Camp. Most of the others had been released. One after the other they had left. In the end only a handful of us Jews were left - and of course all the Germans, the Nazis and also the non-Nazis. They knew they were going to be sent back to Germany,could only agree that this was right and justified and that they had no basis to object to this repatriation. Soon also many of these deprotees had gone and only a small group of us Jews were left in Satara. Looking at the list of those few I cannot with the best of will find any other reason or cause for this special treatment than the displeasure,the hostility,the anger of somebody up there in the Home Department; or there may have been some unfavourable report in their files - and such bad marks were usually contributed by the commandants. Certainly none of the individuals left over in the Camp - and I include us too - could in any way have been suspected of being an enemy agent or pro-German or dangerous to the safety of the Empire or one of its smaller compon ents. Without any doubt only personal factors,mainly a private vendetta or at the best the outgrowth of officiousness could have been the reason for our having been left behind and of our now being all of a sudden threatened with repatriation.

Unlikely as it may sound to you there was every chance that we would have been sent back to Germany - or Poland if in our case the wording "to the place of origin" was going to be interpreted in this way - and that we would have been added to the flood of hundreds of thousands of"Dispersed Persons" roaming through Western Europe or dumped again into a camp somewhere in Germany. All this would have possibly been acceptable even had Kate and I been alone,only for the sake of getting at last out of the clutches of the commandants and the babus in whose hands our fate had been too long now. But you do not accept such a solution,such new ventures so easily with two small children,whom you will not expose to the economic straights of a post-war Europe,especially during the coming winter if at all you have still some strength and determination left.

REFUGEES' WELFARE COMMITTEE
IN INDIA
KOMITET OPIEKI NAD UCHODZCAMI
W INDIACH

No. S-5/35/46.

Bombay 19.3. 1946.
Bombaj

Dr.H.M. Selzer
Parole Centre,
Satara.

DHN/8

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter dated the 6th March, 1946, I am quoting below the wording of a letter from the Home Department:

"The Government of India have decided that Dr.and Mrs.Selzer should be repatriated. If, therefore, they fail to secure visas for another country before the general repatriation starts, they will be compulsory repatriated to their country of origin"

I am therefore not in a position to point out exactly the place, to which the Government of India intend to repatriate you.

However I am taking up this matter once again with the Government of India, as I feel no justification for an enforcement of a repatriation order in the present political situation in Europe.

Yours faithfully,

L. Litewski
Chairman

TL./LL

From:

Dr.H.M.Selzer, M.D.,
Parole Center,
Satara.

To:

The
Deputy Secretary,
Home Department,
Government of India,
New-Delhi.

Through:
The
Commandant,
Internment Camp & Parole Center,
Satara.

Satara, 13th February 1946.

Sir,

I have been informed by Government of India on December 12, 1945, that I should be repatriated.

Whereas I am a Polish citizen,

And whereas conditions under which Jews have to live in Poland are not better than those during the Nazi occupation,

And whereas Government of the U.K. have clearly stated that no Pole would be repatriated against his will,

And whereas my Polish citizenship will depend on the localization of my birthplace, this birthplace Stryj being beyond the Curzon Line and thus permanent Russian territory now,

I applied on December 17, 1945 to Government of India for clarification w h e r e t o Government of India intend to "repatriate" me.

Considering that so far I have not received any reply to this application, I take the liberty to renew my request for the information if Government of India intend to send me to Russia.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant.

However, nobody should see in this the opportunity to accuse Government of British-India,especially the British element in this set-up,of being cruel or heartless. The powers up there in Delhi decreed that those of us who could provide a visa for any country in the world ready to admit individuals of such a dangerous kind as ourselves, would be allowed to leave,provided these entry permits were presented in time before the general evacuation of the camps was started and long before the journey back to Germany had begun.

Again I approached Sam Wallach in New York. Again he sent us an affidavit. Again the American Government refused a visa. I do not blame them. If their British Allies considered us such dangerous people as to keep us imprisoned for about a year after the war had ended and would not let us remain in India, we could hardly be considered suitable or welcome types of new immigrants. I agree with your objection that so many true Nazis,criminals in every sense, were allowed to immigrate to the USA, but you must not blame the United States' Government for such an oversight as these criminals mostly came with documents and reccommendations provided by the Vatican

There was only Israel left for us to view as a refuge, or the country that was still called Palestine then, which was still enjoying the rule of the very same British we had knwon ourselves for the last few years. Palestine was at that time in turmoil, as you will recall,and it was most unlikely that a permit for people of our kind would be obtainable. Notiwthstanding this we tried. Friends,relatives tried - and as was foreseeable, nothing came out of it.

I am sure we would have been loaded along with some thousands of Germans on to troupships and would have landed in some port in Germany and then dumped uncer emoniously somewhere there, had not one of our or of others' letters to leading Jews in England brought some results. I am sure that this was the reason why Government of India suddenly changed its policy. They permitted us to leave the Camp. We were entrusted to the care and the responsibility of the Jewish relief Association in Bombay. And so it came about that we could leave for Bombay. Those of us still left in Satara packed our few belongings and departed on May 8,1946 to land in the Home maintained by the JRA in Habib Chambers of Byculla, a dismal place in a neglected house in a shabby part of Bombay. We were supposed to stay there for some time, i.e. until Government and JRA had decided our further fate, spending our time by thanking God,Govermment and JRA for our deliverance.

No. 2615 of 1946

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT, INTERNEE

Satara, May 8, 1946

To:

Dr.& Mrs.LASER
Mr.LEBRAM
Mrs.LEBRAM
Mr.& Mrs.MARCUS
Mr.& Mrs.ROITMANN
Dr.& Mrs.SELZER
Mr.BERKOWITSCH
Mr.SEIBE
Mr.SAFIER

MEMORANDUM

The Government of India in their letter No.9/15/9/45 - Poll (EW), dated 3.5. 1946, have intimated that the above mentioned members of the Jewish Community in this Camp, should be released pending further orders, on the following conditions:

(a) You will be accommodated in the hostel of the Jewish Relief Association, at Byculla, Bombay.

(b) The Jewish Relief Association will be responsible for your maintenance and conduct, pending your final release or departure from this country, as the case may be.

(c) The Jewish Relief Association will make the necessary arrangements for the departure from India of those of you who do not qualify for final release in India, and will have to leave the country.

(d) The arrangements for the departure from India of all the persons mentioned under (c), must materialise before general repatriations take place, failing which the persons concerned will be repatriated to their country of origin.

(e) The Government of India will however allow, for the purpose of making such arrangements, such a reasonable period as in their opinion will be appropriate in each individual case.

(f) It has therefore been decided to release you forthwith. You will be leaving this Camp by the 20th inst. Anybody wishing to leave earlier, may do so, provided the Jewish Relief Association inform this Office that they can accommodate you.

8.5.46

(E.A.Fern), Commandant, IC & PC

Satara, dated the 16 May, 1946.

ORDER OF EXEMPTION:

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 5 of the Foreigners Act, 1940,(II of 1940), which I have been authorised by the Central Government under Section 10 of the Said Act to exercise, I declare that the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Foreigners Order, 1939, and of paragraph 6 of the Enemy Foreigners Order,1939, shall not apply to, or in relation to the following persons, now restricted to the Interment Camp and Parole Centre, Satara, for so long as they are travelling from Satara to Bombay, by the route prescribed in the annexed schedule, having been released from the Interment Camp and Parole Centre, Satara, and permitted to reside in Bombay, with the Jewish Relief Association, subject to the conditions mentioned in the Goverment of India, Home Department Memorandum No. 9/15/9/45-Poll(EW), dated the 3rd May, 1946.

S.No.	Name:	R.C. No.	Nationality:
1.	Mr. Gustav Adolf Rudolf LIEBRAM ...	Jamshedpur, 50/15.7.39.	German Jewish Refugee.
2.	Mr. Karl Ernst MARCUS ...	Bombay, 907/6.7.39.	German Half Jew.
	Mrs.Rosmarie MARCUS ... & Child.	- n i l -	German by birth.
3.	Mr. Bruno SEIDE ...	Bombay, 4582/13.8.40.	Roumanian Jewish Refugee.
4.	Mr. Kurt SAFIER ...	Registration transfd.to Calcutta, 1735/2.12.39.	Austrian Jewish Refugee.
5.	Dr. Hermann SELZER ...	Lahore, 192/5.10.39.	Polish.

All of them have been instructed to report their arrival to the Deputy Commissioner of police, Special Branch,(II), C.I.D., Bombay.

16.5.46

To:-Sl.Nos.1 to 5.

T e l - A v i v.

Tel Aviv, 16th April, 1947.

Mein lieber Hermann!

Warum habe ich bis heute auf Deine Briefe vom 5. Januar und (laut Poststempel) 12. Maerz dieses Jahres nicht geantwortet ? Ersteren erhielt ich 2 oder 3 Tage bevor ich in Urlaub ging. Ich ging nach Tiberias. Den Urlaub habe ich aber nicht ganz ausnuetzen koennen, weil gerade waehrend dieser Zeit sich hier im Lande Dinge abgespielt haben, die nicht "so sehr" geeignet waren, einen Menschen wie mich zum Schreiben von Privatbriefen anzuspornen. Es war die Zeit von gewissen " demokratischen Aktionen" einerseits und "Kidnapping" als Reaktion auf der anderen Seite. Du erinnerst Dich wohl daran. Und seit der Zeit hat die Spannung nicht nur nicht nachgelassen, sondern in vielfachem Masse zugenommen. "Curfew" loest Belagerungs Zustand, und dieser eine andere "Segnung" mit denen die "Labour Regierung" uns dauernd beschenkt, ab. Ich konnte wirklich nicht schreiben, glaube mir.- Und selbst diese Zeilen schreibe ich an einem der traurigsten Tage unserer an traurigen Ereignissen reichen Geschichte: Heute in den fruehen Morgenstunden wurden 4 junge Juden in der Festung Akko gehangt. 2 weitere Juden, die gestern von englischen Matrosen auf dem Fluechtlings-Schiff "Theodor Herzl", das 2700 sogenannte "illegale Einwanderer" brachte, ermordet, und viele schwer verwundet. Und als Strafe - pardon! als Zugabe - wurde heute morgen um 4 Uhr wieder "Curfew" verhaengt, und zwar über die jüdisch bevölkerten Teile von Jerusalem, Haifa, über Tel Aviv und Petah Tikva. Kleine Kinder, Saeuglinge, Kranke, Greise und fast der ganze "Jischuv" im allgemeinen, müssen hungern, verdursten, aerztliche Hilfe entbehren, und das alles im Namen von "Demokratie". Es ist furchtbar !- Waehrend der paar Minuten die ich diese Zeilen schreibe sind etwa ein Dutzend schwere Tanks an unserem Hause vorbeigerast, so dass das Haus dröhnte, So geht es seit 4 Uhr frühmorgens. Kein Mensch wagt den Kopf aus dem Fenster herauszuragen. Bevin's Truppen sind nach "S.S." Methoden gut eingdrillt; sie können sehr gut und sicher auf Juden, und mit Vorliebe auf kleine jüdische Kinder, schiessen.- Das sind die Gedanken die den Kopf, und dies sind die Gefühle die das Herz und Blut durchdringen. So geht es seit Jahr und Tag. Wie kann man sich unter solchen Umständen anderen Dingen zuwenden?

Genügt Euch die obige Erklärung, um Euch begreifbar zu machen, dass ich einfach nicht schreiben konnte?

Und nun zu den eingangs erwähnten Briefen. Ich habe mich interessiert, herumgefragt, herumgehorcht und mit einigen Leuten sogar verhandelt, aber noch kann ich nichts Positives mitteilen. Es ist sehr schwer einen Menschen, oder einige Menschen, zu finden, die bereit wären nach Indien zu gehen. Gute Fachleute sind jetzt hier zu Lande beschäftigt und gut bezahlt. Gerade gestern habe ich mit einem Herren verhandelt, der ein guter Weberei-Maschinen Fachmann ist. Er verdient sehr gut und würde Palästina unter keinen Umständen für die Dauer verlassen.- Ich setze meine Bemühungen fort. Natürlich soweit mir Zeit und Umstände erlauben. Denn die Umstände* - siehe oben - sind sehr ungünstig, und die Zeit sehr knapp. Ich stehe jeden Morgen um etwa 5.15 auf, und sitze in Petah-Tikva, 8 - 9 Stunden am Schreibtisch. Um nach Petah Tikva zu gelangen und von dort zurück nach Hause, muss ich midestens 2 - 2 1/2 Stunden, oft sogar mehr, mit der Fahrt zubringen. Und wenn ich nach Hause komme, bin ich so abgespannt und die Zeit so vorgerückt, dass ich nur einen einzigen Wunsch habe: Ruhe!

Bitte wenden!

Es handelt sich doch um eine ganz grosse Sache. Dazu müsste ich von allen anderen Dingen ab= und dieser Sache einzig und allein Das kann ich mir nicht erlauben. Deshalb geht es langsam. Ich s meine Bemühungen fort.

Jeder, der etwas von Spinnerei und Weberei versteht, wenn ich ihr "Vortrag" halte und ihm zu erklären versuche worum es sich hande verlangt von mir in erster Reihe Muster von den "Flachsfasern gleichen Qualität wie in Irland, von denen man erstklassiges L machen könnte", wie Du in Deinen Schreiben vom 5.Januar schreib Ich bitte Dich daher, mir baldmöglichst Muster von diesen Faser men zu lassen. Sende das Muster nicht als Paket, denn sonst könn so ergehen wie es einer Bekannte letztens erging: Er erhielt ei che Mitteilung, dass für ihn eine "Postsendung" per Luftpost an ist und wurde aufgefordert, innerhalb so und so viel Tagen bei d Abfertigungsstelle des Flughafens Lydda das Paket abzuholen. Es gerade in der Zeit des Belagerungszustandes, wo wir "schwer bela in Tel Aviv unser Leben Sein büssten.... Deshalb bitte ich Dich Du Muster schicken willst, benutze zu diesem Zwecke lieber eini Beutel und sende ein zulässiges Gewicht in jedem Beutel, mit de Vermerk "SAMPLE OF NO COMMERCIAL VALUE."

Und zum Schluss: Da wir doch ausser geschäftlichen Beziehungen noch andere Beziehungen unterhalten wollen, so gehört es zum gut - "guten Ton" habe ich gesagt, ach, wie veraltet das klingt! - man ein paar Worte über das kleine Bündel von Menschen, die ein von unserem kollektiven "Ich" bilden, spricht.

Sicherlich hat man Euch aus Jerusalem berichtet, dass die Alter passende Wohnung zugewiesen bekamen, nachdem man ihre frühere W requiriert hatte. Auch, dass Joseph geheiratet hatte. Und, dass G.s.D. gesund sind.

Am letzten Tage von Pessach begegnete ich Herrn Neumann - Deine liebe Käthe - und vorgestern begegnete meine Frau Deiner Mutter. alle sind gesund .

Auch bei uns geht alles den gewohnten Gang; man arbeitet, lebt u Gottlob gesund.

Was giebt es bei Euch Gutes? Dass die Kleinen herzig und süss si wissen wir wohl, aber ich wäre Euch sehr dankbar, wenn Ihr uns Gelegenheit etwas ausführliches, und eventuell die neuesten Pho von ihnen, zukommen lassen würdet.

Ihr könnt Euch wohl noch an "die alten guten Zeiten" erinnern, al Rabbiner in der Synagoge seine Predigt hielt und man wusste nie wann er sie beenden wird, bis er dann den erlösenden Satz sprach "Und so wollen wir".... da wusste man, dass es zu Ende geht. Ich mich jetzt dem unteren Rande auf der zweiten Seite dieses Bogens das ist gleichbedeutend mit "und so wollen wir"... Also, ich beg Euch aufs herzlichste und wünsche Euch bestes Wohlergehen, darun auch gute Nachrichten von allen Euren Verwandten, und mit viele für Euch und die kleinen Süssen bin ich

Euer Leon.

Die allerherzlichsten Grüsse u. Küsse an Euch u. l. K

Und ganz

Auch ich sende Euch meine Lieben ganze Bündel

viele herzl. Grüsse u. Küsse

Ihr

REFER TO
811.11
GWS:edem

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Bombay, India, November 28, 1945

Dr. Hermann M. Selzer,
Parole Center,
Satara, B.P.

Sir:

Reference is made to your letter of November 23, 1945, enclosing a completed Application for Registration on the waiting list for intended immigrants.

Affidavits have been received from Mr. Samuel Wallach, 37 West 37th Street, New York City, which indicate his willingness and ability to support you and your wife in the United States.

The Consulate General regrets, however, that it will be unable to give its approval to your application for an immigration visa so long as you are detained in a Parole Center by the Government of India.

Very truly yours,

George D. LaMont

George D. LaMont
American Consul

811.11
GDL/jt

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Bombay, India, September 5, 1946

Dr. H. M. Selzer, M. D.,
Faletti's Hotel,
Lahore.

Sir:

With reference to your letter of August 30, 1946 there is being forwarded under separate cover a money order for Rs.98/12/- representing the balance of your deposit of Rs.100/- less Re.1/4/- for money order charges. The reply in your case was received by air mail.

The Department of State gave no reason for declining to approve your visa application. The message received by this office said:

"The Department is unable to issue a favorable advisory opinion. Visa should not, therefore, be issued".

I assume, however, that it was because you were interned by the Government of India for almost all of the war as a person dangerous to the public safety.

Very truly yours,

George D. LaMont

George D. LaMont
American Consul

Jubilee Shawdan Palace
Srinagar
12th Sept 1946.

My dear Dr Selzer

First my hearty Congratulations on your wedding.

I hope all will go well now and the future be happier.

I received your wire a couple of days before I left Calcutta.

I have been here since the 6th. It is hard work here now, but I am not at all comfortable in my wing of the palace.

I am now weighing 11 st 7 lbs, which is satisfactory and not uncomfortable, especially when my weight [illegible] 7 lbs in one day without any reason. There [illegible]

ago done one of these jumps from 10 st. 13 lbs to
now a days it takes months to lose it
in one places. New places, constant changes
for me in this line; as now what am I to do

In Bombay I had as usual put on
stays of two months & weighed 11 st 4 lb. On returning
I managed to get down to 10 st. 12 lbs going a few
ups & down, when last night & ten days I was
congested, stool, urine became scanty. Began
work & ten days struggle I would get it off. Do
help either, & get headaches & drop in my blood
which is 125 to 130 now a days but most by 125, w
My periods stopped early last year 19

ticed from 1944, I could lose no weight whatever I did. Now
course it is the same story plus these tenderness
in Bombay but anywhere. I have just had a course of
injections of Di-Menformin and been advised to take Ostofem
15 days, also for instance, I for one week two pills, but
k one then nothing for a week & then start off again.
I have before had taking Calcium Sandoz also
Antacid mixture, an Indian preparation Trikatu churna,
Triphala after meals. The whole function seems to be all
no is not bad. My urine complaint is no worse than it
was has been inspite of all these medicines & also pills.
Since last year my legs are swollen all the time but
sometimes more & less, according to my hands and eyes do

it becomes worthless. I used to take dissicated Thyroid tw
last month, it did not especially good and the Doctor in C
thought I better stops it and prescribed Di-Mercurmen all
already mentioned. He thought intravenus Calcium injections
might help us to absorb liquid as I do.

Now please what is your wishes. Can you come
for a couple of days I see no reason why you should not
do so now please do and on my way down about the 15th
October, I could stay a few days in Lahore for you to

Please write soon. My kind regards to Mrs Del

Yourself,

Yours very sincerely

Lachmi Devi W/o Gouch Dhan

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

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TO

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TIME SUGGEST PUT UP HOTEL LAHORE FOR PRESENT A BEGAM SHAHNAWAZ

N.B.—The name of the Sender, if telegraphed, should be written after [illegible] from the body.

P. O. Form

JEWISH RELIEF ASSOCIATION
BOMBAY.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"JEWRELIEF"
TELEPHONE NO. 32222
POST BOX NO. 47.

PRESIDENT: SIR ALWYN EZRA. BOMBAY.

HAGUE BUILDING.
(2ND FLOOR)
SPROTT ROAD,
BALLARD ESTATE.

27th August, 1946.

Dr. H.M. Selzer,
c/o Faletti's Hotel,
LAHORE.

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in giving you below copy of a letter from the Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi, dated 24th August:

" Re: No.72/9/14/40-Poll(EW).

Subject: Release of certain Jewish internees and parolees - Case of Dr. & Mrs.H.M.Selzer.

In continuation of the Home Department letter No.9/16/9/45-Poll(EW) dated the 8th August 1946 I am directed to say that Dr. H.M. Selzer has now applied for permission to go to Lahore to set up medical practice there. Since he has statedthat he has sufficient financial means to set up the practice, it has been decided that he should be finally released and permitted to take up residence in Lahore. He may kindly be informed of the decision. Formal orders cancelling the orders of the Government of India restricting Dr. and Mrs. SELZER to the Parole Centre at Satara are being sent to them through the Government of Bombay. "

Yours faithfully,
Jewish Relief Association
Chairman.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE ASSOCIATION AND NOT TO INDIVIDUALS.

A Jewish Heart .

Before I close this part of our life history, I must recall an episode which moved us very much and helped us regain some trust in man and confidence in our future.

When we were living in Bombay for about six weeks or so, between the Camp and the return to Lahore; while I was trying to find an opportunity to emigrate to some country willing to accept us: and to explore the possibility to start afresh somewhere in India, we realized that we were "nobodies" ,that we had no social status of any kind, that people tried to avoid any contact with us, even those we thought our friends and who later on behaved as if they were still our friends. I cannot blame them: for many years that we had been inmates in the camps they had bothered about and for us, and they had enough of all this. Possibly they may have experineced also unpleasantness becuase of this, from the side of the police or from other Jews ? Be it as it may: none of the Jews in Bombay cared about us, considered us worthy of any personal or private attention.

There was only one exception: one day we received an invitation from a Jewish family in Bombay,not from one of the immigrant German Jews but from one which has been classified as "Bhagdad" Jews,that Arab speaking group of businessmen and traders whose ancestors had immigarted into India about 200 years ago and had mainly settled in Bombay and Calcutta. Our host,his wife and four children,had heard about us and had invited us to tea to show us sympathy nd friend ship. This was done purely out of goodness and for no ulterior motive. T his is the more remarkable, as the couple had every reason to resent us continental Jews. They had been intsrumental in building up the practice,the circle of acquaintances,the introductions of the first two German Jewish doctors who had come to Bombay. He claims that he helped Drs. Berger and Weingarten become known; that he loaned them the capital they required as initial outlay; that he undertook all responsibilities and guaranties on their behalf. However, then they had become known, had become rich, they never again visited this good man, never invited him to their houses. The greatest disappontment this man had was that night when he phoned Dr. Berger urgently for help,when his son of 12 years, his only son fell ill with symptoms

No. 2850 of 1946.

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT, INTERNMENT CAMP AND PAROLE CENTRE, SATARA.
Satara, dated the 20 May, 1946.

ORDER OF EXEMPTION :

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 8 of - the Foreigners Act, 1940(II of 1940), which I have been authorised by the- Central Government, under Section 10 of the Said Act to exercise, I declare that the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Foreigners Order, 1939, shall not apply to, or in relation to - Mrs. Kate SELZER, Polish of German Jewish Birth, Lahore Registree No.194/28.9.39, now restricted to the Internment Camp and Parole Centre at Satara, for so long as she is travelling from Satara to - Bombay, by the route prescribed in the annexed Schedule, having been released from the Internment Camp and Parole Centre, Satara, and permitted to reside in Bombay with the Jewish Relief Association, subject to the conditions mentioned in the Government of India, Home Department memorandum No.9/15/9/45-Poll (I), dated the 3rd May, 1946.

She has been instructed to report her arrival to the - Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch(II), C.I.D., Bombay.

Commandant
Internment Camp and Parole Centre, Satara.

SCHEDULE :

1. SATARA - to - BOMBAY, v i a -Poona.
2. Date on which to report arrival at destination:- 21.5.1946.

To:- Mrs.K.Selzer.

p.t.o.

AR 25045
Hermann M. SELZER Coll.

1811 The story of a Prince
I, Introduction pp. 2 - 21
II, Development and Maturation pp. 22 - 78
chapter 1 - 4

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A N

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This is by far not a lecture, not even an introduction to a course about Comparative Theology - fascinating though this material is. It is, however, a hopeful attempt to interest you in a deeper study and a more prolonged investigation of your own of this most interesting phenomen in human history - and perhaps bring you to search for a meaning, for a purpose of your life.

I.

A N

INTRODUCTION

A N

INTRODUCTION

1

Dear Reader ! Kindly permit that I introduce myself.....

Imagine you see me seated at my desk, a stack of notebooks at my elbow, a store of pencils readied for use placed at a within reach, and a bundle of folio sheets waiting to be entrusted with the story I am going to tell - a story which since a long time has been growing and fermenting in me. You will not mind, I hope, that I use a medical term to better illustrate this communicative urge: I have since long been pregnant with this story and the time for delivery is at last at hand.

You will hardly be able to imagine how a story brewing and bubling inside a person's mind can affect his sleep, his appetite, his temper and his family life. Try to place yourself in the role of a man who thinks he has a nice story to tell, and impatiently waits for the moment he can face an appreciative audience.

Please pay attention to the fact that I have described myself as a "man" and as a "person" in these last two sentences ! Note also, that I have not described myself as a "writer" or as a "novelist" or as a "poet", for I do not consider myself to be a writer or a novelist or a poet. I am only a plain storyteller, a man who weaves with words a web of fantasies; who tells a story which is based on facts only insofar as a myth can be based on facts. In short: I am a man who spins before your eyes a tale made of colourful images which are rendered iridescent by the anticipatory tension he knows to create in you, and finds an echo in the fire of your imagination. Unfortunately the imagery of many stories the storytellers tell are blunted, as soon as the storyteller allows his fantasy to roam beyond the generous limits to which a story can be stretched, and allows it to step down from the path which would have led to a miraculous, but still acceptable ending. To my sorrow I myself am at times inclined to commit such a sin, that is to deviate from the straight course of my story; but as a rule I soon get hold

of myself and take up the thread again. Therefore, please, bear with me.

From the day I considered myself an intellectual, I felt it incumbent on me to refute my formerly vaguely held belief in man's rebirth and reincarnation, in the idea of a transmigration of souls and similar such things; but slowly I changed my mind again, and today I am convinced that such things do exist. I cannot otherwise explain what I have learned in my long life, what I have seen and perceived on my journeys, and what I sense is going on within me. All this becomes evident to me whenever pictures arise before my eyes; whenever I catch myself in animated conversations with figures and persons I have called up in my mind; whenever I pass a sleepless night because I worry about the misfortunes and the problems, or whenever I share the joy and the successes of the individuals I have placed on the stage of my fantasies. It inevitably takes quite some time to call myself back to reality. It is at such moments and in such states that I become convinced that once upon a time and in a prior incarnation I have been a storyteller somewhere in ancient Persia - most likely in Shiraz or Isfahan, those places which are with justification so famous for their storytellers. In a kind of tweelight state of consciousness - I suppose my critics will call it nothing but my overheated imagination, and I do not mind if the do - I see myself in a teagarden, surrounded by fragrant bushes and shrubs, seated on an embroidered silken cushion placed in the shade of a large old figtree on a beautifully patterned carpet which my servant has placed on a slightly elevated platform made of skilfully evened glazed bricks. In front of me, also seated on cushions or low benches and arranged in a half-circle, I see a group of men and children of every age. They listen with great eagerness to my story. With unspoken regret I see that no women are present among my audience. Although in ancient Persia women were not permitted to mix with men who are not part of their immediate family - and I learned only recently that this is again the case in modern Persia or Iran as the country is called now - I have never become reconciled to this custom.

This does not mean, however, that I am not given the honour and pleasure to tell my stories to the ladies too. I am often called - I prefer to say I am invited - to the women's apartments in the palace of the king or in the villas of the notables, where the beautiful ladies of the harem, young or not so young anymore, but all of them beautiful, clad in the most gorgious silks and brocades and covered with jewels, are seated on their comfortable divans with

their maidservants standing behind them and waving large feather fans to cool down their skin and their fantasy. The ladies listen with no less rapt eagerness and thrill than my male public to my stories to which I give an additional coating of glitter and romance and a further doses of the spice of the miraculous.

I must confess, I prefer the audience of women, not only because I love women, but also because my mind grows and my eloquency expands whenever I am in the presence and under the impact of women listeners, whose combined beauty radiates and warms like the sun in spring; and because I can breathe deeper when I am surrounded by the fragrance rising from these ladies which surpasses by far that of the roses, of the jasmin and all the other sweet smelling plants in the teagarden. For when I am under this overwhelming impact, I am liable to decorate the story I have set out to tell with so much more colour, and to fill it with so much more warmth, that I go on and on, stimulated by the cries of surprise and the laughter of happiness as the story unfolds and expands and flies off into the blue skies above me - and the unbelievable becomes believable at last, and the fantastic is grasped as a possible reality.

The starting point of my stories is usually inspired by an event of the day. At other times I am start on my way by focussing my mind on one of the beautiful and charming boys I see seated in front of me among the listeners. Occasionally I am inspired by a perfect flower or a scintillating bird which come into my field of vision. And while I go on weaving and embroidering my story, it grows and develops without any toil from my side; a plot forms and gets dissolved, my tale perceives a goal, sails smoothly towards it and gets in the end elegantly and effortlessly dissolved. At times I may get too much animated; my fantasy will become too much alive and, unfortunately, also too volatile, so that I have to take a grip on myself not to lose my thread and not to find myself at a loss, how to reach a satisfactory conclusion for the story I set out to tell.

And so, day in and day out I have lived as a storyteller in a former incarnation, telling stories, painting word pictures, and having listeners vibrate with my words. This has been my former life, I am sure. Please do not think me conceited if I tell you that in those days I could tell a new story every day for more than a thousand days in a row.

Also now, sitting at my desk in front of a Word Processor, enjoying the reputation of a renowned, a respected modern storyteller, I imagine myself in a teagarden facing a row of eager listeners who do not dare interrupt me, be it by cracking pistacchio nuts or spitting out the skins of melonseeds or, worse still, by conversing among themselves. I appreciate it, that they try to sip their sweetened tea without their accustomed slurping noise. Only the happy laughter, the spontaneous exclamations of sympathy or fear or horror - when appropriate, of course - will I allow from the people assembled in front of me; and this will fertilize my imagination, will ferment my fancy still further, and will lift me to ever greater heights of fantasy. But if at any time - it happens, though very rarely - my listeners do forget their manners and they annoy me, I have only to interrupt my story and look at them for a moment or two without my saying a word, and I have them stop, blush, place their hand over their mouth and mumble a word of apology.

But I never was only a storyteller, a weaver of fantasies in colours competing with those of the butterfly. I always made it a point to introduce a serious theme into my story; to thread into my tale some matter of educational value; or to end the always miraculous happening with some serious reflections or admonitions about a problem in life and how best to solve it.

You see from what I have written so far, how easily I am carried away by my dreams; how easily I can transport myself into a place and into a role in fantasyland. But I may tell you also in confidence, that this is a very nice trait, a happy-making gift. Don't you agree ? If you knew what happy and satisfying dreams I can produce for myself, and how glad I am to have listeners share these with me.

But the real storyteller - and this applies no less also to the novelist and the poet - writes after all mostly for his own satisfaction and fulfillment.

I am sorry ! I must not permit myself to be further distracted - I have to start on the story which I want to tell you.

Oh, my dear friends ! Just when I was about to collect my thoughts to find the right beginning, I find myself again afloat on a sea of dreams, stretched out on soft cushions made of fantasy, in a boat named "Fairyland", and driven along by the winds of wishfulfullment. Even though this weakness of mine has since many years limited the contents of my foodbasket, you have not to feel

sorry for me, I have gained the advantages of a life made up of an unending series of weekends, during which I am allowed to escape from the vexations which turn earthly existence into a grey and sombre vacuum. My imagery makes me fly in a gorgeous slalom over the plains filled with the unblemished snow of happiness. And while in actual life my physical movements are more and more impeded by the dues I have to render to my advancing age, my mind's wings grow in compensation bigger and stronger and make me soar ever higher and higher.

But honesty - a trait I have all my life endeavoured to cultivate - makes me confess, that my daydreaming becomes more and more problematic nowadays. I have on my flights of fanatasy to pay more than ever attention to the controls. To my sorrow I have, therefore, to warn you, that I am in these days more than ever carried away by dreams, that I turn ever bigger circles, that my stories get ever more complex and my plots ever more complicated. Whenever this is the case; whenever you see me deviate for too long from the chartered course; when you see me lose the thread; when you see me immersed in the contemplation of a vista which has unexpectedly opened before my eyes and where you cannot follow me, you may sit up and start a coughing fit should your signs of restlessness not already have caught my attention.

Do you know that only at this moment of writing, just when I had formed the above lines, I do realize that you are not sitting in a half-circle around me on the grass in some teagarden, but that you find yourselves most likely ensconced in a comfortable chair in front of a fireplace, your feet on its grid and "a glass of something" at your elbow, and cannot "call me to order" in the way I have advised. This being the case, please turn over the pages whenever they describe a flight over barren territory, and continue to read where I have settled again into my regular flight route. But, please, do not close the book. I assure you that it will be worth your while to continue reading, that otherwise you are going to miss some very interesting material. And no less carefully should you consider, that you will do me thereby a personal favour, for I like the thought - and am enthralled by the knowledge - that you have been reading a story I have written.

However, before I go on I must admit, that I find myself in a difficult situation at this stage. You see, I would very much have liked to tell you an interesting, an entertaining, an instructive story in order to make you feel that you have not wasted your time.

I could easily have produced now a story about a potato, about an earthworm or about an ingrown toenail - but I knmow only too well, that themes of such a nature have been used so often by other story-tellers, and that such material could not, with the best of wills and by the pen of the most competent writer, bring forth anything of worth, of value and of interest. Such stuff - even from my pen - would undoubtedly have caused you to be disappointed, possibly even hurt. You may take it for granted - honestly and true, cross my heart and so on - that I would not like to lose your goodwill. Certaily not ! It is your right to expect, as do all listeners to and readers of stories, to be offered something thrilling, something fascinating, something instructive in addition.

Times and circumstances have changed. Fortunately - for me at least - I do not have to earn my living by storywriting. I could in any case not imagine that there would be a sufficient number of readers willing to spend money on books I have written; nor is it likely that any publisher would waste time and money on printing my books; nor do I suppose that any bookshop would find space to store my books. And certainly, I could not in my wildest dreams anymore expect a readers' circle or a women's club to have ewnough courage to invite me for a lecture. It is no less certain, that there does no exist a radio station anywhere, even a minute one somewhere at the border of a desert, which would be willing to replace the praise due to a new toothpaste or to forego impressing its listeners with the whiteness producing power of somebody's washing powder, to fit in the reading of one of my stories. Had I not been a storyteller but any kind of poetast sojourning in a thick cumulus cloud, I could use such obscure and tortured language, that the publishers, the reviewers, the reading public, in order not to appear ignorant and uneducated, would bring up unlimited courage, enthusiasm and money to set me afloat on a cloud of uniqueness in literacy and achievement.

Forget your old prejudices and any you may have added in the last few minutes, and read on. I intend to offer you an interesting story. I have the feeling that you will not be disappointed. You will meet some nice people, some unusual people, and also some queer people, some outside-the-usual-run people, some people you usually do not encounter, people neither comparable to those you know nor others of the kind you meet on the subway but pretend not to know. Should you come to conclude that I have not kept my promise, you may ask for your money back. It may be that I shall remain all along on the well-traveled highway used by the common-run stories; it may

be that you will only be given a common though not undigestible fare in the pages through whichg we pass. Should this be the case, please do not get angry and forgive. The truth is, that I do not know yet how my story is going to develop. So far and at this moment I have only a vaguely outlined direction before me, and I do not know where the story will lead, what the weather will be like en route, and who will accompany us on our journey. I can assure you, I carry enough fuel and that we shall not get stuck in some inaccessible place. And I promise you also, that I shall not allow too much sadness, too much pain to flow from my pen into my story.

I hope that you will have learned something new from this story. And I still more hope, that by the time this story comes to an end, you and I will have learned something about humanity's ways to fulfill its aspirations. For I am going to tell you about princes - and there is not only much to tell about them, but also much to argue. Should you ever want to involve me in a argument of any kind on the basis of what you are going to read, wait until you have come to the end of my tale. Thereafter I shall gladly place myself at your disposal. Hopefully I shall by that time be still around and available at my old address.

Yes, I am going to tell you about princes. But they will not be princes but Princes. At least one of them will turn out to be a man of unusual qualities - why and in which sense, it will not take long for you to find out. At this moment I do not know myself how he looks and how he is going to develop, to grow and to mature - and how and what he will be at the end of my story. Leave, thereafore, all your questions till the end. Is this allright with you ?

But I must warn you to have patience and not to press me nor to interrupt me. For with advancing age I have been afflicted with the weakness, when interrupted, to lose the thread, to deviate from the theme, to roam into neighbouring fields - and to turn into a magister, an old-fashioned teacher who, his hands resting on his buttocks, looks accusingly at you over the rim of the glasses which have slipped to the tip of his nose.

The Storyteller's Prologue
An Excursus about Princes.

As I am about to start on my "Story of a Prince", I feel it incumbent upon me to tell you 'in a few words' some of what I know about - and what I associate with - princes.

I am sure that throughout your earliest childhood you had been clamouring for stories about princes and princesses. You are in no way an exception. You will surely remember, that in most of the stories and fables told to you by your mother, by your Nanny, by your teacher, by your favourable aunt, and by all those who endeavoured to help you along to your spiritual and intellectual maturation, there has been a heroic prince or at least his female counterpart, a gorgeous princess. And thus you have come to know, that princes and princesses are without exception beautiful, glamourous and accomplished people; and that in case they are at the begining of the story not truly happy and enviable people, they are sure to become such when the story unfolds, or at least when the happy end approaches. They were, of course, always so beautifully dressed that you could not help envying them, and at a moment's notice were ready to change places with them. These beautiful people were also always so perfectly groomed and so well behaved, that your parents never missed a chance to point them out as models for you to imitate. And it was, furthermore, unavoidable that your mother and grandmother pointed out to you, or at you, when you presented yourselves to them in your beautiful party dress or in your fancy uniform; when they put the bow into your hair or the splendid cap on your head, that this was the way princesses and princes always appear and look in real life. The only time you mistrusted such tales and disliked such comparison was, when you sat in front of your plateful of gruel or spinach and were told, that princesses and princes always emptied their plates without ever saying a word

in protest.

Are not your memories of the glorious princes and princesses brought back to your mind, when your thirst for knowledge, and no less also for the satisfying of your curiosity - notwithstanding all the sophistication you have acquired and all the political indoctrination you had endured in the meantime - make you sit for hours in front of the TV screen to watch the way God, the bishops and the Masters of Ceremony have ordered and arranged how a marriage between a prince and a princess be performed; or how this superior brand of mankind spends its time with a cocktail glass in hand; or parades in a swimsuit or gallops over the polo field ? And hand over your heart: don't you feel like protesting aloud their innocence, when you hear that princes have misbehaved; when you read in your papers that they have been untrue to their vocation of passing through life as exceptional, faultless and untainted super-human beings ?

I am, therefore, entitled to conclude, that you know already very much about princes and their ilk. But at the same time I am ready to take on a bet, that there are still very many things you do not know about princes. And in addition I am ready to challenge you, that there exists a species of princes about whose existence you are ignorant. There are, for instances, princes who were not born as princes, who are really not princes, but on whom the title of 'prince' has been bestowed by toastmasters or newspaper editors as reward for the prominence and the success they have achieved in their fields of activity, in their businesses or in their professions. You may also encounter men who are called 'princes' in the fields of science or literature or sports and so on. All of them are as a rule men of outstanding achievements because - to mention an example - they have built financial empires and have made a lot of money from dealing in oil or coal or shipping or armaments. However, this should not be taken to mean that their highly praised successes are always accompanied by equally impressive moral qualifications.

Although these men - and occasionally women - are not born as princes, they merit your admiration notwithstanding this - or possibly because of this. I have been refering now to people who have earned this - usually not transferable - title of 'prince' and the business empires associated therewith, by their luck, by their hard work, by their perseverance. I think they have earned their "princedom" with more justification than those who are the sons of princes, of kings or emperors; on whom, the moment they are born, the title of prince is bestowed; who are proclaimed a prince and are addressed as a prince, even as "Your Royal Highness" already at an age - and

often also on the occasion - when in their nursery they are placed on an especially constructed and heraldically decorated royal table and have their princely bottoms cleaned, powdered and finally dressed in princely napkins.

And there is - finally - another completely different group of 'princes', who too are already at the moment of their birth entitled to be called 'Prince'; whose bottoms have no less to be cleaned and powdered and napkined; but whose persons and bottoms are not addressed with so much ceremony and with such deep respect by an army of nurses, nannies and other princely attendants; and who have not a priori and eo ipso and automatically and necessarily to evoke your admiration and envy whatever their age. And let me state here once for ever, that I have not the slightest intention to induce you to develop such envy and such admiration for the general species of princes I am going to describe now although, I must confess, I personally do greatly admire the Prince-hero of my story.

You may have come to think that a prince is a prince is a prince - and that this is so in every culture. This, however, is not the case. All over the world there are people who will call their cats and dogs by the name "Prince"; and in India everybody is entitled to name their son "Kumar" which means "Prince". And why not ? He is to his parents a prince and will more often than not comport himself like one when he lords it over the servants. He will certainly not be drowned in a nearby well in the way an infant girl may be finished off who exceeds the number of her gender which the family is willing or capable of feeding or considers worthy of investment. In India the Sweeper, the lowest among human beings - if he is at all counted a human being, for he ranks far below even any animal in value and worthiness - is called a "Mehta", which like Kamar or Kumar is one of the honorifics given to a Prince of the blood. Hindus would never allow such a Sweeper-Prince to touch them; orthodox Hindus would not even permit the shadow of such a "Prince" to fall upon them. A Hindu would never allow such a 'Prince' into their house, except through a specially provided backdoor leading into the toilet - which the Prince has not rarely to clean with his bare hands; for after all you cannot very well offer a rag to a Prince, can you ? Believe me, many a Sweeper would merit the title of 'Prince' with more justification, than many of the Maharajas and Nawabs who are crowding the history of India.

Do not mind if I give now free rein to my associations. I have warned you of this foible of mine, have I not ? I am going to mention

how puzzled I was as a young schoolboy by the genetically and zoologically incongruous relationship of dogs of undeterminable species with certain princes of royal descent, who are amply depicted in the pre-Lenin russian literature, because certain of my school teachers - at the time I write of now most of them strutted around as proud socialists - tended to describe them "sons of bitches". I am to this day sorry that I had not the courage to ask for details from those pedagogic luminaries. It would not only have enlarged my intellectual horizon, but would also have freed me from the incubus this unsolved puzzle has been my lot since my youth.

Don't be in a hurry ! You must not think, that with the above enumerated series of species I have exhausted my catalogue of princes. There are still more drawers with princes I have not opened yet.

Have you so far realized how many things are commonly labeled "princely" ? With all my inherent modesty I would not exclude the possibility, that in an inrush of belated admiration for one of my stories you yourselves might be induced to call it "a prince of a story". But you may believe me when I say, that even in my most immodest mood would I ever have considered such an appreciation appropriate. It would have sounded funny to me even with my poorly functioning hearing aid.

I heard the other day somebody call Machiavelli's opus 'The Prince' a 'princely book'. Such kind of appreciative labels, such an abuse of the word "prince" and its adjectives one often hears from people who should know better. I read recently, that our Minister of Agriculture, enthusing on the occasion of a visit to a farm over a gigantic specimen of cabbage, called that impossible vegetable a "Prince of a Cabbage". I heard once a poet, emerging soaked in sweat from a loo, exclaim full of self-admiration: "This had been a prince of a constipation". And who does not know the Shadchan, the always desperate looking marriage broker, who in his sales talk tries to palm off a squinting slobbing idiot - a true vegetable - as "a prince of a man" to the parents on the look-out for a husband for their daughter, whom they will most likely label, with perhaps even less justification, to parties rooming the marriage market, as a "princess of a girl".

I suppose you have been waiting impatiently for me to stop, for me to catch my breath, to clean my nose or whatever, so that you can tell me - most likely in order to show me how clever you are - that among the Jews there are so many people with the family name "Prince"; and that in any case - whatever their family name

- so many of our Jews believe themselves aristocrats. I hope it will not induce you to break out in guffaws when I tell you, that I find these "Jewish Princes" a very interesting subspecies of the human race. I do not intend to imply with this, that we do in truth harbour in our midst something like a Jewish aristocracy, whatever some of my correligionists among my readership may feel entitled to claim for themselves - particularly those funny people in London and New York among the Sephardim, each and everyone of whom believes himself to be a direct descendent of good old Yehuda Hanassi, the last Jewish Prince who ruled after the destruction of the Second Temple. That poor old man could be used to generate electricity for half Jerusalem, as he would never cease to revolve in his grave, should he become aware how his presumed descendants behave in our days. These and may other rich Jews strut through life as if they were the only blobs of cream on the large bowl of borsht of Jewry. They may be rich, very rich even, but they are anything but princes. They are as a rule moneyed people who commit the gravest crime rich people could possibly commit: they do not know how to carry their riches.

And then I know of another class of Jewish princes. I am thinking of the founders of the various hassidic dynasties and their decendants. From what I have seen, read and heard about the original founders permits me to think, that they have indeed been a bunch of great men. But in so many instances have their offspring deteriorated - by inbreeding and other damage to their genes - into a type of "princes" who, capitalists though they often are, will hardly ever be likely to arose the ire of even the most fervent among the anarchists.

Also the Jewish princes of the commercial and industrial world, of whom we can in these our days discover so many among us, are condemned to remain isolated phenomena, because their progeny will as a rule attract public attention only insofar as their behaviour reveals the lack of those princely qualifications which have distinguished and "enobled" their predecessors.

On the other hand I have encountered in my life many real princes - 'real' according to the Burkett and in line with the definition of the Oxford Dictionary. I had once the luck to meet Prince Philipp of England on a social level, and I found him the kind of guy from whom I would without hesitation buy a second-hand car, and with whom I would also go on a long "Wanderschaft", provided this hiking tour does not include a mountain climb. Neither would I compete with him on the Polo field or with a sailing boat, as this would load

me with too many inferiority complexes. I met once the Old Agha Khan, and I can still remember what a prince of a man he was. I can assure you that the blood of Prince Peter of Greece is as red as yours and mine and has not the slightest tinge of blue. I enjoyed meals at the tables of many an Indian prince, Maharajas and Nawabs, and I had drinks with a still greater number of them. I found them nothing more than average human beings, some nicer, some cleverer than average, some more decent, some more human than the next man. You may call me conceited, but I assure you, that I have never felt myself a lesser human breed than those princes, dukes, earls, lords, nawabs, maharajas and other Royal Highnesses who have crossed my path - even though quite evidently they themselves, and at least their staff, had a different opinion about me.

Yes, my dear readers ! I have not forgotten that I promised to tell you a story about Princes - or better about a Prince. I know quite well that up to now I have offered you a somewhat extended but by no means complete catalogization of the human sub-species 'prince'. You must by now have begun to suspect, that I have a personal reason and a special interest to expand on this theme. Let me hint here and now that this is indeed the case, as one or the other of you has already found out. In fact my family name is - or better said was - 'Prince'.

And with this disclosure the story I want to tell you has started.

However, give me another minute, please. Before I go on, I consider it important for you to know how Jews came to acquire their family names, and I, respectively my ancestors, among them. In the following I shall bring only some general remarks. I beg you, therefore, please do not get impatient. Neither should you feel frustrated. Have I not warned you that I shall now and then inflict on you my foible and deviate from the main theme ? But you may trust me: there is always some reason if I do so. Please bear with me.

I cannot pretend that up to now my discourse about "princes" could have been of any substance unless I expand further on that category of people - be they Jews be they Gentiles - who are not "princes of the blood" but who are still legitimately entitled to the name "Prince". You will soon discover why I put so much weight on this fact, why I have to mention this group of people last, and why I feel obliged to spend some more time on the description of this category.

If you have not known before you know now, that the bearers of this aristocratic name are legally and socially entitled to call themselves such, not because it is a title but because it is their family name. There are all kinds of people with this family name, but none of them has the slightest justification - and as far as I know of the many families with the name "Prince" with whom I am connected, also no inclination - to claim even vaguely an aristocrat among their ancestry. After all, these Jewish families with the name "Prince" could as easily have been allotted the name "Freedman" or "Fischbein" or "Abrahamson". It was all a matter of luck and of money.

I have the impression that - tired out as you may already be by this unusually long preface to my story, of the contents of which you have so far only been given a hint at the most - you must have been intrigued by my last remark, and that you want me to give you some explanation. You want me to tell you, I suppose, why some of you are called "Kahane" or "Caspi" or "Rosenbaum" and others, as I have mentioned, have the family name "Prince" or even "Duke" or "King". You will want to know, whether these families with such high-sounding names are in any way distinguished; whether they are allowed to carry this name as a privilege, though they are not the offsprings of kings and queens, or high-faluting aristocrats; whether they had ancestors who ruled states or only estates; whether they had amassed fortunes dealing in oil, arms, shipping or God knows what else.

I shall tell you how this came about. I like telling people how things come about. When I tell people how things come about, I do as a rule not permit my fantasy to come in between with a salto, with a joke - although I like to wrap my explanation into a nice package.

Since quite some time now there are opportunities and occasions when an individual can officially and legally acquire the family name - of course not the title - of "Prince". But this has become possible only in relatively recent times. Those among you, who are interested in Jewish history - whether you have acquired this knowledge in school or by reading - will have learned that some 200 years or so ago the Ruler of Austria woke up one fine spring morning in an unusual good mood. Usually he wakes up in a bad mood, in a grumpy mood, because the financial burden pressing on his crowned head make him sleep poorly. However, on this morning he woke up in a good mood, partly because it was a nice spring morning; but

mostly because he had a dream by which he was inspired to a splendid plan with the help of which he expected the ease to a great extent his vast Empire's no less vast financial burden. Plans born in this manner were most unusual in Vienna, and that is the reason why that night's achievement contributed to the Emperor's good mood; for it is unusual for Emperors to have original ideas and executable plans of their own.

On that morning, seated in imperial aloneness at the head of the huge dining table, watched by his 25 ministers lined up on both sides of the the breakfastroom how he was with imperial rhythm spooning porridge and cream underneath his huge whiskers into his mouth, the Emperor gave orders that the execution of his unique imperial plan be immediately taken into hands.

It was indeed a brillant idea - I mean the one the Emperor had perceived in his dream - by which the Empire was not only going to be modernized, but in addition the state coffers replenished. With the help of this plan he would no with painful regularity have his day spoiled by the Finance Minister who appeared to have a special delight in making the Emperor contemplate every morning the bare bottom inside the household's treasure chest. Since his infancy the Emperor had disliked bare bottoms, but never so much as that of his Treasure Chest. Soon he was going to see that bottom covered, and kept covered, by the constant flow brought in by the taxes the Jews living in his Empire were going to pay. An additional advantage - though not of secondary importance - was the Emperor's expectation, that next to the ministers also the nation would realize who was the ruler of the Empire, and that the Ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was no less endowed with wisdom than had been Old King Solomon.

This was the ordinance which the ministers of the Empire issued in the name of the Emperor:

> t h a t e v e r y J e w i n t h e A u s t r o - H u n g a r i a n E m p i r e h a d t o a d o p t a f a m i l y n a m e .

Until then it had been sufficient for a Jew - say with the name Moses - to be known as 'Moses the son of Jacob' or as 'Moses the carpenter' or as 'Moses the hunchback' or even as 'Moses the fool'and so on. This method had usually been appropriate to identify, or to find the whereabouts, of that fellow Moses in his native village or in his stetl, but to the Emperor's tax collectors this did by far not suffice as an identification. The imperial tax collectors patience was taxed whenever they suddenly, unexpectedly and cunningly descended on a village or a stetl, determined to apprehend those

who had not paid the taxes due to the Emperor. As all the Jews had only what you would today - rather inappopriately - call "christian" names and no additional family names, it could happen that a single tax receipt issued on the name 'Moses', could be presented in turn by a number of Moseses in proof of having paid the taxes due. You can imagine the bald patches on the scalps and in the beards from which in their frustratetion the tax officials had pulled the hairs. The Emperor sympathized greatly with the balding tax collectors, but he was much more concerned with the bottom of the empty treasure chest, as I have mentioned.

And in due course it came to pass that an order came forth from the Chancellery of the Emperor in Vienna, that every Jew breathing the air of the Empire had to have a distinct family name of his own. A great number of commissions were constituted, each of them made up of a Commissioner and his clerk. These Commissions set out to visit every single stetl, village or hamlet in the Emperor's vast Empire. It took a number of years to complete the work, and much paper and ink were used up, and from every Jew a golden ducat was collected - but in the end the Commissioners could report to the Emperor, that every Jew carried a distinct family name.

It must be recorded for posterity that the Commissioners of the Commissions - suitably decked out in splendid uniforms, helmets, swords and medals - did most conscientiously fulfill their duty to the Emperor and Fatherland. As soon as they reached the place in which they had to perform their duty, they established themselves in the centre of administrative power, e.g. the Buergermeisterant or the Polizeiamt or the Amtsgericht. The Jews of the place had a long time ahead been informed by the local police constable of the Imperial Proclamation, and they had been warned to be ready to present themselves at a certain date and in the allotted place to be interviewed by the Commission. They knew why they were made to line up before the Commissioner: that they were to be provided with a permanent name for their family unit; that they were to have their newly acquired family name entered in the newly established family register; and that henceforth they were to use their new family name whenever necessary - and for all eternity. As I mentioned already, the registration per family head was one gold ducat. Each Jew was entitled to propose on his own a name by which he wanted himself and his family to be known in future. Each one of the Jews who presented himself in front of the Commissioner's table was ready with a name and a smile and a gold piece. It had also been made known in sufficient time - and "just by the way" - that it was

advisable to accompany the proposal for a new family name with an additional few coins - preferably another coin of gold - or any other suitable gift, to be proffered to the Clerk the very moment the Commissioner had to hide his face in his large handkerchief for a sneeze which had been provided for by a sniff of tobacco. Such a gift was the safest way to soften the heart of the Commissioner with the grim eyes and the large moustache - and of the no less formidable Clerk - and make them amenable to graciously accept the petition for the name the applicant proposed; and not to mind in case the petitioner risked some poetic licence. According to the number of the coins or the value of the trinket in the sweating hand of the Jew, the latter could chose for himself a to himself more or less beautiful sounding name. You may assume that those who are today called 'Goldberg' or 'Rosenbaum' or 'Diamant' and the like, owe their "nice names" to the generous gifts their forefather pressed into the hands of the Emperor's officials. Those who could not but produce a "token of esteem", were given permission to call themselves 'Cohen' or 'Levi' or 'Fischer' or 'Selzer' and so on. But the poor man who possessed not even that minimum the Clerk could demean himself to accept; or the stubborn Jew who insisted on his 'principles' or stood on his 'rights' and refused to bribe the officials - in other words those who refused to pay for the 'quality' of their family name, had to accept names like 'Stinker' or 'Dirtman' or 'Backstairssmell' or any other such production of the usually well developed sense of humor of the officials so keenly bent on serving their Emperor and Fatherland. I can assure you, that when examples of the sense of humour of these jokers in uniform became known, even the poorest Jew made a great effort - be it by raising a loan, be it by begging, be it by any other method he could think of - to collect enough money with which to satisfy the sensitivity of the esthetically so finely tuned souls of the representatives of the Austrian government of those days.

This was the method by which those among the Jews, who had acquired in the past much experience in dealing with officialdom, managed to get an often more sweet smelling name than 'hoi polloi'.

This my excursus will explain to you, how it came about that so many Jewish families carry such grandiose names, while others had to content with names which indicate the trade, the profession, of the erstwhile applicant; and how others still had to go along with names which derive from the town or village where their ancestors had once lived or whence they had arrived - or which the Commissioner wanted to commemorate because he had once consumed a very satisfactory meal in an inn in that place, village or town, or because he had

once known a pretty girl in that place, village or town.

All this indicates, that according to the basic laws of economics certain names were more in demand and therefore more expensive. However, there were certain names which were definitely and finally declared out of reach of even the richest Jew. Could you imagine a Jew to be granted the name 'Bishop' or 'Vatican' ? Also the name 'Kaiser' and 'Koenig' and Prinz' were out of bonds. It was simply not done that there should be Jews with such names. Consider the confusion in the slowly revolving mind of a policeman in Galicia arresting for whatever reason a culprit named 'Kaiser Moses' or the sensation of a perplexed bureaucrat in the Immigration Department on Ellis Island, were he asked to admit into the USA a man named 'King Isaac' or 'Prince Samuel'.

Later on, when Enlightenment, Emancipation, Progress, Humanism, Socialism, Romanticism had done their work, had their influence and had left their impact, those who were still or again desirous of a beautiful name, or wanted to rid themselves of an ugly one, could - without having to pay a substantial sum to a greedy commissioner or a slimy clerk - get rid of their smelly names and acquire in their stead a "nice name". Even 'aristocratic names' were available now. This could be done by a very simple procedure. It is called a "deed poll". It involved only a small financial outlay; any lawyer could get you any name you wanted. The name 'Prince' began to proliferate, also other such from the 'aristocratic' drawer. Many other 'Kaiser' or 'Koenig' families came to their phony name by modernizing their town-related names through a simple amputative procedure: e.g. the 'Koenigsbergs', the 'Koenigstadts' became 'Koenigs', and the 'Kaiserbergs' and the 'Kaiserbarts' turned into plain 'Kaisers'.

II.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Some introductory remarks.

At last I have reached the stage when I can present the personalities of the my story.

My friends ! May I flatter myself that, after you have read the coming chapter, I will have made you learn something new ? That today your store of knowledge will have been increased ? A storyteller can never know the range of knowledge his listeners own ! The lesson in Jewish history with special emphasis on genealogy I am going to give, may one day turn out to be of use to you. One never knows ! You may even one day be thankful to me. But I fear it is more likely, that you are at this point 'bored stiff' - as the popular expression goes - that, on the contrary, you will ask "...for the benefit of whom and of what has this lesson been inflicted upon on us ? What is the reason, you will grumble, that you used up - I fully appreciate that you, my listeners, are too polite to apply the word 'waste' - so much time in your story with the business of family names ?"

First of all let me point out in my reply, that you should be grateful for every opportunity to learn something new. And secondly, that you should not depreciate the Jewish trait - you may call it weakness, you may call it impertinence - to make use of every occasion to impart a lesson of some kind or other to one's fellowmen whether they asks for it or not. This is of particular significance when it comes to lessons in Jewish history. I do not mind if this effort of mine results only in a giggle or a guffaw, in which some of you, I am sure, have already indulged while reading

what I have written so far. Can you in all honesty assure me that this has not been the case ?

Are you really dissatisfied with my explanations, why I have so particularly been dwelling on the family name 'Prince' ? I would not be surprised if you are. I concede that there is some degree of justification for you to do so. Still more justified would be your reasoning, that there is more behind this. Yes, there is a reason why I have done so. It is not because my family name is 'Prince', as you must have understood already. I confess that I had a purpose in mind when I was telling you about the nowadays rather common family name of Prince and its variations like Prinz, Prints, Prins, Princz, Prijnts, Princek and so forth.

And having prepared the ground - and hopefully also aroused your curiosity - I can at last start on my story.

This story is about a Prince. He is a the main actor in my story. You will soon discover, that he and his environment, his life and his actions are totally different from what you have most likely expected; that they do not fit into any of the stereotypes with which you are familiar.

I hope that this story about a Prince will achieve what is the expectation and aspiration of every storyteller: that it will open new horizons to you, my readers; that it will at the same time also entertain you; that it will have you think about what you have read; that it will convey a lesson; that it will impart a moral; and that it will provide you with a lot of new knowledge. I am a very conceited man, as you will have already found out; and as such I dare to hope, that my story will make you think; that thinking will make you study the subjects I have touched upon; that this study will enrich you with wisdom; and that this wisdom will enlarge your horizon and make you tolerant.

Should all this come to pass; should my story have fulfilled its purpose; you will surely be able to push aside the disappointment which threatens to overcome you already on reading the first page of my story: for I am telling you of a kind of prince, who in every aspect is completely different from those I have so far enumerated. This Prince does not belong to the romantic world of fairy tales - at least not a priori, eo ipso and automatically. I have so far hesitated to expose you to this fact; and I have postponed this revelation until this moment, mainly so, to ready you for what is to follow, and to ease your most likely initial surprise.

At last I am really ready.

The hero of the story with which you are now going to become acquainted, is called David Prince. His family name is of rather recent vintage. It has been acquired, through deed poll and with the outlay of only a few dollars, by the generation preceding his. In his family's case it was not the outcome of some family member's dream or ambition; it was not created "ex nuovo", that is out of the blue. His family has an older - and if you put value on such things as I do - a more respected background.

In Poland - when real Jews were still living there - his ancestors carried the name 'Princzecz'; but the many family branches, once they became detached from the old sturdy tree and were dispersed all over the earth, preferred to modify their name to make it, and themselves too, fit into the countries who were willing to host them. In Germany you will find a branch with the name 'Prinz'; the one in Holland is called 'Prijnts', that of Belgium 'Princte', the one settled in France is called "Princes". There is another cousin in S.Africa who has the name 'Princzer', and the one settled in Italy had the chuzpa to have his name legally changed to 'Principe'. (He was, by the way, the only one who had to 'pay under the table' for this privilege). And there was a cousin of David's father, who had settled after the last war in Petach Tikva, in today's Israel, who was known as the 'Princzeczer' like his grandfather.

This tongue-breaking name I have mentioned last, was indeed the original name, the 'mother-name' from which all the various names I have just now listed, have taken off. Princzecz was a small village in Poland- so small that you cannot find it but on the most detailed ordinance maps. And you will not find it anymore even on such maps today, except on those which originated in the last century, about two hundred or more years ago, when Galicia had still been part of the Kingdom of Poland. Already then it had already ceased to exist as a separate unit after it had been absorbed by an expanding neighbouring town. David's ancestors had been living in that small hamlet for many a century. During the pogroms at the end of the last century the majority of the Jewish inhabitants in that townlet were murdered and the Jewish quarter burned to the ground. What was left of the family of the Princzeczers emigrated

into various parts of the world. I do not exaggerate when I say, that some of them proved of great benefit to the economic and cultural development of their new host countries in Europe, Africa, America, Australia.

The Princzeczers assimilated with great ease - and with typical Jewish elan - to their new environments. They shortened not only their beards, their sidelocks and their coats, but also their names. The latter they shortened into the various shapes I have already mentioned. They realized that wherever they settled, this was the right way for an immigrant to start a new life; and also the way to confuse whatever adversaries they collected in this process.

Having reached this stage of my story, we can pause for a moment and take stock. You will concede that you have already been enriched with quite some new knowledge. Along with this you have also learned quite a lot about David's family, which had without any great delay and rather instinctively begun to change appearance, habits and profession by the time the second generation had reached legal age.

I am now ready and free to tell you "The Story of a Prince" which is in truth the story of David Prince. In case you ask me why I want to tell you his story, I can only repeat the reply I have so amply expounded already: that I like telling stories for their own sake. And I may add, that if in addition by telling the story I shall be granted the aura of a learned man, I will generously submit to this.

I know I have wasted much of your time before we have reached this actual starting point. I suspect you will accuse me of being old chatterbox, that I have talked so far about things and facts which cannot have much - if anything - directly, or most likely even indirectly, to do with the story I am going to tell about David. But even if you should call irrelevant all the things I have mentioned, I want to make you concede at least, that you have learned quite a few things from these 'irrelevancies'. And above all, you should suitably appreciate that you have come to know me, have made my acquaintance and will, I hope, have developed a friendship-like attitude towards me, your storyteller. Nevermind that you have also learned about my weakness, that of making sorties away from the enclosure of the story. Hopefully you will also have learned to bear with me. But I can assure you, that whenever I wander off into adjacent territory, I will soon return to my story, and I shall always bring back from my excursions something which

you can add to your hoard of knowledge. This is my foible, as I gave pointed already before, and I hope you will learn to live with it as I have succeeded to do. But one more thing I can promise you: I shall from now on make a serious effort to control this weakness of mine. To help me along in my determination I have yesterday cut from our daily newspaper a photo of Fidel Castro, and have pasted it on the wall facing my word processor, so that this champion of long-winded marathon speeches may renmind me of my good intentions. I honestly shall henceforth try to live up to my decision, because this Castro fellow usually also talks too much - and quite a lot of nonsense as well.

I shall now hand over the word, the recitation and the guidance of the following story to the man who has put it into its appropriate shape; who has added his commentaries, and who has provided the props which bring the figures on the stage into the proper light.

If all this sounds too complicated to you, let me give you a simple explanation. This story, the adventures, the maturing of our hero David have been told by David himself to his cousin Chaim Ploni, who has recorded all this on tape, has concentrated all this - I am sorry to say, only a great part of it - into written form, and has handed the manuscript over to me for editing, to act as something like an MC, to write the preface to the story, and to suitably introduce the play and the actors. As you have surely already noticed, I cannot claim much acclamation as an MC, because I talk too much and too long, because I make the public impatient and the main actors restless. I know my faults. The moral of all this is: do not appoint a storyteller ever as a Master of Ceremonies in case you want to introduce a story.

So ! My apologies have been made. The curtain can rise.
I hand over the tale to the man who does in reality the storytelling.

2.

At last I can get the word and start telling the story.
But mark well: this is not my personal story. Having made

One more introduction

.....but this time to introduce myself.

First of all, and before I go on, you have to know that what follows is not my personal history.

And now that we have established this, permit me to introduce myself at last. My name is Moshe Chaim Ploni. I am the son of Yizhak Daniel Princzeczer and the grandson of Shmuel Baruch Princzezcer. My father and that of David were cousins. This makes me a cousin of David 'once removed'. But in view of the great age difference between us, David has called me, since my first visit to the States, his uncle.

What follows in these pages is the record of David's life; of the rich experiences and adventures which are his already at his young age; and of the conclusions he has drawn from them, as he has told them to me in Jerusalem, where I live. This will explain to you, how I could have so much insight in what has been going in David's mind, how he has been feeling, thinking and wishing from the time he started to feel, think and wish.

I have seen David grow up over the years. I have at frequent intervals visited our family in New York, and could observe and watch the development of David's personality. I have seen him struggle and search for an identity. Indeed, this book might have been better given the title "A young man in Search of an Identity" - but it is too late now for thia change. On the other hand it might not be such a good idea, as it might have turned what I want to communicate into something which is not anymore a story - and it is a story I have promised you. Is it not ?

Only one more remark. You will wonder how I have come to my name P l o n i. My grandfather, David's grand-uncle, was a very well known talmudic scholar who had settled in Palestine in the early years of this century. To this day the people of Petach Tikva

and Bne Brak remember with love and respect 'Reb Shmuel Baruch the Princzeczer'. Also my father, may he rest in peace, had been a talmud teacher. I am nothing of the kind. In their eyes I would have been an apostate. I am lucky I have not defend myself or to defer to them when it comes to my attitude to religion in general and to the Judaism practised by their kind here in Israel in particular. May they both rest in peace. They may even have felt an additional disappointment, had they been alive when I 'israelized' my name to 'Ploni' - which means 'somebody anonymous'. This name suits me well - it is cut to measure for my role as a storyteller.

I am going to tell you now the story of David Prince, as he told it to me and my wife Kate in the course of many long evenings. We have recorded on tape all he told us; and all the time I write down his story, the tape is running and his voice is heard telling me what to write. I am faithfully recording here what the taped voice of David tells me. If at times it is not possible for me to suppress my personality of a storyteller; if at times an urge to embroider or to comment comes in between, please forgive. But I assure you, that I have otherwise not interfered - except now and then by correcting his style - with the substance of the story. I may here and there have taken some 'poetic liberty', but I have never acted as a censor.

Ladies and gentlemen ! David Prince has the word.

David tells about his youth and adolescence.

My name is David Prince. My father's name was George Prince. My mother Ruth's maiden name was Borochov.

I am not going to burden you with a long long recitation of the early years of my life or report in detail the years of my adolescence. Neither am I going to tell you about my school education, about my early college studies and my curriculum in general. All this would be of very little interest to you and has no significance for what you want to record. After all, what I am telling you at this hour is only a kind of introduction of myself, the look I grant you into my thoughts. View yourselves as looking through a periscope and overwiewing the film depicting my life. What you see and discover, though perceived from afar, will make it easier for you to understand what has placed me on the route my life has taken; what has made me turn in the direction into which I have been drawn.

What I am going to tell you, will hopefully answer the questions you have raised.

I shall proceed, therefore, along a way and according to a plan which will grant you a survey of the main developmental stages of my life. I shall highlight here and there episodes and events which at first might not be relevant, might not be of great weight nor of decisive value for my development - but even if it seems thus at first, it will make my introductory remarks, the description of my early years, less monotonous.

My parents had three children: myself and my two sisters Carrol and Claire who were two resp. four years younger than I. My parents were second-generation Americans, and proud of this fact. They

earned a good income from their men's clothing shop situated at the fringe of Brooklyn. They could fulfill what was for them their greatest interest in life - and of which they themselves had been deprived, viz:- to provide their children with the best education possible their financial and social circumstances permitted.

I had just completed my 8th year, when my life underwent a profound change: my praents and sisters died in a car crash. It was a sunny day in spring and they were returning from an outing to the countryside, when the driver of a large beertruck lost control over his vehicle and crushed my parents' car. I had not come along on this trip. I had begged off because I wanted to spend that day playing baseball with my friends.

In one way or the other this tragedy affected the lives of everyone of us in our large family. My grandparents grew old all of a sudden. My grandfather decided to retire from active business life. He handed his wholesale hardware shop to his youngest son Joseph, who had in any case since years on his own been managing this well-established business. Grandfather Eli and grandmother Sarah remained in a perpetual state of mourning. Grandfather Eli was a broken man; so much so, that one had to be glad when he died about one year and a half after the accident. If ever the diagnosis of 'broken heart' is suited for a death certificate, it was the case of my grandfather. His wife Sarah, whom we all called 'Bubbe Sorele', a very intelligent, warm-hearted and clever - and no less also wise - woman, refused to accept the hospitality of her four sons and their wives. She was, fortunately, financially well off and could afford to be independent. She chose to enter a well-recommended 'Home for Senior Citizens' in upstate New York. Every two weeks or so I visited her on my own or in the company of one of my uncles. She was no less happy to see me than I was to be with her; and on every visit she insisted that the two of us spend at least half an hour together without the company of the other visitors.

I loved the gentle, energetic, self-confident woman of below average size, with her skin still smooth and her head covered by well groomed white hair. Nothing seemed to escape her clear eyes enlarged by her thick glasses. She never spoke to me as one would to a child, not even when I was eight years old. I realize that she had a profound and beneficial influence on my spiritual and emotional development. She took my side whenever the family appealed to her to make me change my mind or opinion in some matter - that

is whenever my attitude appeared to them incomprehensible and stubborn, as was the case when I refused to have a Barmitzvah.

This refusal came as a great shock to all of them. It must also have affected Bubbe Sorele who was a very religious woman. Along with ther husband she had always and in every detail followed the rules of orthodox Judaism.

On that particular Sunday, when I was a twelve-years-old boy, all the uncles and aunts had come on a visit to my grandmother. Their spokesman, Uncle Nathan the oldest of them, a somewhat pompous and excitable man, begged Bubbe Sorele to influence me, nay to order me, to be 'barmitzvahed' on my forthcoming birthday; and to make me start at once and without delay on the necesaary preparations for this important event, under the supervision of our local rabbi. While we were seated in a half-circle around her on the lawn of the 'Golden Age Home', each of the uncles and aunts had their say. I noticed that my grandmother had been very disturbed when she learned of my unusual refusal. Now and then Bubbe Sorele looked enquiringly at me, but she did not utter a word. Neither did I. Nor did I lower my eyes.

"Leave us two alone", Grandmother said after everyone of the uncles and aunts had their say. She waved them away, uncles, aunts and cousins.

She was siting in her accustomed rocking chair, and on her invitation I moved my chair to her right side.

She took my left hand, placed it on the armrest of her chair and laid her hand on mine.

"Why do you refuse to become a Barmitzvah, David", she asked.

"Do I have to explain it to you, Bubbe Sorele ? I thought you would be the one to understand why I cannot, why I will not go through with this".

"I think I know and I think I understand", she replied after some time, slowly and in a low voice, nodding her head at every word. "But I would still prefer, David, to have you explain your decision to me in a few words".

"Bubbele, I cannot do something in which I do not believe".

"Do you beleve that there is a God ?"

"Yes' I believe there is a God, as only a God could have done this to me. Only a God could could have killed my parents and my sisters. Only a God could have been, could have afforded to be, as unjust as this".

I realized from the way her hand gripped mine how my words had shocked her. But her voice did not reveal what she thought and felt.

"I know how painful it is to have been hurt so terribly much as you have been hurt, David. I understand that you feel betrayed. It makes me feel very sad, gives me great sorrow to learn that you feel like this. But who am I to judge you ? I know that in the course of time you will grow out of this hurt and will overcome this sorrow. I know that the wound will close in due time, and that your memories will not trigger anymore so much pain. But do you know what a Barmitzvah means ?

"Yes, I know. It is the same as the confirmation of my christian friends. In our case it means specifically being afterwards counted as a grown-up person, as part of the Jewish people. But I feel this already. I am conscious of being a Jew without there being the need of my going through such a ceremony of initiation. But the Barmitzvah means also swearing loyalty to the Jewish God, and this I will not, I cannot do. If there is such a God somewhere - and I am sure that this is indeed the case - he is not getting my allegiance. And if what has been done to me personally, to us as a family, to all the Jews in the course of many centuries, is not due to purposeful deeds of God, it all this happened without him able to prevent it, then his is a powerless, an unimportant nobody, and the Barmitzvah becomes for me an empty proceeding. That is to say, if there is a responsible God, I won't have anything to do with him; if he is not responsible, I am not willing to waste my time and energy on a ceremony which is without sense and meaning".

"You are quite a rebel, David", was my Grandmother's softly spoken reaction, a faint smile playing around her eyes.

"Yes, Bubbe Sorele, it is so. I am even more than that. I am a rebel who has been wounded, who has been hurt for no reason he can accept as valid. And Bubbele, I am aslo an unhappy rebel. I am desperately fighting a hatred which burns in me and tries to poison all I think and wish".

I put my forehead on her hand and cried. I cried for a long time. My Grandmother remained silent. Her other hand moved slowly over my hair. After my crying had stopped we remained seated in that same position without talking, until my uncles and aunts returned to remind me that we had wanted to return home before dark.

"Nu ?", asked Uncle Nathan. "Nu, what is going to happen ?"

"If David does not want a Barmitzvah, there will be no Barmitzvah", my Grandmother answered in a firm voice.

I never had a Barmnitzvah. In the end my uncles and aunts more or less graciously did accept this fact. My heresy did not affect our relationship, I am glad to say. I ceased to be a boy in their eyes; I was accepted by them as a person, as a 'nearly grownup' without a Barmitzvah. I do not remember if I had ever specifically demanded this recognition, insisted on it - or if this status was granted me automatically without my asking for it. Possibly both these factors have contributed.

Thereafter I did not permit anybody within or without my family circle to interfere with my reading, my studies, my activities, my way of life in general. Under the influence of Bubbe Sorele's prodding; and following determinately the outlines I had made for my future; and due to my refusal to enter into arguments regarding my concepts of life and the direction I wished my life to take; and because all I did or did not do over the last twelve years had been accepted with grace - and lately with acclaim - by all my relatives, I am in the happy position to say, that my relations with my family have remained harmonious throughout, and that I have reason to know, that over the these last years everyone in the family has come to respect me. This realization has made my life so much easier, as they have always loved me and have always unreservedly offered me all the protection I ever needed.

After the death of my parents and sisters my aunts and uncles did their utmost to show me love and warmth. They never doubted that they had the responsibility for my wellbeing and future. They proposed that I stay with each of them a month in turn; but luckily my grandmother had at once vetoed this brainles scheme. One must not judge the uncles and aunts too harshly - they meant well. I was given the choice to decide with whom of them I preferred to live until I had grown into adulthood and independence. Already as a small child I had developed a special relationship with Aunt Lea, the wife of Uncle Bert, and they were as happy as I was when my proposal to live with them was acclaimed by all. My grandparents felt assured that I was in good hands. I had inherited from my parents a considerable sum of money which was more than sufficient to last me until I had completed my education and could begin to earn my living expenses.

Uncle Bert was a salesman for schoolbooks. He was most of the time 'on the road' and returned home only on weekends. He

earned just enough to permit his family a comfortable existence - but not more. I was happy when he and Lea agreed to accept from my guardians a certain monthly contribution to pay for the additional expenses I was causing them. Bert and Lea lived in a pleasant and comfortable apartment in lower Manhattan. Their daughter Esther, five years my junior, was a pleasant and clever child. She developed into a lovely girl, taller than her parents; and she kept her figure trim by her addiction to sport and diet. My relationship with Bert, Lea and Esther was a warm one and a pleasure to all of us. I was to the three of them a son and a brother.

Bert was a simple man, indistinct in appearance and small in size. He was always tired when home on weekends, and addicted to spend half his waking time in front of the TV. Lea was of average height. She was slightly overweight, had light-brown hair and kind brown eyes which made me always think of her as dreaming of some far away happiness. Her mouth smiled easily and often, and her eyes took part in her smile. She had a rather pale complexion and used cosmetics sparingly but effectively. She was always well groomed and her inexpensive clothes looked elegant on her. Her well-organized household was not only proof of her orderliness but also of her cleverness to make sensible use of the low income Bert's business provided.

Lea was a warm and affectionate woman. She had not to force herself to replace my mother; she did so instinctively, naturally and honestly. I felt happy with her, and she must have felt rewarded by my reciprocating her feelings. I could, all through the years I stayed in their home, fully confide in her. And although my problems, my difficulties and my interests changed during the years I grew up, so did also her understanding for them grow. She is an intelligent person. She tries to improve her education by reading as much as her time allows. I think she made this effort to a great part so that she might be able to follow my thoughts, my ideas - and my plans. I had a relatively large, sunny, very pleasantly furnished room of my own, and over the course of the years my private library had come to reach a considerable size.

Esther grew into a very intelligent girl. I enjoyed her company when she came to my room with a problem arisen from her homework, or when she preferred to read her book seated in one of the two deep chairs in my room, or when she wanted to engage me in a talk often lasting an hour or more.

But in a certain sense I presented a problem to Bert and Lea, and in no less a sense also to the Prince Clan. This does not mean that I caused them trouble or worry of any kind. I did not disturb their routine, nor did I bother them unnecessarily. But in their eyes I was 'a peculiar boy'. I was different from other boys. I had no real friends. In this and many other respects I was different from my cousins and their friends. I had none of the 'vices' of the other boys. I did not run after girls. I spent my time reading or discussing with an occasional visitor possessed with a higher intelligence matters, which were far above the family's horizon. When I grew up, I spent much of my free time in libraries. However, as I am the type who takes in more through his ears than through his eyes, who benefits more from hearing than from reading, I preferred the opportunity to enter into conversation with learned and experienced people, with men of religion in particular, i.e. with rabbis, with priests of every denomination, with teachers of religion. When I say 'conversation' it was not in the way a 'premature' conceited boy would discuss and argue with a grown-up or an expert. My conversations were hardly ever discussions, they were questions I put to the 'men of the cloth', to the teachers and intellectuals, of whom so many were philosophers in the true sense of the word, and no less in search of an answer than I myself. I listened, and asked when I felt the need for an elucidation, but I never argued nor did I ever 'show off' my proffering my own immature opinion.

In school I was at the head of the class in all disciplines except for mathematics, physics and chemistry. I never made an effort to reach this position in my class. I never spent more than one hour on my homework. The teachers generally appreciated my ease of learning; and as I never boasted either in words or attitude of my achievements, I always enjoyed the sympathy and goodwill of my class comrades.

Although to all appearances I was well adjusted and happy, I never overcame the loss of my parents and sisters. I could not accept my loss, could not live with my loss. I never talked about this to anybody, nor did I lament to myself. I never indulged in self-pity. But I could not shake off my resentment of what had happened to me. I could not understand how a family could be dstroyed by the miscalculation or the negligence of a man in a driver's seat. I simply could not understand what Fate, what Power, what God had decided, acted, interfered to have my parents and

sisters die this ugly, this mean death - and why I myself had been spared. What had there been special or unspecial in or with these four ? What was the reason they had to die and I continued to live ? Does this mean that there is a purpose, a goal, a sense in life - and if so, what is it ?

Do not come to a wrong conclusion if you hear me say that I could not 'overcome' the death of my nearest family. Of course, I had accepted this reality; but I was full of hurt that this should have happened to them - and to me. The questions which I put - very quietly, intensely but impersonally - to the men and women of whom I had hoped and expected I could get an answer, revolved around this pain. I received from everyone of those I spoke to an answer of some kind. I was surprised to find, that everyone of these men and women felt embarrassed, uncomfortable to hear me put these questions to them, to expect them to provide a serious and intense young boy - and later an adult - with a satisfactory answer of some kind. I may be wrong, but I still feel that I was justified to think that their answers, even though they may have rested on exceptional learning, great knowledge and deep faith, appeared lacking in structure and substance - and truth. In any case I never felt that in whatever they said I had been given an acceptable answer.

I serched for an answer on my own. I searched through the library catalogues for books to read. I read many a book on theology, on philosophy. But mostly I did not understand what I read. I got sometimes adequate guidance from the rabbis, priests and teachers to understand what the books tried to tell me. I became one of the 'child-philosophers' who have not the right background, who have not the required grounding, who have not the needed guidance. This is the reason why I decided, contrary to my original plans and programs, to enter Brooklyn College to study philosophy.

And all I have told you so far is the reason, why I decided to make it my aim in life to find an answer to the questions with which life has confronted me.

School and College Years.

In my school, and later in High School, I occupied a rather unusual position - as I have already hinted. I was a quiet boy. I was not withdrawn, nor was I what in the eyes of schoolboys is denigrated as a 'prig'. I took as much part in the regular school activities as was necessary to avoid being decried a shirker. I was easily the best in class, but I never made use of this 'rank', nor did I ever claim the advantages such a position may confer. I think this was the reason why the boys and girls in my class showed me a degree of comradely respect which is rather unusual in such an environment and at such an age. They must have agreed among themselves that I was 'peculiar' without being offensively so. My attitude and my behaviour appear to have evoked in them some kind of affectionate and protective tolerance. I never noticed in them anything approaching antagonism.

The teachers were intrigued by the behaviour of the class, as the one or other of them told me on occasion. They observed this state of affairs and tried to find an explanation with the help of a psychologist. I myself did not see in the behaviour of my school comrades towards me a puzzle or anything unusual. I was not affected, and therefore did not react, because I saw nothing out of the usual in all this; because I saw it all as a normal state of affairs; and thus did not bother to spend time and energy to analyze the situation.

Similarly the teachers thought they had to keep a protective hand over me, had to grant me something like an exceptional position in class. I refused to agree to this, to accept this. Still they continued to treat me in a way which is, I suppose, reserved for abnormal or exceptional or otherwise vulnerable pupils at both ends of the scale. I do think they were really justified to think thus

to us all. But I failed".

"I have just now told her what in the past you must have tried to convey to her. I hope I have been more successful".

"Let us hope and pray", said Lea in a low voice.

We sat together and talked about Esther for quite a long time. Then I rose and went for a walk outside. I hoped that Lea was now convinced that things would change now, that everything would return to normal.

If I needed anything further to prove the fine human and intellectual qualities of Esther, it was provided by her in the following weeks and months. We did return to that former normal, cordial and unselfconscious relationship which had existed between us in our 'innocent days'. We were a happy family again. Lea was happiest of all. Bert had never been aware of what had been going on, and Lea had wisely refrained from confiding in him.

about me. All I can say is, that the teachers, with few exceptions, were always respectful, kind - and intrigued. I learned with unusual ease. I always came to school with my homework completed. I always refused to be appointed the Head Boy. However, it was a handicap that I was never impressed by the respectful behaviour the boys and girls showed me in school, nor by that of the men and women on the teaching staff. Nor was my relationship such, that I might have discovered among them anyone for whom I could have developed any particular affection, interest or regard.

Thinking over what I have said just now, I must correct myself. My judgement has been too harsh. It is a fact that many of the teachers were well-read, some were highly intelligent, some were interesting personalities, some of them were well versed in the arts and in philosophy. I found here and there a teacher with deep religious leanings and an excellent theological knowledge. These teachers, jewish and christian, offered me many an opportunity to a 'discussion'. They asked my 'opinion' about things not always comprised in the curriculum. The did so, I am sure, not to test my knowledge - or sanity - but because they were genuinely interested in my opinion. They enquired about my 'hobbies', about my private life. They were at times taken aback by my simple but probing questions of the 'why' and 'how' things went on in the world, what 'the purpose of it all' is. Some of the better teacher material felt challenged that they had not a suitable answer, any answer to give to a young boy, and they attempted to develop in collaboration wth me such an answer.

However, I never the gratification from all I learned in these talks and discussions, and what I absorbed from observations and books, that I had at last comprehended, had been persuaded, had been satisfied. I visited synagogues of every possible current in Judaism. I listened to sermons dealing with the most variegated themes. I attended for a few months afternoon or evening or 'Sunday' classes in which Jewish religion or history or thought were taught. I did not find what I looked for. I visited neighbouring churches, - there was at least one of every christian denomination - observed their services and listened to the priests and preachers. I did not find I was in the right place. Some of the preachers made me even doubt their mental balance. I often wondered how men and women standing or kneeling, singing or silent, shouting or jumping, felt about their God. At other times I was surprised to learn that these audiences could accept the words and thoughts the preachers or

priests produced as inspired by a Divine Power of love and truth. I attended services where I wished I could believe myself, as I saw the people in the church did, what the prayers and sermons so fervently and emotionally expressed and communicated. I soon discontinued these visits, my curiosity unsatisfied. I was honest enough to realize, that I was not yet ready to judge and understand; that I had approached with a biased mind; that I was still imprisoned by my resenments; that the access to a reasonable judgement was blocked in me by my unhappiness.

In short: I was a strange and confused boy.

When at last, at the age of 17, I could enter College, I experienced a sense of relief. I was now free of the restricting school world. In College I entered an atmosphere which confirmed my expectations that learning and knowledge were offered for their own sake; where I could chose the teachers and the material taught; where progress was not chained to the slowest in class; where those who could not follow were not allowed to slow the tempo.

By that time I noticed, that the inner aching, the resentment against fate for having been victimized, had begun to recede, was replaced by the curiosity of being, by the thirst of knowledge, by the realization that 'notwithstanding all and everything' the world continued on its course - and by the growing insight that there must be somewhere and somehow a guiding spirit, a guiding hand; that there must be some purpose and some aim 'in all this'. I reasoned that - nevermind my personal hurt - this all-embracing power had to be fundamentally good. I asked men of spirit and spirituality, the men of God and the gods, who this Power was, and where this Force could be found. They offered me explanations; nearly everyone of them had also a different approach in answering my questions. But they did not give me the answer I looked for.

When I continued at College level, my searching and questioning had taken on a more defined direction and a certain greater maturity. I was also provided with better and bigger tools to research with. I studied philosophy, religious history and comparative religions. I took courses in anthropology and mythology. I must have been the most regular and most attentive student in all the courses I attended. Whatever free time the classes left me, I spent in seminaries and libraries. I had not to cater for the intellectual standards of my fellow students. I had not anymore, as in my

schooldays, to attempt to fit in with them, to live on their level, to avoid offending them. I could regulate my association with the other students according to my preferences. I had now an opportunity to talk to men and women with a greater motivation, a superior knowledge, a vaster experience. Often I discovered an individual whom I thought endowed with a superior wisdom. It was not my intention nor of my doing, that I soon attracted the attention of my teachers and my co-students. I am glad to say, that I never acquired the reputation of a bookworm, of an eccentric, of a show-off. I was well liked and respected by all. I am pround of this.

Already in my first year at College I became convinced, that I had every reason to call myself fortunate. I had become conscious how well my academic surroundings suited me, and how my private life was filled up and soothed by the love I was given in my family circle. Thinking back on those years, I feel this still more today.

I had the impression that my teachers - mainly the junior lecturers but also some full professors - had formed a good opinion of me. I concluded this from the way they often took the initiative to engage me in conversation, or spent more time with me that was expected of them, when after the lecture I requested an elucidation of something they had said. My colleagues in the classroom were kind and welcoming. They respected my wish not to be involved in the kind of entertainment which students enjoy as their right. I was by no means a recluse, but I disliked the loud and boisterous assemblies in the cafeterias and in the pubs which appeared to provide the young men and women with the stimuli to survive their college years. I had many friends among the boys and girls in College. We often met and talked about every possible topic. I liked watching games of baseball. I went regularly to theater shows and to concerts, mostly in the company of a girlfriend. As you see I was by no means a hermit nor otherwise an asocial fellow. I concede, however, I was the typical introvert who has without undue effort learned to fit into his society.

Above all I enjoyed my conversations with the teachers. They gave me the impression that they too enjoyed talking with me, perhaps because they saw in me an attentive and receptive listeners who hardly ever interrupted their talk except for an occasional redirection of their monologues to the question they had set out to answer before they were deranged from the track.

Only once, as far as I can remember, has our peaceful life at home been disturbed in a way I at least had not foreseen. It happened in my last year in College. I think the stage had been set by a few visits of a very attractive moslem girl from Pakistan who partecipated in some of the same College courses as I. Ishrath, a very vivacious and intelligent girl, came a few times to the house to bring me books about Islam in which I had started to show interest at that time. There was from my side no deeper emotial involvement with Ishrath - it was nothing more than a platonic friendship between colleagues. My friendship had quite evidently aroused Esther's jealousy.

Esther had grown into a very beautiful, charming, witty and intelligent girl. She was well read and sure of herself. She was greatly liked by her peers. She was well adjusted at an age and in an age where such qualities were remarkable enough to make it worth mentioning them. We had a warm relationship, but never more than that of brother and sister. No ! It was more than that ! We were very good friends. We spent much time together talking and discussing, visiting relatives and common friends, going to theaters and cinemas. However, I began to feel uneasy when I came to sense that Esther appeared to expect more; when she began to demand still more of my time and attention; when she declined invitations and companionship from her peers; when she refused to form her own circle of friends.

"Why did you not accept the invitation ? Why have you started to refuse invitations from your friends ? Why don't you more often go out with them ?", I heard Lea ask her more than once, that is whenever she heard Esther tell a friend on the phone that she was not free that evening. "You are a young girl, and it is not good for you to stay always home..."

Esther's reply was usually "I do not care for them" or simply to shrug her shoulders.

Once in my presence she reacted more strongly to Lea's reproach. She began to cry. "If David does not care for me anymore, I prefer to be by myself. I have no interest in the company of any of these boys. I love David and I do not want to be with anybody else".

I was very surprised. I was painfully embarrassed. I understood what she implied. I looked at Lea who appeared not at all surprised, but rather anguished and worried. I saw tears coming into her eyes. She pursed her lips, lifted her shoulders and left the room.

We were in the kitchen at that moment. Esther sat at the table, the head resting on her arms she had placed on the table. She was crying without emitting a sound. Her shoulders shook with her crying. I sat down next to her and placed my hand on the back of her head. Slowly and lightly I stroked her hair.

"Esther", I said. "Listen to me".

She did not reply. Instead she burried her head deeper between her arms, and her crying, though still soundless, appeared to intensify.

"Look, Esther", I continued, "whatever you meant with your remark about me, I take sincerely and honestly as a compliment. But your remark arises from a completely wrong interpretation of the situation in which you and I find ourselves. You know quite well that I love you too. I love you very dearly. I love you as my own and only sister. You and your parents are all I have and really care for in this world. I shall always love you three as a son and brother. I talk to you in this frank and honest manner, because I want our life and our relationship to go on for ever. Our relationship would get soured should I have to weigh every word between us, should I have to control every gesture I make".

While I had been talking to her, she had ceased her crying. I took my hand away from her head. We remained seated next to each other for quite a while longer, Esther with her head on the table and I leaning back in the kitchen chair.

After some time I got up from my chair, and with my hand on her left shoulder I asked her:

"Is this allright with you, Esther ? Do you agree ?"

Esther moved her head in confirmation. She agreed.

I left the kitchen. I found Lea in the drawingroom. She was standing near the window looking out into the street.

When she heard me coming in, she turned and sat down on the sofa. I sat down next to her. I saw that she had been crying. I stroked her hands which she kept folded in her lap.

"I am sorry", I told her, "that this situation should have developed".

"Did you not know what and how she felt for you ?"

"No, Lea, I did not know. I had not the slightest inkling".

"I am not surprised that you did not notice it. How could you ? I had a number of talks with Esther. I have explained the situation to her. I have begged her not to indulge in daydreams and expectations which, if realized, could only bring unhappiness

to us all. But I failed".

"I have just now told her what in the past you must have tried to convey to her. I hope I have been more successful".

"Let us hope and pray", said Lea in a low voice.

We sat together and talked about Esther for quite a long time. Then I rose and went for a walk outside. I hoped that Lea was now convinced that things would change now, that everything would return to normal.

If I needed anything further to prove the fine human and intellectual qualities of Esther, it was provided by her in the following weeks and months. We did return to that former normal, cordial and unselfconscious relationship which had existed between us in our 'innocent days'. We were a happy family again. Lea was happiest of all. Bert had never been aware of what had been going on, and Lea had wisely refrained from confiding in him.

About Rabbis .....

Geneticists have known since long, that in the transmission of our heritage the chromosomes play their part; today this responsible role in our make-up, in our development and our conceptions, in our thinking and planning, has been entrusted to the mysterious so-called DNA chains. But it is conceded also, that our environment, our experiences, and no less also a continued accumulation of anxiety and frustration combine to create and form an individuals interests; that they have an impact on the formation of his character - and that his character in turn determines how he will go about to shape his life, how he will face the intricacies of his world, how he will make use of the capabilitis he possesses. I have often wondered in how far my life has been molded by these various factors - but there is no doubt in my mind that somehow this is the case.

You will ask me what my ambience, my family environment had been able to contribute; and furthermore, what influence my immediate contact with my relatives had exerted upon me.

My grandparents had immigrated from Galicia, at that time a part of Imperial Austria. They had been very religious Jews. My parents had been somewhat different from the rest of the family. Although they were much less religious than my grandparents, they had continued to adhere to a great degree to the tennets of orthodoxy, to which they had applied the modern interpretation given to these by their environment. They had by this adjustment been able to create a warm and cohesive Jewish family life. I still remember the careful performance of the religious rites and customs

at home, the regular visits of the family to the local synagogue on Shabath and holidays, and the prayers said at the family table on these days.

Whenever asked, Bert and Lea would call themselves 'conservative Jews', but there was little of Jewishness left, expressed and seen in their way of living. This applies more or less also to the families of my other three uncles, who appear to think, that out of gratitude for the emancipation granted the Jews in America, and for the equal opportunities they can now enjoy, they were duty-bound to divest themselves of most of their Jewish heritage.

I mentioned earlier that I had come to term with the death of my parents and sisters, but the impact of that trauma has continued to act and react on me far longer and far stronger than I realized. I experienced the loss as a personal injury. I interpreted it as an infringement on my rights as a human being. I brooded over the possible reasons why I had been hit. I never ceased to search for an explanation of why this had happened to me. I was groping for someone or something to be made responsible for what had happened to me. I had to direct the blame for my hurt onto some a target, as otherwise I would feel overwhelmed.

Ultimately I always had to conclude, that nobody else was to blame than he whom we call God.

In those years I was more than one could have expected from a boy of my age - and later from an adolescent youth - under the impact of the Holocaust, although only very distant relatives in the old homeland Europe had been victims of that slaughter. It is understandable that I joined my personal loss to that caused the Jewish people by Hitler's murderers. I felt personally affected and violated by both these tragedies. I felt involved in both - and for both I blamed God. I know that deep within me I was uncomfortable with my way of reasoning, with my love-hatred for God in whom I wanted to find the father-figure I craved. I was alone in my world of feelings, reasonings, accusations and hatreds. There was nobody near me or around me of sufficient sensitivity to understand me, or intelligent enough to help me understand myself. Although I must gratefully acknowledge that everybody in my large family, from my grandmother down to my youngest cousin, did their best to show me sympathy and even love, their sentiments towards me were mainly fueled by pity and compassion.

You may have gained the impression, dear Uncle and Aunt, that

I had turned into an atheist, or at least into an agnostic. This was by far not the case. Although I had wisely decided not to come to any clearly outlined definition in this respect, it had never entered my mind to deny the existence of a Supreme Being. I could never view myself or my world without a divine guidance within a central role. It is true that I had refused to take part in anything which pointed to an identification with the tennets of the Jewish religion, but I realize now that this was in part merely a childish reaction. Repeated attempts by my uncles to have the rabbis of their synagogues talk to me, console me, or even to 'teach me the right way', brought on every time a very unpleasant reaction from my side; finally this induced my relatives to promise me never again to call in such help and never again to involve me in such an organized campaign. I must gratefully acknowledge that they kept their promise.

Still ! I continued to visit synagogues on my own, to attend courses in Jewish history, philosophy of religion and so on. I tried to learn from books about Jewish theology as much as I was capable to understand and to absorb. But I did so only as a student, as a detached searcher and not as a believer. I was not even searching for the way to believe. When I entered College I had made it my program to study the philosophy and the theology of the various religions with whose representatives I could make contact. I expected this would in due course enable me to form for myself a clear and definite confirmation or refutal of the acknowledged immature reasonings I had constructed for myself about God and fate, about justice and guilt, about good and evil. The picture I had constructed for myself was simplicistic and immature, but I am not all ashamed of it today. Without realizing it then, I developed into a religious person without a religion. My building blocks - I mean with this mainly my motivations - you would judge unusual, considering that I had created them by myself. They were mostly made up of emotions, of emotion-based interpretations of which I knew not an explanation. They were most likely not much different from the primordial sensations out of which mankind once formed its religion.

From the moment man has been able to reason, he must have been gripped by the anxiety brought on in him by observing death all around him - and the inevitability of his own - and of what he saw as threats to his life by an unkind nature. He must have begun to ponder the meaning and purpose of his own life and of nature. He must have looked around himself and also into himself for help

and support. Basically man's sense of guilt must have been born from his wish and endeavour to know what is right and what is wrong. In this quest he required the assistance and acquired the benefit - of religion. He needed the power of the Supernatural to control the power of the Natural. The Supernatural he discovered - should I say 'invented' ? - offered an understanding for the enigma facing him. And it provided him with hope and support.

I identified with primitive man. I instinctively knew what primitive man had felt. I could relate to original man. I asked myself the same question the first reasoning man in his simplicity must have asked himself. I think my questions were formulated like those of my original progenitors must have been before they had acquired some degree of sophistication. Likewise were my endeavours motivated by the question, what is right and was is wrong, what is good and what is evil, where lies the guilt of man. And I ruminated in which way I could have sinned and been found guilty - and therefore punished by being deprived of parents and sisters.

When I grew up, I was not as sure anymore as before about my image of God. The image I had constructed as a child was nothing more than the construction of a child. Suddenly I faced a blank wall. I was more dissatisfied than ever - and this made me also feel unsure of myself. I looked around for an answer, for a lift out of my uncertainty. My questions turned more specific. I had to know the truth, **the** Truth ! 'Where can I find the Truth ?', became my quest. On this search I concentrated my studies; and my querries on what the teachers of religious thought could provide.

It would be wrong to view my interest in religion as a conscious or unconscious search for consolation, as I was not motivated by anxiety. Strange as it may sound, my curiosity was abstract in nature and by motivation. I felt only an intense curiosity and a desire to know; for I found myself at a crossroad, and I had to decide which direction to take in order to reach - or to distantiate myself from - the belief in the existence - and consequent upon this in the benevolence - of a Supreme Being, of a God. I have to point out that at this stage I was not thinking along specifically theistic or deistic lines. I was ready, willing even, to accept an all-knowing, all-powerful an all-active God. At the cost of placing myself before a puzzle, an incongruency even. I had no pre-conceived conception. For my reasoning was, that a priori such a God could only be all-benign; he could not be a tyrant nor a sadist. I had to find the God with all these qualifications;

the God who is involved in mankind's fate, also in my own fate; the God who must have had a reason, possibly a purpose, in having in such a drastic manner interfered in my life. I had to solve the puzzle into which my reasoning had involved me. Fundamentally all was associated with the wish I carried within myself to find the God with whom I could establish a personal relationship. I searched for a God to occupy this place within me - but it was not to be the God the philosophers had painted, nor the God whom the professional theologians had to offer. Yes, what has just now escaped me is the best definition: I was looking for a God whom I could carry within me. I could not understand than, could not find a clear comprehension - nor did I dare to ask any of the rabbis for fear of being labeled an exhibitionist - what Spinoza could have meant with a 'God who embraces the totality of all Being'.

In my College years I had ample opportunity to study and to compare the philosophy and theology of religion and of the various belief systems in general. A great part of the teaching staff was of a high standard, and as a rule willing to guide questioners, of whom I must have been one the most ardent and persisting. And most likely I was also the most reticent one.

I was in no hurry to complete my college studies within the usual 3-4 years, as I was in no need to take up a professional career. I had sufficient funds to continue for a number of years with my studies in the field which had captured my interest.

During the last two years I spent in College on an M.A. degree, I was fortunate to meet and know many a brillant and wise theologian of the various faiths and denominations. All of them were willing to answer my questions about the essence of religion in general and the one they represented in particular; that they were anything but impartial, that they considered their own faith superior to that of any other, was in this case not a disadvantage.

By virtue of my being a registered College student I had not to overcome obstacles to find opportunities for contact with rabbis, priests, professors and intellectuals - most of whom were in addition distinguished by a wide range of interests outside their profession. Except for a few, all were willing to be engaged in a conversation, to correct my many misunderstandings, to answer my questions, and to define for me what they considered essential in their religious and philosophical Weltanschauung. In general

they pleased me - and flattered me - by always remaining on a purely scholarly and intellectual level. They were never condescending and supercilious in their behaviour towards me. Neither could I ever detect a missionary zeal or undertone in their helpfulness.

It is not possible for me to describe to you in detail all the experiences I had in this respect over the years. I shall limit myself to two instances only. The two men in question are by far not typical for or representative of the kind of experiences I had. They have remained engraved in my memory because they proved of great importance for me, for maturing my thoughts and helping me to shape my intellectual development. It is for this reason that I have kept ample notes about the conversations I had with them.

I had the two encounters which I am going to describe now in detail, shortly before my graduation. They were with two very learned, clear-thinking and also otherwise unusual men. One was a rabbi and the other a priest. They were successful in clearing up a number of misunderstandings, respectively in filling in certain lacunae in my conception of Judaism and Christianity. With the help of the notes I made on my return home from meeting these two men, I shall try to reconstruct for you these two encounters, so that you can form for yourselves an idea how lucky I have been in the pursuance of my studies.

I met Rabbi Dr. Gershon Rosenne in the house of Uncle Nathan and Aunt Hanna. It was on the occasion of the Barmitzvah of their youngest son Eric. I had known the Rabbi only from afar. Once, when I had attended the Shabath service in his synagogue, I had heard him give a sermon. I had not been impressed by his sermon; I had even left before he had ended, as he had that morning selected a political theme to preach about - and a rabbi who mixes political issues with religious matters in his sermon has always been anathema to me. I remembered also having been told, that he had Ph.D. in Philosophy and that he had been ordained a rabbi by the conservative Jewish Theological Seminar of America.

I had not been present in the synagogue for my cousin Eric's Barmitzvah, and I was late to join the family and their guests at the festival luncheon in their house. When I came into the dining-room I saw that the guests were already engaged in eating of the ample fare which is usually offered on such occasions. I handed

Eric the present I had brought - A.J.Heschel's 'The Prophets'- and suitably congratulated Uncle and Aunt. The latter took me by my arm and moved me in the direction of a group in which I perceived the Rabbi, a plate on his left hand, and a fork in his right - which latter when not engaged in carrying food to his mouth, he waved around to underline what he was telling the half dozen or so matrons standing around him; who in their turn, when not engaged with their own foodplates and forks, seemed to compete with each other to tell the Rabbi their opinions, to which he listened very attentively and reacted to occasionally with a word here and a nod of the head there, while carefully chewing his food and waving his fork.

"I am going to introduce you to Rabbi Dr. Rosenne", Aunt Hanna explained straining under physical effort of pulling me along. "We all like and admire him very much. He is a very learned man. You will enjoy talking to him".

"Rabbi, may I introduce my nephew David Prince to you ?", Aunt Hanna called out before we had even reached the group.

And again, as soon as she could - that is as soon as the Rabbi had shifted his interest from his plate to her, and Aunt Hanna had pushed herself carefully, pulling me by my arm, into the circle formed by the women - she repeated: "Rabbi Rosenne ! May I introduce my nephew David Prince to you ?"

I had a few seconds in which to observe the Rabbi from narby. He was a man of about 35 years. He was of medium height. His body contours and his protruding abdomen indicated that he enjoyed his food also outside Barmitzvah luncheons - or that he attended nearly every week one such - and it explained the amount of food which I saw still left on his plate. His round face was slightly flushed. A 'goatee' decorated his chin. A pair of black-rimmed glasses rested on the bridge of his somewhat fleshy nose. He was in a good mood, as he chuckled and laughed every few seconds, without ever letting his merriment, or the talk of the people around him, interfere with his appetite. He was dressed in a black three-piece-suit, a white shirt and a grey tie. He wore a small blue yamulka on his balding head. I noticed a Phi Kappa key on his watch chain.

Mercifully the conversation sustained by the women standing around the Rabbi had stopped when he raised his head and looked into our direction. The circle had opened and we could come nearer to the Rabbi. He looked at me and nodded. He placed his fork on

the plate in his left hand, brought forth a colourful paper nappkin from underneath the plate and used it to wipe his lips. By that time he had also swallowed the food in his mouth.

He extended his right hand. "Nice to meet you David", he said with a friendly smile. "I have heard about you. I would very much like to know you better. Go over that table there which your aunt has loaded with such mounts of delicacies. Satisfy your growling stomach, and after having accomplished that, we can sit down in a corner and exchange a few words".

"With pleasure, Rabbi Rosenne", I replied.

I did what he had advised. I took a plate and a fork, filled up with some liver paste, which I followed with a piece of 'gefillte fish'. I had the caterer's attendant give me a glass of beer, and sat down in a corner to eat my food in peace. It may have taken ten minutes before I had completed eating, as one after the other of most of those present, all members and friends of the family, came to say 'hello' and to exchange a few words.

The Rabbi was standing, surrounded by always changing groups of men and women, at the opposite end of the room. I saw him from time to time look into my direction. It seemed that he had caught the right moment; that is I had just finished eating and was about depositing my plate on a stack of used dishes, when I sensed him standing behind me.

"Finished eating, David ? I see you do not take any of the sweets. Do ! They are delicious".

"Thank you, Sir. I have eaten my fill".

"Your loss. Come with me. Let us sit there on the window sill, and let us talk".

But we had not much opportunity to talk. There were far too many interruptions and distractions, and the excessively high decible count which is usual in such places with such an assembly.

"It seems that we are not allowed to have our small chat here. But I will not forego it, David. Come and see me in my study at home whenever you have the time".

"I will gladly do so. I must confess that I have been very much on the lookout for a talk with a man of your calibre, Rabbi Rosenne, and particularly with one of your liberal outlook. Recently

I have been bothered with my inability to understand Judaism's attitude to certain issues which, though basic, are not modern enough for our society to bother about. I have discovered and read a number of books which do analyse these problems, but they do not give me that precise answer and that unambiguous reply for which I search".

"What kind of problem have you in mind ?"

"For instance, what is in our days the clear, distilled view of Judaism about the essence of God ? What is the meaning of sin and guilt for modern man in this age ? In the main: where and what is the truth on which ultimately everything rests ?"

"These are indeed very large and major issues about which entire libraries have been written, but which - I agree with you - may not give the right or the full or the definite or the consensual information one looks for. I shall do my best to explain to you what I personally think about these things". He inclined his head to one side, smiled, and looked at me quizzically with his grey eyes enlarded behind the lenses of his spectacles.

We met again the following Friday evening after dinner. It was early spring and the Shabath had already begun three hours before. The Rabbi lived in a modern condominium not far from his synagogue. Although for a moment at least I had thought it might be inappropriate, I took the lift to reach the sixth floor on which he lived according to the letterbox near the entrance gate. Arrived at his door I hesitated also for a moment before ringing the bell - I had forgotten to ask my Uncle's advice whether one could ring the bell in a rabbi's house on a shabath. I did press the button. Within a few seconds the door opened. The Rabbi himself had opened the door. He wa wearing a comfortable red velvet house jacket; his feet were in slippers, a black yamulke crowned his head and a wide smile his face.

"Come in, David. Have you had your dinner ?"

"Yes, Dr. Rosenne, I had my dinner. I hope you did not expect me to dine with you this evening. You did not mention anything of the kind".

"To be honest: no, I did not invite you for dinner. But one never knows. However, it would not have been a problem either, had you come hungry and had expected a meal. My housekeeper has since long gone home, but there is always something in the fridge which we could have turned by ourselves into a dinner".

I had not known that the Rabbi was unmarried. I was relieved. I had not thought in time to make enquiries also in this respect. I was glad about this discovery because I had forgotten to bring along some flowers or a box of chocolates for the lady of the house, which according to local Jewish custom would have been the right thing to do on such an evening.

We had now entered the study of the Rabbi. It was a large room which conveyed a comfortable sense of quietness and invited relaxation. Two of the walls were booklined up to the ceiling; most of another one was taken up by two large windows; and the fourth wall, above and around the door through which we had entered, was covered by framed photos and an impressive array of of diplomas. A large writing desk stood in front of the bookshelves on the left.

"What are you going to drink ?", asked the Rabbi. "Let me first provide for the iner man before we sit down".

"Can I have a glass of white wine, please ?"

"Sure ! I am going to bring some. In the meantime sit down over there". He pointed to a set of three deep, leather-covered chairs which were placed around a small low glasstable below one of the windows.

While he was away, most likely in the kitchen, I studied the wall with its photos and diplomas. There were two large photos in heavy brown wooden frames; one of an impressive bearded old man with a big yamulka on his head; and the other of an old woman with a wrinkled sweet face and a kerchief covering her head. They were most likely the Rabbi's parents, orthodox people from the Old Country. The other photos were less interesting: class groups, reunions, congregation events and so on. The diplomas showed that he had a Ph.D. in philosophy as well as in divinity, that he had studied at Princeton as well as at the Yeshiva University, and that he had been ordained a rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The Rabbi had entered the room. He carried a tray with a bottle and two glasses, as well as a plate with cashew nuts.

"Come sit down, David. I hope you will not think badly of me for exhibiting those posters which in our society evidence the bearer's wisdom and accomplishment. It would be inconceivable to my Congregation had they not been provided with visible proof that I had some kind of education. Here", he handed me a glass of wine, "let us drink to our meeting this evening - and to the hope that

there will be more of the same in future.

We drank. The wine was pleasant. It was a good wine as even I, inexperienced as I am, could judge.

The Rabbi took a silver box from the table and offered me a cigarette.

I declined. "Thank you. I do not smoke".

"Do you mind if I do ?", he asked. He had already taken a pipe from his desk. It was already filled. He had apparently been smoking it before I had arrived.

"Don't be shocked, David. I enjoy my pipe and I enjoy my Shabath, and I do not see why I should spoil my pleasure on a Shabath Day by abstaining from smoking. It does not make me less of a Jew, nor does smoking on a Shabath in any way reduce my fitness as a rabbi. I am truly and in every sense a rabbi, a teacher, a guide. I can be such a man with a pipe in my mouth, and I do not grant anybody the right to label me a charlatan or a freethinker".

"I agree with everything you said. By the way it is interesting that you used just now the word 'freethinker'. It reminds me of a meeting I had with a young rabbi here in New York. He was the rabbi of a conservative synagogue. It saw him for the first time on a Yom Kippur Day. I attended the service there with my Uncle Bert. It was an unusual service, for the rabbi interspersed the service every half hour or so with a short sermon or some homely. But on no occasion throughout the day of prayers and sermons did he ever mention the word 'God' or any equivalent. He told also a few jokes now and then, some of them hardly suitable nor for the occasion nor for the majority of that congregation. But the men and women in the congregation appeared to enjoy the rabbi, the homelies and the jokes".

"This is interesting", my host remarked. "Tell me where I can find this synagogue. I might attend a service there some day".

"It is situated somewhere in Brooklyn Heights. The name has escaped me at this moment, but I shall certainly recall it soon. But the interesting part follows. The next Shabath I was again at that synagogue. After the service, which was shorter than usual but otherwise not above the ordinary, and after the Rabbi had said farewell to the congregation filing out, I approached him and asked him 'to free me of a curiosity' as the Italians so nicely formulate a request for information. The rabbi was very friendly and welcoming.

"'I hope you will not see my question as an impertinence, Sir',

I said. 'And if you think I have no right to ask what I am going to ask now, please tell me so and be kind enough to forgive me. You see, Rabbi, I have been attending your service on Yom Kippur and was impressed by the fact that you had succeeded in creating a somewhat lighthearted atmosphere, that you told some good jokes, and that in your various mini-sermons during the service you never mentioned the name of the Divinity".

The Rabbi was in no way surprised or shocked. He seemed to be amused by my words. He asked my name. I told him my name. I continued without waiting for his reply.

'I do not want to imply any criticism, Rabbi. I am only desirous to receive an elucidation, because I am not at all sure of myself as a Jew, as a human creature, and of the meaning of my existence in general. I was hoping that considering the evident otherness of your being Jewish you might have an explanation, that you might be the prototype which could provide me with guidance'.

The Rabbi scrutinized my face while he pondered his reply.

I was tense and nervous. In my fear that he might brush me off, that he might palm me off with an ironic, with a non-committal reply, I did not let him have the word.

'Let me be frank with you, Rabbi, and ask you: can a rabbi be a freethinker or a freethinker a rabbi ?'

This time the rabbi was clearly taken aback by my question. At once I regretted my frankness which had, undoubtedly, amounted to impertinence. He contracted, then pursed his lips, looked at me for a few seconds with contracted eyes, and then stared over my shoulder into the street. For a moment there had been anger in his eyes. But he soon relaxed, and the sense of humour which seemed to characterize the man, gained upperhand again. I was relieved to read this change in his expression.

He asked me my name again, and he enquired also about my family, about my background and about my interests while he went about to remove his clerical garb. He linked his arm with mine and we left the building together. When we reached the street he proposed that we have a cup of coffee in a nearby coffeehouse. We spent over an hour there. It was a very interesting hour. What stuck most in my mind was the answer he gave to my question, and on which I would like to have your comment, Dr. Rosenne".

Rabbi Rosenne nodded his consent and I continued.

"Here is what that Rabbi told me in the coffeehouse. He spoke to me in much more sophisticated terms than what I am repeating now in my own words.

'You have used the wrong categorization, David. A freethinker is a person who defies religion which is not based on logic nor on ethics but - of all things - on anthropology. He thinks and believes that religion arises from the fear of supranatural forces and from the desire of mankind to gain the favours of these forces and to submit to them. He thinks that superstition, fear of demons and the like provide the true roots of the idea of God. Lenin was a freethinker. But he was a freethinker of a very nasty kind, whose reasoning was distorted by political exigencies. He was capable of saying that the very idea of God is 'unutterable vileness' and '...one of the abominable things on earth'. No decent freethinker will use such words. A freethinker, on the other hand, may be a religious person, a fundamentally religious person, whatever form and shape his religiosity may take. A religious person has the inner certainty of something supreme in nature, of something eminent beyond his own existence. He does not need proof nor does he demand proof for what he senses within himself.

'Refering to mysel' the rabbi continued, 'there is room in my own religious belief for a Supreme Being anywhere and everywhere, for a Supreme Power in and with us. This Supreme Being can be known and felt, and made to be known and felt, in many a form and in many a way. A rabbi can preach this belief, can convey the truth he feels, in whatever form he thinks and believes and knows will evoke a resonance in his congregants. The way I have conducted my service last week was tailored to the needs of that congregation among whom you sat - but of whom you were no part'.

The rabbi reflected for a few seconds. 'No, !' he continued with emphasis, 'I am not a freethinker by any definition of the word. If you want to put a label on me, you may call me a Spinozian rabbi, but also this would not be right and just. You must learn to believe, that every rabbi worthy of this title has an approach of his own to the problems which are never solved, are always asked anew. And, paru passu, every true rabbi has his own way to convey what he knows, what are his inner convictions, in a way which is sui generis in every case. You should never attempt to categorize, to apply a standard measure not only to a rabbi but to any human being who has his own religious conceptions. A truly religious man has constructed his own religious world. It has not to be a belief system which is shared by others. And in addition you should realize, that in some way every human being is religious - and that in every one of us this religiosity is of a specific and usually personal nature'.

I stopped. I realized I had been carried away. My host had been listening with great attention. His pipe had gone out but he had not relighted it. His eyes were directed at the wineglass he had been holding in his left hand. I could not make out whether I had bored him or not.

"What do you think, Rabbi Rosenne ?", I asked.

He sat up. He placed his wineglass and his pipe on the table. He put the tips of his fingers together to form a tent in front of his lips. This was, as I discovered, his habit whenever he tried to concentrate.

"What you told me just now is very interesting indeed. It is a very unusual way of thinking in a rabbi - but it is by far not an exceptional one today. He wanted to say that every thinking and questioning man has to form his own idea about God, will have to give shape and expression to his religiosity, and will have to live and be guided accordingly. Like a writer, a philosopher, a teacher even, who can give expression and presentation to any religious and intellectual system - whether they are personally involved or not, to a public, whether they think it is entitled or not to their confidence - a rabbi has his own beliefs, his own philosophy and his own ideology to guide and to direct him and which shape his being a rabbi. He is the one who in his contacts with his congregation has to worry about the manner in which he presents his religiosity to them. This comes to its full realization in the way he performs his religious service in the synagogue, and how he guides the members of his congregation - and also in his constant awareness of the danger that he might be made to lose his self-respect.

"It is this which the rabbi, of whom you have told me, must have wanted to convey to you. I may be mistaken, but this is the light in which I see the ultimate aim not only of a religious man but of man in general. And this, if I may advise you, David, should be the guideline also in your own life, as it seems to me you are groping for one".

"Yes, Rabbi Rosenne, you have understood where I stand and what I need. Your advice may indeed be the proper description of, and the right prescription for, my state of mind. I am in constant quest, search, need to find a way out of my doubts. I believe I have at last overcome my inner anger, the burning rage which at times have frightened me so immensely, because they never condensed

into a steady state of n absolving, of a satisfying anxiety. am searching for an answer. I have learned very much from my reading and from my studying Jewish and Christian theology. I have read much aboutthe History of religion, about the Phenomenology of Religion, of the Philosophy of Religion. I have not found what I searched for. To my regret I very often do not feel myself a Jew, or exclusively a Jew. I would not have hesitated going over to the christian religion, had I found there values of the kind I am looking for - but the opposite has been the result. I have not been able to create, to evolve in me a respect for a religion which has adopted the name of Jesus Christ. What I have learned of the history of Christianity and of the theology of Christianity has made me wonder how this religion could have survived to this day, that it could still be embraced by hundreds of millionbs of men and women among whom there are so many intelligent and discerning people.

"But with this I did not want to waste your time this evening, Dr. Rosenne. I would like you to answer a question about Jewish history and theology which so far no tractate nor any theologian could answer to my satisfaction. It may be that so far I had not the right opportunity to ask".

"I am willing to do my best, David. I have all the time you may want. However, It appears to me that by mentioning history and theology in the same breath you appear to see history as identical with, or at least interdependent, with theology. Whatever the former may claim it is primarily a chronology of inter-religious disputes, while the latter concentrates on the explanation of the specifics, on the elements, even on the logic of the established religion in question. And let me also point out, that for Judaism theology had initially been something peripheric; its explanatory efforts were unnecessary, because Judaism became identified in its principles long before the theologians came to interpret or to detail them. The same is the case with Islam; while Christianity has ab initio been a theological religion. Judaism developed its own theology only at a later stage. From the moment our theologians started to examine the experience man has of God as spiritual expressions or manifestations, their theology somehow took on the aspects of a psychological exercise, of a psychology of religion. Do you realize that the theologians of ancient Greece were not priests but poets, philosophers and intellectuals who pondered about gods and about nature ? Let us better talk about two separate issues, either about a general history of religion or about a specific Jewish theology".

"Thank you, Rabbi".

"I propose we fill our glasses first. I am ready with mine".

"What do you want to ask me", he took up the conversation after he had refilled both glasses.

"Let me ask you first, how you see the 'Absolute Being', the 'Supernatural', the 'Infinite' which has been the original and basic starting point in the forming of a religion".

"Why do you use words like 'Absolute Being' and 'Supernatural' and so on for God ? You seem to be shy of using the word 'God'. Many do. You should not feel inhibited to say 'God'. God is eo ipso the Absolute, the Infinite, the Supernatural. You can do so, even if you accept that God is the 'Unknowable' as some ancient sage - I think it was Dionysos Aerophagos - has once formulated the Deity".

"Indeed he is unknown to me. I do not know who God is".

"You have the idea allright, but you want more. You want to know God. You want to know of him. You want to experience him. In this request you are blessed, David, because you search for more than understanding".

"Tell me more about the way I could know of God".

"Go is within you. He is everywhere. You will encounter God in every phase of your life. It is up to you to find him. Find for yourself the meaning of what Buber said, viz:- that God is the unity of the I and Thou; and what Bultmann taught, viz:- that the question of God and the question of yourself are identical".

"Does this agree with the monotheistic conception of an austere God ? Is this a denial of what I learned about an unapproachable God ? You say God is everywhere; you could not mean a pantheistic God, of course".

"No, this was not my intention. Pantheism is the popular interpretation of nature as God. In Judaism the pantheistic idea does not figure in the concept of God. In our Jewish view God is the personal God of everyone of us. And whereas he is a perfect ethical being and has set the moral standards for us to follow, it is the goal of man to imitate God - which implied in the directive for us Jews to become 'holy'".

"You did not point to the most to me most appealing quality of God, Rabbi Rosenne. The Prophets say that their God is also a kind God. They say also that he is the King of the World, that he rules the Universe. My personal experience is that one cannot easily approach a king, even if the king is one's father, as the prayers never cease to point out".

"No doubt, there is a certain distance between God and man. Though man has been created in the image of God, man is not equal to God, is not on the same level as God. Man has to do what God has ordered him to do. On the other hand a special relationship has been established between God and the Jewish people, for Israel was first to know of the primordial God, the Ur-God of mankind, and made him their God. They made him real. They made him factual by having him reveal himself, have made him state on his own that he is the true and only God".

"Your words imply that God has selected and elected the Jewish people, has given it a special place and rank ?"

"My words mean that God has made a contract, a pact with Israel. It is better to call it a treaty. However, we must never overlook that it is a treaty between unequal partners. At Sinai God was the Allmighty Power and Israel nothing but a miserable, poor, and uneasy band of escapees. God offered to protect, to raise, to lead Israel provided it accepts and fulfills the hard, severe conditions God has imposed on the Jewish people. This is what election and selection should be taken to mean".

"And it means also, that Israel has to serve as a model for the world".

"Israel's duty is simply and plainly expressed in our daily prayer '....to perfect the world in the Kingdom of God'".

"Does the unique relationship of which you speak mean, that we have also special privileges ? For instance does it mean that redemption after death is a priori ours ?"

"First of all you have to know that today we do not have to rely exclusively on the prescriptions and the promises which are read into our religion, in the way our forefathers did. The value religion has for the individual is not anymore associated with what is going on either in heaven or on earth. Along with the limits our tradition has imposed on us, also the restrictive interpretation of the tennets of our religion has been greatly softened. This is more or less the case with every religion extant today. Only Islam is an exception; there is no softening, no let-up in the literal interpretation of what has been originally said or written. Everywhere else mainly moral and social values have today become the measuring rod as well as the mainstay, the true support and ambition, of modern man".

"From my reading I had gathered that the benefit of a belief and trust in the Jewish God's benevolence refers to a great part to the reward we may expect to be granted after death ?"

"Not to the extent you seem to imply. The God of Israel is

the God of the living and not of the dead. And thus also Judaism is the religion of living and not that of the thereafter".

"But from what I have learned, Dr. Rosenne, the promise of a redemption is presented as an attractive feature of Judaism".

"Yes, it is but in a certain sense only. It is not the kind of redemption as in other religions, that is the recompensation to be granted after death. This idea is not specific for Judaism, although some of it may have penetrated into Judaism at the time when the Jews were hard pressed by their enemies. If you look into the history of religion, you will see that Redemption is sought, preached and promised when man is in need, when he inmvests in the hope of a redemption, of a compensation for his sufferings. Such a Redemption is never thought of by man when he can solve his problems by himself, by his own efforts. The Jews have never known a time when they did not implore God to deliver the Jewish people from oppression - but God was never asked for redemption. The Jew, like everyman, labours and suffers and hopes for remuneration, for salvation even, but Judaism teaches that the reward the Jew merits and the punishment he earns are meted out to him here on earth, here in this world and not in the next".

"But, Dr.Rosenne", I insisted, I have heard there is a prospect of redemption, of the promise of redemption for the Jew ?!"

"Let me answer you in different words this time, David. Redemption, salvation are certainly not the main characteristics of Judaism. Not even the redemption from sin. Judaism, Jewish Scripture and Jewish theology teach the guideline how to live in accordance with the revealed will of God. If you read the Bible from that point of view, you will find it tells us little about eternal values, that instead it speaks mostly of the facts of life, of the relationship of man with his fellowmen, of man's needs in his lifetime on earth, of man's achieving an ethically pure hook-up in his life. There is nothing left which has to be settled after death. Life is a steady testing ground, we are taught, a struggle to withstand evil. The Bible must be read as a treasure chest of advice and instruction, of how to live a pure life, of how to overcome the everywhere present evil. You must never overlook that the Bible is a history book which has been written in the language of its time. You must read the Bible with this in mind".

"Let us speak of the Bible, please. Tell me more. What do you think about Scripture ? How do you perceive the biblical writings ?"

"The Bible, as I think your question implies, means something differentt for everybody. But to everybody who beliefs himself

a Jew, the Bible is the guideline, the codex for a moral life, for a satisfying life. To the religious Jew it is in addition the divine word, the direct revelation from God. We progressive and liberal Jews are children of the Enlightenment, who see in the Prophets' directions the deep value of Judaism. We felt entitled -and do not see it as a sacrilege - to determine with the help of Bible Research how much truth is contained in the historic details of the Bible. We are, I am ready to confess, today still under the influence of the philosophical spirit of the age of doubt, which Descartes has introduced, and which involved also the Bible, even though Descartes never thought of attacking the authority of the Scriptures. We see all the miraculous events in their mythological perspective, but we will concede that even with this help and such a method there is much of what we read in the Bible which cannot be explained in this way. But with regard to historic data our researches have benefited from a more effective set of tools.
It was Spinoza who first justified and underlined the philosophical basis of all Bible criticism. Mind you, I greatly admire Spinoza's intellect and courage. I think what Goethe said about Spinoza is justified, viz:- '....he breathes and exhales an eternal air of peace', although he has brought anything but peace into the world of Bible study".

"Does Bible criticism not imply above all a trend to negative interpretation ?"

"Not necessarily. Not as long as you view the Bible critics and Bible commentators as philosophers who within their individual intellectuality - and on the basisd of their Weltanschauung - try to explain which is the meaning certain portions of the Bible have for them personally. They may try to give you the impression that they indulge, as far as they only can, in negative criticism; but they usually take a critical stand - and you must not overlook that many of these men and women are religious people - because they want the Bible to be literally true, and also because they want it to be beyond criticism".

"But from my reading I have gained the impression that with regard to many of the traditions and practices mentioned in the Bible, the Scriptures are today no more so widely respected and accepted as the true mirror of the times to which they refer. Is this not due to the Bible critics ?"

"In principle we have to accept that the Scriptures of every religion have been and always will be that which their adherents take them to be. To the adherents they contain all the wisdom. And those, who look for meaning in the Scriptures will discover

in them, will learn from them, even more than others would by their objective reading".

"Do you really accept that the Bible, in part or in its totality, has been revealed at Sinai ?"

"Fundamentally the Bible is a book of history. But for me, although I often make an effort to reason this belief away, the Bible is a book with a continuing revelation which has been going on all through the epoch of early Israel....."

"This would justify the orthodox elements in Jewry - and I suppose also in Christianity - that the Scriptures are holy and beyond criticism", I interrupted him.

"Let me reply with the words of an ancient Talmud sage, Rabbi Eleazar, as mentioned in a Yemenite Midrash: 'whoever translates a biblical verse literally, is a liar; and whoever adds something is a blasphemer'. On the other hand I can bring you also something which Spinoza said in his Theologio-Praktical Traktat: 'should you find something is the Bible from which it is possible to bring absolute proof that it is opposite to the laws of nature and cannot be placed in relationship with these, one has to conclude with absolute certainty, that this material has been added by blasphemous hands to the Holy Scriptures. For whatever is against Nature, is also against reason, and whatever is against reason is nonsense and is therefore to be rejected'".

"This answers my question, Rabbi Rosenne. I have another question which relates to our own times. Has a new epoch started for the Jewish people ? Have in your opinion recent events awakened the consciousness of the Jews ? Have the Holocaust and the newly established State of Israel brought on a change or otherwise of the Jews to their religion ?"

"Sure ! There is such a change. The Holocaust has traumatized every Jew whatever his religious connection or belief may be; but with regard to Israel that change did not set is which one might have expected or hoped for. I mean this entirely from a religious point of view and not from a political one. In their hearts and minds the Jews have always maintained an intimate connection with the Holy Land. In their daily prayers they have expressed the hope that in their own days there may occur a very positive and favourable outcome of the Galuth, of the Exile; and this positive and favourable outcome has always been associated with the re-establishment of a new Commonwealth. The physical possession of the Promised Land counts in the Jewish consciousness and in our eschatology far more than the statistics of the politicians and apologists, who love to cite the numbers of Jews who have been living in Jerusalem during

the last 2000 years. In the very consciousness of this attachment of the people of Israel to Erez Israel I see the most important factor why Catholicism has felt induced to denigrate the Jewish people, to demonize them, to theologize and phiolosophize away whatever possible propriety rights the Jews might claim".

"But the extremely religious Jews, the ultra-orthodox wing, have not made use of this - in the religious sense - god-given opportunity to return to the Holy Land".

"This is a fact. The ultra-orthodox elements in Jewry explain their restraint with their inability to agree and to accept that the Jewish people has the right to liberate itself from exile by its own effort. It is their belief that they have to await the miraculous divine intervention of the Messiah who will take them back to their ancient homeland".

"What do you personally think about the coming of the Messiah, of a messiah at all ?"

"I believe in a Messias insofar as he is a change of mind, of attitude in the world; insofar as mankind gains an insight in its shortcomings; insofar as it will awaken to a new ethical enlightenment and a new direction; insofar as it will realize mankind's duty to mankind. But I do not believe in a personal messiah, a descendent of the House of David who comes riding into Jerusalem, seated on a white ass."

"What about the Messiah who lives at 770 Eastern Parkway ?"

"You mean the Lubavitscher Rebbe ? We have had many candidates for messiahship all through Jewish history, especially when Jews were desperately in need of redemption from oppression. The Lubavbitscher people explain their claim that the time is ripe for the coming of the Messiah, by pointing to the great attrition the Jewish people have experienced in modern time - and to their own success in having brought back to Judaism large numbers of alienated Jews".

"What other criteria have they for the possible nearness of the messianic advent ?"

"Strangely enough they appear to follow the criteria advanced by Maimonides - although they otherwise refute good old Maimonides. These criteria are that the Messiah will bring all Jews back to God; that the Messiah will militarily defeat all enemies of Israel; that the Messiah will die and be succeeded by his son who will die and will then be succeeded by his grandson., But the Rebbe of the Lubavitscher has no son".

"And how will this problem be solved ?"

"The Rebbe will discover that the time is after all not the right one, and he will promise the final stage of salvation after his return from death".

"A 'Second Coming' ?"

"You may say so".

"What do the other Jews say ? The other orthodox or hasssidic movements ?"

"They wisely watch and do not commit themselves. But as soon as the Messiah-candidate makes a mistake, violates even the smallest of halachic laws or infringes on anything Scriptures say as past false messiahs have done - they will pound on the Lubavitscher, will at least put a ban on him,. should they not physically attack them all. I hope this will not turn into a tragedy. We should adopt the hassidic imperative that each individual engage in a personal redemption of his own and leave the ultimate redemption where it rightfully belongs".

"As a rabbi you are expected to have formed your own worldview, and to give expression to it when approached, even though it will in many instances clash with accepted views. I am pleased to see this fact confirmed by what you have said so far. If you agree with me that this is indeed the case, you will have to grant everybody else the same freedom and with it the right to interpret the Bible, the traditions, and the eschatology as he thinks it will fit his personal philosophy. What do you think will happen should this trend become generalized ? Will it lead to the abolishment of religion, or at least to the devaluation of religion all over the world - and possible everywhere at the same time ?"

"I cannot see how this can happen. Religion will never disappear by itself all over the world. Nor is it possible that religion will be repressed by force everywhere, that is at same time simultaneously. And religion will never die by itself".

"Is there not the trend in modern-minded, socialist-oriented Israel to banish religion, to turn the state into a 'profane' one as is the case elsewhere in the world ?"

"It will hardly come to this. Israel would lose its Jewish character and therewith its right to existence in its own eyes and in that of the world. Israel would disappear after a generation or two. Still ! It is true that large parts of humanity can do without religion. Over the years communism has succeeded in suppressing the teaching of religion and the performance of religious practices, but it has not been able to eradicate religion. Some memory is still alive in the older generation which is dying out.

But you may be assured that as soon as the generation which has been totally deprived of religion, of the knowledge of the Supernatural, comes again in contact with religious philosophy and religious practices, the primordial need of what religion has to offer will awaken in them. However, I would agree with you, should you say that under certain circumstances people do not need religion as much as they need self-confidence and the advice how they should strive for an inner balance. But this is not religion. Modern statistics of the membership of churches and synagogues are useless. Only a small number of the religious attend institutionalized divine services. Of course, a secularizing process has been going on since long, and it is gaining speed. I do not mean, that the number of those has increased who do not believe anymore in demons and angels, in Prophet Elias or in Father Christmas, and who do not accept the miracles described in the Bible as facts. But what is more serious to my mind is that because they do not believe that the miracles reported in the Bible could have been performed by God, they decry the entire Bible as untrue. The next logical step would have to be the denial of God himself".

"I can well believe that people can lose faith in the Bible, but I cannot see why this should lead to the loss of belief in God, although he appears implicated by the compliers of the Bible. But you will have to agree, Rabbi Rosenne, that the laws, rules and customs promulgated about 3000 years ago, which had been tailored to the need of a bedouin people - and this applies even to those added in the following millenia - can hardly be considered valid for and applicable to our times and concepts. I can in particular not accept the halachic rules of conduct in life which the orthodox and the conservative - and nowadays also the reform - currents in Judaism proclaim as essential for the survival of the Jewish people".

"I agree. These laws of the Torah were time-bound and -tailored to the times and people, the conditions and conceptions of those times. With few exceptions they would have disappeared in due course but for the halachic adaption by the Rabbis of old to the exigencies of their own time and to the attempted shaping our modern halachic experts have given them in the hope of fitting them into our actual culture".

"What you said just now, Dr. Rosenne, hardly fits the halachic practices I know the orthodox and other currents in Judaism think themselves entitled to force upon our times".

"Halachic rules are in principle very sound, but they have their inbuilt weaknesses. They become inadequate and inappropriate when they put on blinkers and erected barricades; when they prevent

us from adapting ourselves to our actual times. Ultimately you are placed before a dilemma: do you want a Judaism which is constantly and continuously modernized, if not rejuvenated, and which will inevitably lead to still greater and possibly final assimilation ? Or do you prefer a straight-jacketed Judaism which guarantees Jewry's survival at least in restricted numbers ?"

"I cannot answer this question. But I am convinced that as long as there is a strong movement, more liberal in the light of the steady change of what we may call the externals - and this was once and should again be Halcha's main program - our survival should be assured".

"Your presuppositions are rather too optimistic".

"I am sorry you are not more explicit; but I have the impression you are in favour of a Judaism which is a halachically constantly changing; one which offers a comfortable Jewish life in a progressing and progressive world - without interfering with the ethics of Judaism while maintaining the Jewish people's special vocation".

"You may also call it a Judaism in which the rabbis give halachic decisions with their tongues in their cheeks".

"The Jewish world is liable to stamp these rabbis hypocrites, don't you think ?" Before he could reply I continued. "In this context let me ask you another question: does the secularization you mentioned a while ago mean, that ultimately the road will lead to agnosticism or even atheism ?"

"To a large extent it leads to this. Secularization creates an attitude which accepts only the secular, the profane, the worldly. It is, of course, non-transcendental. Secularism gains an ever greater foothold in these our days. It affects all faiths in an equal measure. I do not see how this process can be halted as long as the modern political-ideological currents continue to remain strong and usurp the place ethical ideology had occupied so far".

"Since how long has this phenomen been with us ? Is it only a characteristic for our times ?"

"Certainly not. Every epoch and every country had known such trends. In the past, and it is a phenomen still today in many parts of the world, secularism was decreed a heresy and in consequence severely suppressed. But secularistic trends have always existed and will continue to exist. They take on many shapes. You may not agree with Goethe who said that in the conflict between religious belief and disbelief, the most important, possibly even the only conflict is that between human and world history. But in my studies I found it a proven fact, that the epochs in history, when faith was in the ascendance, were in general superior in quality and

achievement; they brought mankind greater advantages; they introduced a more promising future - while the peoples of those epochs in which faith was weakened and belief was lacking, have disappeared without a trace".

"This is indeed interesting. I must look at history with such eyes. But I have another question, Rabbi Rosenne. Do you agree that there is in Israel and in the Diaspora a steadily progressing distantiation of the Jews from the synagogue ? I could observe this in my own family. My grandparents were very observant; my parents less so - and I have refused to have a Barmitzvah. At the time of my refusal I did so 'on principle'; but I must confess that today I do not know what these principles were or are".

"It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of the Jews of today remember their religion, and no less also their Jewishness, only at moments of stress. At that moments their Jewishness, albeit in modernized and secularized disguise, comes again into the foreground. But it is also a very interesting observation, that even the most secularized of the Jews continue to adhere to some form of their heritage and traditions; e.g. they have not given up the circumcision of their sons, the bar- resp. bathmitzvas of their children, and they insist on the traditional marriage and funeral ceremonies. I am not inclined to attribute this phenomen to the preservation or the awakening of a deeply rooted religiosity. I see this phenomen as something approaching superstition. And even if this is so, we may say that it has contributed to a not small degree to the survival of the Jewish people".

"To what else, and to what mainly, do you attribute the survival of the Jewish people ?"

"The very factors one would search for and try to establish in any other nation in the world to justify its right to exist - like living in a country with fixed borders, possessing a historic identity, owning its own language - have in our case not even to be invoked in order to explain the miracle of Jewish survival. There is more to it. Not even the long isolation full of humiliation and persecution, into which all the various host countries have in the past forced the Jews, can provide a sufficient explanation for our survival. I have no physical explanation to offer. It is indeed a miracle that we still exist. I can only say that I don't know of any all-embracing explanation for our survival. There is only a divine explanation for the Jewish phenomen. We Jews are supposed to be the 'Chosen People'. The Bible says so, the prayer-book says so, but we Jews never mention it otherwise. It is the Gentiles who speak quite uninhibitedly that the Jews occupy

a special place in the divine scheme of things. I think it is thie belief that we are elected, that we are selected for a special task and duty - although we never boast of this aloud - which in my opinion has made our survival possible. Do you know that the Gentiles, and not our rabbis nor our theologians and philosophers, are the true, possibly the only, defenders of Israel's special place in God's planning ?"

"You sound like a mystic, Rabbi Rosenne. I hope you are indeed one and will be willing to explain to me in a few words the essence of the Jewish type of mysticism".

"I am not a mystic, David; but I wish I could have felt myself capable and fit to be one. I must concede, however, that the study of the Cabbalah has been relevant to my education. It has provided me with an inkling of the kind of mysticism which demands a certain psychological readiness, a definite strength of character, mainly in a Jew, before he can immerse himself in a study along such lines. I found the material very interesting and instructive. However, the study of the Zohar and the other cabbalistic texts is a long and an all-exclusive undertaking. The study of the mystic texts requires among other things an integrated teacher and a dedicated pupil. And it requires in addition ample time and an exclusive dedication. Experts have since centuries warned aspirants of the psychological devastations the study of the Cabbalh without the right supervision may cause. As I could not find the right teacher, and in truth also because I never had the sufficient time so far, I had to stop my studies at a certain low level, although I felt I would have been an apt and successful student".

"You will not find it unusual that as an inexperienced and curious youth I have tried on my own to pry open the door to the Cabbalah, but I was wise enough to desist once I had a glance into the complexities of which I became immediately aware. But this material interests me very much. I shall perhaps find one day the right guide, the right time and the right environment for a profound study of the Cabbalah".

"I can assure you that you will find yourself greatly awarded. Until that time you may find satisfaction in studying the less complex organization of the Habadniks. Like all hassidic movements they have a mystic component, but in them it is more pronounced. I have met them in groups and also singly. I must confess I was less impressed by their rather primitive mysticism than by their hassidic folklore, and still more by their selfless social work, which in their Weltanschauung equals in value their most fervent prayers".

"Thank you, Rabbi. I shall make it my program to come into contact with them. But there is something else. You mentioned prayers just now. Do you think they are effective in any other sense than to call on man to endeavour to know himself ? Most people think, that by following the order of the prayer book, say by partecipation in a synagogue service, we may be able to find a solution to most or at least certain of our problems".

"I submit that every individual has the right to search for an understanding of his personal, and also of the social problems of his environment, by an intellectual approach, by searching for the fundamentals of truth within himself, by an intellectual approach or by logical investigation; but in my opinion - I should better say according to my inner feeling - man can only find an answer in the ambience of divine worship, if he sees - as he should - in worship the opportunity to express his gratitude for having found his place, minute as it may be, in the scheme of things, within the frame of the fate, of the history of his people, within a group of similarly minded and affected people in his community, and through them in a wider sense, in his nation. Ultimately and in the main prayer is to my mind a personal matter, David. It is in no way a detailed order or a prescribed rite. It is a conversation with what an individual considers holy, with all that is exclusive, with all that is different, with all which transcends the profane. All which I adress in my prayer has not even to be transcendental; it may only be my own conscience or my self-consciousness. To me praying is true when I measure by established moral standards myself, my own character, my deeds and my thoughts, the ethical platform on which I stand. Having identified with such a view, I agree with the mystic who says that God exists if man wills it. God becomes then real and a reality for the individual who knows truly and sincerely to pray. 'God is enthroned upon the prayers of the people', said the Rabbis of old".

"Do you really place so much value on prayers, and on community prayers in general ? For some time I have made it my task to observe people at prayer, and I gained the impression that they are rarely absorbed and involved. There may have possibly been a few exceptions among them, it is true, of whom I thought, on watching them, they were approaching the border zone of mysticism".

"You must be careful, my friend. You seem to approach this complex issue by hurriedly pushing a shopping carriage through the storage room of facts and sciences. On the other hand, my own way of worshiping is like having a computer project on its screen the insight I have gained into the wonders of which nature is full,

and the appreciation of the immense miracle which is man. By means of our prayers we realize the grandiosity of the Creation, the reflection of the Creation in our humanity; and thereby we are enabled to acknowledge the primordial and also eternal essentiality of the Creator, a truth which is otherwise hidden. At the same time, and independent of all this, prayer will help us to establish a sincere and honest relationship with our fellowmen and with humanity in general. You do not have to say your prayers aloud, or to shout your prayers, or to sing your prayers. You can effectively pray without a sound and without moving your lips. View prayers as one of the approaches man has to God, David. While you are worshiping, while you are praying, you come to realize that you are not alone; and the certainty that you are not alone may persist long after you are by yourself again".

"What you have told me just now will occupy my mind for a long time to come, Rabbi Rosenne. In any case my sincere thanks, for I am certain I shall benefit greatly from your words. May I ask you what you meant with the word 'truth' which you mentioned just now ? It is precisely that for which I have been searching. What is the truth ? What is **the** truth. Which is the range of truth man is given to perceive ?"

"It is not the knowing of the truth but the searching for the truth which is of importance. The search for truth keeps man alive, gives man a purpose in life; it induces man to think; it induces man to strive for self-assurance and self-realization; and it finally leads him to see in his daily work and duty a blessing and not a grudge. Searching is motivation and goal at the same time. For it will never be granted to man to know the complete and absolute truth. Let us gratefully accept that this is so. There would be nothing left to keep man moving on, should he know all, or even only part of the truth. But truth is a whole. It cannot be halved nor only partially disclosed or discovered. Take it as axiomatic that truth is an integral something. It may have many facets but in truth there is only one truth. To my mind it would bring about a terrible state of affairs should we ever come to know all the truth; should we have nothing more to look forward to; should we become dejected because we cannot measure up to the truth. But this should not mean that you have to be satisfied once you have learned some of the truth, or even half of the truth, or the truth about the truth. If you know, or if you think you know, some of the truth, do not stop looking for more. A little truth is worthless. You must continue your search for the whole truth even though you know that the full truth is not obtainable by mortal

man. It is the searching which counts. For searching is life".

"With my senses I know that what you said is true - especially as you appear to live in accordance with this precept".

"I know that this is indeed the road towards the approach to the truth. Apart from this there is one aspect of truth which has to be unconditionally faced - namely the truth that man is the creation of God. Otherwise we shall fail to understand the essence of religion, which in this case means of our existence. To the individual whose sensing of such a truth is amorphous, whose religiosity is undefined, all I have just now defined should form a welcome consolation, or better still a starting point. A religiosity which has not this minimal truth, has not at least this asset, is limping along without an aim or purpose. I ask you, my friend, how can I understand man's place in the Universe, man's relationship to his Creator, if I do not know, if there is a vacuum, if there is an unsurmountable wall ahead ? It is not enough for me to blindly accept that 'this is so', that there is no use going on to search for the ultimate knowledge. For although we have in a final conclusion to accept the truth that God is inescapably the all-powerful Truth, this should not mean that I can forgo the intelligence, the reasoning power with which I am blessed".

"Don't you think, Dr. Rosenne, that the moment the people who make up the majority of the religious masses, accept - please do not mind if I say instead submit to - the concept you have outlined, they will not feel directly involved, and possibly to a minute part even responsible for whatever human tragedies they encounter ? How could you otherwise explain away man's innocence and God's involvement in the suffering of so many innocents ? Once you have placed such a God at the steering wheel of the Universe, you have also placed the death of my parents and sisters into his lap".

"How can I presume to know the working of God ? How can I without such knowledge, without such a key, ever know the why and the how of human fortune, of human suffering ?"

I noticed that my last question had caused him distinct discomfort. But this question and other similar ones were essentially the reason for my having come to the house of the Rabbi, for my having looked forward to this conversation. I did not want to leave without having received an answer, some kind of answer, at least some kind of an indication, what a man like this rabbi thought in this respect. I insisted, therefore, and said:

"I can accept the insignificance of the single human being within the totality of the Universe, although we are told by our

mothers, by our prophets and by our rabbis that every living being is taken care of by God. But what of the millions of human beings killed in the wars, starved to death in the famines ? What does Judaism say about all this ? How do you, a learned rabbi, explain the suffering of the Jews over the last 2000 years ? And in particular, how do you explain to yourself the mass-slaughter which has been labeled 'The Holocaust' ?"

"To all this I can only say 'I do not know'. What Judaism says about our past sufferings ? Read the books of the Prophets. It will do you much good to read the writings of the Prophets if you want to know what Judaism is, where it leads to. The Prophets will tell you that the series of punishments, the never ending sufferings have been inflicted upon the Jews for having transgressed the explicitedly outlined laws of God. In the course of your studies you must have realized that God's laws are moral laws. These laws outline man's, and specifically the Jew's, responsibility to God and to mankind. It is for neglecting their responsibilities that the Jews have been punished. Many a time have the Jews been punished. So very often have they been mercilessly punished. Not only the Jewish people have suffered, it is true, but the Jewish people have suffered more than any other people, because quite unfortunately for the world at large and no less also for ourselves, the Jews have been appointed the 'Chosen People', the ones who have been selected to serve the whole world as examples, as models of moral conduct".

"Do you want to say now, you too accept that we are the 'Chosen People' ?"

"This is not the issue; it is the fact - as I have already outlined - that we are seen by the Gentiles as occupying such a selected place. And even if you and we all refute or deny or disclaim this particular elevation to holiness, we cannot free ourselves of this in the eyes of the world. So much of our trouble is due to the fact that the world at large sees us as the 'Chosen People' with all the responsibility and all the otherness it implies, while the Jews themselves try to disabuse the world of this election, try to get away from it, want to be 'a people like any other people'. The world has adopted special measuring rods and very finely tuned scales especially for the Jews. We are accused, reviled, persecuted for the minutest deviations - factual or assumed - from the moral laws, while a thousand-fold such transgressions in other countries or by other nations will not be counted or will be simply overlooked. This goes on not only in the world press and in the United Nations, but without exception in every government of the world - and

ultimately in the mind of most of the Gentiles".

He stopped talking. For the last 2-3 minutes he had been sitting bent forward, with his hands placed over his temples and his elbows resting on his knees. He remained silent for some time. I dared not interrupt his thinking. Suddenly, with a deep sigh, he raised his head. There was a far-away look in his eyes. He leaned back, his gaze directed against the ceiling, his hands gripping the armrests of his chair. He continued talking.

"To conclude this point - and you will not mind if after that I am not going to enlarge any further on this issue - I will tell you what I think. You asked for my opinion. You wanted my personal assessment of the painful chapter of Jewish suffering, and in particular about the recent destruction of European Jewry, so very inappropriately called 'The Holocaust'. Listen carefully, David. This is my interpretation. We Jews are indeed in a special situation. We have indeed been charged with a special duty which has not been imposed upon any other people. It has been imposed upon us of today against our will, because our forefathers once upon a time agreed to become a 'holy people', a nation which occupies a favoured, an exclusive position. We Jews have been entrusted with the custody of the laws and ethics as laid down in the totality of the Scriptures. These have been more often denied than accepted, more often contravened than obeyed. For this God has imposed punishments on the Jews. These punishments were certainly mainly meant as reminders, as warnings. Again and again we Jews have relapsed. Every day the Jewish people - and mind you everyone of us Jews - is exposed to a test of his readiness to obey the tasks imposed on us by our destiny. Every day we are on trial. It is true our shortcomings parallel those of the world at large, but it is imposed on us to show how the evil so blatantly prevailing all over the world, can be neutralized and avoided. The world is endangered today. Only mental sanity and moral straigthness can bring help and deliverance. We Jews are today in the right place, in the exposed place and in the appropriate situation to bring the world to its senses. We Jews find ourselves suddenly in situations - one after the other and each loaded with great temptation and danger - where we can by our conduct prove our morality, and where we can serve as an example to others. Not by political power or by scientific achievement, nor by militaryu strength, but by selfless dedication to humanistic ideals, by ethical conduct, by justice, by mercy. But we Jews have failed until now. We are about to fail

again, David. In the past punishments have been imposed upon us for such failings, and they have indeed brought our people to soem self-realization; but another pogrom here and another expulsion there will in these our days hardly have an effect anymore. Should such inhuman acts nowadays be inflicted on the Jews, they would be be useless as monitors, as warnings, as punishment - and they would also unlikely be tolerated by today's sensitized gentile world. Only two generations ago a situation arose, an assimilatory process set in where the Jews were about to lose their identity and with this the task imposed upon them. A 'Holocaust' was needed to reminded of their duty. Six million had to be killed to awaken the Jews from their self-centredness and their stupor. After that they were given the chance to start afresh. They were offered the unique opportunity of the environment in which their complaints of being dispersed,and their of being homeless had no more validity: the State of Israel came into life. And the tragedy is, that hardly have forty years passed - and the Jewish people is relapsing again. They are fighting again among themselves; they are again under attack in the entire world not only for political reasons but also because so many of our people contravene ethics and laws. Will another, a still greater punishment be the consequence ? Will the clearly god-inspired opportunity offered to the Jews in their newly established homeland have been in vein ? Will all evaporate into nothingness and with it the Jewish people ? I am afraid, David. I am terribly afraid".

The Rabbi returned to his former position, bending forward, hs hand pressing his temples and his elbows resting on his thighs. In a slow rhythm he moved his head slightly up and down. He had stopped speaking, but his words reverberated within me, as they did quite clearly also in his mind.

I was very surprised, not so much by the picture the Rabbi had painted, as by his deeply religious outlook which did after all embrace a more than usual mystic component. I hesitated to put into words the surprise and the turmoil which his words had caused me. But I had to know.

"Rabbi Rosenne", I said, "does this mean that you free the Germans from all responsibility ? For your words implied that they acted only as God's tools. I cannot imagine that you really intended to say this. After all these Germans have for at least a century before the last war been the leading antisemites in the world, the

accomplices of the Church, the creators of the pseudoscientific antisemitism which the world in turn has with such great alacrity accepted and adopted. I cannt imagine that the God who cares for his people Israel could have acted thus".

"No, David. The contrary is the case. The God I know, that God of mine, would never have done this. On the contrary ! He punished these Germans for all their past misdeeds ! He branded them in the way that the 'Sign of Cain' will forever remain on their forehead, will remind the world of their misdeeds for as long as there is life on this earthand history is read. This is why God has made the Germans the executioners of the punishment he has decreed for the Jews".

"Would such a theory also maintain that for this same reason the Church has been forced for so many centuries into her antisemitic scheming. and that she accuses even every Jews alive today of having killed their Christ ? And even if the Jews had some responsibility in the crucifixation of Jesus, as the Gospels pretend, they in turn would only have acted as God's tools. ANd in addition the argument may be raised that the Church should be thankful to the Jews who lived some 2000 years ago, for without Jesus dying on the cross Christianity had hardly enough nythology to feed on. Is it right then, that the Jews have been exposed to all the punishment, all the humiliations and sufferings at the hand of the Church, if the latter had been acting in turn as God's tools ?"

"No, my friend ! What you said does not apply. There is no parallel. The Jews did not execute Jesus. The Romans did not have to make use of the Jews to execute their policy. They did not have care for what we wouild call now 'public opinion'. And finally, there was never a Jesus of the type and fate as he has been described by the Gospels and as he has been propagandized by Paul".

He got up from his chair. He was pale. There was sweat on his forehead. He seemed exhausted. Could it be that his inner upheaval had been caused by the recall of some painful personal experience ? I too was deeply affected by what I had learned. I was also deeply touched by his sincere faith.

I rose from my chair. I took his right hand into both of mine without saying a word. We left his study and walked to the entrance door. There he turned to me and smiled. It was not his usual open, at times mocking smile. It was a sad smile. Could he possibly be sad on my behalf ? For having made me take part in his private world ?

He opened the door. He accompanied me to the lift, and when it arrived he opened its door, placed his arm around my shoulders in a friendly embrace. When the lift descended I saw him wave.

I realize now more than ever that my conversation with Rabbi Rosenne had been of decisive importance for me. He had cleansed away many a doubt and had placed many a concept of mine into the right perspective. I learned that a deep faith can be of great benefit, and will still leave room for a an ongoing testing and a continued questioning. I was impressed by the sincerity I discovered in the religious attitude of the priest of the God of Judaism. A further great impact had on me certainly also the unexpected revelation of the mystic streak in this profoundly learned, modern, liberal man. He had given me more than a hint of his carefully and thoroughly thought out viewpoint of Judaism; and I realize now that in the course of the months and years I have tried to adopt a similar philosophy of life for myslf.

As if by grace of a favouring fate, I was to have soon thereafter a smilalrly significant encounter with a no less intelligent, sincere and honest Christian, whose help was to be for me as imporant as would be that provided by a lifeboat to a weak swimmer struggling to reach safe ground underfoot.

The Story

of a

Prince

Hermann M. Selzer

Jerusalem

1988-1993

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The story of a prince.
II. Development and maturation
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.....and Jesuits.

I was sitting one morning on a bench in the College gardens, enjoying the warmth of the spring sun, while my mind was still analyzing the conversation I had with Rabbi Rosenne hardly a week before, when I heard somebody address me.

"Do you mind, Sir, if I take a seat next to you ?"

It was Father Schultz, the Jesuit, whose thought-provoking course in "Christian Belief, Disbelief and Unbelief" I had attended about two years ago. I had been greatly impressed by what I had been able to absorb. I had also otherwise been greatly impressed by this man. He was without doubt one of the best teachers I have ever known. He was very clear, logic, honest - and patient in expousing his ideas. He had in addition a fine - an often self-depreciating - sense of humour.

Even before I had recognized him, I had instinctively replied "Please do". When I looked up and recognized the priest, I added "I shall be pleased to have your company, Father Schultz", and with an inviting gesture I shifted towards one end of the bench on which I had been so far the only occupant.

Father Schultz was a tall, broad-shouldered man of about 50 years, somewhat overweight, his stomach straining against the buttons of his short black jacket. His movements were quick and precise. He must have been a good football player in his young age, I thought. His clean-shaven round face had a florid tinge. His fleshy lips hinted at his appreciation of good things in life and a certain degree of sensuality - the bluish-red colour of his nose might be taken as underlining my diagnosis. His eyes, enlarged by the steel-framed thick glasses gave his face an owl-like expression. My description might not be that of an impressive man, but nobody

who ever saw this face rise over the priest's dog-collar could have any doubt that he was in the presence of a very alert and highly intelligent man. He was nearly bald; but this did not appear to bother him, as I had never seen him wear a hat, not even in the hottest summer days. In his lectures he made ample use of his big strong hands, whenever he wanted to outline an image or to underline an a statement. When he came to College, he was as a rule dressed in a black coat over a priest's black waistcoat-like front piece and in black trousers. He was always exactly on time when he marched with quick steps into the classroom. The soon familiar sound, made by his heavy black shoes with their rounded caps and thick heels on the tile floor of the corridor, announced his arrival and evoked in most of the students the anticipation of a pleasurable lecture. I remembered that I had seen him a few times in town or on a subway, when he was "off duty", dressed in a tweed jacket, a hig-necked grey pullover, khaki slacks and was moving along soundlessly on his sneakers. We students agreed among us already after our first encounter with him, that Father Schultz was a 'personality'.

"Should I not recognize you as one of my pupils ? Have you not been in one of my classes ?", he asked before he had even sat down next to me.

"Yes, Father Schultz. I attended your course on "Belief" a couple of years ago".

"That is right. I remember now. You never failed to ask questions after the lecture - and I must confess, they were often embarrasing questions. What is your name ?"

"David Prince".

"Yes, I remember now. What are you doing now ? How do your studies progress ?"

"I am ready for my M.A. Already since a year I have all the credits I require, and also my thesis has already been accepted. I have so far not been in a hurry to graduate, and have in the meantime spent all my time reading and studying on my own".

"Are you continuing for a doctorate ?"

"No, Father. I am not in the slightest interested in degrees, diplomas or titles. Studying, learning have become a mania for me. I am driven by the thirst to know more and more. It has turned into an obsession, I am afraid to confess. I suppose the genes I have inherited from my rabbinical forefathers are playing up on me. However, enough is enough. I have decided to present myself for graduation this coming session, so that I can continue my further

studies abroad".

"You are a fortunate young man if you can financially afford to do so".

"With the help of what I have inherited from my parents it will be possible for me to carry on for a few years more. After that I shall inevitably have to worry about my daily bread. So far this is the last thing I bother about today".

"Lucky the man who, at least for a time, especially at your receptive age and with your agile mind, can avoid the hustle and the competition of the market place. What are the lines which interest you most and to which you dedicate your studies ?"

"It is a large, vast,timeless - and I fear also a bottomless - subject, which in its totality could be capped with the title 'Unsystematized religion', or in simpler and inadequate term with 'Philosophy of Religion', or in a wave of modesty could be given the label 'History of Religion', or in still plainer words could be waved off as 'Comparative Religions'. It is a subject which, as you know only too well, could among others be interpreted as poaching forays into your territory".

I ended my reply in this jokular manner as I felt apprehensive all of a sudden, that the Jesuit Priest might feel repulsed by what he must have seen as the exhibitionist verbage of an immature young man.

"Yours is indeed a vast and inexhaustible subject. Can you outline for my benefit what you have learned so far ?"

"Father Schultz ! I think you should know better than to ask such a question here on the bench of a noisy park !"

"I stand corrected, David. I hope you do not mind that I address you by your first name". Facing me and lifting his eyebrows his words which had sounded like an order, were turned into a question; and without waiting for my reply, he continued. "I should have known better. Would it meet with your idea of a suitable environment" - he merrily twinkled his eyes - "if I propose that we meet in a more appropriate place at a to both of us opportune time ? I am due to give a class now. I would very much like to hear from you what you have learned so far, what you have experienced already, what major interests you have".

Though I did not like the way the Jesuit had formulated his invitation, and because I was no less curious to know more from and about that man, I accepted.

"I shall be very pleased, Father Schultz, and would welcome the occasion to see you again, as you proposed. I agree also that a more suitable place would contribute much to our conversation.

But I cannot see that it would be worth your while to listen to my ideas, thoughts and what you call my 'experiences'. I would, however, be honoured and grateful, if you had the time for me to ask you some questions, for you to share with me a few of your own experiences and a little of your vast knowledge. For there are quite some things in your theology - and for this matter in theology in general - which are not at all clear to me. Although I have read very much about Christianity and have studied many a treatise, I can best clear a question which occupies my mind, if I hear it discussed, if I receive a verbal explanation. There are so many questions about Christianity which my bookreading has so far not clarified; and until now I had no occasion to place them before an expert of your standing who is willing to take me serious".

"I gladly agree to your proposal and program, even though I cannot promise that I have an answer to all your questions. I have, however, not the slightest doubt, that I myself shall greatly benefit from your questions".

He pulled a large silverwatch from the pocket of his waistcoat-like garment and studied his dial with a quizzical look. I remembered well this typical gesture of his.

"It is time I move on to my appointment. Will you be free tomorrow at about this time ? Could you come to my place and have a light lunch with me ? After that we can have our talk. You can ask as much and for as long as you like, as I have no other specific program for the entire afternoon".

I agreed. He tore a sheet from a notebok he had pulled from his pocket and wrote down his address. It was the address of a Jesuit Centre in Second Avenue.

We rose from the bench, shook hands and left in opposite directions.

The following day, shortly before noon, I pressed the single bell-button of the house, the address of which the priest had written down on the sheet I had in my hand. It was a large brownstone building of seven floors. Nothing on the outside, nor in the entrance, indicated that it housed a Jesuit community of some considerable size. The entrance door was opened at once by a young man. He was clad in a high-necked green pullover, grey trousers and grey tennis shoes. I supposed him to be a servant or, more likely, a seminarist. The young man replied to my "Good Morning" with a kind "God Bless You".

"I have been invited by Father Schultz.....", I began.

"He is expecting you", the young man interrupted me. "Please come with me to the Library".

He invited me into the entrance hall, closed the door behind me, and indicated that I follow him. We passed through a short corridor leading off from the right side of the entrance hall, and stopped in front of a large high wooden door. The young man knocked and without waiting for a reply opened the door. He pointed with his hand towards the left corner of the room where I saw Father Schultz seated in a chair. He had been reading a newspaper. The priest rose, and advanced towards me his right hand outstretched.

"Welcome, David. I am glad to see you. How are you ? This is our library", he added when he saw me look round the large room whose walls, except for four large windows with pannelled glass and the high door on the wall opposite them, were covered with books up to the ceiling. Father Schultz walked with me along one of the walls and I could look at some of the books. Most of them were leatherbound, mainly religious, theological and philosophical works of old vintage; but on one of the shelves I saw a large number of books, some still in their dust covers, which were recent issues. Some of them I had read.

"Very impressive", was the only comment I could make.

"We are very proud of our library. It is, of course, a specialized one, but within these limits a very comprehensive one. We have material which you cannot find in any of the libraries in the US. It could, of course, be arranged that you come here occasionally to read up on material which is not available in the University or City libraries".

I thanked him suitably.

He looked at his large watch.

"It is just the right time for lunch. Let us first have something to eat, and after that we can return here for a nice chat".

He took my arm and led me back into the hall, and from there into another passage which ended at the door leading into the diningroom.

"This is our refectory, and from my abdominal circumference and that of some other fratres, so busily engaged already, you can rightly conclude that our cooks are performing well.

The twinkling eyes behind his spectacles were so grotesque that I would have laughed out aloud, had I found myself in a less solemnity-demanding place.

My host opened the door and made me enter. It was a large oblong room. Two long tables connected by a head table occupied most of the room. On both sides of the table arrangement stood wooden chairs with seats and backs of cane work. On both sides of the door through which we had entered stood two large double-tiered sideboards covered with silver dishes, plates and cutlery. The opposite wall contained three large windows. On the wall behind the head table hung a huge wooden cruciifix; and against the fourth wall, the one opposite the headtable, stood a lectern with a large bible placed on its inclining surface.

At one of the long tables were seated about a dozen men, variously dressed, some in dog-collars and black coat, some in street clothes. They looked up when we entered, replied to our greeting, waved a hand in welcome, and continued with their eating and their conversation.

Father Schultz led me to one of the sideboards on which stood an impressive array of food.

"Load up, David", he invited me. "All the food in front of you has been blessed by the Holy Spirit. Should you by chance be on a diet, you have my absolution to forget about it for once".

He handed me a plate and I took a knife and fork. I felt too shy, I must confess, to enjoy a big meal. I took some mashed potatoes and a fish cutlet. Father Schultz was far more indulgent in what he put on his plate. I was glad that he did not urge me to follow his example.

I was no less pleased that he led me to the end of one of the long tables, where we could eat and talk without having to enter into conversation with the other people, not all of whom appeared to me were Jesuits. I had the impression, that this was a day in the week when guests could be invited to an informal meal. Looking around I reflected that the Jesuits have rightly the reputation of being good hosts - and psychologists.

"May I suggest that we take a sherry or a glass of wine with our meal ?"

"Thank you, Father", I declined. "I rarely drink alcohol. In any case I would prefer to keep a clear head - and awake - for our talk later on".

"You are right and I shall follow your example".

I was not at all embarrassed when he folded his hands, closed

his eyes, bent over his hands for a short prayer, while I silently looked along the table at the others present.

"We can go back to the Library now", he proposed after we had finished eating. "There we shall most likely be all by ourselves, as all the other fathers are at this time busy outside the house. Wait a minute ! I shall take some coffee along".

He took a tray from a sideboard, filled a small coffeepot from a large container of steaming coffee, and then loaded cups, saucers, spoons, milk and sugar onto the tray. As an afterthought he added a plate with cookies which stood on a shelf above the sideboard. I made an attempt to take the tray from his hands, but he did not allow me to do so. We left the refectory with a greeting to the men still seated at the table and still engaged with their food.

Father Schultz went to the same corner of the library where he had been sitting before. He placed the tray on a small wooden table around which stood four stuffed chairs. We sat down. Father Schultz consulted me about the way I wanted my coffee to be made up, then filled our cups and added some coffe and cream.

After he had taken a few sips, and had with few prolonged "Ah"s expressed his enjoyment and comfort, he took from his coatpocket a box with small cigars. I refused his offer with a "Thank you, I am a non-smoker", and he praised me for may wisdom and foresight "which unfortunately I have not yet reached", as he said, when he lighted one of the cigars. He inhaled the smoke a few times and nodded his head in approval.

He leaned back in his chair, and with something like a loving expression around his mouth, he looked at the glowing end of his cigar, which he seemed to address when he said:

"You know, David, I have had to face many a doubting and wavering Christian who requested me to put his nose back into the only permitted direction. I have discussed with Jewish colleagues the finest points in theology we could think of, and often I could grant myself the feeling that I had brillantly outdone the most expert talmudists; but it appears to me that I am ging to face today a new experience, namely to help a young intellectual Jew to feel justified in placing his own religion above my own usurping one. Is that not so, David ?"

He looked up, and for a moment I thought that notwithstanding his smile there was the glint of a threat in his eyes.

"No, Father Schultz", I replied in a calm voice, "This is not

at all the case. I have heard and read much about your religion and about the history of your Church. I cannot claim to know enough yet to apply a value scale. I hope that you will help me to fill in some of the many gaps in my knowledge. But as you expect me to be frank and honest, let me start with saying, that I met the other day a man, a Jew, who had converted to catholicism. I must confess, I cannot understand how such a highly educated man who had, as he told me, come to his decision after a long study, could have taken such a step, how he can identify with the principles of Catholic Christianity. And this question, by the way, applies in my mind also to any intelligent Catholic who reads, studies, reasons and thinks".

The Father looked at me, and again I thought for a moment, that notwithstanding his smile, there was that glint of threat in his eyes.

"Yes, go ahead and tell me more", he said in a calm voice, and made an inviting gesture with his right hand.

"I am surprised that the Church has not shown a trend to go along with the times. She has constantly to remind her faithful - giving an explanation but not expressing an excuse or a regret - that the Christian creed is not dependent on the sciences as they evolve from moment to moment. She prefers to stick to a mythology which, there is no doubt, she has taken over from paganism and she has tailored into a new garment. Let me cite the dogma of incarnations as an example. She insists also - or better said she feels the absolute necessity to insist - on the historicity of the Gospels, although there are so many blatant errors which even a non-expert can detect".

"Yes, from your standpoint you are right in what you said. However, your standpoint is your standpoint. You must realize that our creed is founded on revelation. Revelation is not a way to transfer certain information, but the partecipation in an encounter between man and God - and as such it is synonymous with the grant of salvation. We Catholics believe that whatever cannot be perceived by reason, explained as a natural process, must have been revealed by God. We believe that God can, if he wants, communicate many a mysterious statement and can arrange for things which to the scientific and logic mind may appear contradictory".

"I agree: with such an explanation everything becomes explained - and acceptable. Let us turn now to something else. Do you maintain that in view of the past - and not so past - history you priests of the Church are justified to preach that Christianity

is a religion of love ?"

The Jesuit made a sudden movement as if he wanted to protest, but he had himself under control.

"This may have been the truth a long time ago", I hastily added, "It may possibly have been so among the early Christians, but from what I have seen, heard and read, it hardly applies to these our days".

"I agree", was his surprising reply. "You are right. Except for the first Christian communities, that is in the first century, there has never been a time when 'agape', a true, unrestricted, unselfish brotherly love has prevailed in the Christian world."

"Would you also agree, that even if some such love had existed at any time, it was only - or mainly - an internal matter, that there was never any - or at least not enough - love left for non-Christians, for outsiders ? And would you be able to agree, that even the love which may have existed at times among the Christians themselves and for fellow-Christians, did soon disappear again, and this for a very long time, possibly for ever. If you want to know what made me think like this, let me point to the persecution of those you term heretics, and especially to the Reformation, and to all the wars between christian nations the world has seen in the last two millenia".

"Also in this respect you are right, David. However, you must not measure Christianity with the behaviour of us Christians. The christian religion has always and unreservedly demanded that man loves his fellowmen. But it is a fact that average man does not love his average fellowman. Man is not perfect - at least not yet. Jesus' - and thus the essential christian - message of love and peace is all-encompassing; it has never been changed or restricted and it continues to live on".

"Peace ? Is this so, Father ? Did Jesus not say something like 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace but the sword' ?"

"I agree, that in view of what you have cited, everything I might bring forth about love and peace will sound incongruous. I can only explain Christ's words by presuming some misunderstanding or some misreprsentation in the Gospels. And do not overlook, that the intellectual, mythological and spiritual image reflected in the Gospels expresses the hopes and aspirations of the very Jewish people of that time".

He pondered his next words for a few seconds and then continued. "I may concede that the impression one gains of Jesus from

the Gospels may not always be correct. I am ready to agree with the modern Bible critics who say that the content of all the four Gospels has been onesidedly adjusted by their composers in order to dissociate the early Church from complicity in the Revolt against the Romans in which the Jews were engaged at the time the Gospels were composed. But this does not make the message, the essence contained therein, untrue".

"I understand what you say, Father. But there is another "incongruity" which I would beg you to explain away for me: in every age and every stage of its history Christianity has promised that God's reign will soon begin on earth and that death will not afflict the believer; that is to say, not those whom you call the 'Children of Light' but only we, the 'Children of Darkness', will have to die. Baptism, mass, communion and confession are offered to the believers as sure antidotes to death. Christian dogma teaches that Jesus has taken upon himself mankind's original sin, that a Christian has already died and has been reborn by having been baptised. In other words: a good Christian is entitled to believe that he will not have to die again. But he does...".

"This promise stands. It will be fulfilled. There is no doubt in this regard. Only the time has not yet come for this to be established. I am firmly convinced that in its time this promise will be fulfilled. In expectation of this, that is to make this promise a certainty, the dying person is given the Eucharist along with the last ointment".

"And what about those who do not accept this kind of christian doctrine ?"

"Also for these this is the absolute truth. Whoever believes - not necessarily in Jesus, let me point out - whoever believes in a Supreme Being, in a God and Creator, be he Jew, Moslem or Christian of any denomination, that is to say anybody who sincerely believes in God, will be saved. The approach to God may vary from individual to individual, but if it is a sincere and honest approach it is valid. As long as it is a sincere and honest approach an individual makes in accordance with his knowledge, education and his inner heart, it represents the accepted truth for that individual and it is this truth which will bring him salvation".

"This is to say that you promise salvation also to those who do not believe in Jesus Christ the Saviour ?"

"Yes, Christianity has always been a salvation religion. It derives its name from the Divine Saviour whose death was necessary so that man can enjoy eternal life. But it is explicitedly stated that Jesus died for all mankind, and that true belief, as I have

outlined just now, will save man whatever his faith may be".

"In other words, you postulate man has to have faith".

"Yes, something on which he bases his need of, his capability for the support which faith can give. Faith does not mean that man should blindly adhere to a circumscribed theology. Faith, you should be well aware, is never a rational process. It means total acceptance without criticism and without the use of scientific tools, even of logic. Fundamentally it means conceding priority to the inner certainty that there is a God and Creator; that each of us, whatever his religious adherence or Weltanschauung may be, harbours within himself a God and Creator. Let it be understood that I refer only to those individuals who - whether knowlingly or not is immaterial - are blessed with being religious; by this, however, I do not necessarily mean those who adhere to a specific religion. I mean to say, that every reasoning human being with a streak of religiosity senses, feels, even knows that there is something beyond his own existence. He does not need proof, nor does he demand proof of what he feels within himself".

"I must say, that the concept of salvation as you have formulated it, shows evidence of superior wisdom. I have never heard or read it explained in such clear words - nor in such a form. I must presume that such wisdom is, next to you personally, restricted to a limited group of highly placed men of your Church. Let my confide, that you have conveyed to me a very consoling message. Not in the way that it may apply to me and affect my possible personal future redemption, but as an indication that there are circles within your Church who confess to such a highly ethical conception of the Divinity and of the relationship of the Divine to man. But don't you in your next breath not also reduce the ethic value of Christianity - or at least place it on a lower level - by the Church's dogmatic announcement that a Christian ceases to be a Christian, if he denies that Christ has through his suffering and death brought salvation and eternal life into the world; and that, on the other hand, the Christian believer will be immune from future punishment if he believes in the resurrection of Jesus from death ?"

"This is not quite correct. Simply stating 'I believe' is not enough. Nobody is free of personal responsibility for what he does and thinks and says. Man will receive his award and punishment according to his deeds. The sacrifice of Jesus only opens, and partly paves, the way to salvation; but every man and woman is on his own when he or she climbs the upward road to salvation".

"Has this been originally pronounced by Jesus ? Or is this one of the program points St. Paul has added ? For it certainly does not accord with Jewish doctrine or ethics. Jesus in his time was an orthodox Jew and he lived and preached accordingly".

"It is immaterial how this became a fundamental Christian belief, and who first formulated that God had decided to enter human history. For it is basic to Christian theology that God sent his only begotten son down to us on earth. Yes, it is true that Jesus was a Jew. It is true that he spoke the language of the country and followed the customs and traditions of the Jewish people of his time. But it is also true that a new conception of truth, a new conception of ethics had started with Jesus. You Jews claim far too great a share in the original theology of Christianity. Christianity did not take over Jewish theology or ethics. With Jesus' coming into the world Chistianity broke its relationship with the Jewish people, distanciated itself from the pre-exile Prophets of Israel. There was not much of an influence of Judaism on Christianity, or at least it was not stronger than that of Hellenism, as the Gospels show".

"This would confirm the thesis of the Jewish historians, that it was the hellenized Paul who shaped the Church doctrine..."

"You may say he influenced the development, but he was the craftsman and not the planner, the builder and not the architect,. The influence of Aristotle, Plato and the Gnostics was later on even still stronger; it was Thomas Aquinas who produced a synthesis of the Scriptures and Aristotle's philosophy; however, let us be frank and concede that it is very difficult to recognize as such the thoughts he had borrowed from Aristole.

"Are the original ethics, whateever their source, still a mainstay of today's Christian doctrine ?"

"This has always been the case, and this is the case also today. You cannot separate Christian ethics from Christian doctrine....."

"This would mean that the moment you come to doubt the ethics, the doctrine becomes inapplicable...."

"Let us say 'irrelevant' at the worst. That is to say, that even in case ethics should regretfully become temporarily suspended like in wars, when reacting with or to terrorism etc., when that which has to be judged as unacceptable excesses in Christian doctrine have suffocated moral humanitarian principles, at least traces of the original structure of ethics will somewhere still be found to linger on. You cannot blame the Church for the maltreatment of the ethical principles. I would say neither any other religion finding itself in similar circumstances. Look what has become of

the morals in our country, mainly that our youth, since religion is no longer taught in the schools, and since talk of morality has become a laughing matter ? This applies to all strata of the public here and everywhere. I repeat and underline: that what Christianity preaches - salvation to all believers who on the basis of their inner convictions and by their own efforts avoid the pitfalls in life and live according to a minimal ethical standard - is the only possible solution for mankind's ever present and ever increasing problems".

"Also Judaism promises something of the kind, as far as I understand. But it adds that all this is only the goal towards which to aspire, that it will only come to pass when the Messiah comes, Father Schultz. There is, however, a great difference between the Jewish and the Christian Messiah. In Jewish tradition, contrary to that of the New Testament, the Messiah, the "Messenger of God", will not be divine. He will be a human being. Apparently anyone can be a potential messiah".

"I admire the modern Jewish conception that potentially every man can be the messiah; for this means that each man on his own carries in himself the potential to gain perfection; that everybody has, therefore, on his own to strive for holyness; has with grace and reverence to approach the Divine in himself. With some goodwill you can sense the hint of a similar contention, namely that each of us is a potential messiah, also in Christian philosophy. I will go even further and say, it is one of Christianity's basic doctrines that every man must be the messenger of, and an intermediary, towards that state of perfection which the divine in him urges him to reach - and with the potential of which he has been endowed".

I must confess that I did not understand what the Jesuit had wanted to convey; or, to express myself in clearer terms, I could not imagine that this was the Church's accepted, or even hinted at philosophy.

Father Schultz did not look in my direction; he studied the ash of his cigar. I thought it wiser not to pursue this point.

I started on a new treck.

"It has come to me as a surprise to discover", I told him, "how many pagan residues there are in the Christian rites and ceremonies, and no less also in the arts, associated with death and burial. Quite evidently much of what is going on in church and at the graveside has been adopted from what has been customary in preceding cultures. Is it, for instance recognized in your

intellectual and knowledgeable circles, - and if so, is it also taught in the priestly seminaries - that the mass is a copy of what had been going on in the ancient mystery religions of Greece; that baptism is an ancient Jewish custom; and that the communion is an ancient pagan initiation rite ?"

"Oh yes, we know all this, of course. This is not new to us. And why should it bother us ? It is a known, natural and accepted developnebt in the progress of human history, that newly penetrating or developing cultures and doctrines incorporate, quasi swallow and copy existing customs and traditions. This is clearly manifest in the development of Christianity and in no way diminishes its fundamental truths".

"The great, I would even say impressive, impact of Paul's hellenistic background and experience on the original make-up of the Church must be evident to everybody. Before Paul and John the Evangelist appeared on the scene, the Christian sect was a Jewish splinter sect. Paul and John, protagonists of a new Christian doctrine, assimilated their newly evolving religion to what were at that time modern concepts, namely to the hellenistic mode of thinking, to the mediterranean philosophy which dominated their age; and they added to it all a dose of gnostic spice and a touch of mysticism".

"And if so, what do you want to deduct from this ? That our theology is not based on facts and truth ? Do you want to say with Tillich that whereas Jesus died on the Cross he could not have been a God, as otherwise he would not have died; that at best he could only have been 'a symbol of God' ?"

"No, my question aims in a different direction: had Jesus not died on the Cross, he might not have been as easily accepted at least as a historic personality. Imagine if the story had ended with an angel arriving on the scene and carrying Jesus bodily off from the court of Pilate !? Why then have the Jews been stigmatized with the accusation of something which is historically in any case quite unlikely, namely that of having been responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus ? Without a crucified Jesus there would hardly have been a christian religion, at least not one to which Paulus could have applied his genius, and certainly not one on which the Church could have erected its imposing and domineering structure".

"The facts are not exactly as you describe them. The main accusation directed against the Jews, the main reason why they were declared guilty, was their refusal to accept Jesus as their Messiah. Fullstop. The accusation, that they have been responsible for the death of Christ - I am ready to concede, or if you want me to say

so, to confess - is only a stratagem with which to make things easier understandable to the populace in every epoch and in every place. And there is also the additional fact which has just now come to me: had the Jews, all of them, accepted and recognized Jesus as their Messiah, as the son of God, he would not have had to die, there would not have been the need to stage a Crucifixion. As you see, whatever you say, finally and ultimately the Jews are responsible for the death of Christ".

He smiled - but I was not sure it was only in self-irony. He seems to be congratulating himself on his typical jesuitic mental acrobatics.

"Would you be able to see something immoral in such a strategy, in such a deviation from the truth ?"

"It was believed then it is believed now, that all this has been preordained by God".

"Also the fate of Jesus in all its details ? I thought divine predestination applies only to the human race ?"

"God has before the foundation of the world pre-ordained the appearance of Jesus on earth. It is written that God '..... has pre-ordained some individuals for eternal life through Jesus Christ; to the praise and glory of his grace, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his justice'. What I have just now recited, David, is the 'Baptist Confession of Faith'".

Again I had the impression that the Jesuit was not at all convinced by his own words; and again I thought it better not to insist on a clearer explanation. I sensed that Father Schultz knew what I thought at that moment, and that he appreciated my reticence.

"And would you agree that it was St. Paulus who initiated the anti-Jewish attitude of the Church ?", I asked him instead.

"I am not so sure. Paulus was a Jew and always felt himself a Jew. He acted, as far as I have come to understand him, as a Jewish apostle active among the Gentiles, to whom he wanted to bring the essence of Rabbi Jesus' teachings and promises. The Torah remained always alive for him. He wanted the Gentiles to become Christian Jews. He felt called upon to do so, because he felt himself ordained by God to do so, to fulfill such a task. And as you said, his initiation in and his experience of the Greek mystery religions gave him the tools and the imagery to create an atmosphere and to offer Jesus' doctrine in easier form to the primitive Christians of his time; and an easier acceptable ideology with which

to attract Gentiles to the religious movement he had set out to organize".

"As we have reached this point, Father Schultz, permit me to ask you now this question: the foundation on which Christianity rests is undoubtedly that the Christ was sacrificed, that he was raised from death and that he will return again ?"

"Yes, this is indeed so. And what is the question ?"

"Does this mean you can agree with me, that all this had been cleverly staged by Paulus ?"

"He was a very clever fellow, no doubt about that. He was after all a Jew. Yes, he became the first modern Christian. You may say that it was he who made a Christ out of a Jewish rabbi. He must have been a great organizer. And a great psychologist in addition. I agree, that the Crucifixion and the resulting ritualistic like the mass, baptism etc. have been very impressively fitted into the basics of Christian doctrine. Don't you think the mass is an impressive ceremony, the Last Super a nice tableau and the baptism of a baby a nice act ? And why not ? We accept all in good spirit all these attempts at theorizing and deducting; and we chuckle when we recall the saying of Avvero "...of all religions the most senseless and stupid one is that whose followers create their God and then eat him...."

"Does what you have said just now fit in with the moral principles of good and bad which Jesus has preached ?"

"These principles were presented by Jesus to the Jews not for the sake of their own significance but only as means by which they could gain salvation".

"That is to say, if we are good we go to heaven; if we are bad and sin we go to hell ?"

"Something like this".

"Is it not a fact which your theologians have always underlined, that the uncritical adoration of the god-man Jesus is of far greater usefulness, even of immediate effectiveness, for the faith of a man than any deeper knowledge and any prolonged studies of whatever Jesus has taught ?"

"This is certainly true for hoi polloi, for the masses, for the plebs; it cannot with equal certainty and effect be applied to thinking and reasoning man".

"I do not want to include into my question also the belief in the miracles which Jesus performed according to the New Testament, nor would I like to refer in this connection to the description of his miraculous birth or even to his resurrection".

"This is a wise decision, David, as it saves me from offering

you replies which might spoil the fluvium we have established between the two of us".

"Thank you, Father, for this remark. Neither am I going to ask you to disentangle for me the 'Second Coming'. I realize it is rather difficult for a Christian to explain even to himself that the Messiah has already come and is to come again".

"Thank you for your consideration. I know that the Jewish conception of the Messiah is different. I acknowledge that the event of a Messiah is not as clearly established in the Old Testament as the Second Coming is in the New Testament. This is definitely an advantage the Jews have over us".

"Is it not also otherwise, that Christian doctrine which centres on the words - not only on the prophecies - of Jesus, had and will always have to test, measure and adjust its meaning within the context of what the Old Testament has to say ?"

"Undoubtedly this is so, although this has only in recent years been acknowledged. Jesus did not want to change one iota of the Old Testament. He cared first and foremost for the Jews. He never doubted that the Jewish people were elected, that they were chosen. He instructed his disciples to concentrate only on the Jews. 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of Israel', he told them".

"I hope I am not going to hurt your feelings now, Father. But could Jesus really have said that he is the son of God ? Does this really fit in with his character ? That he addressed God as his father is no proof - every religious individual does so. Or is it rather the outcome of the clever public relations effort of St. Paul ? I hope you do not mind that I return again and again to the great modeling influence Paul had on original Christianity".

"Rest assured that you have not hurt my feelings", he smiled. "Even a man of the stature of Tillich has said that '...the assertion that God has become man is not a paradoxical but a nonsensical statement". You see, David, you are in good company".

"I know of this statement of Tillich. Will you be equally forgiving when you hear my next remark ? Is it not so much the content of, than a psychological reaction to, a dogma, which makes your believers accept something as true without reasoning and without raising an argument ? Let me refer to the decision of the Council of Chaledon sometime in the 5th century, that Jesus was 'at one and the same time fully God and fully man'. This has to mean that Jesus was at the same time 100% God and 100% man. Apart from the fact, that a bunch of mortal men decided this imposing fact without explaining further how it is possible, that their verdict turns

Jesus into a 200% personality. Let me also mention the assumption of a recent Pope that the Virgin Mary had been bodily assumed into heaven. How did these people know all this ?"

Father Schultz nodded his head indicating his agreement with what I had said. "I agree that it is at times difficult to accept a dogma". He smiled. "But a dogma is a dogma. It is a doctrine which has to be believed in the form and in the way the Church has determined it should be believed to be true. It has to be accepted. It is beyond discussion".

"And what about the Trinity ?"

"I have been waiting for you to mention it".

He laughed and I joined in his laughter.

"I have read some of the easily available literature", I continued, "and some of the explanations and commentaries it offers. I must in all honesty confess that until now I have not gained an understanding of the meaning behind this theological complex. I found Tillich also quite outspoken in this respect, when he called it a 'logical nonsense that three is one and one is three'. To Tillich the doctrine of the Trinity may appear only paradoxical, irrational, dialectical, but to me its simply incomprehensible".

"You should not think that whatever is incomprensible must of necessity be also untrue. This is the reasons why the dogmas have been established, namely to smooth the way to believing. It may be a good way for you to reach an understanding of what you may call the 'Trinity Complex', if you approach it via the Cabbalah. But should I accompany you on this path, you may accuse me of trying to avoid a definite and clear answer. It is best that you accept the Trinity concept as a doctrine resting on a philosophically successfully argued platform in a theologically decent dogmatic dressing".

"How come, that I did not find mention of the Trinity anywhere in the New Testament ?"

"You are right ! I agree you will not find anything in our Scriptures which will support this doctrine. But this has not presented a problem. It has never been one such. Whenever an intellectual difficulty arises in theology, or in the interpretation of theology, the Vatican will come up with a new dogma. Therefore, in the Church and for us Catholics no problems and incongruities ever exist. Such a method may appear irrational to you, as in the case of the bodily assumption which you mentioned. But for the latter we have a precedent in the Old Testament, where it is assumed that one or the other figure, like for instance Old Enoch, did not

die as other mortals do, but was bodily assumed into heaven. Have you ever heard any of your sages or critics or commentators make a fuss about such a statement ? Your ancient sages in their time and the Vatican in ours have decreed this to be a fact - and so be it".

"Again let me be honest and confess how amazed I am, that it is assumed in your world that the Church can dominate, deafen and blind intelligent men and women by her insistence on the sanctity of the faith and the power of the dogma; and in particular, that this type of men and women submits to and cowes under her threats. I can deduct from your words why this is so, and I do not need any further explanations. Am I right then to presume, that things do not always proceed smoothly, that tension and disputes have been frequent in the Church ?"

"Unfortunately this is a fact. The Vatican has realized only too late, that there exists a gulf between its hierarchy and the intellectual laymen; but even this belated realization has not brought with it effective remedial results, because in my opinion the remedies offered and applied have been psychologically far too inadequate".

"On my own I have already been able to find out, that the Church has not kept pace with modern developments in the lay world. What is the relationship, the place, the importance science has today in your religion ?"

"Let me express it in this way: science is theoretical, experimental, measurable, while religion which embraces the same values as science, does so by contemplation. The scientist attempts to be exact and objective, while religion embraces the infinite and the undefinable without asking questions. It is a pity, that science has not been capable of amicably confronting religion. I concede that this is mainly due to the slowness and the rigidity of the Church. This applies no less also to the churches of all the various christian denominations. But the Church of Rome bears the main responsibility. The men in the Vatican have since a hundred years recognized that their predecessors have wrongly condemned Gallilei, and that something has to be done to correct this error - but only now has the Pope taken a small hesitant step in this direction. In more or less every generation there was bound to be a dispute, to what extent it could be accepted that science as it stood at that specific time, confirmed religion and vice versa - but the dispute has regularly threatened to turn into a fight. The intellectual atmosphere in the various epochs was liable to affect also other intellectual spheres besides the sciences. A

conflict was inevitable whenever new discoveries in the field of astronomy or geography - and recently in the nuclear field - created conceptional structures which could not be made to fit into the prevailing, suddenly illogical appearing, belief structure which my Church had acquired and concreted in the preceding generations. The outcome was always a confrontation between a speculative and a dogmatic point of view. Whenever this happened people were bound to think and reason that the Church had to fabricate new dogmas in order to suppress discussions; and inevitably thinking and reasoning people had to conclude, that the the Church was manoeuvring to silence them".

"Tell me honestly, Father Schultz, does the Church have any true respect for intellect or for science ? And going further, let me ask: has she any respect at all for the individual ? Has Christianity in general, considering St. Paul's harsh view that man is esentially a sinful creature, not a rather unpleasant view of mankind ? What else can you think, how else can you treat people, when a priori you judge his elementary nature sinful, and when you start from the viewpoint that it is only by divine intervention that man can overcome his share in the original sin".

"You have correctly described the fundamental belief of the Church, as it is formulated in the dogma of the "Fall" - and I am not sure whether I would describe it as a fortunate one. You may see it as a myth if you want, but to me it indicates a warning that man should not see himself as a great and powerfully independent being, and that he cannot claim the right to arrange his life and his future as if hed not a responsibility to carry on his shoulders".

"I understand what you imply, Father, but I cannot understand how this harmonizes with the statement that man has been created by God. You must concede that man is something real, as he has been created in the image of God. Can man then be anything but good too ? God cannot have created something which is in part at least evil. How is it possible then, that God could burden a person at the moment of its birth with a load of sin and misery ?"

"It is not so. Our Church maintains that man was primarily and originally good. But, she says, he was tempted by evil and could not resist. We say that man is incapable to remove on his own his weaknesses, his trend to evil, the stain of the original sin which he has inherited from Adam, his forefather. We know that only with the help of God's goodness have we been given the opportunity, the insight I would say, to free ourselves from sin".

"By Jesus' suffering and death ?"

"Yes, this is christian doctrine".

"To which you subscribe ?"

"This is not the issue. Nor is it relevant whether and what I subscribe. It is so".

"I understand and am sorry, Father Schultz. But let me now come to some questions which have been pressing on my mind. I know I have already taken up much of your time. Please have some more patience".

"Nevermind my time, David. Go ahead".

"I feel somehow that man has lost his decisive significance in and for all that is happening in the world today. I feel somehow that man has no more the meaning he once had for his fellowmen, and also in the context of the events which are going on in the world. Has he also less meaning for God now ?"

"I do not agree with your pessimistic assessment and diagnosis. I do not think we have less meaning for God. In the christian view God has sent us the only son he ever had. He has sent him to be with us, to live among us. And he has not called him back, he is still with us. God has withdrawn him only figuratively, but his essence is still with us".

"Then, logically, this must mean - to me as a Jew at least - that Jesus, the son of God, is responsible for what you Christians do and do not do ?"

"He is with us, but he does not actually and directly function. He only functions by the message he has left with us and by the influence of the Holy Gost which is active through the Holy Mother Church. I concede - and we have more or less agreed between us - that the Church is left too much on her own in making her decisions; that she handles without sufficient supervision the steering wheel of the world's fate; that she has usurped the claim to the ownership of the world. I concede that the direction she tries to give to the decourse of world events is not always viewed by many of us - and certainly not by most outsiders - as the correct, as the best one".

"You depict - and after all you belong to - an organization which claims to have been created by God; which has been given the right to exist, and can only function by uncritical faith. Is the Jewish God not easier to deal with ? And does Jewish theology not have a less dictatorial approach ?"

"To this I can only reply that you Jews are privileged. In your belief system God goes out of his way to meet man. God seeks man's companionship. God encourages man, grants him the right to meet him. God is so real to you, that you do not have to imagine him in figurative representations of any kind. But still ! We know

that not only with regard to us, but also with regard to you has God not changed his relationship with man; and we know also, that for you too, for the Jewish people in general, is the promise valid which God has made to mankind, and which is going to be fulfilled through Jesus Christ".

"With reference to your statement that'....God's promises are to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ', Father Schultz, I am sure you no less than I have inevitably thought of an issue we shall not be able to avoid facing this evening: I mean the issue of the Shoah, the'Holocaust'. You know that we Jews are asking 'why did this happen', while the honest ones among you feel the need to ask themselves 'what is the share we Christians bear in the crime'. I do not want to talk about the fact, that all those who actually and actively participated in that massacre were Christians - I do not want to waste our time with you explaining that there were also moslem troups serving under Hitler - but I want to talk about the share your Church, the Holy Catholic Church has to bear, the great responsibility your Church has for the incredible hatred she had - and still has, let us not illusion ourselves that it is not so - for the Jews; and for the poison she has over many many centuries instilled into the heart of her believers. I know of the noises which emanate in our days from Rome and other christian strongholds about Jews and Christians being brothers. Am I possibly wrong ? Is it more than an empty noise ? I know that there are in many countries large groups of evangelic fundamentalists, who sincerely believe that their and the world's salvation can only come from and through the Jews. However, am I not entitled to say, that as a rule the more fervently religious a Christian is, in particular a Catholic, the greater is his hatred for the Jews ?"

Father Schutz raised his hands in a gesture which I interpreted as one expressing helplessness, and then let them drop on his thighs.

"I know only too well that this is to a great extent true", he said in a hesitant voice. "I concede that all this anti-Jewish agitation is as old as Christianity, that it had already started with John the Evangelist, and was continued by the Church Fathers who spread about, that the Antichrist would turn out to be a Jew. No doubt, what exists to this day as antisemitic poison has been started by these pillars of the Holy Church. But I can assure you: the ranks of the Christians who repent their Churchs' past and recent sins against Jews grow day by day".

"How are you and the others going to manage, that their good

intentions can overcome next to their ingrown prejudices also certain theological obstacles; for it cannot be denied that the hostile conception you Christians have about Judaism has started with, is derived from, the negative image of the Jews which the New Testament portrays. Throughout her history, but particularly so in the Middle Ages, has your Church systematically demonized the Jews. The hatred she has aroused against the Jews - and lately among other things the libel and slander that the Jews are out to dominate the world - persist in undisguised form to this day. And little is done from your side to eradicate this negative image. You have hinted a short while ago, that it had been purely political reasons which induced the Gospels to paint an abysmally negative picture of the Jews - but as far as I know, this is not the official opinion of your Church".

"Yes and no. Attitudes have the potential of changing, David. I can assure you that a trend to this effect has certainly become manifest in the recent decisions of 'Vatican II'....".

"... which have remained only decisions and which have not yet been translated into practice", I interrupted.

The priest nodded his head only slightly; he continued as if I had not interrupted him. "...and you can detect - to give you an example - such a change in the Church's confession and concession that from the onset we have entertained a very wrong picture of the Pharisees, even though the revised interpretation strongly contradicts that which the Gospels say about this wing of the political spectrum which was dominant at the time of Jesus".

"You will concede, Father Schultz, that these corrections, though interesting, are only of minor importance. They are only minor variations in the wrong colours in which the global picture has been painted in the New Testament. Such belated changes can by far not wipe away the main, the fundamentally responsible factor in the negative image the Church has felt the need to create of Judaism, and which she has never corrected: namely her arrogant assumption of the right to cancel Israel's special relationship with God which the Scriptures have more than once mentioned as an inviolable promise of God. Who has given you the right to declare this ? Who has given you the right unilaterally to declare invalid Israel's special, and fundamentally unique, relationship with the God of Israel ? Who has entitled you to declare yourselves the new Israel, the heirs of the true Israel ?"

"From the beginning it has been the basic, the dogma-like doctrine of the Church, that we are the new Israel, that we have inherited all the divine favours which God once upon a time has

granted Israel. However, I can assure you, also in this respect some changes have become noticeable. In the ever wider ranging cycles of christian intellectuals has grown the doubt, whether we can inherit against his declared wish from somebody an ancient and legal possession he has not voluntarily renounced; how we can declare ourselves heirs as long as the owner is alive, and without his consent as confirmed by his signature on his Last Will and Testament. For those among us Christians - and our number, I can assure you, is growing steadily - who follow this current of thought, the Covenant of God with Israel has remained intact and is still valid in all its fullness. This current of thinking has convinced us, that a fundamental concept of Scriptures, which is concretely promised to Israel in Exodus 19:5:, has not only never been anulled but has also now been proved as true '...now, therefore, if you will obey me and keep my commandments....you shall be my own possession among all peoples'".

"I am grateful, Father Schultz, for this reassurance. I can well do with, so that I can neutralize the unfortunate experience I share with the Jewish people that Christianity is as a rule affected by a selective memory. This, to all appearances congenital weakness, is widespread, as I have experienced. In any case, Father Schutz, I am grateful for your assurance. There is only one more question I would like to ask you. Without following up what you just now said with a 'still' or a 'notwithstanding this' or a 'therefore' or any similar verbal acrobatics or with any sophism, I would like to ask you a very personal question: You are a priest. Under certain circumstances and in certain situations you can speak in the name of God. You believe that God was incarnate in the man Jesus, whose mission it was to induce mankind to practise brotherly love; who had been sent down to bring about a brotherhood of men on earth. This is my question: what does a priest think, what do you as a priest feel, what has a sincere Christian to say, when he has to concede that Jesus has failed; when he witnesses the uninterrupted series of grave sins which are daily committed if not in his direct presence at least so to his knowledge ? How do you explain the attitude of the priests, who with the cross raised high in their hands, with the name of Jesus Christ on their lips, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, incited the mob to kill every Jew within reach ? How does your religion explain away the Church's disinterested, or cynically supporting attitude, when she witnessed the crimes of the Hitler regime ? And how do you justify the Vatican's intention to raise to sainthood that Pope Pius XII, who reigned at the time of the Holocaust and looked on without lifting

a finger to help the millions of Jews murdered by the Germans ?"

Father Schutz did not reply. He remained silent. He did not even move in his chair. His remained seated with his chin resting on his clasped hands. I waited anxiously for what he might have to tell me. My hands gripped my crossed knees. Much depended for me on how he was going to reply. His answer was either going to deepen my interest in his christian ways, or it might destroy the respect I had for Father Schultz personally - or it could fill me with the hope and expectation that my despondency might be dispersed by the discovery, that there is after all a fundamental goodness in man.

I do not know how long the silence lasted. It seemed a long time, but most likely it did not last even a minute. At last the priest raised his head. He looked at his hands and not at me. He sighed. Slowly and in a low voice he answered me.

"You ask questions, David, for which there is no answer, or at least no serious or honest answer. There are only excuses or subterfuges. We are all of us nothing but weak human beings on trial and under test here in this world. We strive for perfection but fall by the wayside. We build great spiritual and intellectual castles but have not given sufficient care to the infrastructure, least of all to the drainage system. What the Church has to offer as an explanation, as an excuse, has only resulted in a further loss of whatever power she still possessed. But more than that; she has lost out on ethics, honour and honesty. I may not sound to you like a Jesuit when I say, that politics have gnawed away at the foundations of the Church. The Church will undoubtedly survive but not without going through very painful stages. She may still emerge victorious and strong from the crisis she has actually to face - but only if she succeeds in purifying herself. Have you ever heard of the sect of the Donatists who lived about a thousand years ago ? They refused to acknowledge the sanctity of the sacraments when these were handled or dispensed by the hands of unworthy priests. For this they were persecuted as heretics - and exterminated. What a pity ! What a pity the Church had not understood, had not learned from them about her own shortcomings. Today a similar opposition with similar objections is growing up among us - and I pray the Church will react with shame and with gratitude to the warnings emanating from this modern Donatist-like group".

His right hand massaged his forehead for a few seconds; and then he continued.

"As you see, David, I have no explanation to offer. There are no explanations. There is only deep shame. I feel in me this humiliating shame. I feel as well, that I personally carry a part of the responsibility for the hostile attitude the Christians have shown for the Jew in the past - and even today. When I realize all this, desperation overcomes me again and again. I pray. I have never prayed with greater ardour - and, yes, sincerity - than when I am reminded of Christendom's guilt for the suffering of Jews. I try to place the responsibility at the feet of God, of Jesus Christ. I try to console myself with the thought that God has ordained it, has willed it, has used the Church as his instrument - but I cannot for long deceive myself. Yes, yes, David, we have sinned, but at least and at last we begin to become conscious that we have sinned".

He stopped. He did not move. There was silence in the room, but his words continued to sound in my ears. I was strongly affected by their sincerity.

As soon as I decently could - for I could see that Father Schultz was far more affected than I myself - I rose from my chair.

"With your permission I shall take my leave now, Father. You will never realize how much you have given me, how much you have helped me. You have succeeded to put many thing into their right perspective for me. Most of all you have given me hope. You have created in me a strong trust that all is not lost. All my years' long studies have not been able to achieve this. I am also grateful that you have made me gain some inner peace; that you have taken away my resentment against God and men - and yes, also against the Church".

He had also risen. He placed his right hand on my shoulder.

"In such a situation", he said with a smile, "politeness demands of the other party to say, that the benefit was mutual, but you may rest assured, that I mean it when I say, that I too have learned very much today; that I too have been able to put certain things in order within myself. I have, therefore, to thank you too. Whenever you have any further questions, come back. Above all, keep in touch. I confess, I am very curious to know how you will develop intellectually and spiritually".

While talking, we had started to move towards the door of the

library. With his hand still on my shoulder he guided me through the corridor into the hall and towards the exit. He stopped near the door, faced me, placed his other hand on my other shoulder, slapped my shoulders slightly. His smile had turned slightly self-mocking, sardonic, ironic, cynical - and reassuring. I do not know how to define it.

He opened the door.

"May our common God favour you and give you peace".

"Thank you, Father", I said, "Amen", I added self-consciously.

I passed through the door, descended the steps into the street. I heard the convent door close behind me.

I walked home all the way. The sun was already setting. I had not realized until then that my conversation with the priest had lasted so many hours. I tried to analyze what he had said and what he had only implied. The frank way in which the Priest had expressed his opinions continued to surprise me. I had somehow been conditioned by the opinion prevailing about Jesuits; and while listening to him I had initially expected, that his frankness had an ulterior motive, or that he used it to diplomatically cover his true opinions. But my suspicion was dispersed when I remembered the strong emotion which had from time to time overcome him - which could not have been faked by even the most accomplished diplomat or actor.

I do not remember anything else of my long walk home; but I realized that - at least with regard to Father Schultz - I had come to change my usually reserved, but in certain respects negative opinion about the christian priesthood, and in particular about Jesuits. However, I did not sense any psychic or spiritual nor any other deeper personal involvement. There was none of that emotional engagement, none of that spiritual upheaval which I had experienced during - and as an aftermath of - my visit to Rabbi Rosenne. I respected Father Schultz very much, because he had evidently been honest in his emotional involvement in what he heard and said in the course of that afternoon. My former relationship with him had been rather superficial; it had been that of a student with a teacher who lectured about a subject on the periphery of my interests. He had never occupied a place in the circle of the teachers for whom I had developed a special affection. Also all through my conversation with him that afternoon there had still remained a certain barrier, a certain caution at least, from my side; there was never that affinity nor respect I had from the onset

felt for Rabbi Rosenne.

During the entire evening and till late into the night I recollected and put to paper what I remembered of my conversation with Father Schultz. I think I have recorded the essence of most, if not all, we had talked about.

Permit me to add another, an even more personal note.

For a very long time I had felt the urge to look out for a guide who could lead me to consolidate in some acceptable form or other my vague and floating ideas and conceptions about my personal religious involvement. I told myself that I was in need of a counsellor who would help me to discover where and in which religious world - if anywhere there at all - I could fit. For many years I had eagerly listened to what a gallery of lecturers of the various disciplines, what the theologians of various religious denominations, and what other learned men and women had to offer me - but none of them had produced in me that sudden, that surprising, that revolutionizing comprehension which might have set me into the right direction. None of them had made on me such a deep impression as had Rabbi Rosenne and Father Schultz - and it is for this reason that I have recorded my talks with them in such detail. Without my having had to spell out in words what I saw as my problem, both had without much effort understood the reasons for my spiritual and intellectual restlessness; they had sensed - more by instinct, it seemed to me, than with intellectual acumen - the cause of my urge, my searches, my querries. That evening, walking through the streets of New York, deep in conversation with myself, I came to realize what within me I had all along known, viz:- what I am and where I stood.

The two conversations I have described to you - they are, I must confess, by far not complete; they contain only what I wrote down as most essential and substantial both times I returned home - helped me to clear away many of my inhibitions, many of my resentments. They more or less crowned the studies I had pursued over the years. They provided me with the intellectual bifocals through which I could perceive with clarity from near and far the form, the shape, the colouring not so much of my actual self yet

- I knew I had still a long way ahead for my maturation - as of what I might become one day.

I know, it may sound exaggerated, even conceited, if I say that I had come far, that I had achieved very much in my searching. I certainly had now a better, a clearer perspective. I felt my former anger and resentment fading away. I knew that I did know now of an Infinite Essence, of a Supreme Being, of God. I knew also that I did not know more than that, that my knowing was still vague, unformed and insubstantial. I knew also, that I had to know more, that I had to learn as much as was in my power to learn to know. I knew that in order to learn more, I had to go on searching. I wanted to make the search for further knowledge, for as much knowledge as possible, the aim of my life. I knew well enough, that knowledge leads to truth. I knew also that truth has many facets. I knew already, that the same unique universal truth could appear in many a shape, could manifest itself in many different lights and reflections. I knew now better - or it had at least been confirmed to me - that there is the same truth in Judaism as in Christianity - or at least that the Rabbi and the Priest knew of the same deep and eternal truth though they viewed it from different angles or perspectives. I knew that they meant the same truth, even though they viewed it through differently tinted spectacles. I knew there are innumerable religious systems, philosophies and theologies in the world, and that every one had a truth to convey.

And finally I knew I could never be a happy man, could I not continue my searching, my enquiring, my probing into what other people, other religions, other philosophies believe and possess, and what they think they know and possess. I knew I had to make the search after such knowledge my aim, my study, my purpose in life. I made up my mind on that evening I left Father Schultz, that I was going to discover what understanding the religions, the philosophies, the men of wisdom had gained; what they knew of the truth, and what truth means to them. It was not yet clear to me how I was going to proceed, how I was to reach this goal - but I knew on that late afternoon that I had a purpose in life.

A First Approach to Islam.

I continued my College studies as before. My approaching M.A. finals, and therewith the end of my stay in Brooklyn College, did not interfere with my study program. I continued to attend most of the courses and seminaries reserved for those who study the history and philosophy of religion. These were the subjects which interested me most. However, many of the lecturers were a disappointment; it seemed to me, that their approach to the matter they taught was rather superficial, that they were lacking in intellectual depth. The reason was in most instances, that they catered mainly for beginners, for students of a lower level.

I read many books. My reading extended far beyond that which was prescribed or advised as relevant. I studied, as deeply as was given to me to reach, the religions of primitive peoples; and in addition I took a great interest in the religions of the East.

I came to the realization, that by reading only, and within the time limit I had set for myself, it would be impossible for me to acquire a clear and true knowledge of what I was studying. I had also the disadvantage - if it could be called a disadvantage - that I could learn better by listening, by asking, by discussing than by reading and memorizing. This induced me to made use of every opportunity I had, to talk things over - it would really sound preposterous should I say I discussed them - with the representatives of the "monotheistic western religions", as they were designed in the study programs. I have already mentioned - and have described two such instances - that I had frequent contact with jewish and christian theologians. Many of them were kind enough to give me elucidations and explanations whenever I approached them for such.

I was keen to learn also more about Islam than the literature I had studied could provide. But in this respect I was less lucky. The College offered only a few courses. The lecturers were of a low intellectual level. They undoubtedly knew their material, but they did not know how to present it on an academic level. They dealt mainly with selected parts of the Qu'ran, with teaching the arabic language, with presenting an one-sided view of their peoples' history, with explaining the economy of the Middle East. It disturbed not only me, that they never failed to mix in, even when most inappropriate, contemporary political issues. To all this I had a far better and clearer access through the books in the libraries. The poor attendance in these lectures proved that I was not alone in my judgement.

In some of the courses I attended - albeit sporadically and only for a short time - I met a Pakistani girl. Ishrat was her name. We became good friends. Her family came from Karachi. Her father was a member of her country's diplomatic service and had recently been transferred from the Washingon Embassy to the Pakistan High Commission in London. Ishrat had stayed behind in New York to complete her BA degree.

I tried to find out what Islam meant to her, what her religion conveyed to her. I found out that this unusually vivacious and intelligent girl - though effortlessly fitting into her modern and liberal surroundings - was not only very religious but also uncritically so. The explanations she could give me were on a Sunday School level, and unfailingly her information and explanations soon deviated into politics or became fired with missionary zeal.

"I am afraid, David," she finally told me, "you will find me nothing but an unsophisticated, orthodox, conservative moslem girl. The questions you ask me, the things you want to know, deal mainly with the philosophy of Islam - and here you have entered a field into which I cannot follow you".

"Nevermind, Ishrat", I consoled her. "But tell me, please, where in New York I can find a westernized theologian among your people; some person that is, whom I could possibly meet ?"

"You can find an enormous number of moslem theologians here in this country, but you will be at a loss to find one who has the disciplined philosophical education which will make it possible for him to provide you with the information you want and in the way you want. They are very clever in political matters, they may also be knowledgeable in history; but they are very narrow-minded

and unsophisticated when it comes to the field of theology. For instance, they would curse me and my parents, should they see me talk to you without a chaperon hovering nearby. You should spent a year in Pakistan or Egypt. There you are sure to find a number of unprejudiced, modern-thinking, broad-minded moslem theologians".

'Do you think it would be worth my while to spend a year of studies at the University of Karachi or that of Lahore ?"

"This would certainly be a good idea; but I am afraid it may not be advisable for you to do so at this moment. You would hardly be welcome there, because in your discussions you would have the tendency to set the tennets of Islam in relation to those of Christianity or possibly even of Judaism; and our professors - certainly also our maulvis - might object to hear you do so. To them Islam is incomparable, and without any doubt also superior, to any other religion in existence. However, if you could avoid such arguments, could hide that you are a Jew, you may be sure to find in a country like Pakistan the best chances to learn all you want to know about Islam. There could be also good opportunities for you to study Islam in countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Syria and so on; but not only would you be even less welcome in any of these countries, you would also get a wrong impression of what Islam stands for".

"You could hardly expect me to hide or to deny that I am a Jew, should anybody ask me ? Could you ?"

"No, I do not think you are capable of doing this. Neither would I like you to do so. All considered and for your purpose London would be among the best and most suited places outside the Moslem world. Many Moslems have settled there, and highly developed and respected centres of Islamic studies have been established there. If you can get an appointment or a scholarship for a year or so for London, your problem will be solved. Yes, the more I think about it, the more I am convinced that London is the place for you to continue your studies. As you know, my nearest family lives there at the moment, and my father can certainly be of great help to you. If you decide on such a program, let me know and I shall write to my parents and inform them that you will call on them in London.

A Grandmotherly Intermezzo.

Please, do not mind that I interrupt my tale with a short reference to my Grandmother.

It happened very rarely that I did not visit my Grandmother at least once a month. As a rule I accompanied one of my uncles - who, as well as their wives and children without exception, loved to spend a few hours with Bubbe Sorele - on their journey to the sleepy little upstate townlet where the matriarch of our family has been living for the last fifteen years in a well-run and in every sense luxurious Old People's Home. However, in my last three months I had been rather irregular in my visits. I felt uneasy about having thus been remiss. I felt so notdue to a bad conscience but because I am very much attached to the old lady, and because after every visit I enjoyed for days a calm and relaxed state of mind. For Bubbe Sorele was the only person with whom I could talk freely, and on whose advice and guidance I placed very much value.

I spoke every few days by telephone with her, however; and although she never said so directly, in the way she sounded over the telephone, she must have been very disappointed with my frequent excuses. I decided, therefore, to leave all work, classes, studies for a day and pay a visit to my Grandmother. To tell you the truth, I was glad I had a good reason for a break in my daily routine, which had become burdensome as routines are bound to become, especially after six years of college attendance.

I traveled by train. The journey took about two hours. I walked the distance of five miles to the "Golden Age Home". I arrived tired but stimulated by the to me unaccustomed exercise.

My Grandmother was waiting for me outside the compound on a bench near the entrance. I realized that she had been on the verge of concluding that I had again postponed my visit, as I usually arrived by the regular bus line whenever I came by myself. She greeted me with her usual exuberant affection, throwing both her arms around my neck, pulling my head down and kissing me repeatedly on both cheeks and my mouth.

"How are you, my David ? Are you feeling well ? Are you eating enough ? You look so thin ! Are you really feeling well ?", she enquired after she had released her hold on my neck, had stepped back and had her eyes roam over my face. As far as I remember, these were regular opening words with which she received me whenever I came on a visit. This time she sounded quite apprehensive; the long time I had not shown myself must have made her fear there was a different reason for my staying away than the one I had offered. I knew every intonation in her voice and of her words; although she had acquired an astoundingly rich vocabulary, she never lost the 'continentality' in their pronounciation - and this became more marked whenever she was excited or worried. When I assured her that I was perfectly well and that I ate enough, she beamed a happy smile.

(I use this term because she has always a happy smile for everybody and everything; and even when she is worried, a smile is always the foundation on which a worry or an apprehension is temporarily but not totally overlaid. In addition she has many grades of smiles, which we all who love her so much, know well to differentiate. And when she crowns her happy smile with a burst of laughter, it sounds unbelievably youthful like a well-tuned Glockenspiel, also to those who as a rule are not affected by poetic exaggerations.)

I placed into her hands the small package I had brought with me.

"I have brought you some halva, Bubbele. I could get some from the best halva-maker in town only after I told him that it was for the best grandmother alive", I joked.

"How kind of you, David, but you should not pamper my weakness. You know well enough that sweets are not good for my health".

All this dialogue too was more or less an established routine between the two of us. There was, therefore, no reason for me to reply. Instead we both laughed aloud.

There was justification for her last remark, as she was overweight by even the most flattering standards. This was the more apparent as she was slightly below average height. The top of her head did not quite reach my shoulders, and I had to bend down to let her hug and kiss me. Her appearance denied the fact that she was now over 84 years old - at the most one could have supposed her to be in the middle sixties. The skin of her round face was still smooth and surprisingly elastic. She had a slightly pale complexion because she had all her life avoided every exposure to the sun, which she feared might affect her weak eyesight still further. She has since her youth required glasses, but avoids as far as possible wearing them when she has visitors.

She is always well dressed - and at times she ventures into 'high fascion'. She always sees to it, that the 'blue rinse' of her hair is in perfect order. She applies some 'make-up'to her face - a cosmetic concession to vanity she shares with most of the ladies in the Home, as I heard her comment one day. The only complaint she has - and she mentions and describes it only after intense questioning - are her knee and hip joints which appear to reduce her movements to a to her unacceptable degree.

Notwithstanding this handicap she moves about eagerly and with surprising agility. She makes use of her walkingstick when we are not present, or when her pains are more marked than ever, or when we insist that she uses it.

She took my arm and propelled me into the house.

"I agree it is nice and warm outside, but let us better go to my room. Outside on the lawn we shall be too much disturbed. Everybody and his aunt is sure to come and talk to you - and there will not be enough time left for me. As you have come by yourself this time, we shall not go to a restaurant in town, but shall have a few sandwiches brought to my room. Let us stay here just the two of us. Is this allright with you ?", she added anxiously.

I was, of course, only too happy with her arrangement.

She had a set of two small but pleasantly furnished and decorated rooms, and her own small balcony. There we sat down on two comfortable chairs which I had placed, on her instruction, side by side, away from the sunlight which fell only onto a small part of the partially closed-in balcony.

Bubbe Sorele went through the list of enquiries a grandmother has to go through. She wanted to know about her children and

grandchildren. After she had made sure that everybody was well, was not affected by any recent disease or scandal, was handling his or her problems well, she turned to me with a smile which I can best describe as 'roguish'.

"When are you going to be married, David ?"

"Marriage !? That is the last thing I am contemplating at the moment, Bubbele".

"Have you at least a girlfriend ?"

"I have and have had more than one in the past", I laughed. "I hope you are not getting worried about me. I hope you do not think I am abnormal. Rest assured, I like girls".

"I am glad to have your assurance, David, although I am not in the slightest worried that you might be abnormal. But one day you will certainly have to think about getting married. I would like to hold a child of yours in my arms".

"Sure, Bubbele, that day will come. But don't forget that I am only 24 years old, that I have not yet completed my studies, and that I have so far not even a job".

"When will you graduate ?"

"It will take another four months or so. I have more or less completed all the work I have to do. My thesis has already been accepted and there are no further obstacles in my way".

"What do you intend to do after your graduation ?"

"I must confess that I have always tried to avoid facing this problem. Of course, I shall one day soon have to consider what profession to take up. As much as I am going to hate it, I shall soon have to compete for a job as a teacher, as a librarian, as a Government servant. I shall tackle this problem after my final examinations".

"Why do you say you are going to hate it ? What else would you ever want to do ?"

"What else ? There is nothing I would like to do more than to study, to learn. Bubbele, do you know the weight which presses on a man's mind when after learning for many years; when after having concluded his university education, he finds out that he does not know enough to answer even the simplest, the most basic questions he is made to face ? This happens to me. There are so many things I want to know still. I literally thirst for knowledge. There must be some fundamental truth to know, some serious explanation to be learned, some profound wisdom to become aware of - and although I know I shall never master them, I still want to have at least an inkling of them, an approach to them. And even though there is no assurance that in this endeavour I may not totally fail -

the searching, the exploring will at the least make me happy. You do not have to tell me, Bubbele; I know within myself that I am chasing after an illusion, that any happiness I might gain will last a short while only, that soon the facts of life, the need to find my daily bread will wake me up to realities".

"I understand you only too well, David. What you told me is not new to me. You have given words to a trait which is common to many Jews. In the Old Country I encountered many such searchers. There have been many young men in every generation who dedicated their lives to uninterrupted study. In old times you would have easily found many an opportunity to continue your studies and to learn all your life long the subjects which attract you. Such a life, this kind of ambition, is hardly ever heard of today in this modern world in which we live. Here and today only 'achievement', that is success, competition, money do count. This is not the place where a young man can sit the whole day and half the night over books - be they religious or profane - to study and to learn, in order to gain an understanding of what man and the world are about".

My grandmother laid her left hand on my arm. She pressed it for a few seconds. She had her eyes closed. Slowly she nodded her head. She did not smile now.

"You do not know, David", she began in a low voice a few seconds later, "how much you remind me of my brother Feivel. He spoke and thought in the same manner as you do. He wanted to learn. From the age of four he had begun to learn, and already at the age of twelve he studied 12-14 hours a day the holy books, the Talmud, and later on the Cabbalah. He said to me once 'Sorele, I am thirsty for knowledge, for ever more knowledge. I want to know the real truth about God and man. If I cannot learn and search for knowledge, I shall perish'".

She stopped for a few seconds. "The day was not long enough for him", she added in a low voice.

"What did he find ? What did he discover ?"

"He was not given the time to find or to discover anything. He was not given the opportunity to go on with learning. When he was 17 years old we were exposed to another of the many pogroms - and he was killed by a posse of Cossacks".

She gripped my arm again. Her grip was hard this time. I saw a few tears escape from her closed eyes. I stood up and sat on the armrest of her chair, with my arm around her shoulders.

I placed my left cheek on her head. Thus we sat for some time - she with her memories and I with my thoughts.

Within a short time Bubbe Sorele had regained her composure, her smile and her good mood.

Late in the afternoon I took the train back home. The visit to my grandmother had done me good.

Dear Reader ! Permit me, Plony your storyteller, to take the word now.

All you have learned so far about David Prince has been told by David himself. I wrote down from the tape more or less (the 'less' is due to the need for economy in space) what he told us and what I have recorded.

I want you to view all you have read so far as a kind of introduction ('one of more' you may say, but I do not mind). If your impression of what you have read in the preceding pages is as I expect, you have learned enough about the character of this extraordinary young man so as not to be surprised about the way his life is about to develop.

We have reached now the day of his graduation. A new stage in his life has begun. And with this also the part of story which I wanted to tell you in my own words.

I have already warned you, that I am by profession and character a storyteller - and this means that I am always a storyteller. You will, therefore, appreciate my reticence, the control I have so far shown over my urges to throw in now and then a word, or even to take over the telling myself.

However, the next chapter is so important and interesting that it does invite my interference. I cannot refrain myself anymore. I am going to add a little paint and decoration to the dry narrative in which David describes the next decisive developments in his life.

In due course I shall give the word back to David, that is at the stage when he reaches intellectual ground or when he travels through spiritual spheres where any interference from my side would only be harmful. I shall tell you, of course, when this change-over takes place.

The Graduation.

'Graduation Day' had at last arrived. I woke up in the morning with the kind of feeling which, I suppose, a prisoner knows on the day he is going to be released from jail. Do not misunderstand me ! I liked the environment, the atmosphere and the facilities which were offered in Brooklyn College, but I was always conscious of the fact that I was expected not to forget my 'incompleteness' whenever I approached a professor with a question, and especially so on the rare occasions when I dared to contradict any of their statements. This handicap I was in particular made to feel by the junior teachers. Since some time I had also come to resent the regimentation which, I suppose, cannot be avoided even in the best of the liberal colleges.

You will be surprised to hear me says all this, especially as I had on previous occasions repeatedly underlined how happy I was to remain an undergraduate student in the College - but this was before I had worked out for myself a program of future studies, and before my impatience to start on this new program took hold of me.

I had graduated a B.A. about three years ago, and I was soon made to understand, that having remained standing on such a low academic rung, I had very litle chance of 'being counted'. Now that I was about to be declared an M.A. - a 'Magister of Arts' - these disadvantages were hardly less noticeable. But this degree promised me at least the right to express my ideas, or to contradict those of others more learned than I, without my being brushed off as an 'inexperienced youngster', as one lecturer had called me.

The Auditorium was filled to capacity with relatives and friends of the young men and women graduating on that day from three faculties, who were about to receive their diplomas. As far as I could make out all my uncles and aunts, and also the grown-ups among my cousins, were among the onlookers. They must have come early, for they had occupied the middle section of two rows of chairs in the centre of the hall. They were talking loudly among themselves - or let me say as loud as the other people crowding the hall. Notwithstanding the steady very high decible of sounds drumming on my ears, sitting on the stage among the other candidates about to receive their M.A. diplomas, I thought I could distinguish one or the other of their voices. At least half of my relatives were always engaged in calling my name or in otherwise drawing my attention; and the younger ones among them, my cousins, accompanied the waving of their hands with grimaces or blowkisses or at times with exploding a balloon they had made rise from the bubble-gum in their mouths.

During my years in College I have formed many friendships among the young men and women of my age group, and also with some of the teachers I had met in College. Most of them sat alongside me on the stage; others I spotted here and there in the audience.

The procedures were opened in solemn form. The noise in the hall had died down. The Dean had his say. A girl of my group was reading her valedictory speech to which none of us her colleagues, none of the professors arraigned behind a long cloth-covered table, hardly any visitors paid any attention - possibly not even the family of the girl who must have been made to hear that speech innumerable times in the last weeks and days.

I was glad that I had refused the repeated requests of the Dean to give that address, as I had graduated 'top of the class' and 'summa cum laude' and so on. I could escape the ordeal by telling the Dean that I would never forgive myself, should I take away this honour from the girl who was 'next in line'.

At last the speeches had come to an end. The Secretary of the College readied himself to call out the names of the ones who graduated in Chemistry. One by one they stepped forward, made their bow, shook hands with the College President, shook hands with the Dean, accepted the rolled-up diplomas, shook hands with the other professors - some with each of them, others only with some of them - and returned, mostly triumphant and with a flushed face, to their

seats from where they waved to the rows of spectators. It was possible to judge from the amount of clapping - and at times shouts - the number of friends and supporters the candidate had in the hall. Many a politician would have been happy with such an applause.

At last it was the turn of the graduates from our faculty. My name was the first to be called out; and accompanied by the efforts of my 'mishpoche' to prove they were 'second to none' when it comes to clapping, I went forward to receive my diploma, a 'special mention', a prestigious prize and a gold medal, as well as a friendly clap on my shoulder from the Dean. I went along the row of the professors, shook their hands, grinned back when they did, and sat down. By acknowledging their greetings by waving my diploma at them, and with the help of my imploring gestures, I succeeded to quieten my uncles, aunts and cousins.

And finally also the address of the President of the College had come to an end, and with it the permission for all of us to go home.

I was glad it was over. I was glad that - at least for the time being - I had finished with the College. My professors had advised me to continue my studies towards a doctorate as a first step of an academic career, but I had no intention to follow their advice. I was free now to pursue my studies in the way I liked, without any regimentation and without a limitation. I preferred to arrange my studies in the way I pleased.

I must confess, however, that I was somewhat depressed, because I did not experience that sense of achievement which visibly and audibly elated all the other students who had felt duty-bound, as I had not, to forego all possible pleasures, or to jealously ration their time, for the sake of passing the examinations or for the honour of being among the ones placed on the roll of the top graduates, or to be among those selected for a college prize. I had attended as many of the prescribed courses in the humanities as were necessary to accumulate the required credits - but not more. I had never felt bound down, did not allow myself to be imprisoned by the prescribed curriculum. I had always spent my time in the way I wanted. I had spent most of my time in lectures and courses and in reading about things which interested me in the field where religion and philosophy meet and cross into each other's domain. My thesis about the 'Heretic elements in the writings of Gallileo

Gallilei' had been accepted with appreciation by the Faculty, but I did not accept the invitation of my preceptor to continue researching this subject. Still with my diploma in hands a new stage in my life had started. I felt relaxed, released, liberated.

When I came down from the stage and joined the milling crowd, I found myself engulfed by the family. And after everyone of them had crushed me in his or her arms, had slobbered a kiss on my cheeks or somewhere on my collar, and after each had placed my "board" - as the funny hussar-helmet-like headgear is called - on his or her own skull (and thereby had crushed it out of form and beyond recognition, so that the next day the shop, where I had rented that piece of academic gear along with a long black gown, refused to take it back and made me pay the full price for it), I saw Uncle Robert Prince standing apart at some distance. He had not taken part in the orgy of kissing, embracing and backslaping. This apparent reluctance was so much contrary to his nature and his general disposition, that I had begun to wonder if there was anything wrong between him and me. However, when he saw me glancing in his direction, he came forward, with a wide grin stretching his by nature already wide mouth. With his right hand he waved a white envelope above his head, while shouting again and again: 'Here is a present for you, my doctor-lad'. I was startled. I noticed that this was also the spontaneous reaction of all the Mishpoche. Such a gesture - whether generous or not - was quite unusual for Uncle Robert. I do not mean that he shouted, or that he shouted any nonsense, or that he had kept afar until now. No, that he should offer me a present ! For it is an established tribal custom, that whenever one hands over an envelope on such an occasion, it means an offer of a monetary present. This was clearly the explanation all of us reached in this case and on this occasion, when we saw Robert wave an envelope in the air for a minute or so and for everybody to see. Robert had now the opportunity to claim his share of hugging, of clowning with my 'board' and of offering a series of wisecracks. But that this did not mean, that having accomplished this, he was going to vacate the centre of attention. He made a deep bow, performed a wide arc with his right hand holding the envelope, and with my headpiece in the other sweeping the floor, he sonorously announced: 'This my boy is a present from your Grandmother'. He pressed - with a grandiose gesture, of course - the envelope into my hands. I heaved a sigh of relief, and from the sudden relaxed smiles and laughter all around me I understood, that my original doubt and the ensuing relief, had been shared by

them too. My psychological antenna had, after all, not been tuned into the wrong wavelength. None of us appeared to have expected the present inside the envelope to come from Robert's pocket. Uncle Robert had remained his own self. He had not yet turned senile.

At last the generous exhibition of my family's happiness - repeated a hundredfold in the groups around the graduates within and without the hall - was over. Closed in by hundreds of joyful men and women, who quite evidently had the same program ahead as us, we reached with difficulty the exit. I inhaled deeply and with relish the fresh air which met us once we were outside. I was glad to note that my diplomas, my gown and my crushed helmet had without too much additional damage also reached the exit.

We set out in a cavalcade of family cars to the restaurant in Soho which is owned by cousin Jonathan, also a member of the Princzeczer tribe. That florid-faced, well-rounded relative proudly displayed the name of his restaurant 'The Prince of Princes' on the housefront and inside the restaurant without too great a violation of good taste. Only there and then, after each of us had drained his glass of pink-coloured champagne - all of us agreeing with cousin Mark Prince, the acknowledged champagne-connoisseur in the family, that it was the best champagne they had ever tasted - did I take my grandmother's letter from my pocket. I did so mostly because I would not have liked my behaviouir to be interpreted as offensive to my grandmother; and also because I did not want to be thought a snob. Of course I had also been curious to read what Bubbe Sorele had to say. I opened the letter slightly, slowly, carefully, peeped inside for a moment and returned the envelope to my pocket. I thought this behaviour, this well disguised curiosity was the right expression of my newly enhanced dignity and certified sophistication. My acting thus gave me also otherwise a good dose of satisfaction, because every one of the celebrating guests present was far more curious then I about the contents of the envelope - and they did not care to hide this fact.

The meal was plentiful, well prepaired and tastefully selected. I was glad to see that everybody enjoyed the meal. Watching them I pondered, that if the enjoyment and the quantity of the food consumed per capita were indications of good health and a steady character, my family would be the healthiest family and its members the steadfastest far and wide.

As you will know from your own experience, the graduation of a boy or girl from College is not only unimaginable without a graduation lunch. It is no less also an accepted fact, that the pleasure of the occasion and the enjoyment of the meal are inevitably marred for the guest of honour by the thought of the ordeal he is going to face, not only by having to listen to the often tedious and boring but always embarrassing speeches during the meal, but more so even by the knowledge, that he will be duty-bound to make a speech himself at the end of the meal - in suitable words, with the right pathos and accompanied by a few jokes which the assembled guest cannot but have known already. The ordeal anticipated by the poor guest-of-honour causes the knot in his stomach to twist more and more, and often the twisting will not halt before nausea takes over.

My own experience did not differ from what friends had described to me not long ago with the right dose of "Schadenfreude". Though I am as a rule not shy nor tongue-tied, I do not like speaking in public. My own situation might not have been worse than that which the majority of my co-graduates had to face, who were at this moment suffering their own share of the agony which affects a large section of the nation in the days marked by graduation time. Neither was it a consolation for those directly affected, that the catering industry hoped to overcome its factual or pretended financial difficulties by benefitting from the gastronomic therapy they prescribe for the graduation fever which grips a large section of the nation in the days the colleges nation-wide release another load of half-baked candidates.

The sensation that I was sitting on a cushion filled with nails and woodsplinters was to a great part due to the fact, that I belong to a very loquacious family in which nearly everybody feels honour-bound to be wittier and cleverer than the next. To some degree I was fortunate, as in due course, and earlier than I had expected, the symptom-complex of fatigue and somnolence - which a heavy meal and the unaccustomed consumption of alcohol can bring on in even the hardiest eater and speechmaker - overcame the festive assembly. For none of my uncles or aunts, and only a few of my cousins belonged to the 'three martinis luncheon circuit'. This explains, that each of the four speekers whose turn came at the end of the meal, used up less time than the one preceding him - for after all which could be said or had to be said, had already been said more than once about the family, about Grandmother Bubbe Sorele, about my future, about my great expectations, about my future earnings, about my

soon-to-be-expected marriage and about the number of lovely great-grandchildren I was going to provide for Bubbe Sorele. Even though all my well-wishers showed signs of fatigue in the way they talked, when they visibly strained to find another and another joke at my expense, and when they gave me their advice, what I had to do to find a wife and how I should organize my future life, they became alive again and their strength revived, when at the end of their speeches they offered their help in the disposing, the handling, the investing of the money I had inherited from my parents and of which I could soon dispose freely without the supervision of my wardens.

At last the coffee-and-cake stage was reached. It was my turn now to mount the stage. Before saying a word I took Bubbe Sorele's letter from my pocket and took from it a sheet of paper and a cheque. I did not trust my eyes; it was a cheque for $50 000,-. I held up the cheque for all to see.

"I have in my hand a cheque for $50 000,- from Bubbe Sorele", I began my speech.

For a few seconds no sound was heard. Everybody seemed to have ceased chewing the cake they had in their mouths or smoking the cigar which the waiters had offered along with the brandy. For how can one chew cake or hold a cigar with an open mouth ? Fifty thousand dollars was more than anybody present had seen all in one piece since quite a long time. Each of my four uncles, two my aunts and five of my cousins had given me money presents when they made their long or short speeches - a hundred dollars here or fifty there, and each had accompanied his or her present with a 'you may need this to establish yourself' or 'here is the money to buy yourself a house'; a joker told me even 'here is the price for a brandnew cadillac' and another did not fail to cause an outburst of roaring laughter with gesturing a fifty dollar bill with the advice 'here, buy yourself a share in the Brooklyn Bridge'. In general it was pleasing to note, that the words and the enjoyment of their jokes was commensurate with the well developed sense of humour in the family.

I sincerely appreciated their gifts, because I knew that - although none of the gifts exceeded a hundred dollars, for some of the donors the gift represented a sacrifice.

"Read the letter", they shouted, after they had recovered from their surprise. A few had coughing fits because some of the smoke or a piece of cake had passed the wrong way. But I am certain,

that all of them were happy for my sake - even though somewhat envious - because during the many years they all had felt responsible for my wellbeing and had done their utmost to make life easy for me; and whenever loving affection is associated with responsibility the bounding is especially strong.

"Read the letter", they shouted again.

I opened the sheet of paper. I had a further surprise. I did not remember ever to have seen the handwriting of my Grandmother before. I was impressed by the neatness of her calligraphy and the exactness of her orthography. Bubbe Sorele wrote that she loved me very much, that I occupied a special place in her heart because I was the image of her late brother Yankel. She regretted very much that she could not be present in person, but a journey to New York would have been too great an effort for her. She wished me well and hoped to see me soon. And she added a postscript:

"Dispose of the enclosed small amount of money any way you wish - you do not have to render account for it to me or to anybody else".

I was touched. I was proud. For a fleeting moment my happiness was marred by the knowledge that the late great-uncle Yankel with his fishmonger's business on an open cart drawn through the streets of the lower Eastside by an eyesore of a horse, had in our family been the proverbial 'shlemil'.

I looked up. I was proud to see that most of those seated around the table, at least the older generation among them, were equally moved, as was evident from their faces and from the tears in their eyes.

All over the world the final stage of a graduation lunch is reached, when the guest of honour, with unaccustomed cigar in one hand and a nearly empty brandy glass in the other rises to make his 'Thank You' speech. I was, of course, conscious of my duty - though I am a non-smoker and non-drinker. I made now, after having read out Bubbe Sorele's letter, tom make my contibution to the festive event. I said the things which were expected from me, a freshly graduated M.A. I remembered my parents and my sisters. I expressed my sincerest gratitude to Lea and Bert and the pleasure to have Esther as a sister. I thanked in appropriate words my other uncles and aunts and all my cousins not only for what they had said

at the luncheon table, but for all the love and kindness they had shown me throughout the years. In particular I gave thanks to Bubbe Sorele not only for the cheque but for the far most generous love she had given me throughoput my life, for the pride I have in her strong character, her lovable personality - and her good sense.

But I had more to say than that before I sat down. What I said acted like a bombshell. And, I am afraid, with that bombshell I ended as well the sense of goodwill, of complacency and relaxation which had until then prevailed around the table. Against my best intention the 'finale' in my speech did also interfere with their laboriously proceeding digestion, and it rudely interrupted the increasing somnolence of all the twenty-five or so persons present who appeared to have been sinking deeper into their chairs.

"My dear people", I told them in conclusion. "Before I sit down, please accept again my sincere thanks for your presents and for all you have said about me. Above all I thank you for the good advice you have proffered me for my future life and activities.

"I do not have anymore to think matters over, as has been the motif in all the advice you have given me. I have come to the decision, to the irrevocable decision, that for the time being I shall not be looking for a job nor think of continuing my studies at this or at any other university. I can afford to defer any decision. I have since long wanted to enlarge my horizon. I have since long wanted to know the wider world. I shall go abroad and see for myself what the world has to offer. I want to study life as it really is. I want to find out for myself what men and women outside our restricted circles, even outside our Continent think is true and what is right, what is just and what should be done by and for drifting mankind. I want to mature. That piece of paper which Brooklyn College has given me this morning may tell you and me and the world at large that I am a mature man, a learned man, that I am a 'Magister of the Arts' - whatever this may mean - but I do not feel that I am a mature man, not enough so at least. At the best this degree can mean, to me at least, that I can exchange the short pants of knowledge with a pair of long trousers of knowledge. And this is not enough for me. I want also to acquire intellectual spurs to my boots. I want to roam around the world, anywhere in the world, for a year at least".

All this I said on the spur of the moment. I had not prepaired this part of my speech. I had not contemplated a program of the

kind I had just outlined to the family. For a moment I was no less surprised about what I had outlined than my listeners. Especially was I surprised about my courage. My sudden decision could not have been influenced by the magnanimous gift of my grandmother, as I had inherited a small fortune from my parents - investments, properties, real estate - but somehow I had never considered this money truly my own. Perhaps I had been reluctant to consider it my own as it had become my own only consequent to the death of my parents and sisters.

I was becoming apprehensive about the effect my words were having on my uncles and aunts. But only for a moment. Then all the tension I had felt passed away. I smiled at each of them. They were now wide awake. The eyed me with surprise. Then I sat down.

The uproar that followed, the handwringing and tablepounding made me agree with Uncle Nathan who could not refrain from saying that the investment in a festive lunch had been wasted, that all the joy had evaporated. I agreed with them in all this, because I myself felt the same. But in contrast to them I did not share their fear, that I was going to ruin my future, nor that I was turning into a 'hippy', and certainly not that I was spoiling all my opportunities. All of a sudden I felt a different person. I felt free. I was independent of everbody and of everything. I was ready to face the world.

Although my decision had been made at the spur of the moment at the end of that luncheon in the 'Prince of 'Princes', I realized when walking home by myself, that the plan I had pronounced had in fact been the culmination of a dream I had carried since a long time within me.

I decided that I would go first on a prolonged visit to Israel. I was sure to find there the atmosphere and the human material which would help me to enlarge my knowledge in the specific field in which I was interested. Although I did not require any preparations - mental or material - it took about a month before I could set out on my journey. For I decided, once I knew that Israel was going to be my home for the next months or even a year, it would be to my benefit if I spent first a month or two in Europe. I viewed this as a kind of 'intellectual grand tour' of the kind which a

century or two ago had been the right granted t educated young men of my age. I studied the adequate literature available in the Public Library. I made enquiries from a number of young people who had returned from travels abroad. I acquired books and maps which I thought might prove useful.

I spent an entire day with Bubbe Sorele, not only to thank her for her gift but to say farewell, to receive her blessing and her understanding for my undertaking, for the motive of my journey, for my quest for a continued learning. She was the only one in my vast family who understood and supported me. My uncles and aunts, and the relatives they enrolled from outside the State, did not give up, until the day of my departure, their efforts to dissuade me from what they termed my foolish idea. My cousins, without exception, assured me that they were on my side, that I did well to get away, that they envied me, that they would follow my example were this possible for them, and that I could rely on them for any help I might require.

In the meantime my passport had been issued. I had a long talk with the attorney who had arranged my parents' affairs, and with the accountant who managed my estate, and settled my finances with my Bank, bought a bundle of traveler cheques and became the owner of a Letter of Credit. I was going to travel light and had, therefore, very little packing to do. I had in the meantime also become an expert in the ways how to arrange the cheapest means of transport, in the most economic means of survival and in the adequate psychological methods how to approach obstreperous foreign officials.

At last the day of departure arrived. I promised Bert and Lea and all my other relatives again and again that I would 'keep in touch', that I would not hesitate to write should I ever require any help, that I would contact my uncle Chaim Moshe Ploni in Israel should I ever be in trouble.*

I insisted that nobody accompany to the airport. The reason was that I had not bought a ticket on any of the regular airlines

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*Indeed Bert, and later also Nathan, wrote me tearful letters imploring me to remain in contact with David, which I promised to do in my immediate reply. But it was impossible, as I did not hear from him until much time had passed. (Ploni the Storyteller)

but one for a 'standby passage' to which students are entitled. I spent two days and a night at Kennedy Airport. I did not mind the delay. I was without problems, without a timetable, and I had the unique opportunity to observe the manifold types of people,

At last I got my seat on a plane to London. I paid only $56.- for my ticket.

You may be surprised and be induced to call me a miser in view of my financial position of which I have acquainted you. I did this, not because I cared to save money or to cut down my expenses to a minimum. This would in any case have been beyond my character or my expertize. I had decided that I was going to observe and learn about people with whom I had no contact before, to talk to people of a mentality I had not known before. I met many interesting people coming from many parts of the world or leaving for every corner of the world. I confess that also financial matters played a role in the way I organized my travel. I was not going to throw away money or to live in luxury while abroad. I wanted to see the world as it really is and as it appears to people without a package of traveler cheques in their belt.

My dear Reader ! I, Ploni the Storyteller, am addressing you now.

We have reached 'dry ground' again, and it is better to let David tell what happened next. Please, take this as an announcement and not as a threat - but you are welcome to see in this a promise.

AR 25045 18/3 The story of a prince

Hermann M. SELZER Coll. III, Travelling abroad
chapter 1-3 pp. 131-176

III

TRAVELING ABROAD.

London.

I arrived in London on a misty morning in autum. I was in a state of elation. My journey, my education, my adventure, my manhood had begun. For reasons I cannot fathom now, I added in my mind that my freedom too had begun that morning. My mood of sophistication, which I had thought was so charactersitic of me, had evaporated.

I found the modest boardinghouse in Bayswater Street, which my friends had recommended to me, adequate, clean and comfortable. Throughout the first week I spent my time in the way a tourist is supposed to spend his time. For hours I walked through the steets, visited museums, ambled through the enormous department stores of which I had heard or read. I traveled for hours in subway trains and on buses - one of the reasons I did so was to rest my tired legs. I could get on short notice tickets for a modern play - of which I have forgotten the name - and for a Haydn Concert.

However, I had soon to give up my attempts to get to know the country through a sampling of its individuals, to get the feel of its civilization by the contact with its representatives, by starting a conversation with people in restaurants, in buses or trains. The reactions my innocnt approaches produced were to me a sufficient indication, that what I had heard about the renowned reserved attitude of the British had not been exaggerated. I had, however, the impression, that in similar experiences I had with the black and coloured people, who make up such an abundant part of the street scene of London, it was more an expression of undisguised hostility against a 'white man', which was responsible for their more than negative attitude. I was deeply perturbed, although I should not

have been, for what I experienced in London did not differ from similar experiences I had now and then at home.

All I saw in and of London that first week was far less impressive than I had expected. The shabbiness - compounded by shoddiness - I noticed everywhere and in everything saddened me. This feeling was increased by the rudeness of the people in general, of which I became aware in the streets, in the restaurants and in the public places. The medical student - a Scotsman - who roomed in the same Boardinghouse as I and who befriended me on the first day we had breakfast at the same table, explained to me, when I remarked a few days later on my experiences, that I had not met yet the justly vaunted politeness and reserve of the British, that the deterioration in the public's manners was primarily due to, and mostly noticeable in, the coloured people who had in enormous numbers immigrated from the former British colonies and Commonwealth countries after the last war. Should I meet one day specimen of the true British people, I might discover, he assured me, that the reputation the British had in the past, was still justified to this day. But, he pointed out, it was unfortunate that 'the better class Britisher', who had once upon a time made up the majority of the population of London, had moved to the suburbs, to other towns or to the countryside, and visited the metropolis only very rarely, that is whenever necessary for business or other reasons. He explained this sociological phenomen with the 'take-over of London by Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis and Jamaicans etc.'. I could not, of course, judge if this was indeed so or how much he had exaggerated. Nearly all the people I talked to in that first week - and as a matter of fact all through the month I spent in London - were either Pakistanis or Indians or Arabs. One thing seemed certain: the opinion of my Scottish friend was shared by the few 'real' Britishers I met. On two occasions when in the evening he and I were walking through the sidestreets off the main roads, he pointed out to me groups of young people with shaven heads, dressed in black leather jackets and high boots riding on powerful motor-cycles through the streets.

"These charming boys and girls are out on their regular evening entertainment, namely the beating up of Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Indians, Africans and other immigrants. And for good measure they will with the cycle chains and clubs also bash in the head of an occasional Jew".

I am afraid that much of my former regard and respect, of my

earlier admiration and esteem for everything which England had meant for me, was reduced after a few days. Since my childhood, in school and in College, I had been an Anglophile, or better said, I had been turned into one by my parents and my uncles, who - apparently in their atavistic eastern-jewish need of something european to praise after Germany had forfeited every right to praise and respect - had discovered, starting with english woollens and textiles and continuing with english literature, much to admire in things english, its culture and all it stood for. I had been looking forward to witnessing at the source the evidence of that immensely impressive cultural tradition with which, I felt, I had the right to be associated as an American. I was disappointed. There was litle evidence in people's attitudes and reactions, of the nation's once powerful aspirations, traditions, conceptions. These appear to have evaporated or at least to have shriveled. If England had only become impoverished and weakened, I would have felt my anglophylia reinforced; but England had turned into a discouraged, greedy, spiteful hag of a country now. Most of the things I judged as above average quality, had been introduced or imported from abroad - starting with men of above average intellect and ending in good quality shoes. On one occasion I asked a leading exponent of English culture for names representing modern english culture; that is for the names of people who had achieved prominence in the sciences, in philosophy and the arts - and instead of being given the names of scientists or philosophers or artists, I was told of the Beatles.

Contact with Islam.

After a week had gone by, I woke up one morning with the guilty feeling of having wasted my time so far, of having neglected the task I had set for myself. It did not help that I tried to justify my idle days in London with the need to get acclimatized and adjusted to my new environment.

All of a sudden I was in a hurry. I felt the urge to embark on some serious work, on a definite study, on something of substance with which to engage my mind. After all, I had set out not as a tourist but as a student; and I had come to London in particular to learn about the spiritual and intellectual world of Islam, so that I might have acquired another value scale by the time I was encountering Judaism in its renewed form in today's Israel. My sudden restleness may to a great deal have been due to the disappointments I had experienced in London - and no less also to the rain which had been beating all through the night against the window of my room.

During the last year I had often met Ishrat, and she never missed an opportunity to encourage my interest in islamic studies - and to advise me to visit her parents in London. I came to incline to her view, that I might find in London more suited sources of information about Islam, and also more approachable contacts with moslem circles. The great number of Moslems in London made me conclude, that there had to be - next to politicians and restaurant owners - also a substantial number of intellectuals among them.

Already during my first days in London I learned to distinguish by the mode of their dressing the Moslems among the crowd in the street: the beards, the caftans, the turbans, the purda and so on. Neither was it difficult to distinguish the Arabs whom I saw

passing by in their luxurious limousines, or engaging exclusively for themselves most of the sales personnel in the expensive stores. Also the number of mosques of enormous size in the best parts of London, the notices in arabic in the streets, the hotels, the restaurants next to the english ones, did not anymore appear strange or incongruous to me as they did not to the people I talked to. It was quite evident that islamic culture had grown deep roots in London, that its followers were an important part of the english scene.

On that rainy depressing morning in London I made up my mind to start at last on my 'serious' program. I phoned the Pakistan Embassy and asked to be connected with Mr. Khan.

"Which Mr. Khan ?", asked a competent sounding female voice. "What is his full name ?"

"The paper slip I am holding in my hand says 'Mr. A.H.Khan', and I added quickly 'from Karachi'.

"You will most likely like to speak with Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan, our Councellor".

"I think this is the man. He might expect me".

"What is your name ?"

"My name is David Prince from New York".

"What is the business on which you want to see Mr. Khan ?"

"Nevermind my business. You tell Mr. A.H.Khan that I am on the line and want to talk to him".

After a short delay Mr. Khan was on the line.

"Hallo, my dear friend ! I suppose you are the Mr. David Prince who is the friend of my Ishrat. Is that not so ?"

When I confirmed that he had guessed right, he continued.

"We have been waiting for you since some days. We must meet at once, my friend. Unfortunately I shall be very busy all morning and during the early afternoon. But afterwards I shall be free. Meet me this afternoon here at the Embassy and we shall have a good talk. Please take note that due to our special relationship with Great Britain our Embassy is called the 'High Commission of Pakistan'. Will this afternoon at closing time, say at five, be allright with you. Is this allright with you ?", he repeated.

I was there at five. The gatekeeper had been warned to expect me. One of the uniformed guards lingering nearby took me without delay to Mr. Khan's imposing office on the second floor of the building. My guide knocked and made me enter. Mr. Khan rose from behind his desk and came towards me with outstretched arms. He

gripped my hands and then my shoulders.

"Welcome, my friend ! I am delighted to see you. We have heard so much about you already from Ishrat. Sit down for a moment. I shall be ready in a few seconds".

I was surprised by his booming voice which was a lot of decibles higher than was necessary. But his was a pleasant voice, a melodious voice. His english was nearly accent-free. He was a round, bald, clean-shaven man of middle height. During conversation his eyes behind the thick lenses often lost their shrewdness and filled with laughter. He was the most outspoken extrovert I have ever met. Even the colour scheme of his tie was of a merry theme.

After he had enquired with real concern about my health and wellbeing; and after he had made sure hat I had found suitable accommodation in London, I had to outline to him my plans for the coming weeks. I was surprised when he enquired in all seriousness and in detail, whether I had met in London with any hostility from any quarter. His relief was evident when I assured him that I had not noticed any hostility apart from the rudeness of the people, instances of which I had to describe to him in detail.

After he had closed the bundle of files on which he had been working into the safe standing in a corner; and after he made some entries into a large register of some kind, he began to tidy up his desk. Having accomplished this to his apparent satisfaction, he nodded to me with a smile and jumped up.

"At last I am ready. I am sorry I have kept you so long. Now, David, you will come along to my house. You must meet my wife. Every day she has been enquiring about you. She knows already that you have at last arrived. She is expecting you this evening. We shall have a bite to eat, and shall have all the time to get to know each other better".

He hooked his arm into mine and we left the building. We drove to his house in Hendon. His racy Jaguar car appeared to me somewhat incongruous for such a portly man; but it was apparently well suited to his disposition. He was a very temperamental driver - but he was also a very experienced driver. He seemed to be the kind of driver who feels uneasy whenever there is car in front of him which, he is determined to overtake at all cost. He talked all the way, now and then interrupting his exposure of british politics and

economics by pointing out an interesting building or a landmark.

We drove into a street on which, he indicated, he had rented his 'bungalow'. The street was made up of an endless row of identical semi-attached one-family houses. We stopped in front of one of them.

"It is very difficult nowadays to find a suitable place for rent in London. By charging exorbitant rents, the landlords try to compensate for their reluctance to let us orientals in. They appear to think that we all are oil sheikhs in disguise. But I have been lucky; I have found a nice house and a decent landlord".

The lady of the house, a charming woman, dressed in a splendid brocade saree, met us in the entrance hall.

She had the same figure, height, shape of eyeglasses as her husband, and also the same friendly and outgoing ways. She bade me welcome in a few nice words, and at once corrected me when I addressed her, to tell me that she was be called neither 'Madame, nor Mrs. nor Begum, but by her own name 'Naz'. It was soon evident that this middle-aged couple was still in love with each other as they must have been as newly-weds. Or - knowing now the marriage customs on the Indian subcontinent - more than at that time even.

We had a simple tasty Pakistani meal, served by a servant, whose family - as I was told - like that of the cook, had been since generations in the service of the Khan family. I found out on this occasion, that in my attempt to gain some knowledge about moslem culinary specialities by way of eating in Pakistani and Indian restaurants, I had acquired very wrong connotations.

At the end of the evening it came to us three as a surprise, that we all felt very much at ease with each other, as if we had been friends since a very long time.

We talked for many hours about a number of topics. Already on that first contact I gained an insight in the way people of the East think and feel, how their philosophy of life differs - mostly to their advantage - from ours in the western world. This was the more remarkable, as Mr. Hamid - I was soon corrected as to the way to address him - had been educated in England from the age of eight. His father had been a minor diplomat in the service of the British Raj. One would have presumed him to be too much atuned to the ways and also to the thinking of the western world. But this was not so. Though he was considerbaly westernized, he had remained an

Oriental in heart and mind - which statement, please, consider a compliment.

Of course, all my plans and programs were thoroughly discussed; and very much of what I was going to do and to learn in the coming weeks, I owe to the guidance of this friendly couple.

They invited me to stay in heir house. "We have a guestroom which cries out for you", Naz explained. "We are by ourseleves here in this house and would very much like to have your company". But I declined. I did not want to be tied down, nor to become a burdeen to my new friends. They were genuinely disappointed. However, I promised to be a frequent visitor. I kept my promise. Every time I left their house after a visit - which usually included a meal - I was told that I was to come back the following day, or at times after two days, as they had invited one or more 'interesting people whose acquaintance I was surely going to enjoy, and from whose knowledge and experience I was surely going to benefit'.

This was the case already the evening following our first meeting. Their guest was a scholarly looking man of about 35 years, with a pale face surrounded by a short black beard. His deep-seated eyes behind the horn-rimmed glasses were crowned by a high forehead. His name was Akbar Ahmed. He was distantly related to Hamid. I was told that he was a well-known islamic scholar; that he was a professor on the staff of the Islamic Cultural Centre in London; that he had a philosophy degree from the Punjab University in Lahore. He was a very serious-minded man, evidently unable to understand a joke, although some of his opinions appeared to me to be meant as such.

"Professor Ahmed Akbar is the right man to teach you the wisdom of Islam", boomed Hamid when he introduced us. "Under his guidance you will soon become a maulvi, an islamic theologian, yourself".

I can confirm that I did learn very much from this serious islamic expert as well from many other knowledgeable men I met in Hamid's home, or whenever he invited me to accompany him to some islamic function or other.

I arranged with the Professor that we meet, whenever it was possible for him to find the time, in his study in the Islamic College. For nearly three weeks I spent nearly every day about

1-2 afternoon hours in his company, and in that of some of his colleagues, in very interesting and constructive conversations. These conversations consisted mainly in the dissection of intrinsic and complex problems which had puzzled me and which I asked him to explain to me; or of things which had appeared to me contradictory in my reading the islamic literature, on which I spent a few hours every morning in the library of the Islamic College.

And nearly every evening saw me in the company of Hamid and Naz - and very often there were other guests too. The men and women I met there were as a rule interesting types, and often also very learned ones. They were mostly Moslems - Egyptians, Levantines, Arabs or members of other nationalities from various parts of the Middle East. Unfortunately, they were mainly interested in talking about Israel, about American economics, about the recent London scandals; they were least interested in talking about things I wanted to hear, in particular about the specifics of Islam in relation to other religions, or about the personal adjustment these people had made to the different religious and social trends of our times.

As I mentioned already, I had in the following weeks the good fortune to learn very much about the various aspects of Islam. I am not going to mention here what you can read in every treatise about Islam or in any of the many theological compendia available everywhere. Otherwise my narrative is in danger of becoming unmanageable. I shall recount here those points in my conversations with islamic experts in which I looked for explanation or elucidation or interpretation of certain to me unexplainable or intriguing aspects of the Moslem religion.

I must, however, confess that I was disappointed by the lack of objectivity I discovered in the Professor and in many of those who made islamic theology their profession. I had not thought it possible, that in our days men with an excellent and superior education could be so fanatic in their beliefs and outlooks, could have such restricted, completely 'fundamnentalistic' views. In the course of years I have discovered that such a lack of objectivity, such a blind fanaticism, such a fundamentalist direction are not specific for Moslems, but are also to be found among the representatives of all all other religions in existence - though, I must agree, not to such an extent as among the Moslems.

Neither is such an outlook restricted to theologians. One

day Hamid invited me to be his guest at a Rotary lunch - he was, understandably, a very enthusiastic Rotarian - because the guest speaker was going to be a former Pakistani ambassador to the United Nations and former minister in the Government of Pakistan. In addition this man was also an internationally acknowledged legal expert. The theme of his speech was 'The Wisdom of the Holy Qu'ran'. It was a very interesting discourse, delivered by a very good speaker who took 45 minutes - it would have been impossible to restrict him to the 20 minutes allowance which were as a rule granted to speakers at such luncheons - to provide proof that the Qu'ran had already 1300 years ago predicted - and described in detail - the effect of the Hiroshima bomb.

I was fortunate, however, to have long talks with two, possibly three Moslems - two Egyptians and one Lebanese - who were thought by their friends and colleagues very reform- and liberal-minded, but who in our cultural world would more suitably be called conservative. The concepts of Islam's doctrine and history I could have them describe - along with the precepts of the orthodox and fundamentalist elements I met and talked to and which fitted better in with what I had learned about Islam in the past - helped me to round up the picture I formed for myself of this religion.

However, I had learned to proceed very carefully with my enquiries. I had been warned by Naz and Hamid to be very careful - also in my conversations with the most liberal, and to all appearances even atheist Moslems - never to express an idea, nor to use a word even, which might be taken by my interlocutors as a criticism of Islam. Although I made every effort to follow this advice, there must have been many occasions when I overstepped the limits I had staked out for myself. I was lucky that my loss of caution had no consequences - mainly so, because my partners in our conversation were mostly diplomats who knew to keep themselves under control, or else academics who had learned, that in the western environment in which they found themselves, they had to control themselves whenever exposed to free speech.

Only once, when seated opposite a Professor of Islamic studies at London University - a learned, very pleasant, liberal-minded Jew - could I talk and formulate my questions without restraint.

You will want to know what questions I asked the experts in Islam, and what answers I received from them. Here now is some

of the information I received, and some of the additional knowledge I could collect.

In New York I had read the Qu'ran, the Hadith, the Bukhari and other literature which reveal the fundamental doctrines of Islam. On the advice of my moslem friends in London I studied now many of the religio-philosophical tractates I found on the shelves of the Islamic Institute. I read the articles in the handbooks which were specifically pointed out to me. But I must confess, I cannot claim to have mastered the matter more than to a partial degree only. It was of little help that most of the answers I received were packed in many layers of tiresome stereotyped, repetitious phrases.

"Tell me, Professor", I asked Akbar Ahmed in one of the first meetings we had in his study, "what do you see as the fundamentals of Islam, what does Islam mean to you, and what does it demand of you and other Moslems ?"

"First of all you should know that Islam is a religion of absolute submission. It is submission to the sovereign will of Allah. It is an unrelenting submission as the holy Qu'ran again and again reminds the believer".

"From what you tell me, you sound intolerant with regard to other monotheistic religions, like Judaism and Christianity".

"Islam is the legal heir and the renewer of the religion created by Abraham. Our Prophet Mohammad, blessed be his name, found out that the Jews and Christians have falsified their heritage. At first the Prophiet of Islam thought he could reform Judaism, he might make Christianity correct its deviation into polytheism; but the Jewish and Christian authorities in his neighbourhood at that time did not follow him, nor did they accept his guidance. Their negative attitude, which often threatened to turn into hostility, branded them heretics; but as they, the Jews and the Christians, venerate the same God and own the same Holy Scriptures as we do, they are permitted to live among us, though not with the same rights as the Moslem".

I thought it wiser not to argue about this statement. Instead I asked: "It is impressive how rapidly after its institution, Islam has spread through the mediterranean world and beyond. How do you explain this phenomen ?"

"Islam spread so quickly, because it has a unique salvational appeal; and also because it preaches a strict and uncompromising monotheism".

"I found that like Christianity's theology also that of Islam has from time to time been strongly influenced and motivated by political factors. As far as I can judge this is not the case with Judaism".

"It is indeed a fact, that one of Islam's strengths is the political interpretation of what man has to be in the eyes of Allah. You must be aware that similarly also in Judaism some external factor has its influence; in Judaism it is the ethnic factor which plays such kind of an important role".

"The first thing which struck me when I started to study Islam were the many features Judaism shares with you religion".

"This is true. Islam and Judaism share many common features like circumcision, dietary regulations, sexual codes. Yes, there are many similarities because they started from the same roots. But soon thereafter they deviated in certain important principles. In Islam the state - in Judaism the people - are the expression, the carriers, the formulation of God's will. Unquestioning faith and political discipline form the foundations of Islam; while the identity offered by the common faith, heritage and tradition form those of Judaism. There is also the fundamental principle that from Islam's point of view man can pursue a true islamic life only within the frame of a constituted state, while your people has remained a people for so long without a state. However, the politically founded and based state by no means represents the final status and goal. The Qu'ran tells us in clear terms, that the framework of the state is only a temporary arrangement, and that the ultimate society will come to be within a purely spiritual frame".

"But fundamentally it is the theological approach which is different in the two religions; and I would point specifically to the intermixture of religion with politics as specific for Islam".

"You are right; but it indicates a political realism which is the very strength and genius of Islam. However, the political factor does not interfere with the realm of the spiritual leadership, whose duty it is to show the way to God and to prevent disquiet in the people".

"Does this not lead to a form of political realism which in the end might endanger the ethic value of Islam ?"

"Islam's political realism is eo ipso enveloped in ethics".

"Does this mean that you have at no time experienced among Moslems - be they orthodox or liberal - a resistance, an objection against the strict rules of conduct imposed upon them by Islam ?"

"Sure, there are such people among us. We have among us

agnostics and atheists too, but they never come into the open - at least not, if they find themselves in an islamic society, that is among believers. Islam has its strict rules, and from these no man can deviate; man has to find the time and the will to live in accordance with these rules. Islam is the belief in God, in his prophets, in his angels, in his inspired books, in his decrees, in the Day of Judgement. Islam governs our life in the way the Prophet's Holy Book, the Qu'ran, supplemented by the Sunna - the decisions taken on questions which arose in the early years of Islam, - and by an elaborate code of law worked out in the Middle Ages, the Sharia. You will know already, that the Moslem's belief in Islam rests on five pillars: witnessing one's religion, five prayers a day, giving alms, fasting during the holy month of Ramzan and the Haj Pilgrimage to be performed at least once in a lifetime. It is all in all not such an effort to perform one's duty as a Moslem, considering that the alternative is going to be an everlasting uninterrupted severe punishment after death. Man should never forget that there is no other God than Allah. Man has been created by he word of Allah. Man is going to be judged according to his faith and his infidelity, according to his good and his evil deeds".

"How does man know what is good in Allah's eyes ?"

"The Moslem's moral laws are clearly outlined in our Holy Book. The rules therein contained define in simple and plain words what is good and what is evil. We do not dress these basic principles of our faith into philosophic interpretations".

"How does this agree with man's knowledge that God guides and supervises every aspect of his life ?"

"Although Allah is sovereign in every sense; and although Allah demands absolute and unconditional submission; and although Allah shows us mercy and compassion, Allah's grace and benevolence cannot be predicted. The individual cannot claim the assurance how much - or if at all - he will benefit from Allah's mercy and grace. The Qu'ran says: 'Whosoever Allah desires to guide, him he fills the breast with Islam. Whomsoever he intends to lead astray, his breast he makes narrow and tight; thus does Allah lay abomination upon those who believe not'. Yes, Allah determines man's destiny".

"That means that all is predestined for man ?"

"Yes, predestination is a cardinal doctrine in Islam. It is written: 'Allah does what he wants, guides rightly whom he wants. He will make people or guilty or not'. This is predestination, is it not ?".

"Has man then any chance to decide for himself in certain

circumstances at least ?"

"There is no consensus about this among the various sects of Islam. The Shi'ites teach that man has a free will, but not in everything. Allah is so powerful, they say, that whatever he orders will happen, and he will interfere whenever he does not like what man does. Although all schools in Islam agree that man is granted some right to act on his own, this does not free him from having to follow very strictly all the principles and precepts of Islam".

"Let me be clear about it, please. You mean to say that it is predestined whenever I suffer, that it has been predestined that and when I have to suffer ?"

"Man's suffering is willed by Allah. Allah is the all-knowing and all-willing and all-powerful God. He knows, therefore, and has ordained it beforehand. who will be condemned and who will be saved".

"And who is going to suffer ?"

"Yes, also who is going to suffer. Allah has in every instance willed your suffering".

"If this is the case, man could hardly be inclined to try and prevent his or others' sufferings".

"He has to submit to Allah's will. But he can pray and hope that the coming Judgement, as described in detail in the Qu'ran, will favour him".

I did not want to hear him enlarge further on this theme, as his deep faith did not permit him to voice nor to tolerate any criticism. I tried instead to have him enlarge on his reply to a previous question of mine.

"In a question I asked a short while ago I wondered, how you explain Islam's rapid conquest of vast parts of the world so soon after the Prophet had established his religion. And how can you explain the fact, that Islam continues to grow, that in these days its fundamentalistic trend is more pronounced than ever in the last centuries ?"

"The religion of Islam spread so quickly after its inception because it could provide man with all his spiritual needs and could liberate man of all the doubts which affects him. And there is also the fact, as I have already mentioned, that Islam has a unique salvational appeal. And furthermore you will have to take note, that what happened 1300 years ago applies to a no less degree also to our days".

"In those years of conquest many opponents had certainly to

be overcome. I do not mean from a military point of view. I mean people who did not agree, who did not like to change their faith, who objected to the teachings of the Prophet ?"

"The identity between the will of God and the ways of the Prophet, the depiction of difference between the glorious future man can expect after death and the misery he encounters in life, did reduce, though not eliminate, the criticism of the Prophet's and of Islam's early adversaries".

"And how are conditions now ? Are there internal tensions, are there opposing groups among the Moslems ?"

"There are circles who think that Islam has to undergo certain reforms in order to adapt to modern times. For a time - say at the turn of the century - these currents had acquired quite a following, especially in India and Egypt; but since the political and economic power of oil has benefited so many of the moslem states, islamic self-assurance has been greatly strengthened. And whatever the trends to reform Islam may have been, and whatever they may have achieved, has fortunately been suppressed by the true believers, by the movement which the West likes to call 'fundamentalistic'. The rulers of Saudi Arabia have been in the forefront of those who proclaim the supremacy of Islam, with Qadafi of Lybia a strong second, followed by the Emirs of the Gulf States. But also in other moslem states has the re-islamization been very successful, mainly so in Egypt, Algiers and Pakistan where secularization had made great inroads already".

"I think you should have mentioned Iran first".

"You may count in also Iran. However, this nation has refused all approaches to the modern age. It has returned to a fundamental form of Islam via its revolution of 1979, which was exceptional in so far as it was not a revolution initiated by leftist or liberal forces, but by conservative ones, which proclaimed the return to Sharia Law and the total submission to the Qu'ran; which wanted to restore the Umma, the nation, to the form in which it had existed at the time of the Prophet and of Ali".

"Do you favour the situation in Iran ?"

"No, I don't. It is a Shi'ite rule in which politics prevail over the Qu'ran, and which strives towards the conquest of all the Near and Middle East".

As was often the case in our conversations, it was impossible to avoid politics becoming the main topic; and as I had already learned about the problems of Iran - and those which Iran created for others - from more broadminded experts, I did not pursue this

line of conversation any further.

I was given a better, a well-cut, a sharply outlined survey of the political-ideological aspect of Islam by Bertram Young, a young Assistant professor of the Political Science Faculty, a few of whose lectures I could attend with his permission. By chance we had come into conversation when we both attended a concert in the Albert Hall, and agreed to meet again the following evening in his "rooms".

"Is it not unusual - and does it not make it difficult for you, a Jewish professor, to lecture about Islam ?"

"Contrary to what the annoying and deplorable politicization of religion and the sciences may make you think, I meet only rarely with antagonism in my professional work. After all, I only continue a century-old tradition in which Jewish scientists had been the leading exponents of the history, the philosophy and the theology of Islam".

In the course of two evenings I learned from him what I could not have learned from any of the Moslem academics.

I am going to reconstruct from the notes I carefully wrote up each time I had come back to my room, the picture he painted for me in his wide-ranging survey.

Western politicians and historians tend to view the islamic world as made up mainly of secular modern societies, in which various groups of small but vociferous "religious fanatics" have no or very little influence. Not even the islamic revolution in Iran, nor the widespread return to strict religious practices in most moslem countries, has changed the prevailing opinion in the West.

Much of this lack of understanding is due to the habit of the non-moslem scientists and journalists to apply their western terminology to the conditions which exist in the East, and especially to Islam. Therefore the term "fundamentalism" in vogue today in political circles is not a suitable description of what goes on in Islam.

Fundamentalism is originally and fundamentally a concept of Christian theology. It denotes a religion entirely based on a faith without which a believer is not a believer and cannot count on the blessings of his religion. In specific terms such a non-believer cannot count on the salvtion promised to man. There are masses

of Christians who belong into this category. They are mainly motivated by their refutal of the fundamentalists' belief that the Scriptures present the unaltered holy words of God, and that the Gospels are God-inspired literature.

I confronted Professor Ahmed with this analysis I had been given by Professor Bertram Young.

"In Islam problems, which arise from such kind of divergences from faith, do not exist", was his reaction. "No Moslem who declares himself a Moslem would ever doubt - and if he does, he would never dare to declare it aloud - that every word in the Qu'ran is a word of Allah which has been written down exactly as it had been dictated to Mohammad by the Angel Gabriel. The eternal value and truth of Allah's words is proved by the fact - and by the big number of research papers published in proof - that whatever Allah conveyed to the Prophet more than 1300 years ago is still valid in the social, cultural and scientific spheres of our world of today".

At my request, that he further define the differences which exist between Islam on one side and Judaism and Christianity on the other, he enlarged his explanations. "Islam is a legal-social system, not a religion based on articles of faith. The Moslem is not assured of salvation because he believes word for word what is written in the holy literature; instead he acquires the required credits for salvation, if he practices the daily demands of his religion. In principle it may suffice if he only states aloud his identification with Islam. I shall go even further and say, that a Moslem has not even to declare he believes in Allah and his Prophet, as this is self-evident in every Moslem. Islam - never overlook this basic fact, David - is a social system and a culture as well as a religion. This becomes evident in a Moslem's daily life, in the social, legal and political systems in which he exists".

"Such high ideals and such self-assurance should make it easy for Islam to accept and respect Judaism and Christianity as equals, and for the Moslem to live in harmony and peace with Jews and Christians".

"It is very important that you remember, that Islam regards itself not as one of the three monotheistic religions, but as the first and only true religion. Since there is only one God, there can only be one religion. And that one and only religion is Islam. The history of mankind is the history of Islam. It is agreed that the Bible is the true word of God, but it has been falsified by the Jews. Islam was in existence long before the Bible was written. The Prophet Muhammad was the last of all the true prophets, the

most important one, but Allah's message had already been carried to mankind by other though minor prophets like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, David and Solomon. All the nations have been ungrateful, they have neglected their heritage. Allah has given them a last chance. He has offered them the best they could aspire to in this world. Allah has appointed Muhammad, the best man in existence ever, as his messenger to bring them the absolute unfalsified truth. He has entrusted mankind with the most outstanding Book ever written, and has selected the Arab language as the most suited one to pronounce the holy words. And whereas Abraham, who is called Ibrahim in the Qu'ran, is a Moslem prophet, everything connected with him is holy and all the places which are asociated with him are exclusively Islamic holy places".

He paused; and for a few seconds he looked at me with half-closed eyes, whether to see if I understood and agreed, or whether he expected an objection or a challenge from my side, I cannot say. I thought it wiser not to react in any of the ways he expected.

Then he continued in what must have been his lecturing voice:

"Unlike the West where sharp divisions are being made and have even been legally underlined, Islam does not differentiate between the sacred and the profane, between politics and religion, between the realm of the mosque and that of the state. Even a communist and atheist Moslem will think along these lines".

"It seems to me, Professor, that in Islam politics are unimaginable without some form of nationalism. However, as a rule nationalism, especially in its extreme form, is not very respectful to the tennets of religion, of any religion. In which way is the Qu'ran, that is the religion of Muhammad, compatible with the nationalism which pervades the Arab countries today, as it had in the past ?"

"It has no effect on Islam, which does not even visualize the possibility, that in the ideal world it wants to see come about, in the world it wants to build, there could be room for any other religion; or to say it clearly, that any religion next to Islam could exist in active form. Our Prophet Muhammad, blessed be his name, has preached, demanded, promised that Islam will be the only religion in existence in that world. And have no illusions: it is understood, that this aim can only be achieved, that this goal has to be reached, with the help of sword and fire. This is something neither we nor you non-Moslems should ever forget. This is the tennet which has been preached in every mosque from the day Islam was born, and which continues to be preached to this day - and this, whether

officially proclaimed or not, is today the policy of every Moslem state in the world".

"Pari passu - that is, it follows logically and strategically - this doctrine applies in the eyes the Moslems also to Israel's right to survive ?"

"Israel is an unacceptable presence in the Middle East not only in the eyes of Israel's Arab neighbours, not only in the eyes of every Arab politician and cleric, but also in the eyes of every plain simple Moslem anywhere".

"Your definite statement contradicts sharply what I have read and heard since years, viz:- that the Arabs, and in particular Yasser Arafat and his PLO's propaganda machine, have persuaded themselves, the diplomats and the newsmedia in the West - and also many people in Israel - that they aspire to create a 'democratic, secular Arab-Palestinian state' in which Moslems, Christians and Jews could live together and would each have the same civil and legal rights".

"Such a situation would be impossible - and would in any case and in any form be unacceptable. It would contradict everything Islam represents, teaches and demands. Islam permits, nay demands that Israel be eliminated. All you read and hear in this respect, all the negotiations which go on, and all the peace treaties which may one day be signed, are nothing but stratagems. According to Islam's demands and to what it teaches, Palestine belongs to the Moslems, and the only way it can be regained is by the sword".

One evening next to me a Qadi, a moslem judge, was the guest in Hamid and Naz' house.

"Please do not take it amiss if I am mistaken in what I say, as I do not want to make a wrong assessment of what I read the other day. But is it true that islamic theology, as expressed in the Qu'ran, reflects views and concepts of the Arab culture which prevailed at the time the Prophet lived; that many elements have been taken over from Judaism and Christianity, like the cult of the Ka'aba, the demand of circumcision, the pilgrimage etc. And, finally, is it accepted in your circle that there is much borrowing from pre-islamic folklore and paganism ?"

"It is not exactly as you formulate it", answered the bearded man dressed in a white turban and a flowing brown tunic, in a surprisingly friendly voice, "but let us not discuss it any further. Let us only recognize that Muhammad was a great and inspired man; and let us acknowledge, notwithstanding how it is is formulated in what you have read, that a much synthesis underlies our faith".

"I can accept this formulation; but", I insisted, "I had it explained by a professor of islamic theology, that Islam's chief

appeal had initially and also thereafter been - in his words - its 'strict and uncompromising milienary monotheism'. By the way, this characteristic could be applied as no less specific also for Judaism. But I think there is also another factor which must have strengthened Islam from the onset, namely that the Prophet knew where and how he had to make concessions. For instance he permitted the continuation of the ancient Ka'aba cult which dates from a pagan past".

"This is a mechanistic view of illiterate non-moslewms", the Qadi replied heatedly. His voice was harsh. He was angry. "You do not know what the Ka'aba represents to us, what it means to the world. The Ka'aba is the right arm of God on earth. It was always holy to the true believers in times long gone by. It was Adam's consolation. It was Abraham's support".

Throughout my month's stay in London Professor Akbar Ahmed remained my main source of knowledge and information. I came to appreciate and like him. More than anything else I came admire his uncomplicated deep faith. I learned also to appreciate the sly humour with which he thought he could make me overcome what in his eyes might have been an embarrassment to me.

On one occasion I had to wait a few minutes outside his study, because the Professor had a visitor. He was an Arab dressed in his native clothes. Akbar Ahmed accompanied the man to the head of the staircase, and from the respect he showed the visitor I concluded, that the latter must have been a very important man, or at least a very rich man. When he had returned to his study and I was sitting opposite him, I referred to this encounter.

"How do you as a Moslem feel about the Oil Sheikhs and the other rich Arabs, who are designated the aristocrats of Islam, when you meet them in the mosques or in the streets, or when you observe their luxurious lifestyle, or whenever you read about their riches and their vices ?"

He had his pat answer ready. "Islam assures social stability through brotherly solidarity. Islam never knew an aristocracy. The Qu'ran teaches us that only God decides who is going to be rich and who poor. Islam does not know of any class distinctions nor of any social barriers. Neither has Islam known racism or does it object to the intermixing of the races. Apart from the benefit this brings to our missionary efforts, Islam has also the advantage that we do not need any tabu restrictions in the life of our society. Neither do we place any specific value on worldly possession, nor do we have to boast about our personal relationship with Allah.

With regard to my last words, the Sufis are an exception, however; and this is one of the reasons, why the official moslem hierarchy prefers not to recognize Sufi mysticism as an acceptable expression of islamic faith".

When talking about religious matters I was, of course, always careful not to embarrass nor to hurt the sensitivity of the people.I very much appreciated that neither Naz nor Hamid ever thought it necessary to warn me in this respect, although I did notice from their behaviour - and from the kind of visitors they invited - that in the first few days they had been apprehensive about such a possibility; and I realized also with relief, that their apprehension had soon vanished again.

This caution I applied also in the Institute whenever I talked to Professor Akbar Ahmed or others I met there.

When I had come to know the Professor better, I ventured to face him with a complex of questions which were of special interest to me, although some I had already aired them with other people.

"In the course of my reading and in our conversations", I began one day, "I have found that there are remarkable similarities with Judaism in the way Islam formulates certain of its concepts. I hope you do not mind that I approach this subject, Professor, but as a Jew and in my search for the truth it is of great importance to me. I think so highly of you, that I know you possess the necessary qualities to give me an honest and impartial answer". Encouraged by his consent I continued. "I have more than once been told that Islam see's Judaism as antiquated, its theology as falsified, and that your's is the only true and superior religion, as well as the only justified religion. Islam and Christianity, on the other hand, are generally seen as daughter religions of Judaism. Many - also those who respect Islam and wish it well and place the latter alongside Judaism as a prophetic religion - want to see a difference insofar as in Islam the majesty of God and the submission to God are much more underlined than in Judaism".

"I do not mind your asking me such questions. Not at all. Neither am I surprised to hear you ask me such a question. Jews have always contributed to the study of Islam - I may say that they have been the leading scientific contributors to islamic studies in the last hundred years or so. Another reason why I do not mind is, because I consider Islam the legal heir and the renewer of the religions which derive from Prophet Ibrahim, whom you call the Patriarch Abraham. Our Prophet Muhammad accused Judaism and Christianity of having falsified their heritage. It is a fact,

that in the beginning Prophet Muhammad had seen himself the heir and reformer and continuer of the Torah of Judaism. But the Prophet had been perturbed by his observation, that the people of the neighbouring Jewish-Arab tribes had absorbed the traits and customs of their Greek and Roman environment. Consequently he felt called upon - on direct orders from Allah - to correct, and finally to eradicate these deviations he had noticed among his Jewish and Christian neighbours".

"In other words: Islam teaches, that this task and duty, and thus this right, the Prophet has received in a direct revelation from God. I think this is the main stumbling block for the Jews. As you may know, Professor, the Jewish rabbis say that by the time the Bible had been bound into a canon, the time of revelations had come to an end, and that what followed thereafter was only commentary and classification - while you Moslems that long after the time of revelations had gone, another prophet has arisen".

"Why should we accept what your rabbis say ? We Moslems feel entitled to say, nay we know without any doubt, that there came the time and the need for another prophet to arise; and all which the newly arisen Prophet preached is fundamentally identical with what Judaism has originally - that is a long time ago - been instructed to teach. As far as I know, his is not what the Church teaches about Judaism. Christianity too speaks of a new revelation, but it came from a crucified god and not from a mortal prophet".

"Apart from this there are also other fundamental differences between Judaism and Islam. For instance, although the Qu'ran, like the Bible, warns evildoers and threatens them with harsh punishments, in the Qu'ran these threats are not softened by promises nor are they humanized by exceptions as is the case in the utterances of aech one of the Jewish Prophets".

"You are wrong ! Our Holy Qu'ran says 'whoever kills a man for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves the life of a man, it shall be as if he has saved all mankind'".

"Do you know, Professor, that this is word for word what our rabbis of the Talmud have said many hundreds of years before the Qu'ran was written ?"

He did not react to what I said. Instead he continued with his lecturing voice with left index raised for better emphasis.

"You know, I suppose, that we Muslims recognize the sacredness of the Bible, that we call Jews and Christians 'The People of the Book' ?"

"I know this and I appreciate this recognition, which also the Christian Church has only recently deigned to express. Of

course, it is your right to say that the Qu'ran is superior to all other Scriptures. I have been impressed by the great reverence with which you treat the Holy Qu'ran. I have not seen any other faith treat their Scriptures in the same way".

"Every religion regards its Scriptures holy. Yes, you are right, we Moslems do so more than others. To us every word, every part and portion of the Qu'ran is sacred. That this makes us appear intolerant, that we do not permit criticisms or commentaries of the Holy Book, has to be accepted by the outside world. For every word in that Holy Book has been dictated to Muhammad by Allah through the Archangel Gabriel. Our Holy Book contains ordinances, outlines rules and teaches behaviour for every aspect and for every sphere of human behaviour in life. It is like your Torah a law-book as well as a religious book. All it contains is holy law".

I did not want to enter into an argument about any point he had brought forth so far, and continued to pursue my theme.

"I dare say, Professor, that to a great part and in essentials the Qu'ran and the Bible agree in general but differ in detail. But the difference in some of the details is marked. I do not want to enlarge too much on the islamic concept of demonology, but there is one interesting point to which I want to draw your attention: according to your teaching demons are everywhere in heaven and on earth. They concentrate around people and never cease to threaten them. Nothing of this is mentioned in the Bible - except for some later folklore-like additions to the traditions. They have most likely been taken over during the time Jewry was in contact with Zoroastrianism. I think I have the right to conclude, that the demons so abundantly mentioned in the Qu'ran originated from what existed as jewish folklore in Muhammad's time. I hope you do not mind if I speak freely now. Based on the fact that the complex of demonology which is an intrinsic part of islamic theology - which, as I have just pointed out, existed in folkloric form among the Jews after their return from exile in Babylon - appears in the Qu'ran not only as if it had come straight from heaven - which is beyond my right to dispute - but it leads also to the wrong conclusion, that the belief in demons had been an integral part of Judaism's theology. This has induced many modern researchers to conclude that the bedouin world at the time of Muhammad mistakenly accepted much of a secondary traditional folklore as if it were the true essence of Judaism. What I want to say with this, Professor, is that although the Qu'ran is a revelation from Allah, with regard to what I have just now said, certain human factors must have influenced the Prophet when he compiled the Holy Book; or in other

words: he must have mixed into what had been revealed to him elements which he had heard people tell around the campfires".

"Be careful", Akbar Ahmed said angrily. "Your words could easily be called blasphemous". He quietened down after a short pause. "But I know that you could not have meant any disrespect, for I know you as a serious scholar and a true believer. I know that you harbour respect for Islam in your heart, and that you only repeat the words of less honest men. Don't let these men lead you astray. Don't allow them to corrupt you. Do not forget that the essence of Islam has been revealed to us from God, though not by God himself. Take it as a fact outside any discussion that he Prophet, blessed be his name, received the Qu'ran by divine revelation. You know that God is sovereign, that he governs the Universe. Know also that he is unpredictable, inscrutable, unknowable, unaccessable. Allah is accountable to no one. Call Islam a theocracy if you want, because Allah is everywhere; but never compare it with pantheism. We know that the Qu'ran has been given to us by Allah. We Moslems know, therefore, that the Qu'ran tells the truth and nothing but the truth. How could it be otherwise", again his voice rose in anger, "considering that its contents have been told to our Holy Prophet in the name of Allah by the Angel Gabriel ? All the contradictions to which you and your references point, have their cause either in the Jews hiding certain parts of the revelation they have received, or in their having falsified - whether knowingly or unknowingly is not important - their own scriptures".

I felt it wise to change the topic.

"Am I entitled to say, that there is a further difference insofar as Judaism presents itself as a religion with a mission carrying a destiny to be fulfilled by example and persuasion, while Islam is a religion with a mission to be fulfilled by the acquisition and wielding of great power ? And can we say, that the two religions are destined, if not to clash at least to disagree because each of them believes it alone has been appointed to carry the divine will and has been entrusted to be mankind's destiny ?"

He pondered a few seconds before he replied.

"You will be surprised, David, to hear me say, that contrary to most Moslems, in particular the clerics, I see in Judaism the mother religion of Islam; and that I accept the State of Israel as the expression of Allah's will. The State of Israel could not have come into existence, had Allah not willed it. Whereas Allah has always the wellbeing of mankind at heart, and Islam has been appointed the guardian of mankind's wellbeing, the recreation of

the Jewish State can only have been willed by Alah for the benefit and the ultimate predominance of Islam".

He gestured that he did not want to be interrupted.

"Let me expand my thoughts a little further. I see Islam as the political directive - in the way Judaism is an ethical one - of how we all, men and women, have to act in our duty to fulfill Allah's will. Look back into history ! From the first day of its existence Islam has at every stage fulfilled its duty to Allah mainly, if not exclusively, by being a political force. Islam, from the moment it became established, dominated states and empires. Judaism, in order to justify its existence, has used its spirtual-intellectual strength, starting with its prophets and continuing with its scientists and Nobel Prize winners. The strength of Islam is only realized when it's religion is the mainstay of a strictly governed state system, while the strength of Judaism lies in its tradition and history, in its belief of having been divinely selected and appointed - and in its daily prayer since nearly 2ooo years that its statehood be re-established. That the latter has come to pass now, should in my opinion - mind you it is my personal opinion - not be the reason for enjoyment and relaxation, but should be perceived as an awe-inspiring warning, as the imposition on the Jewish people of a great duty and responsibility".

I was very much impressed by what he had said; I have never before nor since heard a Moslem intellectual express himself in this mysticism-hinting way. I told him so. Although I would have liked to pursue the matter, I feared I might abuse his frankness and spoil the friendly-intimate relationship which existed between us at that moment; for I had perceived in the movements of his hands and head something of a warning gesture. I felt it wiser, therefore, to change the subject.

"Tell me, please, Professor, whether you perceive difficulties or objections because the Qu'ran is not only written but also always recited in Arabic. Does this not represent a difficulty for the majority of Moslems who do not speak arabic ?"

"Why should there be any objections ? According to the Holy Qu'ran - read sura 33:6 - the wives of the Prophet are the mothers of Islam, the mother of all the Moslems. We know that these revered ladies spoke arabic. It logically follows, therefore, that arabic is the mother tongue of all Moslems. Who can object to praying in one's mother tongue ?"

Overcome by a sense of defeat I decided I could not ask for a more profound explanation. And so I put the next question.

"Explain to me, please, the philosophical or ideological principle underlying the institution of Ramzan, the yearly month of fasting ?"

"Islamic fasting means abstention from eating, drinking, smoking and other physical pleasures from about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours before sunrise until after sunset. After the sun has set, you can eat as much as your heart desires. This sounds gruesomly difficult, but one gets soon adjusted to eating no more than one hearty meal in the evening and another lighter one shortly before the fast starts again the following morning".

"Has it been your experience that during the month of Ramzan a good Moslem who fasts is less fit - and possibly also less willing - to work or at least to follow his regular occupation ?"

"Of course, there is a certain handicap".

"Does this not damage the economy of the country, especially a country which is mainly moslem ? I cannot visualize a country in the world which can afford a reduction of output, a lowering of the standard of maintenance and so on for an entire month, that is by $8\frac{1}{2}\%$, every year".

"Even if this were so, what does this matter to a man's soul as long as he follows Allah's will and the Prophet's commands ?"

"One more question, Professor. Why is the fasting month not fixed once for all, instead of it occurring at a different time every year ?"

"All dates are fixed according to an established lunar calendar. The Haj - the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca - takes place on the 8th day of Dhu-al-Hijjal, the last month of the moslem year. The conclusion of the Haj is the Id-al-Adha, and at the end of Ramzan we have the Id-al-Fitr. All these dates, including the month of Ramzan, are not fixed in accordance with the Gregorian calendar, but with the lunar one. This is not unusual; as far as I know also the Jews follow the moon calendar. This is the reason why the holy month of Ramzan is shifted ahead by three weeks every year".

"Don't you feel inconvenienced by the yearly shift ?"

"Don't forget that Islam is a univeral religion, that it expands all over the world. Should Ramzan have been fixed according to the Georgian, that is the profane, calendar so that it happens at the same time and in the same season every year, this would have in perpetuity provided an easy time to those who live in one part of the world, and perpetual hardship to those who live elsewhere in a less pleasant climate. By the fact that the fasting month moves year by year, the discomfort due to seasonal factors is shared by all. This should serve you as another example for Islam's fundamental justice for all".

"I understand. This explains why also the Haj pilgrimage moves ahead by three weeks every year. Tell me, please, how does a good Moslem view the Haj ?"

"The performance of the Haj pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime is obligatory for every Moslem, men and women alike. Believe me, it is a terrifically impressive and moving experience. It is a pity that you cannot once live through it in Mecca. This would also have been the opportunity for you to see the Ka'aba. It is unfortunate that non-Moslems are not permitted to visit our holy places. As far as I know this kind of restriction has not existed in the past, as we know that Alexander the Great himself has once visited Mecca and the Ka'aba".

"Really ? I never read about this anywhere".

"You are right. None of the Greek sources mentions this visit, but this does not mean that it did not take place".

"This would prove that already some 2300 years ago the Ka'aba had been the goal of pilgrimages".

"Definitely so ! The Ka'aba has been a sanctuary since ancient times. To this day you can see the footprint made by Abraham when once he stood on the holy rock".

"It is indeed a pity I cannot see all this in person. It would be very interesting. It would have interested me also to observe the remarkable equalizing effect the Haj has on the classes and the races assembled in Mecca".

"Indeed this is so. All are equal in the holy places, for there is no class, no race, no colour prejudice in Allah's eyes".

"You know, Professor, just now the thought comes to me, that also Judaism has a similar kind of pilgrimage. But it is a far more extended one. In times past every Jew was expected to come to Jerusalem three times a year, year in and year out, at the time of the three important seasonal festivals. This obligation applied also to the Jews who lived far away in the diaspora. I can well imagine what a load and damage this had meant to the economy".

"Do not forget another facet of the impact on economy these pilgrimages had: for on these occasions the pilgrims had to pay a head tax which represented a welcome contribution to, perhaps a major part of, the income of the Temple Institution. Once upon a time this has also been the case with the Haj. Until recently every Haji had, on his arrival in Mecca, to pay an english gold sovereign to the House of Saud, but since the oil revenues have provided the Saudi king and his family at large with such enormous wealth, they can well afford to forgo this tax".

I started on a totally different track.

"In all my studies of the religions old and new I have never read of such an all-surmounting claim to a "special relationship' between God and man as in Islam. It is true that one of Judaism's main characteristics is what one may call an 'intimacy' with God, to reach which is the aspiration of the Hassidim for example. However, these mysticism-inclined and other cabbala-attached movements their relationship more in a profession of an intimate friendship with God based on an all-exclusive love for God - while in Islam this relationship is based on awe, and not rarely on terror".

"I think your definition rather superficial. In Islam man plays a secondary role. Man's relationship to God depends on God. Man has no claims on God. Obedience to Allah is the prerequisite. All and everything is referred to God. All that happens is in accordance with Allah's will. All the power and glory is Allah's. Allah is the God of Islam. A Moslem cannot object to or complain of any suffering which fate has made him undergo; nor can he ever give expression to doubts or to a disturbed conscience about things happening to him. He has in everything in life to be guided by the precepts of the Holy Qu'ran which make it clear to him, that God decides what is good for man, and that God knows what goes on in the heart of man".

"Has man no chance to call upon Allah for mercy ? Can man not change God's mind, deviate God's ire ? I notice that Allah is constantly referred to as the Sovereign Lord, as the 'Rabb', with man relating to him as a slave. I have nowhere found the fatherhood of God underlined, placed in the foreground, referred to in a Moslem's prayer, as is the case in the other two monotheistic religions".

"We do not have to refer to the so-called 'fatherhood' of Allah. We know Allah as the Master of the Universe. We submit to his mercy. We do not claim the rights of sons, and we do not think that we are entitled to demand something froom God as if he were our father. We never demand. Islam means that one is resigned to one's fate. Islam is a religion of submission; the Moslem submits to Allah, to whatever Allah in his sovereignty sees fit to do. Allah is indeed 'Rabb' and man is 'Abid', the slave. Therefore it is not for man to question what Allah inflicts upon him, nor his right to complain about Allah's sovereign will. I agree, that this may result in blind fanatism - and indeed this has in the past been the case among large sections of Moslems. But as we know, that whatever happens to a Moslem is done by a fiat of Allah, we submit and accept. Only the evildoers have to fear Allah; the true believer trusts in Allah's

mercy".

"Is there no softening of one's fate ?"

"We do not ask for this. 'Ihsan' is for us the highest principle. It means selfless benevolence for the sake of Allah. Allah is the All-Knowing, the All-Present. His 99 names are not even sufficient to express the uniqueness of his Being. Yes, man knows that Allah punishes those who do not obey his commands; but man should also know that in his dealing out punishment, Allah is also full of love. For Allah is everything; he is an absolute God".

"I have learned from the Qu'ran of all the punishments with which the evildoer is threatened. It is an impressive list. Can man at all avoid doing evil things ? Has such a power, such a faculty been implated in him? Let me go further and ask, if man is a priori good or bad ? Is evil only the absence of, the incliniation to the good, or is it as such and on its own right a predominant factor in the world ?"

"The human being harbours only relative good and relative evil. Only Allah is absolute good. Evil, the same as Good, is relative. Absolute evil des not exist. It is a fact that Satan, the principle of absolute evil, has been created by Allah; otherwise we would have to presume the existence of two gods, that an evil god exists besides Allah. Do you understand my reasoning ? We know that we shall after death have to undergo severe punishment for all the evil things we did in life. However, some of the punishment is meted out to man already in his lifetime: whenever we suffer a loss, an illness or any kind of misfortune while still in this world, we may with justification presume that we shall have to suffer less in the next one".

"Your words confirm what I have thought since time. I am impressed by the degree the Moslem's life, in all its aspects, is ruled by his religion".

"It is so. Our Prophet Muhammad, the same as Moses and Jesus, was a law-giver. He has styled the prolific legislation which from the onset regulates the life of the Moslem. It is specific for the Moslem, that his life is regulated by his religion according to the teaching and the tennets of the Prophet's Holy Book, which is further supplemented by later rulings on certain problems which arose in the early stage of Islam, and which is reinforced by the elaborate code of law which came into existence during the Middle Ages."

Before I could follow up with a question, he continued:

"Let me outline, also in reply to some of your former questions, the five main principles of Islam as they have been defined by one

of our wise men:

1. It is God's will that human society is hierarchically arraigned. The islamic society is a body of values is the ideal realm which has Allah at its centre.
2. The Sharia, the sacred law, has to be fulfilled by man - but in reality is never fulfilled.
3. The followers of the faith should show a consensus in the performance of religious practices.
4. Between the Shariah and the Umma - the 'ideal ought to be' - stands the Sunna of the Prophet which is both actual and ideal, is in history and yet eternal, the perfect characterization of the ideal.
5. The "Stream of Being" which was activated and led by the Prophet in the 7th century has grown into a community and a history endowed with a distinct ideology and many appropriate institutions.

"I hope you have understood word for word what I have just now recited. These five principles will provide you the means with which you can on your own answer the questions you have raised".

I could not tell him that I had not at all understood what he had recited; but as there might be the possibility that by reading up the author on my own, I might comprehend the complicated message Akbar Ahmed seemed to think the five rules contained, I asked him for the name of the author. He name he gave me was Ismail Razi-ul-Farooq.

"I am full of admiration for Islam, and in particular for your Prophet", I told Akbar Ahmed on one occasion.

"Why ? You must have come to this judgement after comparing him with Moses and Jesus, I suppose".

"What impressed me most is, that Muhammad has remained a mortal man all his life; he has not been deified, and no monuments have been erected in his honour. But above all I consider him so great, even extraordinary, because he was a simple man, had not received the education Moses was granted in Pharao's palace, nor that which Jesus received in his seminary. And still he had succeeded in building up such an overpowering faith and in layimg the foundation for such an impressive political, social and legal structure".

"Our Prophet, blessed be his name, was a human being allright, a mortal being indeed. The reason he was an extraordinary, an unusual being was due to his harbouring the 'Tanzil', that which communicates the will of Heaven to man on earth. He was not divine

himself. Islam rejects the christian concept of incarnation, of sanctification and of deification. Muhammad was a man of great intellect, wisdom, integrity and energy. He knew how to talk with the elements of nature. He held conversations with the invisible reality beyond all visible things. He spoke to God through the Angel Gabriel. He was a mystic, but he did not withdraw from reality. His remuneration was the knowledge that he lived, and was going to live, in the shadow of Allah".

"Islam gives value and honour also to other prophets".

"Yes, we do. Preceding Prophet Muhammad there have been other prophets. A long chain of prophets, extending from Adam onwards, had been necessary all through the development of the human race, because the message of each one of them had been misunderstood or falsified. Because in his wisdom Muhammad has immediately on hearing them put God's words into writing the Qu'ran, no further prophet is necessary. And in addition we Moslems know only too well, that Muhammad the Prophet is superior to any of the prophets who has preceded him. Muhammad is the Prophet who has been sent as a messenger, as one of his titles, that of 'Rasul', indicates. He is the last prophet to be sent by Allah, because through him Allah has already sent his definite and ultimate message".

Some of the above questions I had here and there also addressed to other Moslems, but for various reasons I find the answers I received from Akbar Ahmed more worthy of recording here than what I learned from the others. His reply to my question what difference he sees between the Qu'ran and the Bible, is an exception due to its lack of substance; that is to say, his reply was another set of phrases which did not answer what I had asked.

Instead I find the one I received from a lawyer I had met in Hamid's house, more interesting.

"Explain to me, please", I had asked him, "why there is such a profound difference in the way the Bible and the Qu'ran report the identical narratives and myths. For instance, referring to Abraham's sacrifice of his son, the Bible says that Isaac, and the Qu'ran that Ismail had been the intended victim."

"Does the Bible not say that 'the oldest son' had to be sacrificed to God ? And was not Ismail Abraham's oldest son ? And also with regard to the 'only son' of which the Bible speaks, there should not be any diveristy of opinion: God gave his order at a time when Isaac was not yet born. This answer should satisfy you from a logic as well as from a historic point of view".

"Yes, Sir", I assured him. "I have understoood how the

difference of interpretation could have arisen"

"By the way", he added, "this instance you cite, is among other similar ones cited by our theologians as proof, that much in your Bible has been falsified for some reason or other".

It was no always plain sailing, as the expression goes. Most of the Maulvis, the moslem clergy, I met now and then socially, were disinclined to come into a conversation with me. I have the impression that this was not so much due to hostility of these portly elderly men, nor to their reluctance to air theological matters with a young foreigner, as to their fear that their their poor mastership of the language, along with their one-sided education and their lack of a general philosophical backgound, might put them at a disadvantage.

However, one of them, a younger man who was no exception to what I have just now said about the maulvis, proved to be less of a religious fanatic and national zealot than most. He had a Ph.D. philosophy from London University, which made him more amenable to my request for elucidation.

"I have been impressed by the elaborate ritual which accompanies your prayers", I told him "Could you explain it to me ?"

"We pray five times a day. The wording of the prayers is exactly detailed. After the routine prayer the believer may add his own prayer in his own words. Prayers are only valid when the prayer is in a state of purity. It must, therefore, be preceded by ablutions. The way and the sequence in which the washings have proceed are also clearly prescribed: they have to be applied to the hands, to the mouth, to the nose, to the ears, to the arms and to the feet. With every step in the ablutions the appropriate blessing has to be pronounced. Also in the way we pray an exact ritual of bending, rising and prostrating which has to be followed to the minutest detail. Only at a funeral service inside the mosque are the prayers performed without a change in the upright position. Every step and every movement has a deeper meaning; but it will hardly interest you to hear about them in detail. Let me mention, by the way, that most all of the prayer ritual, and of the washings which precede it, have according to tradition been performed in this way and in this sequence by our Holy Prophet. For this reason they have been made into a permanent ritual to be followed for all eternity".

"Has a Moslems to pray in the company of other Moslems, that is to say, is there the need of a gremium to make the prayers

effective, as is the case in Judaism and Christianity ?"

"A Moslem has not to pray in the company of others or in a mosque. Allah is everywhere. Therefore a Moslem can pray anywhere. If most of the Moslems will prefer to congregate in a mosque for Friday prayers, it is mainly due to custom or for the sake of company or to hear a sermon. The sermons are in form of a lecture of often high standard. But you must not compare a mosque with a church nor the Friday with the christian Sunday or the Jewish Sabbath. For us Friday is not a day of rest - except when by order of the civil government, that is on the basis of legislation, a day of rest is prescribed for every community in the land. Otherwise business activities and work are suspended around noontime for the time it takes to say the prayers".

"I must confess", I told my professor on one occasion, that I am intrigued by what I have learned from reading about Sufism. Although I have read a lot about this mystic islamic movement, there is still much which is not clear to me. Do you think it is possible for me to meet a member of this sect ?"

"It is no secret that there a few Sufis among us here in London, but they are reluctant to make themselves known, because they are judged heretics by the orthodox moslem community. It would be useless to even try to contact one of them, as they will not agree to talk with outsiders about their belief system".

"I must know all there is to know about sufism, Professor. I am sure you can tell me what I would very much like to know".

"I shall do my best, David. As you must have found already, Sufism has much in common with other mystic movements. It is essential a deeper interpretation of Islam, an experience in his inner person of the Limitless Infinite. It evolved first as an ascetic sect. Later on, strongly influenced by neo-platonism, by christian and jewish mysticicism, it became a mystic movement. Mystic Sufism started in the 12th century. However, this was not the first mystic movement among Moslems. We know it has been preceded by the Wadis, who can be called the original moslem mystics. Most of them were ascetics. I am certain that Allah had equiped these ascetics with miraculous power. The Wadis must have been in direct contact with Allah.

"You should know that in Islam great ascetics as well as great mystics are, and always have been, great teachers; that they are supermen endowed with great piety, superior religious knowledge and remarkable fortitude. The Wadis could change the weather, heal the sick, pave the way to paradise. When moved to do so, they were

be willing to intervene with Allah on behalf of the faithful.

"The Sufis have followed in the footsteps of the Wadis. At first they were only a losely knitted community of teachers and their disciples, but soon they formed into a closely knit fraternity ruled by a strict discipline. They know various ways to give expression to their mystic beliefs; but the first and principal such expression is through the intensity of their prayers".

"Are there schools of Sufism ?"

"Sufism, like all other mystic currents within an organized religion cannot be taught, but has to be transferred by a Master to a disciple".

"You said that Sufism is not favourably looked upon by the islamic hierarchy. Why is this so ?".

"No, it is not. It is mainly so, because Sufism is seen as a reaction against the legalism and the legalistic rigidities of the law schools of Islam. It may interest you to know, that one can perceive within Sufism the influence of Zoroastrianism as well as Judaism and Buddhism. 'I am the truth', a Sufi may say in his ecstasy, or 'I am he whom I love and he whom I love is I'. The negative attitude of orthodox Islam to Sufism will be comprehensible to you, after a Sufi has told you that he has more in common with Zoroastrianism and Buddhism than with Islam".

"But he is a fervent Moslem, is he not ?"

"Sufism says of itself that it represents the profoundest possible interpretation of Islam. Once upon a time the Sufi Brotherhood has exerted a formidable influence on the cultural history of Islam and on the moral life of the Moslems. There are certain parts of the Moslem world where they have still retained their ancient glory. In the past the Moslems had great respect for the Sufis, but mainly this was so because they did not understand them. The Sufi is today even less understood by both the layman and the maulvi. I must confess, that I have noticed this to be so, because at times one can detect a certain pantheistic streak in the thinking of the Sufi. One should not wonder about this. The Sufis' path to salvation leads from a beatific vision of God to absorption into God. Even in our days can a Sufi reach a very exalted state of ecstasy. He believes that the words he utters in such a state are not his, but have been put into his mouth by Allah. This makes him identify himself with Allah. 'I went from God to God until some voice called in me "Oh you"', thus a Sufi once expressed his experience. The Sufis of today are kept under stricter control than before. They form today a brotherhood of men aiming at sainthood; of men who are dedicated to the service

and enjoyment of God; of men who claim that their mystic experience brings Allah nearer and nearer until he will finally dwell in the human heart. This is the way by which the Sufis try to answer all questions which never cease to be asked and which have already been asked some 800 years ago by men like Avicenna, Averero and al-Gazi".

"What you have told me just now about the Sufis' intense love for and the identification with God, has impressed me very much".

"They are truly obsessed with their love for Allah", the Professor continued. He seemed not to have heard me. "And they think it entitles them to call themselves "Friends of Allah". They think also, that as friends of Allah they may do things which are forbidden to others. This explains the frequent trespasses and excesses of which the Sufis are accused by outsiders, for they themselves think that being a Friend Allah will not punish them whenever they commit what is for others a sin. It can go so far, that some Sufis do not think it wrong to commit thefts and even adultery, or that they get drunk on wine because they have a friend in Allah.

"Let me give you a wider description, David. The mystic divests himself of all obligations and restrictions. His notions are romantic at times, negative occasionally and allegoric to a great deal; but he is always guided by piety, devotion and higher directed thoughts. I have already mentioned 'Ihsan'. To the Moslems it is the highest principle of benevolence. The doctrine of 'Ihsan' is most intensively cultivated by the Sufis".

"It seems to me that there is nothing in Sufism which is not also a characteristic of mysticism in general", I interrupted him. "The same kind of thinking and acting you can find also in jewish and christian mystics".

"I agree. This is indeed so. Sufism is no less strongly influenced by Neoplatonism than jewish and christian mysticism. One can say the same also about Ismailism. As an indication of this let me hint, that the Sufi looks for the eternity hidden in his soul. He expects that after death his soul, like that of the 'Knowers' - that is the philosophers and the intellectuals - will merge with the 'Active Intellect', while the soul of those who know the truth but act against it, will end in hell, and that the souls of all others will simply perish".

I had by now become convinced that Professor Ahmed was himself a Sufi, or at least a lay follower of Sufi beliefs and practices. I was afraid to continue my probing, as I understood now that an earlier remark of his about a Sufi being reluctant to discuss his

beliefs and doctrine in depth, was meant as a warning to me.

I asked him instead if there are any reform movements in Islam.

"Hardly any in the sense your question implies", was his reply. "Reform movements which would modernize and liberalize the strict rules of Islam do not exist. Their followers would without exception be immediately excommunicated as heretics. For instance, there is a sect, the Qadianis so named after the town in North India where their founders lived in the early part of this century - who believe that in thei rmidst a new prophet of Islam has arisen. They are otherwise good and obedient Moslems. But since they lost the help and protection they enjoyed from the British until Pakistan became an independent State in 1948, they are severely persecuted. On the other hand you can call the 'Fundamentalists' reformers, but of the opposite direction. Take for instance the Wahabis who dominate Saudi Arabia. The Arabs call them 'Muwahibidin'. Their endeavour to restore a pure and literal interpretation of every word in the Qu'ran can indeed be called a reform movement. In some way they are identical with the Unitarians of Christianity. They teach that salvation and damnation are in Allah's hands. They preach that no saints, no prophets, no faqirs can intervene in Allah's plans or decisions. This is the reason why the cult of saints' graves, or graves in general, is anathema to them. You will not find in Saudi Arabia cemeteries with gravestones; the dead are buried in the sand somewhere and no trace of them is left".

In this way four weeks passed. I had dedicated most of this time to a concetrated study of Islam, its theology, its history, its philosophy and its sociology. With the help of these studies I tried to find an answer to the all-overriding question: what mewssage does Islam contain, what solution to human problems has Islam to offer ? Looking back now I can say, that I have never before in my life pursued a program with such an intensity. I gladly acknowledge, that my efforts and their outcopme had been greatly supported and facilitated by the men and women who had begun to identify with my curiosity, and had slackened my thirst for knowledge. My thanks are in particular due to Hamid, Naz and Akbar Ahmed.

At this moment I realize with surprise, that I had at no time ever had a sense of 'otherness' with regard to the men and women I met in London in that month, whether they came from Egypt or Algeria, from Pakistan or Afghanistan.

On the other hand I must confess, that during my first days in London I had felt different from - even repulsed by - the coloured people with whom I had come into contact in some form or other; and that I had felt perturbed by my inability to reason away these sensations. I had grown up in Brooklyn and have shared schoolbenches and playgrounds with children of janitors and streetcleaners, cooks and artisans. I have always been 'colourblind', and while I found objectionable the trend of the majority of the British to range the coloured people below par, I had begun to sense an empathy grow up in me for those who slandered anybody with a pigmented skin.

You can imagine, therefore, that at the time I had begun to think of terminating my stay in London, and when I surveyed the days and weeks I had spent in the British Metropolis, I welcomed with great relief the realization, that I had developed such a great respect, even an affection, for my new friends and acquaintances; and that I had accepted it as natural to think, that very many of them were in many aspects superior to very many Americans and Europeans of the same social and educational background and of the same intellectual level.

My mind was made up. I was decided to continue with my program with which I had set out from home. I was going to Israel, where I was sure to find the right environment for me to continue my education in the hope to reach the maturation of my conception of the purpose and aim of our life. I was in no hurry; I had all the time I wanted to spend on my program. Neither had I any obligations. I decided, therefore, to spend a few weeks, or even months, traveling through Europe before finally starting on my program in Israel. I had been living frugally so far, and was going to do so also in future. I was going to stay within my budget, and was determined not to touch my investments in the States.

My friends expressed their regrets when I told them about my decision. They showed also great understanding. I could leave with their and my satisfactory knowledge, that my horizon had been enlarged and my mind grown with their help and in their company. We all sincerely hoped that we would one day soon - Insh'allah - meet again.

The last evening before my departure for the Continent - I was to take an early plane next morning for Norway - I spent with

Naz and Hamid. I appreciated it as a sign of the maturity of our friendship that on both sides there was none of the sadness and regrets which are common in farewell meetings. We were grateful to have known each other, certain to meet again and appreciated the many things we had in common.

On that last evening Hamid confessed with some embarrassment that he had been unhappy since some time because "...you must have wondered, my friend, why I did not make you the most natural offer, namely to invite you to Pakistan, where islamic studies are on a very high level, where I could introduce you to the appropriate circles, and where we have a large family which could have looked after you. Our affection for you obliges me to talk frankly to you. We were afraid that such a visit in these times might have exposed you to much unpleasantness from the moment you arrive in Pakistan. Even my warmest personal recommendations would not have prevented this. You are a keen student of religious matters, an ardent enquirer into human nature - and you are a Jew. You would soon have aroused the suspicion of the Authortities - and with regard to official narrowmindedness our Authorities are second to none - and you might have been accused of spying. I am sorry to confess that this is the situation in these days - and Naz and I are very sorry that this is so. Go on with your program. Keep in touch. In 2-3 years I shall retire from Government service and return home for good. It is high time I do so. My family estate has been neglected for far too long. When we are back in Pakistan, even if by that time you have completed your studies, come to us as our guest. I can assure you that none of us will regret your decision".

On the way to the Holy Land.

I spent the following three months on the Continent. I visited the four scandinavian countries. I traveled through Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland and Italy. 'I enjoyed every minute', as the saying goes, for I was under no pressure, had no duty to perform. It was easy to come into conversation with people - very often the contact was initiated by others.

It impressed me very much, that wherever I went I found dissatisfaction among the resident nationals and unhappiness among the newly immigrated of which there was an abundance in ever country. The French complained about the 'Nordaffs' - the north-african immigrants from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria. The Swiss were unhappy with their portuguese and italian 'Gastarbeiter'. The Dutch and Belgians cursed the Surinamese and the Congolese in their midst. I saw discontent everywhere. I did not discover anybody anywhere who cared to pursuit a deeper interest in life; everybody everywhere appeared either struggling to 'making ends meet', or to care only for material pleasures. I found hardly anybody among the people with whom I talked - and I talked with, to and at many people and often for a long time - who could tell me what purpose they saw in a person's life, what meaning they had personally found in and for their existence, except that of satisfying their bodily needs.

(David told us in the course of many hours, and often in great detail, about his experiences on the Continent of Europe. He spoke of the social, the sociological and psychological conditions in Europe as he perceived them during his sojourn there. My wife and I were deeply impressed by his unusual approach and his mature insight. He was the only 'tourist' of whom I know he has not been attracted by monuments and antiquities exclusively; who had not spent his time on sightseeing tours and in nightclubs. He was only interested in living people. Traveling and tourism meant to him

searching for and the acquisition of intellectual knowledge, of insight into the way various people and peoples lived and thought. Every human being he encountered was for him a potential object of study. Everywhere he mixed with the common people. He described to us in detail certain unusual personalities he had met. He somehow knew to discover such unusual characters wherever he went. I suppose that in the same way we ourselves had felt an immediate liking for the good-looking, friendly, reserved and unpretentious young man, also those with whom he communicated or associated must have felt impressed and attracted. As a rule he avoded contact with tourists, except for students abroad on their vacations, whom he met in youth hostels and small hotels; and whom he knew to make feel comfortable in his presence, so that they did not mind to communicate to him their thoughts and impressions. With the help of such contacts he often gained an easy and immediate entry into intellectual leading and politically influential circles. His contacts often led to unusual experiences and interesting adventures with the description of which he entertained us for many an evening.

As I told you in the beginning, there are so many things which David told us and which could be of interest to you too, but as I do not want to stress and strain your attention span anymore than necessary, and as I do not want David's story to turn into a travelogue, I better do not make his stay in Europe a part of David's tale. There may be a future opportunity when I can tell you this part of David's story. At this stage I want to reach quickly and at last the really important part of his life - that story which is in truth the justification for this long tale. I am sure you are going to agree with me.

I shall allow now David to take up his narrative.)

A kind of disappointment, possibly mixed with sadness, had come over me by this time. I noticed growing up within me the feeling, that I was witnessing an irresistibly progressing decay of this once flourishing and important part of the world.

And so I came finally to the conclusion that I had seen enough of Europe to form my own opinion. Except for Jugoslavia I did not travel into the communist East. I would have liked to peep behind the 'Iron Curtain', but the travel agents, and above all the American Consul I consulted in Rome, advised against what they thought might turn into a risky adventure. They all pointed out that in Soviet Russia and her satellite countries I would not be allowed that kind of visiting and that kind of personal contacts which were basically the only interesting and important purpose of my travels.

Neither did I set foot on German and Austrian soil. I feared that I would not be able to face with sufficient equanimity that self-righteousness and that self-satisfaction, that smugness and that amnesia, samples of which I had frequently been able to taste among the foreign undergraduates in Brooklyin College, and far more so here and there on my journey among the ubiquitous German and Austrian tourists. I may have been wrong, and my judgement may

have been too harsh - but this was the state of my mind after I had been in conversation here and there with singles or with groups of people whom I associated with the crimes of the Nazi era.

Finally I reached Greece which has so much to offer people like myself even though I had no classical education.

My plan was to travel from Athens to Israel - to the next stage of my education.

I had, of course, regularly written to Bubbe Sorele, to Uncle Bert and Lea, to Esther and to the one or other of my other family members in New York, to keep them informed of my whereabouts and of my travel plans. From Athens I wrote to them that within a week I was going to be in Israel, and would at last see Uncle Moshe Chaim and his wife. To the latter I wrote that I was soon going to be a guest at their table.

But I changed my plans. I changed them quite drastically.

In Athens I met a group of French students who invited me to join them and to travel with them to Egypt. Induced by the thought that it might be interesting to meet some Egyptians, I agreed to accompany them to Cairo. After all, Egypt was not too much out of my way.

I found Egypt very disappointing. I do not mean the dirt and the uncontrolled greedy crowds, nor the corrupt officials and the disorganized traffic. I mean the degradation of the dignity to which a person is entitled, the humiliation of the values a human being represents, by those who claim the right to issue the rules. I mean the miserable masses who in their submission to Allah's will do not mind facing a life of neglect and poverty. I mean the cruel organs of state who abuse their power. I mean the strident arguments of the Fundamentalists to which one is exposed everywhere. And finally I mean the impossibility to get a straight answer and an honest explanation on anything and everything due to the thick overlay of political polemics - mostly in the form of hatred for anything jewish and israli - which obscured the mind and dimmed the vision of the educated Egyptians. I was surprised to see that even the intellectual elite did not feel degraded when their political judgement was disfigured by the view they had through their antisemitic spectacles.

And again I postponed by journey to Israel.

In the waitingroom of the American Consulate in Cairo I came into conversation with a cultured couple from Boston. She was a free-lance journalist and he was engineer who had just completed his work on a project near the Aswan Dam. They were on their way to a new engagement in India. The couple was going to spend a few days in Turkey before proceding to India.

Our conversation continued that evening during dinner in their apartment. Their description of life and conditions in Turkey - where they had been living and working a few years before on an engineering project, and where they were now going to visit old friends - was attractive enough to induce me to make an excursion to Istambul, and to contemplate even a journey to India. I was in no hurry to visit Israel - I discovered with surprise - nor of returning to America yet. It was suddenly the most natural thing for me to follow the American couple's advice and spend a few days in Turkey - and possibly to proceed from there to India. Suddenly I had the inner certainty that a visit to India had since long, from the very onset of my journey, been my true and primary goal.

In Cairo and in Istambul I realized once more, and more than ever even, how great is the number of travelers, explorer, tourists, adventurers - call them what you like - who are on the move all over the world. I encountered a large number of young men and women who had been to India already, and who were willing to give me advice and guidance. Possibly the best advice I got - as I was going to find out - was not to arrive in India dressed as a 'Wanderbursche' in shorts, open shirt and sandals, but 'dressed as much as possible in the disguise of a gentleman', as an english merchant, whom I had met in the lobby of my hotel, expressed himself. The way the Indian Authorities of any grade behave to a tourist is very much influenced by the way the visitor is dressed, I was told. It is starkly negative and often rude to those dressed in shorts and sweat shirts with sandals on their naked feet, and a rucksack on their back their only luggage. While traveling through Europe this had indeed been my comfortable attire for the last few months. I was glad to receive this advice as I had grown tired of my sloppy and untidy appearance; and I gladly accepted the sartorial advice proffered to me from various sides. I bought two sets of 'safari outfits' consisting of a white and a khaki bushshirt and long white

cotton trousers. I competed my outfit with a few shirts and a sturdy but comfortable pair of shoes. My spare clothes, underwear and shorts, as well as my other belongings, I packed into a holdall of appropriate size.

I was glad I was decently dressed when I was interviewed by an Indian Consul in Istambul. He may at first have seen in my a potential drug user if not trafficker, but he soon enough accepted my credentials as a 'student on his sabbatical' after he had scrutinized my passport and had counted with due appreciation my impressive stock of traveler cheques.

My string of luck continued. I learned from a sympathetic girl in the American Express office that around the same time as I intended to fly to India also a passenger-carrying cargo boat was going to leave Istambul for Bombay. It had eight passenger cabins and one of these was still available. The Captain was willing to take me along. The fare was not excessive, though somewhat higher than a tourist class ticket would have cost. But at that moment the price was to me less important than the thought that I was going to enjoy a ten days' period of complete rest and relaxation, as well as the to me unusual experience and opportunity top spend these ten days among and with a kind of people I had not met and known before.

The young Indian Captain and his officers made a good impression. Their self-assurance did not interfere with their politeness. They were capable and disciplined. My co-pasengers on board the ship, Indian students and workers returning home, proved good company. I enjoyed this first sea-journey of mine very much, except for two days of bad weather which tossed the boat about and in addition thoroughly spoiled my appetite. I had long and informative talks with officers and members of the crew and with the passengers; and you may be sure that my curiosity about India and her people was thereby still further increased.

We spent a day each in Port Said and Suez when passing through the Canal; and the officials and hawkers I came across ashore, though apparently a different breed from those I had met in Cairo, not only did not change but even still further reinforced my negative opinion of Egypt and the Egyptians.

All this added to my elation that I was leaving Europe and Asia behind me.

And finally I am going to mention two episodes, with which I want to complete my impressions of Egypt.

Strolling through Cairo's main bazar I entered a shop to buy a shirt. I could chose from a large selection of shirts exhibited on tables or hanging from the walls. I had no experience regarding the quality of the textiles used for shirts in Egypt, and I approached two female customers whose dress and appearance suggested they were europeans - and from whose conversation they conducted with the shopkeeper in english I deduced they were mother and daughter - who had bought large quantities of dresses, shirts, trousers, household linens etc.

"Excuse me, my lady", I approached the older one, a slim woman of about forty-five years. "May I ask your advice whether the colours of this shirt are waterproof ?"

"You mean whether they will run in the wash ? You may rest assured they won't. I bought some such shirts on my previous visits here, and as you see some make up also my today's purchases".

I thanked her for her help. I wondered whether they were Jews, especially as the older one wore a whig of the kind New York's orthodox Jewesses do. But I refrained from further questions.

In the afternoon I met the two women again in a bazar. They appeared to have continued their buying spree. I greeted them and they stopped me.

"You are an American Jew ?", the older one asked.

"Yes, I am an American Jew; and I supposed you are too Jewish and from the States ?"

"No", she laughed. "My daughter and I are from Denmark but we live now in Israel".

"I shall visit Israel soon, I hope. I have been wondering, whether - considering what I saw you buy in that shop - there is a shortage of that kind of stuff in Israel".

"Not at all. You can buy anything you want and need in Israel, as long as you have the money".

"And why...."

"Here in Egypt all the stuff we bought - most is meant for the dowry of my daughter who is going to marry soon - is much cheaper than in Israel. I would estimate it costs about half the price we would have to pay for it in Israel. We come here on an average every half year or so to buy what we need for ourselves and our household".

"But you have to add customs duties and other expenses".

"We are lucky. We have never paid customs, and hopefully shall

not pay any also this time".

"Do you as Israelis experience any difficulties with the people of Egypt ? I have been told Israelis are not the people the Egyptians are keen to have as friends.

"Perhaps not as friends but certainly as customers. In our case this is no problem either, as the egyptian shopkeepers do not know we are Israelis, not even that we are Jews, as we come here on danish passports".

The other encounter I am going to mention in a few words has been less pleasant, or let say less harmless.

In the lobby of my hotel I came into conversation with a man who proudly declared himself to belong to the 'Moslem Brotherhood'.

"What is the Moslem Brotherhood ? What does it stand for ? Could you define it for me, please".

"You are an American, as I learned from the Receptionist ?"

"This is so. I am an American".

"Then let me give you the first definition of what we say and are: We do not like foreigners, and more than any of them - except for Jews and Israelis - we dislike Americans".

"I am sorry to hear this. But an important religious and political movement as I suppose your's is, can hardly be based on such a program only. I assume, you aspire to much else in the field of religion and politics".

"You are right. Of course we have a definite program. Islam is our program. It is our program to make Islam reign over the world. When this time arrives, and if Christianity and Judaism realize and recognize this basic fact, we shall permit them to survive and to live in security and confidence - but only in the protective shadow of Islam".

"Why then are you so much opposed to Jews and Israelis; and why do you so strenuously oppose all the ongoing peace processes between the Arabs and Israel ?"

"Have you heard about the Hamas ?"

"Yes. I have heard that they are the main, the militant wing of the Moslem Brotherhood".

"You have heard allright. I belong to the Hamas. We hate the Jews. Allah's messenger, our Holy Prophet Muhammad, taught us that we have alweays to fight the Jews and whenever possible to kill them. It is written.... 'and the Jew will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will say 'O Moslem, the

Jew is hiding behind me, come and kill him'"

"This makes you object to a peace with Israel ?"

"The peace talks are no more than the appointment of infidels as judges over Moslem land. Our enemies are devilish clever; they use their immense wealth to set up clandestine organizations - such as Freemasons, the Rotary and Lions Clubs, Bnei Brith and others - to destroy our society and to help the Zionists. Let me repeat: Moslems have the sacred duty to kill as many Jews as possible".

"Why don't you go along with modern times ? I learned with surprise, that as strict fundamentalists you do not allow your women to help you in whatever program you have in daily life or also otherwise to be active in professions etc ?"

"You misunderstand the role of the Moslem woman; in daily life and especially in the wars of leading to Islam's victory she is no less important than the men, for she is a factory for producing warriors".

Finally I could leave Egypt and Europe. I had been glad to leave Europe. I had been greatly releaved by the thought that I was soon getting out of Egypt.

I was looking forward with great anticipation to the next few weeks. I experienced an inner certainty that I stood on the threshold of an important phase in my life. I felt not the slightest apprehension that I might meet with circumstances - or even dangers - which might interfere with my wellbeing.

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III.

ALONG THE BORDERS OF THE UNKNOWN.

A Case of Mistaken Identity.

For everything there is a beginning - and for everything there is also an end. At this stage of my story, and in this context, my wise statement applies to my journey on the good ship 'Himalaya' which had taken me to India. One afternoon, without having to specifically enquire, I concluded from the increased activities of the ship's crew and from the restlessness of some of the passengers, that we were about to enter the harbour of Bombay. And indeed, the Purser informed us during the evening meal, that we were 'making a landfall' early the following day. We were told to have our luggage and our documents ready after breakfast next morning, as we were to disembark soon after landing.

And thus it happened. Early next morning I was awakened by the cessation of the din of the ship's engines which had accompanied us day and night throughout the journey. After a shower and a shave I quickly dressed and ascended to the deck. The night was just ceding to the sun which I glimpsed sending its first rays over the horizon. I was disappointed - for we were not yet inside the harbour. I saw that the 'Himalaya' had anchored in the open sea. It was surrounded by a wall of mist, within the first few meters of which I could see nothing but the stretch of water around the ship. I could not see a shore line anywhere. The ship was swinging with the low waves, the rhythmic swish of which failed to have a soothing effect on my nerves. I asked a young sailor, who was leaning against a big metal casing from which the anchor chain emerged, why we had stopped and had not yet entered the harbour. In reply, the boy - who most likely did not speak english - grinned, lifted his shoulders and pointed to the east where I could perceive now outlined against the shore, at not too great a distance, the mist having begun to lift with the

help of the increasing breeze, a row of big and small ships. With the sun visibly rising minute by minute and the consequent accelerated disappearance of the mist, I could distinguish also what were undoubtedly the silhouette and the occasional lights of a big city. We had arrived in Bombay.

On of the passengers, an engineer who was on his journey home from a three years' job in Europe, passed by.

"It will take some time still. Better come along to the diningroom for a glass of tea and some breakfast. You can never know when you will have your next meal".

"A good idea", I replied and followed him down the stairs. After a quick meal I was back on deck. I leaned against the railing. I enjoyed the quietness around me, the stillness of the sea, the clearing of the mist, the pleasant breeze playing with my hair and shirt - and the thought that I was going to start on a new chaper of my journey. I asked one of the passengers who had joined me at the railing - he was a student returning home to Madras after having completed his studies of architecture at the University o Manchester, who during the last few days had made an unnecessarily great effort to bring home to me that he was a far more experienced sailor than I - why we were not moving, and he explained to me, in a wide-ranging summary of his past experiences, that we were waiting for the pilot to guide us into the harbour.

"There he is coming", he ended his expose' before it had ended. "It will not take long now before we can get down from the ship".

I looked in the direction to which his hand was pointing and saw at a distance a motorboat approaching at great speed. After a short time I could make out a group of some 5-6 men either standing or sitting in the motorboat. When the boat reached the side of our ship, a man - who I was told was the pilot - climbed up the ladder which had been lowered for him. He was received on board by the First Mate and taken to the steering house towering over the upper deck, while the other newcomers, two men in white uniforms with insignia on their shoulders and on their caps, as well as another man - dressed in civil clothes who carried a large shopping bag, as well as two policemen, resplendent in their freshly pressed khaki uniform and red-trimmed turbans, with a revolver pouch pendling from the belts, were received by the Purser and taken to his office.

"These fellows in white are the Passport Officer and the Doctor",

my informant told me. "The other one is their clerk. They have to check on us and on the crew too - as a rule this is just a formality and nothing more".

Soon the engines took up their rhythmic pounding again, though in a far less allegro tempo than the one I had got accustomed to. With a great rattling of the chains the two anchors were lifted. In less than an hour we were secured at the side of one of the quais in the harbour.

Not only had this been my first sea journey, but this was also the first time I found myself inside a harbour. Yes, you are right to think this a strange statement ! Although I was born and bred near the Atlantic, and although New York has a very big harbour and an enormous international maritime traffic, I had never evinced an interest - and neither had anybody else I knew - to visit one of the harbour basins and to watch the arrival and departure, the loading and unlaoding of the big ships. This is a pity, I realized now. For these goingson offer a grandiose spectacle indeed. The lack of interest and of appreciation in these our days is undoubtedly due to the predominance of the aeroplane - and also to the fact that the majority of the population of New York is not involved in any way with the seatrade.

I was fascinated by what I saw. I could distinguish in the distance the triumphal-arch-like 'Gateway of India' which I had seen depicted in the travel prospecti. Wherever I looked I saw ships of every possible shape and size. From and to these ships large amounts of cargo of every kind were transported by stevedores and coolies, by trollies and carts. I saw huge containers put, one on top of the other, onto the deck of some of the ships. I sensed that to do this a great skill ana special expertize were required to prevent them from toppling or from otherwise upsetting the balance of the ship. I saw nenormous nets, filled with merchantise of all possible kind, raised or lowered by the never tiring overhead cranes, disappear as if swallowed by, or emerge as if disgorged from the bowels of the ships.

No sooner had our ship been secured at the quaiside than our ship's officers and crew appeared to explode into a sudden hectic activity, accompanied by much running and shouting. I asked the First Mate, who was passing by, whether anything had gone wrong, but he assured me with a grin that this hustle and shouting were the normal expression of the excitement which accompanies every ship's

arrival in her home port.

The Purser emerged and asked us passengers to line up outside his office, at the entry of which stood one of the policemen as if on guard. We were admitted one by one. When it was my turn to enter the small office, I came face to face with the two officers seated behind a table, while the clerk occupied one of the table's narrow sides. Each of the officers had a sheet of paper in front of him, while the clerk busied himself with a large ledger. A big book took up the space between the Clerk and one of the oficers. Coffee cups, a whiskey bottle and a carton of cigarettes were also placed on the table.

All three men at the table replied politely to my greeting. One of the officers extended his right hand, but before I could shake it in the belief that he wanted to extend a friendly welcome, he said: "Your passport, please", and the other said "Your health certificate, please". I gave to the one my passport and to the other the certificate that I had received the prescribed immunizations against smallpox, cholera and the typhoids.

The first officer made sure that my face conformed with that shown on the passport's photo. He checked my name, number and what else he was looking for, with the entries on the sheet in front of him. For some reason he knew best, he raised against the light the page of my passport on which the entry visa to India had been stamped. Then he passed my passport on to the clerk to whom the Health Officer had already handed my health certificate. The clerk searched in the big book at his side whether my name had been registered therein - which, I suppose, contained the names of black-listed individual - and in case my name had been registered there, I would have been classified an unwelcome alien. When he failed to find my name he nodded towards the Passport Officer and bent over the ledger to labouriously enter my personalia therein. The Passport Officer gave me a friendly nod and asked me to wait outside. I refrained from asking for the return of my passport when I saw him add it, along with my health certificate, to the pile of those of the other passengers which I saw deposited on the table.

I had been the only foreigner on board the ship and the last of the passengers to be processed by the officials. Soon after I had left the office, the Clerk emerged and handed the bundle of passports and other documents to the policeman standing near us in front of the door. The Clerk told us that we were free to leave the ship, that we should take our luggage and follow the policeman.

I took my hold-all and my hat which I had deposited on a deckchair nearby, adjusted my shoulderbag and, dressed in my clean and - thanks to the Purser - well pressed suit, I arranged my straw hat and my sunglasses in the places of my skull for which they had been created. I was ready to leave. I waved to the Captain and the ship officers who were too busy for a more prolonged farewell, pressed what I considered the appropriate baksheesh into the hand of the Purser who had appeared at just the appropriate moment and had thereby freed me from my apprehension that I might have to leave without locating him. Then I joined the other passengers who, staggering under their load of suitcases, parcels and bundles had, along with the policeman been waiting for me at the head of the gangway. Slowly, carefully I descended the gangway and stepped onto the quai. I had arrived in India.

The sun had risen quite high by now. I noticed that it was getting hot. Also the humidity must have increased. Along with my companions I followed the policeman carrying our passports. The man was in no great hurry; he stopped every now and then to exchange greetings and/or news with some man here and there. As the others in my group did not object, but meekly and with a smile partecipated in their enjoyment of what must have been wisecracks of our official guardian, I thought it wiser not to interfere with what was in all likelihood a normal procedure - and tempo. (But in the end of our 'walk' I ignored the outstretched hand of the policeman into which everyone of my companions had deposited some money or at least a package of cigarettes).

After what must have been at least half an hour's 'walk' - or it may only have appeared to me to have lasted that long - we reached an imposing yellow-painted building. It was still within the precincts of the harbour and appeared, considering the busy coming and going - to house important government or shipping offices. We were shown into a large room, were told to take our seats and to wait until our individual names were called out. I saw 'our policeman' hand over our passports and other documents to a man seated behind a small windowed counter.

I sat down on one of the not very comfortable benches, placed my heat and shoulderbag on one side of me and my hold-all on the other side. I opened my jacket and shirt and leaned my head against the white-washed wall. It was hot. I tried to catch some of the breeze dispensed by the slowly revolving overhead fan by waving my

hat in front of me.

Along with me and the other passengers of the 'Himalaya', the room was nearly filled by about three dozen men, women and children, along with bundles, boxes and suitcases arranged in groups according to ownership. I was quite obviously an object of unconcealed interest to these fellow-occupants of the room who eagerly sought information about me from my traveling companions. At intervals of a few minutes a name was called and the owner of that name - usually accompanied by one or more family members - rose and approached the counter where he, she or they, after a more or les short conversation, received from the official behind the window their passports and other papers; and after having gathered their luggage they were admitted by the policeman at the door with the inscription 'Customs', to the adjoining hall. One by one also my fellow-travelers were 'processed' in this way, and each of them, before he disappeared behind the door leading to the adjoining hall, came to say goodbye and wish me a good time in India.

At last my name was called. And with this began what may appear to you a funny or strange interlude, but was going to bring for me, in every sense of the word, a decisive change in my life.

The official poked his head through the opening of the small window, and looking in my direction, shouted in a high-pitched voice:

"Prince David of Jersey ?"

Prince David !? Not David Prince or Prince, David - with a slight pause between the two words - but Prince David ? And what had 'of Jersey' to do with my name ? I wondered what it all meant while I rose from the bench and moved with my luggage towards the counter. Then I remembered that I was indeed born in Jersey City in New Jersey. My parents had at approximately the time I was born wasted a year on some disastrous business adventure and had decided, for reasons I did not know and never cared to find out, that Jersey City would be a suitable place. I had not known that the place of my birth had been entered into my passport.

I reached the counter behind which the official had withdrawn his head and upper body.

"Are you a prince, Sir ?", the man asked; his eyes, enlarged by his bifocals blinked rapidly at me. A bulbuous nose and a pencil-like moustache decorated his swarty face. In his effort to produce

a polite smile, the bethel-stained teeth and the fiery-red tongue became revealed, completing the colour-scheme of the not very attractive picture of the man.

"Yes, I am Prince, David", I replied.

"Welcome to Bombay, Sir ! Welcome to India, Sir !"

The fellow rose from whatever place of furniture he made use of to have him serve as a seat. He leaned forward in angle which allowed him to fill the entire window space with his upper torso. He lifted my right hand which I had placed on the counter, and shook it vigorously. I responded with a bow and a smile and with pressing his hand in return. I had difficulty to repress a shudder, because I had the sensation of having got hold of a fish. At that moment I learned my first lesson in India: not to apply the firm grip a boyscout is taught in America in response to a handshake, but to follow the custom of the land, and have my hand and that of the partner in the ceremony of greeting slightly touch each other by a near approach of the palms without the application of any force or the exhibition of any unwarranted strength. But you must not think that this "fishy manner" indicates an absence of warmth or cordiality. Not at all !

"Welcome, Sir ! Welcome !", he repeated. He grinned. He bobbed his head a few times. He withdrew his head and shoulders and resumed his seat. "Welcome, Your Highness !", he began anew from his seat behind the window. "I hope and pray you enjoy a happy time in my homeland, Sir". He pressed a stamp here and there into my passport and on my health certificate and handed me these back. Again he bobbed his head up and down, exhibited his stained teeth and his colourful tongue. I was far too bewildered to say anything. And why say anything at all ? Why should I worry about the fantasies in which this man indulged ? In all likelihood I was not going to see this man ever again in my life. And it was too hot to linger or to start a discussion. I replaced my hat, slipped my papers into the sidepocket of my jacket, adjusted my shoulderbag, picket up my hold-all and entered the adjoining hall to which the policeman, who had with interest observed the scene acted out by the passport official and myself, had opened with a smart, heel-clicking salute followed by a deep bow. I found myself in the customs shed.

I had hardly passed through the door when I was face to face to face with by a clean-shaven small elderly man in a light-coloured slightly crumbled but clean shirt with long sleeves tucked into white

cotton trousers. From the pocket of his shirt a row of pencils emerged. His feet stuck in closed sandals. His upper lip was decorated with a thin line of a moustache, and his face was decorated by a pair of large green-tinted glasses resting on a slightly curved nose. On his head sat a white rimless elongated cap which left free his ears with their unusually elongated earlobes.

The man folded his hands in the respectful greeting which, as I knew already, is called a 'namaste' (which means to convey 'I greet the divine within you'). He bowed deep before me. Then he slowly straightened out again, looked at me, his glasses accentuating the look of wonder - and somehow also of anxiety - reflecting in his eyes.

"You are Prince David of Jersey, Sir ?"

I waved my hand in refutal and made to pass him. But before I could do so, he insisted.

"You are Prince David. I know you are, Sir. I heard the Babu in the other room call out your name. I well understand that Your Highness wants to remain incognito. I appreciate your discretion. It is no pleasure for an exalted personality like yours to be bothered by government people. Formerly this would have been impossible, but times have changed, Sir. They have changed very much indeed".

The voice and the comportment of the man were very respectful. He evidently meant what he said. He kept his hands folded and he bowed his head every few seconds. He spoke like an educated man. I intuitively knew that the man who confronted me had seen in me a real prince, and that his behaviour was not the 'routine treatment given gullible foreigners. These people really believed that my name, my family name, was in truth an aristocratic title !

I did not know whether to laugh or to get angry. I looked around for advice or help from somebody whom I might think right to act as my adviser or helper - especially some European or somebody who might look like he possessed a european education; but the hundred or so people standing in rows in front of the long tables loaded with various shapes of luggage, were too busy with their own affairs, even if one or the other might have been of help. Do not get the idea that I felt threatened by that small man and was in need of protection. How could I think thus ?! But I did not want any misunderstanding whatsoever to complicate my stay in India - and certainly not already on the day of my arrival. But slowly though pereceptively I began to feel tickled by the humerous side of the

situation I was made to confront. But though more or less persuaded that the fellow was genuinely believing me a 'prince', I did not exclude the possibility that he might make use of his 'discovery' - and I did not want to be taken in by a tout. I did not want the fellow to believe me an easy victim of his tricks. I am not different from other men: I do not like to be considered a fool".

I looked down into the anxious face of the little man. I did not want to blunder into complicating a situation from which I might not be able to extricate myself. On the other hand I did not want, by reacting brusquely and by rudely overlooking the fellow and what he said, to miss something which might turn out to be an interesting experience, a valuable adventure. I was my own master without any obligations with regard to time and program, and I had nothing to lose by playing along. I had come to this country to learn things, to meet and know people; and here and now I was unexpectedly offered an opportunity - though initiated by a misunderstanding and under strange auspices - to enter into into an unusual contact with my new environment. I was well aware that I did not misinterpret the situation, that it was not the custom here to address every foreigner as 'Your Highness'; for were it so, I would have been warned about such a peculiarity.

I had not doubt that the man in front of me, who had appointed himself an one-man reception committee, was a tout; that he was an opportunist who made it his business, his living - most likely in collusion with the lower staff in Customs House - to 'assist' ignorant newcomers. And indeed he did offer me now his help.

"Can I get your luggage slip, Your Highness ? I am a Customs Agent, Sir. My profession is to help travelers and others to get through the endless and enervating customs procedures".

"My dear man, you are very kind", I told him with a smile (I nearly said 'a gracious smile', for I was amused to notice that I was falling into the role I was supposed to occupy), "but I do not require your help. I have nop other luggage. I like to travel light. This hold-all is all the luggage I carry with me".

"O very good, Your Highness, Sir ! I understand. I understand very well. Give me, please your hold-all and I shall expedite you with haste out of this room".

I accepted his offer. Without saying a word I handed him my single piece of luggage. Do not think I did so because I felt obliged to him or forced or blackmailed by his offer to be 'expedited', but

I was not looking forward to another long wait queuing up along with the large crowd in front of the handful of customs officers who appeared to bury their hands with such great relish into the contents of the opened suitcases and untied bundles. Sweat was dripping from my forehead and my shirt was unpleasantly sticking to my body.

The Agent had suddenly turned very businesslike.

"Can I have your passport, Sir ?"

I took my passport from my pocket, and he took it from my hand without a further word being said. He grabbed my hold-all with his other hand. With a gesture he invited me to follow him. We crossed the length of the hall until we reached the tail end of the long table. There he pushed aside one of the suitcases belonging to a very important-looking - now indignant-looking - man, and placed my luggage piece in the space he had liberated on the table. My self-appointed Agent asked me to wait where I stood and to 'keep an eye on my property'. Then he went behind the table and approached a customs officer who was standing idly, with his hands behind his back, a few steps behind the other officers busily pursuing their duty. I supposed that he was the supervising officer. My Agent gave my passport to the official who had greeted him in a very friendly manner, and was bending down the better to hear what the little man was telling him in such a hurried, agitated manner. The Agent pointed at me. The official looked at me. He looked at my passport. He turned the pages of my passport. I saw him turn the booklet in various directions, apparently in order to decipher some of the rubber stamps which filled a great number of its pages. He appeared not to pay any attention to the excited whispering of the little man, who from time to time discontinued his gesturing in order to push back into its appropriate place the spectacles which tended to slip down his long nose.

The Customs Officer approached me and my hold-all, with the Agent tripping in his wake.

"This is Prince David, His Highness Prince David, Mr. Chief-Inspector Sahib".

"What is your name, Sir ?", the Chief Inspector addressed me, turning again the pages of my passport. He ignored the little man at his side.

"Prince, Mr. Chief-Inspector. Prince, David", I said, with a distinct pause between the two components of my name.

"What is your profession, Sir ?". He looked at me now. His expression indicated quite clearly that he was indifferent to whatever

my reply might be, that he was bored by me and by my advocate's effort to turn me into a reluctant aristocrat.

"My profession ? Hm, my profession ! How can I describe my profession which is no profession ?", I answered. "Or at least no profession yet. Let me say, that my profession will be formed from the outcome of my search to satisfy my burning desire to learn, to see, to hear what is truth, and thereby to come to an understanding of the world".

If my reply sounds stupid, fastidious and facetious, it is because I felt stupid, fastidious and facetious.

My little Agent raised his eyebrows and shook his head in admiration - and in confirmation as if he had expected such a reply.

The Chief-Inspector looked at me with surprise. His expression clearly said that he had not expected such an answer. Then he caused me to be surprised by his wistful reply.

"I wish I had the time to accompany you". Then in a business-like voice he continued. "Have you anything to declare, Sir ? Do you carry with you anything on which duty has to be paid ?"

"No, Sir".

The Chief-Inspector nodded. With a yellow crayon he made a kind of hieroglyph on my hold-all, and another one on my shoulder-bag. He handed me my passport; and with a dry "Have a good time in our country" and with a nod he indicated, that he had lost all further interest in me.

I thanked him suitably. My Agent emitted now a torrent of words - most likely expressions of thanks - in what I supposed to be the local vernacular. The Chief-Inspector acknowledged them with a smile and a few words. For a second he placed his right hand on my Agent's shoulder. He nodded to me again and returned to his place behind the other customs officers.

The Agent took hold of my luggage piece and marched ahead of me through the large door marked 'Exit' without being stopped by the police guard, whom he appeared to have assured in passing that I had been cleared by the Chief himself.

I found myself now in a large, dirty, busy street. I did not see only litter and horsedung everywhere, but also many red stains on the pavement. Fortunately I knew already that these had been made by the spit of beetle-nut chewers.

The little man put down my hold-all on the not too clean pavement and turned to me. He bent low with folded hands and addressed me in a solemn voice.

"I welcome you to my country, Your Highness. At last you have arrived. It is so many years now - I can honestly say all my life - that I have been expecting you. I know that with your arrival my samsara, the period of my suffering on this earth, will soon be over. I know that now I shall gain my moksa, my release from the effects of my karman. I know now, that my fate will at last be fulfilled. I assure you, Your Highness, that I am at this moment the happiest man in the entire world. It is my predestined duty, my fate-prescribed task, to serve you, my Prince, as long as I live, or at least as long as you are in this country. My prayer is that your stay may be for ever. Command, my Lord, and I shall obey".

Again he bent very low.

I was beginning to feel annoyed. The humid heat, the noise, the smells and the strong sun contributed to my overwhelming wish to get away from that street corner and from that boring and twisting man who was either insane or a crook who thought I would fall for his kind of talk.

"Listen, my friend", I told him in a stern voice. "Allow me at last to put in a word", I waved off his attempt to interrupt me with what I suspected was going to be one more song of praise or offer of undying faith. "By the way, what is your name ?"

"Gobinder Nath at your service, Your Highness. Gobinder Nath".

"First of all, Mr. Gobinder Nath, I do not wish to be addressed as 'Your Highness'. This is ridiculous. This nonsense has to stop. Enough is enough. I am not a prince. My family name is 'Prince', like that of other people is 'Smith' or 'Brown', or as I suppose yours is 'Nath'. You may call me Mr. Prince, if you want to call me by my name at all. But this is all which refers to my person and none of that aristocratic nonsense".

"I understand, Sir. I understand well, Sir".

"Now that you understand me, I hope the air is cleared. Permit me to ask you what you propose to do now ? We can hardly continue to stand any longer on this hot and noisy street".

"Now I shall transport Your High...., I beg your pardon, Sir, I shall bring Your Honour to your hotel now. In which hotel have you booked your suite, Sir ?"

"I have not booked any suite anywhere, nor for that matter any single room either. I had not time to make hotel arrangements before I left Istambul. The ship purser has given me the names of a few places which he thought might suit me. But it is most

likely that you know this town better than he, and that you are better informed about hotels than any purser. Where can I find a small, clean, cheap hotel. I am not looking for any luxury hotel but for one which is frequented by local people. In other words, I do not care for a place which caters for the tourist traffic".

Gobinder Nath looked at me with surprise - but also with wonder, I thought. He folded his hands in front of his face, pressed their thumbs underneath his chin, closed his eyes and murmured some words which may have been a prayer. Then he bowed and told me with his ingrating sing-song voice which started to grate on my nerves:

"O very good, Sir ! O very jolly good, Sir ! I understand very well, Sir ! I know just the right place for you, Sir ! It is a simple, clean, well-kept hotel. It belongs to my brother-in-law who will be deeply honoured to welcome you".

I sighed. Somehow I should have expected this - or let me say I was not surprised. Although in this respect my experience had been limited, I had already found out that every tout has a brother-in-law who owns a hotel, a sister who is ready to offer entertainment, a cousin who owns a taxi and so on. Nevermind, I thought. I wanted to get out of the sun. Sweat was accumulating underneath my hat, my shirt was soaked and sticking to my back. Why not see what this brother-in-law and his hotel were like ? I could any time I liked change my mind and shift to another hotel, couldn't I ?

I nodded my consent. This caused a beatific smile to smoothe away from Gobinder Nath's face the anxiety which appeared to be its permanent fixture.

"Very good, Sir ! Very good indeed, Sir ! It is as it should be", he added in a low voice.

I confess I did not understand this remark, but I did not feel like opening another line of discourse.

"But before we proceed to this place, Sir, permit me to alarm my brother-in-law, that he places himself and his hotel in readiness for your arrival".

Without waiting for my consent he rushed off, back into the Customs House. After about three minutes he was back at my side.

"Everything is under control, Sir. We can proceed, Sir. I see that you want to meet the true India. You want to live with the Indians. Very good, Sir. Let me, therefore, start your new

life-style adequately by traveling to my brother-in-law's hotel by a horse-carriage, that is a Victoria, and not by taxi".

I was favourably impressed by his offer. His explanation sounded sincere; I could not very well interpret his reasoning as having been dictated by personal interests.

He took my luggage piece in his hand and marched off. I followed him into a side-street where I saw a number of taxis lined up. At once we were surrounded by a crowd of men, the drivers of these taxis. Each tried to outbid the other with his offer to carry me in his taxi to my hotel or wherever I liked.

Some distance away I saw a row of old-fashioned horse-drawn carriages of a type known to me from pictures and films which related to the last century, to the time of Queen Victoria. I had seen replicas of such carriages in New York: they were on hire to young couples for an hour's drive through New York's Central Park.

The drivers of these 'victorias' - as Gobinder Nath told me they are called - had remained seated on their boxes; none of them had approached us to plead for my favour. They must have thought - or known from the preferences of Gobinder Nath - that it would not conform to my, and no less also to his status and dignity, to make use of their transport. However, when the little Agent raised his right arm towards them with a commanding gesture, the horses of about a dozen of these two-wheeled carriages were whipped into motion by their owners - and the first to reach us, Gobinder Nath haughtily granted the honour to carry us away.

We passed through various quarters of the teaming town, each labeled by Gobinder Nath with a different ethnic or commercial characteristic. We drove through many streets, wide and narrow ones, in various states of cleanliness and offering a large array of not easily definable smells. Most of the streets were thronged with busy hustling crowds; their various ways of dressing or their scanty way of dressing, were differentiated with ease by Gobinder Nath with regard to caste, profession and religion. He showed me the Taj Mahal Hotel and the Terminus Railway Station, both of whom he called 'well-known landmarks'. He pointed out the Red Light District, and the hovels of the tanners, both of which he called the 'nation's shame'. Everywhere we saw hordes of street vendors and beggars. Many of both these groups were children. I saw people sit listlessly along the housefronts or crouch besides the gutters. All I saw was unusual and new to me. All I saw was very interesting

to me, as you can imagine.

In the course of the nearly one hour lasting drive - I had the impression that Gobinder Nath had instructed the carriage driver to make a long detour in order to give the hotel owner ample time to ready my room - I learned from my companion more about the people, the history, the economy of Bombay than an entire guide book or even an anthropological compendium could have conveyed. His explanations were not only accompanied by his pointing finger darting all around me in a circle of 360¶ - and my head moving along with his finger - but also by the warning shouts and the incessant curses which the man on the coachman's box directed at careless passersby and impudent taxi or motorcar drivers. What I found particularly enchanting was the generous way in which the rhythm of the Victoria - due to the irregular and mostly broken surfacing of the roads, and the encounter of the carriage springs with the many hard objects which neither the Creator nor the builders had intended to interfere with traffic, there was not always the smoothness which the rubber-covered wheels had promised - was accompanied at regular intervals by the farting of the horse. The machinegun-like eruptions came with that nature-directed regularity which until then I had only known to be produced by the hot-water geysers in our Natureparks at home. I could derive additional entertainment by anticipating with some precision each series of farts. I consoled me that I could apply this observation - which I checked with counting my pulse - in evidence, that my mental faculties had not been affected by the hot weather. And in addition I could enjoy the counterpoints erupting from between the horse's bony hips, by fitting them into a symphony along with the noises and smells of the regularly changing surroundings, wherein the miserable imitation of a bronco, trotting along with hanging head and dull eyes, by lifting his moth-eaten tail, gave the cues, saluting his fate in reflective staccatos.

The Royal Hotel.

The increasing intensity with which Gobinder Nath gestured, and the mounting shakiness of his voice while he directed the pilot of our vehicle, made me suppose that we were about to arrive at our destination. Indeed, we finally drove into a smaller and relatively clean-swept street. We stopped in front of a two-storied whitewashed building whose purpose, name and ambition were displayed in large letters over the entrance door. It was the 'Royal Hotel'. By the time I had dismounted, Gobinder Nath had recovered my luggage piece and had paid off the coachman - who to my surprising did not debate the fare he was handed by my mentor - a man, whom I supposed to be the proprietor of the hotel, had appeared at the entrance of the building. He was a mountain of a man with a huge abdomen and a table-cloth-like red-and-white-checkered sheet wound around his lower body. His torso was naked except for a string made up of a few cotton threads hanging necklace-like down to his navel. The open sandals on his naked feet were kept in place by the big toes imprisoned thereon in a tight loop. His scalp, his face, his chest were clean-shaven. In the centre of his scalp, on its vertex, a tuft of hair had been left standing. On his forehead he had affixed a small-coin-sized red dot, the like of which I had seen worn by many of the men and women we had passed in the streets.

Although he must have been informed of my arrival, there was an expression of surprise in the big man's face when he saw me standing, with my shoulder-bag at my feet, in front of his hotel. Travelers of my kind and skin colour had most probably so far not come to his door; and those of my skin colour and ethnic origin, who might have asked to be accommodated, most evidently would have belonged to the tribe of hikers and hippies whom he would not have

allowed over the threshold of his hotel.

The hotel owner smiled a greeting, made a short 'nimaste' and then shook my outstretched hand. In the meantime a coolie had emerged from inside the hotel to function as a porter and to take hold of my hold-all. On the invitation of the proprietor I entered, followed by the latter and my guide and mentor. The lobby was pleasantly cool. Gobinder Nath who had been warmly received by 'mine host', started a long speech in what must have been the local lingo. He had soon attracted a group of listeners who had joined him from different parts of the hotel - guests and servants most likely. I had no doubt that he was talking about me, because his long sentences - only momentarily interrupted by the need to take a deep breath - was interspersed with many a 'Prince David' and 'Moksa' and 'Karman' in the way a Jewish housewife's cake is filled with raisins and nuts and candied orange peel.

In due course Gobinder Nath had said and told all he had to say and tell. The fat man with his kind and astute face, who had been scrutinizing me all the time - while I in turn had with great interest been observing the scene around me - turned to me, greeting me with folded hands and a deep bow.

"I learn from Gobinder Nath that you want to be accommodated in my hotel". His voice was sonorous and his english that of an educated man. "We shall be very pleased and much honoured to have you as our guest. I must warn you, however, that since ours is only a simple hindu hotel, it may appear to you rather primitive and old-fashioned. But we pride ourselves of being far cleaner, warmer and friendlier than any of the leading hotels in town. All this refers also to our kitchen and the food we serve. We serve only vegetarian food here. It is, of course, left to you if you want to have your meals in our house or anywhere outside".

I had the instinctive feeling that I was going to be comfortable in the 'Royal Hotel', and that I was going to be satisfied with the care I was going to receive from the owner whose name was Seth Gopal. I did not mind - on the contrary, I welcomed it - that the hotel was so evidently unspoiled by modern installations and westernized conceptions of life's necessities. The place had in addition also the advantage, that it offered me, most likely better than any other place, the opportunity to learn about the country, and to come into contact with local people. I welcomed also the

idea of eating nothing but vegetarian food - the wish to do so had already arisen in me during my ride through the streets of Bombay, when I saw the miserable cows, the half-dead goats and the stringy chicken which had so often blocked our passage. Another confidence-creating factor was the price which Seth Gopal quoted. It was so ridiculously low that I had to ask Gobinder Nath to confirm in dollars the price which the owner had quoted in rupees - and to make sure that this was the official price and not a concession to me for Gobinder Nath's sake.

Within a short time I had also to concede, that I had been mistaken in my evaluation of Gobinder Nath. He had all along told me the truth. He had not attempted to abuse my ignorance and my youth. I felt slightly ashamed now that I had entertained such a negative opinion about this man - and I made a mental note to hencefort learn from this experiences. Gobinder Nath's sister was indeed married to Seth Gopal, and Gobinder Nath had certainly not asked Seth Gopal to increase the hotel charges to include a fat percentage for himself. I discovered also, that Gobinder Nath himself had a room in the hotel.

I had a good feeling when I found out that my little Agent and Guide had proved more honest and decent than I had imagined a man of his calling could have been even under the best of circumstances. I told myself, that this should serve me as a lesson in future.

In the company of Gobinder Nath and his occasional comments, and under the guidance of Seth Gopal and two of his servants, I was installed in my bedroom. Everything appeared bigger and larger than anything I had experienced before. It was as if space and material, economy and labour had not been of any concern to the builders. My room was very large and had a very high ceiling. Up to a height of two meters the walls were covered by colourful tiles. The greater part of the cement floor was covered with a straw mat over which a plain cotton carpet, a 'dhurrey', had been laid. A big bed, enveloped in a mosquito net susspended from the ceiling and secured underneath the mattress so as to make it form a tent, stood near two 'french windows' leading to a veranda which circulated three sides of the building and served as the resting-, waiting- and sleeping-area for the guests' private servants - an established feature of most travelers in India. The narrow veranda was also the place where one of the hotel's sweepers was always to be found, whenever a guest required him for cleaning or sweeping

the room. The largest fan I was ever to see in India, was suspended from the centre of the ceiling. The air set in circulation by the fan's slow revolutions, gave me a sensation of coolness. Adjoining the bed-room was the largest bathroom I had used in my life so far. Not only the walls, but also the floor of this room was covered with white tiles.

Seth Gopal, ably assisted by Gobinder Nath, introduced me to the intricacies of Indian bathing and toiletry. There was no bathtub - "this is a dirty way of bathing" explained the hotelier - and no overhead shower either. Next to a small drain opening in the ground within a sunken area surrounded by a low cement frame, stood a large barrel filled with water on which floated a dipper with a a wooden handle. One was to perform 'ablutions' by throwing, with the help of the dipper, water from the barrel over one's body. Should I 'experience the desire' to use hot water, the coolie sitting day and night on the outside veranda would, I was promised, 'at once and without delay provide the same'. For the 'other bodily needs and other necessities' a cube-shaped lided box stood in a corner of the bathroom near the door leading to the outside veranda. One of the servants opened the contraption - which for reasons I forgot to enquire about Seth Gopal called a 'thunderbox' - contained, as I saw, a white-enamelled pot of generous size in the shape of an inverted truncated cone, whose ever-readiness and ever-cleanliness was equally entrusted to the outside coolie-sweeper 'equally ready to serve'.

I assured Seth Gopal and Gobinder Nath that I had fully understood and absorbed the instructions for the use of the bathroom, and that I did not at all mind forgoing modern plumbing's benefits for the sake and advantage of 'plunging straight away into Indian life', as Gobinder Nath opinioned. His happy smile, his grateful look and his unmistakenly gestures of relief were sufficient compensation for any possible inconveniences I might experience during my short stay in the Royal Hotel, particularly with reference to the Thunderbox.

Gobinder Nath, who had been watching me and my reactions with undisguised anxiety, could and did relax at last. It was evident to him now, that I intended to enjoy my stay in his brother-in-law's hotel. My opinion about the little man continued to improve., He had proved himself a reliable and trustworthy agent.

"I am grateful for all you have done for me this morning, Mr.

Gobinder Nath", I told him, when we had returned to the bedroom and the others had left. "You have been very helpful. I am sure I shall from now on be able to manage on my own. But I hope we shall keep in touch", I added when I saw disappointment, even terror come over his face. "I shall call on you whenever I need further advice and guidance. Your brother-in-law will convey such a message to you. (I did not know yet that Gobinder Nath had a room in the hotel). Tell me what I have to pay you for all your help".

It is difficult to describe the sudden change in the face of Gobinder Nath. He had turned deadly pale. I might even say that his face had become ashen grey. His mouth had fallen open. His eyes were bulging and tears were dripping from them. He swallowed hard. He was perpiring heavily. His eyes were opening and closing. I was afraid by what I saw was going on in the man.

"O no, Sir. O no, my Prince", he stammered imploringly after he had regained his voice. "You cannot do this to me. I am your servant for ever. You are the great turning point in my life, in my samsara, in the emptying of my karman. I have been waiting for you all my life. Already in my infancy it had been discovered in my horoscope that a great man, a Prince, would come from over the seas and finally bring me my liberation. I have been told that by serving the Prince for the rest of my days I shall overcome the past errors and faults which fill my karman; that under the tutelage of that Prince the sins will be canceled which have throughout my former existences prevented me from achieving salvation. My horoscope fortold, that with the intervention of the Prince from over the seas I shall finally come near the ultimate bliss of deliverance, shall be freed from the misery of having to be reborn again and again. Please, Sir, do not chase me away ! Please do not push me back into a future of misery and suffering !"

He had been speaking with a choked voice, his hands imploring me no less than his words. The last sentence he had cried out in anguish, while tears ran down his cheeks. He fell on his knees and tried to grab my hands. His sobbing made it impossible for me to understand what else he was saying.

Was I surprised !? I had perceived most of what Gobinder Nath had said and done until now as belonging to the functions of a clever and capable tourist agent and guide. I had not the slightest doubt, that notwithstanding his apparent honesty and decency - which I had been so happy to acknowledge and appreciate, and which I was

about to compensate - he had given me the kind of 'treatment' - in American lingo I would have said the 'spiel' - which he had thought the apposite one for a client of my kind. I began now to doubt my judgement. This was no play acting. This man's distress was sincere and genuine. Was he possibly mentally deranged ?

Whatever questions and doubts came just then into my mind were dispelled by Seth Gopal who had returned to my room. He had most likely been attracted by the cries and the sobbing of his brother-in-law. He must immediately have grasped the cause of all the ongoing commotion.

"You must not doubt his words, Prince", he told me in his slow and deep voice. The man was visibly worried. "Gobinder has been telling you the truth. This is no sales talk. His horoscope, which has been cast at the hour of his birth, predicts that one day a prince will enter his life; that the prince will come from over the waters and bring Gobinder those spiritual benefits and blessings for which we all crave and of which his karman seems to be in particular need. I want you to know, that Gobinder is not an every-day tourist guide. He is a very larned man. He is far and wide respected as a great scholar. He could easily have found employment for his talents in some institute of higher learning. But he preferred to serve as a customs agent and tourist guide in the harbour in order not to miss the arrival of the prince. He is advancing in age. He is nearly sixty years old. He is becoming desperate because until now the announced prince, the promised medium through whom he will reach salvation, has not made his appearance. Loking out for the prince, waiting for the prince, has kept him alive. His wife and oldest son have perished a few years ago in a disastrous fire, and he has interpreted this misdaventure along with the non-appearance of the prince as a bad omen for his fate, as an indication that he will continue to be reborn for further suffering. Can you blame him, my Prince, that he is desperate ? Can you understand why he is in such a state, why he fears that you may dismiss him from your presence ? Please, do not send him away. Keep him near you. You will not repent this. You will do a very good deed. It will bring you great merit. You will one day reap the benefit accruing from this kind action. Do not doubt that Gobinder is as much in your karman as you are in his. Can you doubt that it has been predestined also for you to turn up today in Bombay ?"

"Yes, my Prince ! Please let me serve you". Gobinder Nath

took up the plea. He had remained on his knees with his head bowed and hands folded. He straightened his upper body now and spoke in a quieter voice. "Please, let me serve you. I shall not accept any payment. Be my father and my mother. Be for me all my family. Please, do not dismiss me". Another fit of sobbing interrupoted his talk.

I was very annoyed. I thought I had done the right thing when thanking Gobinder Nath for the morning's job, by offering him adequate payment, and by bidding him farewell. And look what a scene I had to face ! I had certainly not bargained for this ! What was it all about ? In what kind of world had I landed ? I did not want to be burdened ! I had not come to India to be made responsible for the fantasy-born expectations of a man I had known only a few hours ! I was worried. I did not want any imbroglio. I felt inadequately prepared to face such kind of problems in this to me new and strange environment. I did not want my freedom curtaile. I did not, could not wish to have placed on my shoulders a responsibility, in addition one implied with so much emotion.

I began to realize - at first vaguely but stronger every second that passed - that my negative reaction had an overlay of anxiety. There was a sensation of uncertainty in me, of a vague doubt about myself which I had never known before. I wondered whether this anxiety and the accompanying uncertainty had been transferred on me by the two men with whom I shared the room at that moment. I had to get out of the trap which was closing around me, I thought. I had to free myself from this pressure, from this incubus. I was convinced that in the way Seth Gopal's and Gobinder Nath's anxiety, fear and despair had affected me, my own state of mind was affecting them in reciprocation.

I would have welcomed to be for an hour by myself; to have the opportunity to quietly review the situation, to quietly analyze my feelings, to quietly reflect on how to solve all possible problems which might arise from this situation. But I knew with a surprising clarity, that this was not necessary; that I did not need delay my decision; that I had already come to a definie and final decision.

In other words, I decided there and then to take on the role into which Gobinder Nath's horoscpe had thrust me, the one which had been offered to me in such a dramatic sequence of events - the factuality of which had been vouchsaved by Seth Gopal's intervention. Why not, I thought ? In the end, I thought, it may turn out to have been for me a lucky concatenation of circumstances. I had

here a unique offer to learn, to live and to experience. Here and now, I reasoned, I was confronted with a world I had not known before, and would otherwise never again have a chance to know. I was not afraid, and knew myself well enough to be certain, that however things were going to evolve, I would always be able to keep my mental balance and would never lose my freedom of action. I could any time I wished change my mind and my plans. I had planned to stay in Bombay for 3 -10 days, but I was free to leave any time before that date, should I feel overwhelmed or inconvenienced by these people. Why not employ, I reflected, as my guide for the short time I stayed in Bombay, this little man who so far had proved reliable, capable, well-informed and well-behaved, even though in certain respects and at certain times he may be also somewhat unbalanced ? As I said already, I was going to stay only for a limited time; after that I would be free of all this and could continue my travels northwards or southwards or eastwards as my whim may make me decide.

All these reflections and the resulting decision took only a few seconds. And once having decided, I felt a sense of relief flooding through me. My inner tension and apprehension had disappeared. I got even some amusement out of the situation. I was going to offer the man kneeling before me on the floor, and still sobing in a heart-broken and -breaking manner the only words which could console him.

"Allright, Gobinder Nath", I said to him, offering him my hand. "Come on, give me your hand. I have since some time come to know that my karman is indeed intertwined with yours. I shall fulfill mine through yours and vice versa".

Indeed, both of us were going to make sure that this was to be the outcome.

Dear Reader ! I have until now spoken to you in David's voice, or better said, David has spoken to you with my words, or better said..... nevermind, you know what I mean to say.

I leave it now to David to continue on his own. I report in the following pages verbally and literally what he told us, and am going to write dowen exactly what we have recorded on tape.

David himself has now the word.

And with this decision I entered into an interesting, a strange and an unexpectedly exciting life.

That strange and unexpected facet of my whereabouts and its effect on me started nearly immediately. It started with the lunchtime meal. What went on may sound to you as being nothing more than 'local colour'; may be as the way an honoured guest is treated - and fed - in the East. But to my mind it is worthy of being recorded here as it provides the needed introduction by which you may gain some inkling of the atmosphere into which I found myself transplanted.

The meal was served in my room, on the small bedside table which had been moved into the centre of the room underneath the ceiling fan. I was made to sit on a large, deep, uncomfortable cane chair. One dish after the other was brought to my table by Seth Gopal or Gobinder Nath. They did not permit a servant to do so, or one of them to even come into the room. One or the other servant would bring the dish to the door where it was taken from his hands by either Seth Gopal or Gobinder Nath. They brought all kinds curds and other milk products, along with cooked or fried vegetables of all sorts; various dishes made of pulses or rice each one prepared in a different way. After having laddled a tablespoonful or two of the content of a dishes onto my plate, and watching carefully how I reacted to

the taste of the dish, some more spoonfuls were added or the dish was exchanged at the door with another one held in readiness by a servant. Every few minutes Gobinder Nath replaced the 'pulka', the hand-sized round wheat bread from which I had at the most torn off a small piece, with a fresh one rushed, while still very hot, from the kitchen.

When I had eaten my full - and I assure you that this term has to be applied to its fullest meaning - and had followed Seth Gopal's advice to 'cool down with a bowl of lhassi - an iced dish of sour milk - I had to 'partake' also of some fruit. I worried how I could still add anything more to the content of my stomach which showed incipient signs of protest; but I had to agree to add at least one banana. Seth Gopal voiced his appreciation of my 'good sense'. He selected the longest and thickest banana from the tray loaded with apples, oranges, dates, figs, guavas and bananas which Gobinder Nath was holding in his hands; and while standing at my side, his huge abdomen hanging over and resting on the edge of the table, he peeled the banana and proceeded to place piece by piece and morsel by morsel of it - and with his own pudgy fingers - into my mouth.

From the following day onwards, every morning and again in the late afternoon, Gobinder Nath and I left the hotel and walked through the streets on Bombay. On an average we must have spent every day at least six hours on our feet. During the 3-4 hot midday hours I rested in my room. I soon became used to a long and refreshing after-lunch sleep. In the evening, and also after my midday sleep, I studied many a book dealing with India's sociological problems and psychological complications, its ideological differentiations and its philosophical convolutions. I was fortunate insofar as I could purchase all the literature I cared to read in the well-equiped bookstores abounding in Bombay. At least one hour every day, by myself or under Gobinder's tutelage, I spent on learning 'Hindi' which, by bridging the 500 odd regional languages in use on the sub-continent, was for every purpose the lingua franca of India, the one language supposedly understood in most parts of the country. It is a difficult language, but in the course of time I was to master it well enough to enter into conversation with people who did not speak english. This achievement relieved Gobinder more and more from the additional duty he had taken upon himself, namely that of acting as my interpreter.

Instead of the ten days or so I had planned, I spent more than two months in Bombay. Always accompanied by Gobinder, I went into the markets and the bazars, into the stores and the workshops. We

Instead of the ten days or so I had planned, I spent more than two months in Bombay. Always accompanied by Gobinder, I went into the markets and the bazars, into the stores and the workshops. We sat in temples and in mosques, in churches and in ashrams. We talked to all the people who were willing to talk to us. We squatted at the side at many a shopkeeper and many a beggar. I never missed an opportunity to speak to officials. I met clerics of many a denomination, monks and mystics of every sort - and of such there is an abundance in Bombay. I had long talks with professors and teachers of every possible discipline. The thought never came to me, that I might have learned enough, that I should cease my endeavours to learn still more, that I should not expand still further the limits of my knowledge. I had no specific program. I was like a sponge which absorbs everything offered. I could not satisfy my urge to go on searching and asking for more knowledge. Whatever I saw and heard and read was of interest to me. Whatever the theme of a conversation, it always engaged my full attention. I was on the lookout for something - but I was not sure what it was I wanted to find. When I set out in the morning, I did not know what the day would bring, where I was going, what I was to look for, with whom I was going to talk. Gobinder was indefatigably engaged to help me satisfy my curiosity which he had begun to share.

I seems I was becoming a known figure in the neighbourhood of the hotel. Whenever I started out on a walk with Gobinder at my side, neighbours standing outside their houses or shops, and men and women passing by, greeted me respectfully in the usual way, that is with their hands folded. Shopkeepers rose from their haunches to do so. The policeman on point duty saluted smartly. And the children, everywhere present in great numbers, crowded around us to touch us lightly for a moment and then ran away with gleeful shrieks. These expressions of respect were not shown to me because I was a 'white man', a foreigner or a 'sahib'. I had soon come to learn, that in modern India Europeans and Americans do not anymore enjoy as much respect as before, nor any preferential treatment.

It was evident that Gobinder and Gopal had not kept the promise I had made them give me. They must have been telling people what they knew about me, or better what they thought they knew about me. But after repeatedly reminding them that I wished to remain 'incognito', which Gobinder always acknowledged with a 'holy promise' reinforced by a series of looks heavenwards and with his right hand hovering over his heart, I finally gave up on this. Looking back

now I realize, how little I had been aware during the three years or so I spent in India and in Gobinder's company, I owed to his devotion, and to the 'publicity work' for which I had so often reproached him, the ease with which I could form and cultivate the relationship with people, as well as the friendliness I was shown, the respect with which I was received, the smoothness with which I overcame difficulties and even hazards. More than once and in all sincerity he explained to me that he was only doing his 'religious duty' not only on my behalf but also on that of all the people who came into contact with me, as whoever knew me and of my 'true personality', and had even only a second's contact with me - 'dharshan' he called it - was going to gain the benefit of having come nearer to salvation - and be it only by a tiny step.

There is no doubt the C.I.D. - the all-powerful, the all-knowing and the all-feared police - had heard about me, had made enquiries about me from Gobinder, from the hotel staff, from the people to whom Gobinder and I had talked. I do not know if they believed in the nonsense my guide and my host - the latter now also a firm and fervent believer that I was a "person of superior rank' - had been spreading among the neighbourhood, namely that I was a royal prince traveling incognito, that I was a kind of holy man and so on. However, it is not excluded, that also the Police Inspectors and their superiors, made up not only of Hindus, but also of Jews, Christians, Moslems and Parsees, did accept Gobinder's explanations of my link with this karman.

Of course, I did not know what kind of rumours about me were making the round - nor did I ever care to enquire. But there must have been rumours. Let me give you an example.

One morning Gobinder and I had set out on one of our long walks. We had reached the commercial district around the Stock Exchange, a distance of about half an hour's slow walk from our hotel. At a street corner I observed a waif, a girl of possibly 5-6 years (but in view of the general malnutrition which affects this class of people, she may well have been 12 or even 14 years old). The child was about to approach a group of three well-dressed, obviously well-to-do Hindu businessmen, who were standing on the corner of the street. The girl in her dirty torn tunic which hardly reached her knees, her streaky filthy hair falling over her face, her thin legs and her shoeless feet covered with mud, approached the three men with her hands outstretched, obviously asking for alms. The

Hindu nearest to her, the one with the largest stomach and a a row of coloured lines on his forehead, raised his walking stick in a threatening gesture without interrupting his conversation and without glancing at the beggar girl. The poor girl emitted a sound of fright and ran away. She stood at a distance of a few yards, facing the three men. Her eyes, wise and calculating, were watching the three men. She seemed to ponder her next approach. She had, apparently, not given up the hope of extracting a gift from the three Hindu businessmen.

I took a few strides and stood near the child. I took her left hand into mine. This startled her and she attempted to run away, but when she saw the assuring and friendly smile on my face, she relaxed and smiled at me in return, very timidly at first, and then, taking her right index finger from her mouth, she placed also her other hand on mine gripping hers. Then, holding hands, we walked up to the three men. They became aware of me only when we stood next to them. They interrupted their talk, looked haughtily at me and then with surprise; but their look was at once replaced by a startled expression, when one of them made a remark to the others which I did not understand. They looked at me with an awareness as if they knew of me. They looked at the hands of the child which I held out, palms upwards. Then, as if by common impulse, each put two fingers into the lower pocket of the multi-bottoned waistcoat which each of them wore over a white open-necked shirt. Each of them withdrew a coin - a small coin - and dropped it into the hands of the child, taking great care not to touch the dirty little hands. One of the coins fell to the ground, but I prevented the girl from lifting it up; instead I bent down myself, retrieved the coin and placed it into the child's palm at the side of the other two coins. I closed the little hand over the three coins into a fist. I let the hands of the little girl go, grinned at her and gave her a little pat on the back. The girl ran off. Then, slightly bowing my head to the businessmen and a short 'nimaste' I acknowledged their gift. The three men 'nimasted' in return and - as if due to an afterthought - they bowed deeply towards me and placed the tips of their hands against their foreheads. I moved away.

Gobinder had remained standing a few steps away watching my intervention with a fearful face. He told me, that he had been calculating in his mind what to do in case my honour and dignity had in any way been violated. He was greatly releaved when he had not been forced to react. This was clealy expressed by a chortle

and the shining eyes behind his thick glasses, as well as by the solemn greeting with which he welcomed me back at his side.

I am telling you all this not because I want to mark out any lesson or because I want to point to any specific moral. I describe this little episode because I was surprised - and you may believe me when I say that my threshold for being surprised had been greatly raised already - when on our return to the hotel 3-4 hours later, the idlers and the non-idlers in our street hailed us with deep bows and acclamations. I did not know what was going on, until Seth Gopal, who was standing, waiting for us it seemed, at the entrance of the hotel, congratulated me for having reminded 'those three fat moneybags' of their duty to their fellowmen. To this day I do not know how the 'bazar telegraph' could have worked so fast and so efficiently.

It is difficult to describe to you the life in the streets of Bombay or, for that matter, of any big or small town in India. I do not mean the big buildings and their variegated styles ranging from hovels to palaces; nor the shops or the street vendors; nor the cars, the tongas or the rikshas. I mean the people, men, women and children. You have to live there, with your eyes open, to really understand what I mean.

Gobinder had already in the first hour of our association, during the victoria-ride from the Customs House, indicated to me the burghers and the coolies, the Hindus and the Moslems, the priests and the Untouchables, the merchants and the monks. My 'education' had continued since then, and within a few days I was able to 'diagnose' on my own the great number of ethnic, religious, social and economic groups to which the people in the streets of Bombay belonged.

Of course, the majority of the people were Hindus. The study of their religion and their philosophy occupied in the following months most of my time and interest. I read for long hours about the history and the doctrines, the organization and the divisions of the Hindu system - and I was not anymore surprised to discover that the considerable knowledge of Gobinder was of great help to me in clearing up the difficulties I experienced in understanding the various schools of Hinduism and also of Buddhism. In the following many months I could deepen and enlarge, clear and complete

my knowledge with the help of many learned, experienced and wise men. Later on I shall tell you more about all this. But in telling you about what I learned, I start from the supposition, that you have some prior knowledge of the religious systems of India, so that I do not have to waste time on the basic facts; and also so that you can better understand - and I can with greater ease explain - what I learned of, found in and gained from the unbelievably interesting, profound and by far not simplicist ancient religions.

Over the months and years I could constantly add to my knowledge of Hinduism, its philosophy, its development and its scriptures. I may say that Hinduism in all its vastness and varieties, was and will be - along with Buddhism - my main concern and priority for a long time to come. I shall have later on to tell you much about this - perhaps more than you might care to hear.

With the help of many conversations with learned moslem clerics I could enlarge my knowledge of Islam still further. I had to conclude, that the moslem theologians of India are more advanced than those of New York or London - or at least than those I had met before. I shall tell you about this when the time is opportune.

However, at this stage of my narrative I want to tell you first of all about two of the religious groups which have exerted a great fascination upon me, and which of all places in India can best only be studied in Bombay - namely Parsism and eastern Judaism.

A Few Words about the Parsees.

Bombay is home to the largest Parsi Community in India - and for that matter in the entire world. They represent an important feature of cultural life - and of the street picture - of the town. After a short time only could I learn to identify the men and women who belonged to this religious group. They differed from the general population not only by the way they dressed - in modern times this applies only to the conservative elements among them - but also by their facial cut and the fairness of their skin, which makes it often difficult to differentiate them from Europeans.

Gobinder proved well informed about this ethnic group; and what he told me about the Parsees, their history and their religion, their culture and their sociology, made me wish to know more about them, to personally meet some of them.

"Nothing is easier than that", he answered, when I alluded to my wish. "This evening I shall phone my good friend Dr. Dara Dhanjibhoi. He is an old friend of mine. We were class-fellows in High School. He is a physician. He is retired now and enjoys his well earned leisure. He has handed over his practice to his son Jehangir, who turns out to be professionally no less successful than his father has been".

The following midmorning we were the guests of Dr. Dhanjibhoi. The rather young looking 'Old Doctor' had invited along with us also one of his friends, Dr. Jamsetjee, a professor of philosophy at the local University, who guided us in a fascinating, one hour lasting lecture through the history, the theology and the sociology of the Parsis. Dr. Dhanjibhoy, a charming old gentleman, offered

us his time and services, should I wish to 'undertake further excursions into Parsism'. When Gobinder explained to him, that I had come to prefer my tuition to take place in form of practical demonstrations while enveloped by the atmosphere in the localities, while being among common people and while visiting temples and institutions, our host seemed intrigued by my peculiar habit and offered to accompany us on our walks. For a few days we three walked through the parts of Bombay where we would with greater probability encounter Parsi men and women, most of whom Dr. Dhanjibhoi knew and to many of whom he introduced me, and some of whom invited us into their houses for a cold drink or a cup of tea, by which our routine in the often tiring, sultry, and at times unpleasant weather received a welcome break.

It was fortunate that the good doctor seemed to enjoy his role as my guide and mentor. "It fills in my free time in a very pleasant way", was his gentlemanly explanation when I expressed my unease that we took up so much of his time. I gratefully acknowledge that during the eight days in which we made use of his hospitality, I received a very thorough grounding in the philosophy and theology of the Parsi religion, and could come into contact with the unusual culture and customs of this small, ethnically and religiously sharply circumscribed and surprisingly preserved group.

When we met on the day after our first encounter, the Doctor invited Gobinder and me to the 'Najote' ceremony of the daughter of a related Parsi family. The Parsis' **Najote** is fundamentally the same kind of an initiation-like ceremony as the 'Communion' of catholic children, and the Bathmitzva and and Barmitzvah of Jewish girls and boys. By the time in the afternoon we arrived, the ceremony, which took place in the large garden in front of the house, had been going on 'already since some hours', as we were told by our host. We sat down among the large number of guests. I saw three white-clad priests standing on a kind of elevated stage filled with huge flower arrangements. They were facing a young girl of about 11 years. Most of the time she kept her eyes closed - soon I came to suspect that she did so out of boredom, as later on I found her to be a very vivacious - irreverent girl.

"What are the priests saying in their prayers ?", I asked Dr. Dhanjibhoi who - after having greeted innumerable acquaintances, friends and old patients - had come to sit next to me.

"They are most likely calling the blessings of heaven on the

child".

"Why 'most likely' ? Don't you knw what the prayers of the priests say ?"

"Unfortunately no. They are praying in our ancient Parsi language, which is not anymore used in our daily conversation".

"That means you do not understand the language ? From what you say I must conclude, that this antiquated language is like hebrew and latin only used in the religious services and is most likely also the language of your Scriptures ? Do Parsis not learn the ancient language which they use in their prayers ? Are Parsi children not taught in their schools - or in your equivalent of our Sunday Schools - how to read your Scriptures in the original language ?"

"No. Regretfully no. Nobody of us speaks, knows or understands this ancient language, except for the priests. And, to be honest, I suspect that even among the latter a large number does not know what they recite in their prayers".

"But as children, say in preparation for your Najote, you must have received instructions, must have been told what the prayers contain. I suppose they are made up - as prayers usually are - of praise for the divinity, of requests for divine blessings, of the hope of gaining salvation ?"

"You are right. This is more or less the content and the direction taken by our prayers. They are praises for the godhead and invocations for his favours. It may interest you", he added with a grin, "that there is an unusual flavor in some of our prayers: though they are as a rule mainly directed towards the Supreme Being and Creator, some of the prayers are addressed to the sungod and to the woodspirits".

"How do you individually and personally express yourself in your prayers ?"

"More or less like people of all faiths do in theirs. We have our daily prayers in their prescribed form; and in addition to these others which have to be recited, also in defined form, on certain days or on specific occasions. These prayers we have to learn by heart. Of course, though I could not translate them word for word, I know their content and their meaning. In addition to these fixed prayers, we are permitted to express our devotion, that which we wish for and what we desire, in our own words. For this we make use of our daily idiom which is Gujrati, the langue spoken here in our part of the Bombay Province. However, we do not rely too much on words; most of our prayers are expressed in rituals and ceremonies".

It seemed that the three priests had at this moment reached an important part of the ceremony, for I saw that most of those present in the garden - who so far had paid scant attention to what was happening on the stage - had stopped their private conversation and had, at least those seated in the back rows, risen to their feet.

The three priests had ceased their loud recitations. I saw one of them pull a muslin shirt over the head of the girl, while another handed her a long string made up of cotton threads which the girl wound a few times around her waist.

"What the child has in her hands now is the '**Kusti**'", explained the doctor. "It is the sacred thread with which, along with the white muslin shirt, every boy and girl is invested at the Najote ceremony. From the moment the young boy and girl start to wear the Kusti, they are counted as full members of the Parsee community. Everyone of us has throughout his life, day and night, to wear the sacred cord and the shirt. Listen ! While knotting the ends of the cord together over her abdomen, the girl is about to recite the creed ".

"What are the words of the creed ?"

"Righteousness is the best gift as well as happiness. Happiness to him who is righteous for the sake of righteousness".

"How beautiful this sound", I said, quickly writing down the words. "By the way! Let me tell you, that I am impressed by what I have seen. Do you know that also the religious Jews wear from a certain age onwards some kind of a miniature garment with strings attached to the four corners ?"

"I know ! Until you have pointed this ut to me I never realized the similarity. The sacred thread or string or cord seem to be an ancient symbol, for also the Hindus have to wear a sacred cord on their body".

On another day the Doctor invited us to accompany him to the wedding of one of his relatives. Thousands of guests must have been filling the lawn of the hotel in which the wedding took place. It was a monotonous affair. Also here a set of priests spent hours praying for the wellbeing of the young couple. Rice, flowers, cocnuts were exhibited everywhere and in great quantities; and outlines of mango-designs were chalked on the floor of the elevated platform on which the wedding ceremony took place. All this had great symbolic significance, I was told. Again, as on all the other occasions where we were guests, the food was ample and rich - and

was heartily appreciated by the guests who must have seen in it a compensation for the strain on their patience.

"You must have many relatives here", I remarked to the Doctor on this occasion.

"Indeed I have. I must add, unfortunately so. We are a small community and in consequence there is far too much intermarriage".

"Why ? Don't you marry Christians, Hindus, Jews ?"

"Regretfully this is not possible. Once a person marries outside the community, he ceases to be a member of our community".

"Is he or she ex-communicated in such a case ?"

"More or less".

In the course of my conversations with various Parsis whom we had met in the house or in the company of Dr. Dhanjibhoi, in the houses of various other no less hospitable Parsis, and from what I read up in the evenings, I received - as I have already said - a thorough explanation of the religious content and the historic background of the Parsi religion. I am not going to waste your time with telling you what you can easily learn on your own, as I did, from the everywhere available literature. I shall tell you only the highlights I experienced.

Not only did I gain an understanding, but I also gained a deep respect for this ancient religion and its ethics. I shall share some of this knowledge with you.

I learned that Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism - as the Parsis call their religion - has once upon a time been the leading religion of the East; that it had a great impact on other religions, also on Judaism; and that next to Judaism and Greek philosophy it had greatly contributed to the formulation of Christian theology.

The name 'Parsi', I was told by Professor Jamsetjee, whose acquaintance we had made in Dr. Dhanjibhoy's drawingroom, derives from 'Parsa', a province in ancient Persia. By others, however, I was told, that the name derives from the ancient name of Persia, namely 'Pars'. Parsis are followers of Zoroaster or Zaratrustra, the great prophet who lived and taught around the year 600 BCE. When the Moslems conquered Persia, their enmity, and the resulting persecutions, forced the Zoroastrians to flee the country. They found refuge in India and settled mainly in Gujrat, which is a province of the State of which Bombay is the capital. The Parsis form today only a small entity. The majority of today's not more than 100 000 surviving Parsis lives in and around Bombay; a few

smaller colonies exist in Karachi and on the North- American continent.

I received from Professor Jamsetjee, a rather excitable man in love with his own rhetoric, an enthusiastically formulated explanation of Parsism .

"I prefer to call our religion **'Mazdaism'**", was his introductory remark, "because it is the religion of ancient Iran's God Mazda. Since ancient times it has inspired us with action, courage, purpose. It has taught man to value freedom above everything else. It has evoked - and no less also satisfied - man's deep longings and his spiritual requirements. The dynamic morality of Mazdaism was not of a theoretical kind only. It was very practical in nature. It's ethics are based on a dualistic conception, of the good contrasting with the evil, of light opposing darkness. It teaches man's duty to become a moral individual, to overcome darkness and evil. Our Prophet **Zoroaster** said this in clear words, as they are outlined in the **'Gattas'**, one of our holy scriptures: "...the task of the chosen people is to convert or to destroy the followers of the lie".

"Don't you think that the words of Zoroaster which you cited, point more to intolerance than to virtue ?", I asked.

'On the contrary !", he exploded. "They preach virtue ! They encourage man to dedicate himself to the fight against evil !"

I did not want to argue with the man, although as a rule I came to enjoy our verbal fencing.

"Does your religion promise you a reward when you are successful in your fight against evil ? In other words: will you be rewarded or punished for what you commit in your lifetime ?"

"Our Holy Book, the **Avesta**, teaches us that there is going to be a resurrection and that there is a life in the Hereafter. It teaches us, that a Saviour will one day arrive. Yes, it preaches that after our death our soul will be exposed to rewards and to punishments"

"Can man avoid these punishments ? Or has everything which happens to man been predestined ?"

"Yes, e are taught there is a predestination of what happens to man. This means, that each individual, by a preordained decision of the Godhead, is predestined for reward or punishment. However, this does in no way free the individual from bearing responsibility for his behaviour".

"This is interesting; for this very same concept is also known to Moslems and to Calvinists", I told the Professor.

"It is most likely that the two faiths you mentioned took over

this complex of beliefs from the Zoroastrian religion".

"I agree, this is most likely. You mentioned just now the soul, Professor. What does Zoroastrianism teach about the human soul ?"

"We believe that man has a soul, an immortal soul. The soul survives man's death. The soul is judged after death. It is given rewards or punishments in accordance with the good and bad deeds the harbourer of this soul has committed in life. When the End of Days comes - don't be surprised that Zoroastrianism too teaches this concept, was most likely its originator - all souls will be cleansed in molten metal. Therewith they will regain their former bodies, and thereafter, Ahriman the Evil having been destroyed for ever, they will, in the blissful company of Ormuzd the Good, again populate the by then purified earth. ".

"I know. This is the dualistic concept of Zoroastrianism".

"Let us better say that Zoroastrianism is a theistic faith with dualistic characteristics. The principle of dualism means, as you will know, the fight of good against evil. Such a concept is, however, by no means exclusive to Zoroastrianism, to Mazdanism. It was known long before Zoroaster began to teach; he took over this concept and incorporated it into the religion he founded. This dualism means that Ahriman, in the shape of Satan, is active in the world. He is the virtual adversary of God and an enemy of mankind. Do you know, that Zoroastrianism has also introduced the principle of Hell and Heaven as places where after death punishment and reward are distributed ?".

"Let me, please, be absolutely clear about what the doctrine of dualism specifically says. How does God function in this contest between good and evil ?"

"At the time the good god Ormuszd created the world, there existed also Ahriman, the Evil Principle. For this reason Ormuzd has created also mankind as a defense against his arch-enemy Ahriman. God himself is beyond good and evil. God is unequivocally good. You cannot attribute any of the evil which exists in the world to God. He is the author of both love and wrath. Ahriman, the Satan, however, is completely evil. He is a principle sui generis. He produces and represents the 'Lie', the destructive principle".

"I read once that these same - or at least very similar - conceptions are also recognized by Judaism", I told the Professor. "But, as far as I know, nothing of this nature is mentioned in the biblical scriptures. It is generally supposed that the Jews had adopted these concepts in ancient, post-biblical times - during their Exile in Babylon in the middle of the last millenium before

our era - when they had for a long time been in contact with Persian culture".

"This is quite possible. For Zoroastrianism, perhaps because revelation is one of its principles, is acceptable and understandable to other revealed religions. It could, by being accepted and also understood, contribute greatly to the religious doctrines of the Near and Middle East. It has, next to Judaism and Greek philosophy, made great contributions to european culture. I will even go so far and maintain, that Mithraism and Manicaeism, which are ultimately associated with the development of Christianity, are descendants of Zoroastrianism. Many of the Zoroastrian ideas, concepts and principles have also been adopted by Islam. To give you only one example: Islam like Christianity have taken over from us the concept of the devil, of Satan - with the difference, I agree, that they have granted him the status of a separate principle".

At the end of my first visit to Dr. Dhanjibhoi I had asked him for an explanation of the "holy fire", with which the Parsis are identified. He took us to a small room where I saw standing on a table a small silver basin from which a steady burning small bluish flame sent off from time to time a reddish flicker.

"Is this the holy fire of the Parsis ?", I asked.

"Yes. You can find in every household a small container similar to this, in which a flame, nourished with sandalwood, is day and night maintained. We consider it a tragedy, a bad omen, if for any reason whatsoever the flame is permitted to die. In such a case we have to undergo certain ceremonies, after which the flame is rekindled from the holy fire permanently burning in the temple".

"Fire is holy to you, doctor. Does this mean that you pray to it ? Could you, please explain in detail what the eternally burning fire means to you ?"

"You - like the world at large - have a totally wrong idea about us and the holy fire. We do not pray to the fire. Yes, it is true, the fire is sacred to us. Ahima Mazda, the Lord of Creation has created the fire in the same way, and at the same time, he created the Universe and all it contains. To us the fire is a symbol for God. We show reverence to the fire insofar as it expresses the omnipotence and the omnipresence of God. For this reason a Parsi will never on purpose extinguish a fire. And this is the reason, why a Parsi will never light a match; and this is the reason why a Parsi will not smoke tobacco in any form".

The more I became acquainted with Parsis and their world, the more was I impressed by the evidence of social responsibility they showed, and by their charitable work in which every member of the Community felt duty-bound to partecipate.

On one occasion our friend took us to one of the great number of very impressive institutions of benevolence which the Parsis maintain in and around Bombay. We visited among others a school and a technical institution, a home for old people and an orphanage.

"We consider it our inescapable duty", the old doctor said, "to dedicate ourselves to help the needy to the maximum of all our capabilities. It is not true, as we are often accused, that we concentrate our charitable work only on the poor of our own community; we help also those of other religious groups who need help. But I must concede, that in view of the actual strained economic situation we concentrate most of our help and support on our own needy cases. We are proud we can point to a great success in this respect. I can assure you, that you will not find a single destitute person among the Parsis here. Everyone of those among us, who is either poor or incapacitated, is well looked after by the Community".

I could observe this general dedication to charity whenever we were strolling through the streets. What I saw had also been one of the reasons why I took an interest in the Parsi Community.

I had noticed in the mornings that every Parsi - it was easy to recognize the conservatively dressed among them by their high, black, brimless, waxcloth hats covered with innumerable tiny golden stars - on descending from a bus or walking along the streets, was surrounded by crowds of beggars, every single one of whom was given a coin. I did not understand at first, why this scene should impress me as unusual - until I realized, that the beggars surrounding the alms-distributing Parsis were silent, totally silent; they had not to clamor for their alm nor to push each other; they simply held out their hands, took their coin without a word of thanks or a whine for more - and went off to the next alm-distributing Parsi who appeared in their field of vision. They gave me the impression that they considered the coins they received as their due.

On on one of the walks in the company of Dr. Dhanjibhoi I asked him what meaning death has for the Parsis. I was, of course, alluding to their funeral rites of which Gobinder had told me.

"After death", the Doctor explained, "we shall be judged. That

means that our soul will be judged. Whoever's sins are so great that he loses his balance when passing over the hair-thin bridge leading into paradise, will fall into the abyss underneath where hell is located. No evil deed of man is overlooked. On the other hand, ultimately also every good deed is sure to bring benefit. Whatever you may think of such an arrangement", he twinkled his eyes to indicate his scepticism, "this fear of hell has kept many of us on more than one occasion from doing evil things. But as we are all only weak human beings, we cannot always escape being tempted into committing a sin".

He laughed self-deprecatingly - but there was something missing in his laughter which would have made it sound merry.

"You have certainly heard of the way in which we dispose of our dead ?", he continued. "I shall show you how we do it".

He took us in his car to the outskirts of Bombay. We stopped at a distance from a high, round, windowless tower.

"Here you see the **Dakama**, usually called the 'Tower of Silence'. There, on the top, the bodies of the dead are exposed to be devored by vultures; and finally, what remains is disposed of by sun and rains to be washed into the sandpits at the bottom of the tower".

"Why have you this unusual method of disposing of the dead bodies ?"

"The body of the dead is unclean. Earth and fire are too sacred to be brought into contact with the unclean bodies of the dead. This is also the reason why there is a class of Untouchables among us, namely the corpse-bearers. You may charitably call them a sub-class of our priests. These men are for ever unclean and have to live separated from us".

"I can well imagine that this method of disposing your dead will solve also other problems. In the same way as the funeral pyre of the Hindus, the total disappearance of the body will save large tracts of land which would otherwise remain occupied for ever by cemeteries".

"You are right. You may see our funeral customs also in this light. To imagine only what the Hindus have saved in land and space in the course of the last 2500 years ! By burning their dead the Hindus have solved also many another sociological and economic problem. You know how ? By burning along with the husband also the widows, now useless and burdensome - and in addition also on the same pyre without having to use additional wood".

He laughed heartily. He appeared to enjoy his joke - most likely one of his repertoire of jokes.

"I suppose it will interest you to learn that we Parsis have a number of other distinct customs and rites associated with death".

"Of course !" I eagerly accepted his offer. "This would interest me very much".

"As soon as I hear of a death among my acquaintances, I shall take you along when I pay my condolences. I am sure, unfortunately, that you may already tomorrow have such an opportunity".

The next morning he drove up to the Royaal Hotel and took us to the house of a friend whose father had died during the night. I was impressed by the deep sadness of all present, and also by the dignity they exhibited. The body of the dead man had been placed on the tiled floor of a big room, and from the wetness of the floor I concluded that the body had been washed a short while before.

"What is happening now ?"

"Now the corpse-bearers are going to wash the body with bull's urine. The stuff is supposed to wash away the dead man's sins, and to help the soul along on its difficult way".

"I did not know that the bull is sacred to the Zoroastrians".

"Not so anymore. But it was so in ancient times in Persia, even in pre-zoroastrian times. We have the belief, that there are demons wherever one goes and is, and that also every bad deed will in turn create still more such demons. Here the bull's urine comes in useful. It is a protective agent against the demons who are at this moment collecting around the body". He laughed. This was not the first time that I was unsure whether the old physician believed in what he described as his peoples' customs or whether he mocked them. "And now you can see how we ascertain whether there are still demons present or whether they have already gone". Again he laughed .

A man had come into the room pulling a dog along by a chain. The animal was terrified; it struggled to get out again. The dog broke into a pitiful howl as soon as it had been forced into the vicinity of the dead body. The dog finally succeeded in struggling back to the door where it was released by its handler.

"There you see ! The dog has not only clearly ascertained that there are still demons crowding around the body, he has also with equal certainty frightened away these very same demons", the Doctor whispered. He did not laugh this time. "You see ! The perfect behaviour of the dog will transform into truth the ideas which are based more on superstition than on theology".

A week after I had made the acquaintance of Dr. Dhanjibhoi

I visited him for the last time. I contemplated leaving Bombay within a few days, and had come to bid him farewell and to thank him for the time and the hospitality he had granted us.

While I sipped a cup of tea the thought came to me, to ask him about the Jews in India.

"I read somewhere once, that there are many Jews in India. If so there must be also a Jewish community in Bombay. What can you tell me about the Jews of Bombay ?"

"There is most likely much which would interest you. But I am not the right man to tell you about them. I know many Jews here in Bombay. They belong to all possible social classes. But I have never perceived them as a separate ethnic entity. I know them either as my friends or as my patients or as just plain acquaintances. Why not ask one of the Israelites yourself ? Would you like to meet one of them ? I can introduce you to the right man of whom I think he can tell you all you might want to know. I am thinking of a man who had been my patient once, and with whom I have since then developed a genuine friendship. I cannot tell you much of his background. I only know that he belongs to the **'Beni Israel'**, the original Jews of India, that is to say to those who have since ever been living in India. As far as I know his ancestors were originally settled in the South, in the State of Cochin. But let him tell you himself about his people's origin and background. He is a very cultured person, and he has always had my admiration".

A Visit with Mr. David.

That same afternoon Dr. Dhanjibhoi accompanied us, Gobinder and me, on our visit to Mr. Solomon David. The Davids lived in an apartment on Marine Drive. The conventionally dressed man and his wife welcomed us in a friendly and self-assured manner. I felt at once at home with them.

The couple and their two children, a boy of eight and a girl of six, were intrigued by my traveling program which Dr. Dhanjibhoi made me outline to them, but they refrained from askng more than a few questions about my family background and my travel experience.

We spent four pleasant hours in that apartment. I had not come to discuss any theological or philosophical questions with Mr. and Mrs. David. I was only interested to learn how Jews lived in India, how they fitted into, and reacted to, their environment. I cannot give you a detailed account of all I was told. I shall only mention those facts which appeared to me of interest.

"Jews are to be found mainly in the major commercial centres like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras", Mr. David explained. "You can divide the Jews in India into three different ethnic groups. I purposely use the words 'different ethnic groups', as one could hardly believe that the Jews you find here belong to the same race and religion. These groups are the 'Bnei Israel', who are considered to be the native Jews. Then there are the 'Bagdadi Jews' who, as their name implies, have immigrated from Iraq in the wake of the British conquest on this sub-continent. They are as a rule rich merchants. And finally there are the 'European Jews'.

"In theory these three groups should be intimately associated

with each other, or should at least not be incompatible with each other - but the sad truth is, that each unit is separated from the other, at least in a social sense, by an unsurmountable abyss.

"Skin colour is of great importance, not only for us Jews but also for every racial contingent of India. This had its origin, and is perpetuated today, because the Aryans, who once upon a time invaded India and became the master race, were light-skinned, while the subjugated original inhabitants were of a dark skin colour. You may have already noticed that all the low-ranging castes in India have a dark skin. As you see from my family's colour, also the Bnei Israel, the original jewish inhabitants of this continent, have a dark skin like the original dravidic inhabitants of India. The Bagdadi Jew, on the other hand, is light-coloured. He is very much conscious and proud of his skin colour which separates him, in his eyes at least, from the low-class Indians. It is not only difficult but psychologically impossible, for him to recognize us Bnei Israel as his equals. This attitude - and the ostracism-like estrangement which grows from it - makes intermarriage and also purely social contacts very difficult if not impossible.

"Each one of these three communities has its own synagogue, not so much because the rites and cultic procedures are different, but because in the absence of any form of social intercourse common worship would make everyone feel uncomfortable. The Bagdadi Jews are as a rule rich merchants.

"The third group is made up of European Jews. Once, in the 'thirties and 'forties, we had a considerable number of them in India, especially here in Bombay. They were the ones who had succeeded in escaping from Hitler's Germany. Some of them came on their own initiative, others had previous private or commercial connections with local Indians. A great number were taken off the ships which passed through Bombay on their way to Shanghai".

"Please tell me more about this", I requested.

"This chapter should be written up for the history annals of our people", emphasized our host. "Before the last war Shanghai had been the only place left on the earth, where Jews were admitted without having to present an entry visa. We Jews of Bombay formed a committee which visited every one of these ships destines for Shanghai loaded with jewish refugees, which passed through Bombay Hartbour. We did our best to comfort them with small gifts, but our main interest was to select from among them men and women whose expertise might be of use to India, that is to say, on whose behalf, and on our responsibility, we could persuade Government of India to grant them an entry permit, and for whom without exception we

could later on find a place to settle in their professions".

"What happened to them once they were settled here ?"

"Today only few of these German-Jewish refugees are still left here or elsewhere in India. After the war ended they have emigrated elsewhere. To my sorrow I have to confess that we, the local Indian Jews, have not formed nor retained a pleasant memory of the European Jews. We received them with open arms as our brothers in distress. We helped them financially, socially and also in many other ways. Most of them were professional people like doctors or engineers or technicians. But as soon as they had established themselves professionally and socially, and as soon as they were financially independent, they did not want to know us anymore. Let me give you a pertinent example. My late father was very active in organizing this local assistance program. He personally financed the settlement and establishment of a group of German doctors in Bombay. He gave them the money with which to rent their houses and their offices. He introduced them to his vast circle of business associates. One evening my father phoned one of these doctors, one who owed his and his family's safe escape from Germany, as well as his flourishing medical practice, to a great part to the help he had received from my father. He phoned this doctor and asked him to come and see me as he feared that I was suffering from an inflamed appendix. I was then a boy of nine years. The doctor replied that he could not come that evening as he was socially engaged, and that he was also otherwise so busy that he could not give my father an appointment before another three weeks. My father then turned to Dr. Dhanjibhoi who had that same night my inflamed appendix removed. You may believe me when I state, that there is hardly anybody here in India who misses any of these German doctors who have since gone back to Germany or have settled in America".

"What professions do Indian Jews mainly occupy ?"

"We Beni Israel occupy mostly only modest places in business or in public life. Most of our people are small businessmen or traders. A few of us are in the various professions. Some of us have import- and export-agencies. A great number of our people are in government service; but they occupy only lower ranks like that of police-inspectors or railway conductors at best. However, you will also find some of our people among higher-ranking military personnel. The Advocate-General of the Army, for instance, is a Beni Israel".

"Have you to face any problems because you are a Jew ?"

"This inevitable. Is it not the fate of the Jew ? It could be worse, however. I have to concede that after India had gained

its indipendence in 1947, we Jews miss the protection which we enjoyed under the British Raj".

"I am glad to hear that before Independence the British had protected the Jewish Community of India", I told him, "as I might have thought that the well-known British antisemitism of the past - and the present - had its ripercussions here".

"We cannot complain that the British loved us Jews. But we were of such minimal importance to them, that they did not bother to include us among the Jews they hated at home. We were granted the protection, given a share of the government jobs available to minoroties in the same way and in the same ratio as to the other minorities in the country".

"And how is the situation today ? How are you treated - or how do you feel you are treated - in today's independent India ?"

"Although we have not much cause to complain, be it about racial discrimination or antisemitism, or about any form of anti-religious hostility - except for the enmity from the side of certain moslem officials and politicians - and although we have not to worry about our physical safety, we are aware, that even though we may have become adjusted to the times and to the conditions, our children have no future here in this country. This has been brought home to us by the unrestrained anti-Israel diplomacy and the outspoken pro-Arab policy which Nehru introduced years ago and which his successors continue to pursue to this day. A great number of our young people has already left India, a large part of them to live in Israel - mostly, I must concede, not out of zionist sentiments but because they could not obtain immigration visas for the US or Canada or Australia".

"Does this mean that one day no Jews may be left in India ?"

"Take me and my family as an example. I am an England-trained Chartered Accountant. I feel well adjusted here. I have no reason to complain about any physical or economic shortcomings here. We have a good social position and I have a very satisfactory income. But I have made up my mind to leave forever this country, in which my forbears have lived for 2000 years or possibly more. I am not sure if I shall land in Israel - or if so, if we shall remain there for long - though my wife and children press me very hard to settle down in Israel. They have already enrolled in hebrew language classes in preparation of their 'aliyah', their immigration into the Holy Land".

"How is your relationship to other Indians, to other classes, castes and races ?"

"I must again ask you to accept, that we are not going to

emigrate because we feel unsafe here or persecuted. Officially, but also in practice, Jews are not persecuted here or treated unequally - unless you take into account the effects of the caste system which according to the Constitution should have been abolished but in reality continues to exist, and in the spirit of which we Jews continue to be listed by the Authorities as 'outside the group of castes', that is to say, that we occupy the same low status as the 'Anglo-Indians', those called 'of mixed race'".

Two remarks of my host had caught my special attention, and I requested him for a more explicit explanation.

"In your judgement antisemitism has affected India only since the beginning of this century. You made a distinction, in what you said about the modern anti-jewish currents, between 'the real, the specific, the racial, the areligious antisemitism of the kind known in Europe' and the kind which 'does not belong to the political or the anti-zonist variety'".

"There is definitely such a difference", David insisted. "What I call the 'modern antisemitism' is practised and expressed mainly by those among the Indians who have been educated abroad, who have experienced - have enjoyed and have taken part in - the antisemitism which is rampant in all the universities abroad. The result is, that they have returned with the greedily absorbed belief, that the Jews are of an inferior race in comparison to themselves; that the Jews belong to the kind which the Indians all their lives known as 'Untouchables'; and that these very Indians - whatever their status may be at home, whom the Europeans and Americans had treated abroad as second class individuals - are entitled to look down upon us Jews as their inferiors".

"That confirms that the antisemitism ingrained and still rampant in England, has after all along made its appearance here too ?"

"Definitely so. It is the preferred import of our educated youth - in the way it has been that of Nehru and his family. As I mentioned before, the Indians never persecuted other religions. Now in India, as is the case in England, the term 'Jew' is given an opprobrious, a defamatory, a pejorative meaning".

"Really ? When I was in England I have never...."

"Check the word 'Jew' in whatever dictionary or encyclopedia is in use today in England, and you will see confirmed what I said - to the delighgt of the Indians, the Africans, the Asians".

The other interesting feature of the Indian Jews of which I learned that afternoon, is their aversion against eating beef. Of course, as believing Jews they cannot eat pork - but to this dietary restriction the Indian Jews have added also an aversion against beef. Beef has become for them a physical tabu, no less than it is to the Hindus. It is not a dietary restriction which has been adopted for prudent or political reasons. The reason is also not that the Jews have turned vegetarians; they do not mind eating fowls or mutton. David and Dhanjibhoy tried to explain the aversion of the Indian Jews against eating beef as an adaption to the customs of their environment - by osmosis.

My acquaintance with the family of Solomon David made me regret that I did not stay longer in Bombay and meet also other members of the local Jewish community. This would have enabled me to find out, whether their prayers and religious rituals - dating, as the Beni Israel maintain, from the time of the Second Temple - conformed to any of the ones I knew, especially to those of the Sephardic Jews. It would have been interesting to find out. I hope I shall one day have the opportunity to learn more about these Jews, their history and their culture. I was assured by my host, that I am going to meet many Indian Jews in Israel - but somehow I could not avoid the idea, that the Beni Israel Jews now settled in Israel, will not - under the impact of the free environment and the social equality they enjoy now - have already in the first generation changed, assimilated, adapted to such a degree, that they would no more be suited for a study of their unique features.

The Horoscope.

As a rule Gobinder Nath accompanied me on my daily walking tours. But a morning here and another there I went out on my own. Each time this happened, he begged me, with an uncalled for guilty expression on his face, to excuse him for a few hours, as he 'wanted to put his things in order the better to serve me henceforth'. I asked never what this meant. I was to learn only later, that he had spent most of the time he had left me alone, in the company of his Guru, his spiritual adviser and guide.

One evening - I had been in Bombay already more than a month and had on that day been discussing with Gobinder my plan to travel on - I was requested by Seth Gopal not to go out on my usual walk the following morning. Gobinder and I had planned to walk to a certain neglected slum area, where I was interested to talk to some of the inhabitants and to learn from them how they justified their miserable fate which contrasted so greatly with that of even their poorest neighbours.

The reason for his request, Seth Gopal explained, was that his Guru - the same one as Gobinder's, by the way - a senior priest of a nearby old and widely respected temple, had expressed the wish to make my acquaintance. He knew already all there was to know about me. He had been regularly kept informed by both Gobinder and Gopal of my antecedents, my activities, my interests and my encounters. The priest had informed Gopal that the time had come at last to meet me in person. The Guru had informed him, that he did not want me to come to the temple, that he instead was coming to the hotel for the meeting Gopal was to arrange. Both Gopal and Gobinder gave me to understand, that this was not only a most unusual gesture from a priest of his standing, but also a great honour for

the hotel - and by implication for me too.

Early next morning, after I had eaten my breakfast as usual at a very early hour, Seth Gopal and Gobinder Nath led me into the former's sitting-room. There I came face to face with a group of five white-clad, very dignified looking men. Two of the men were quite old as was indicated by their wrinkled skin and the tuffs of white hair emerging from their otherwise bald scalps. The other three priests were very much younger. The vertical colour stripes on their foreheads told me that all five were high-class Brahmins. Strongly scented flower garlands hung from their necks. Now Gopal placed one such also around my own neck.

Gopal informed me in a loud whisper, audible throughout the room, that the oldest of the two venerable men, to whom he pointed with his folded hands and whom he called 'His Holiness', was the Head Priest of the temple, the one who had expressed the wish to meet me. The other old man was the Deputy Head Priest, and the three younger men were their acolytes. His Holiness had come to know of me from Gobinder Nath, to whom, as well as to the entire Seth Gopal family, His Holiness was kind enough to be the Guru.

I respectfully greeted the priests and they replied to my greeting. I was pleased to meet these men. I had repeatedly spoken to Hindu priests, but the Head Priest and his Deputy appeared to be especially interesting types. If one is allowed to conclude anything from a man's physiognomy, I reflected, the older of the two must be endowed with great wisdom and knowledge. Seth Gopal had mentioned the names of each of the five priests, but I was to much overpowered by the first impact of the encounter to have paid attention to what he said. I was concentrating on listening inside me, on registering the sensations I experienced, on testing the vibrations the encounter had set in motion within me. To this day I do not know their names.

The Head priest stepped nearer to me. He was of about the same height as I. His eyes wandered over my face for what seemed to me a long time - not as if he was short-sighted but as if he wanted to register every pore in my face. And finally his eyes concentrated on my eyes. I felt his eyes looking straight into me and through me. They were not staring; they were not of that intention-filled intensity which would have made me think he was trying to hypnotize me - or to outstare me. It was as if he was looking for something in my eyes, as if he wanted to discover

something within me.

At last the Old Priest stepped back, and in obedience to his inviting gesture we sat down, all of us, around a small carpet which had been spread over the dhurrey. I sat opposite the two old priests. The three junior priests had arraigned themselves behind their elders. Gobinder and Gopal sat on each side of me, but slightly behind me as I noticed with some surprise. In the centre of the carpet stood a copper bowl filled with red rose petals; their scent, in unison with that of the six yasmin garlands around our necks and that of some incense burning somewhere in the room poroduced a pleasant, sedating aroma.

All of us declined Gopal's offer of 'a cup of tea or a glass of sherbet'.

The old High Priest requested me to give him a survey of what I considered the main events in my life so far. I did so without having to think for a long time what to tell him - my recital did not take more than a few minutes. Otherwise our 'conversation' consisted of a series of questions - interrupted by long intervals of silence - which the High Priest, and occasionally one of the other priests, addressed to me. He, as well as the other priests spoke an acceptable english, and somehow their sing-song intonation semed to me to fit well into the atmosphere.

For a considerable time, and in a very thorough manner, the two senior priests scrutinized my past life, in particular the last five years of my life. Strangely enough, they showed no interest in my family background, not even in my parents. The short survey I had given them in the beginning of our conversation had apparently sufficed.

Our talk was hardly a conversatiion in the usual sense; it was more a questioning, an interrogation. It went on, more or less, along the following lines: did I remember anything from a past existence ? No, he corrected my first attempt at a reply, he did not mean from my childhood but from a previous existence on this earth ? Has there ever been anything, anywhere, at any time in my life, an event or a place or a face which had evoked in me the sensation of a deja' vue ? (He actually used this french word). Did anything I had seen since my arrival in India - or for that matter elsewhere on my journey - anything I had heard from people or had seen in the people I had met, remind me of something, of

anything whatsoever even though only vaguely? Had I ever come acrosss anything, been involved in any event, any happening which could not be explained as a natural occurrence or process ? Could I recall any episode or occurrence which had somehow appeared to me unusual or unexplainable ? Did I have dreams, or did I ever notice thoughts enter my mind which might indicate that I have knowledge of things past, or of another world which mortal beings do not, cannot possess ? Did it ever enter my consciousness that I was a superior person, a person in any way favoured by higher powers ?

To some of these questions I could give an immediate reply; to others I did so after some reflection. But all my answers were in the negative. The other senior priest, sitting at the side of the Head Priest, then tried to make my thoughts go off into free associations - a Freudian method with which I was familiar from my College days. But the outcome was equally unsatisfactory.

It never occurred to me to refuse them the right to interrogate me in a way which under different circumstances would have appeared to me uncalled for, or would have given me the impression I was facing a police investigation. Looking back on the interrogation which must have lasted over two hours, I did not think I could have made any valuable contribution. This was not due to any conscious or subconscious resistance from my side. Although the trend which their questions revealed, appeared more often than not strange to me, I willingly collaborated. I made an effort to find the material for which they were looking - only I did not know what they were looking for in me or in my past. I came to the conclusion, that after all the efforts they - and I - had made, they could not have discovered anything which might have been of any value to them.

To my surprise, my interlocutors appeared to be of a different opinion; for both of them - and as if my osmosis also the three juniors seated behind them - indicated in gestures and words that they were satisfied, as if they had hoped for the very answers I had given them.

At last I found the opportunity to put in a question of my own. It had been on my tongue since some time.

"What is all this about, Your Holiness ? Why did you ask me all these questions ? What did you hope to discover ?"

While the other four priests smiled and nodded with what appeared to me a self-congratulatory expression on their faces, the Head Priest bent slightly forward and lifted his folded hands - which had until then rested, palms upwards, on his thighs - in front of his chin, the fingertips touching each other, in a prolonged greeting. He did not reply but continued to look at me.

"My Prince", he began after some time. I tried to interrupt him, but his hands, their palms turned towards me, refrained me.

"I know you are only a M i s t e r Prince (his voice seemed to underline these last two words). But you are far more than that. You are a great personality. You are a holy man. You harbour a great soul. You possess great psychic power. We Brahmin priests of great maturity, experienced in the paths of virtue and truth, and endowed with the knowledge of the mystic emanations of the soul, sense we are in the presence of an elected personality. All this is clearly written on your forehead. You possess the Third Eye, Your Holiness. Only the initiated recognize this great qualification in others. We all here know that you belong to the restricted group of most valuable beings who are actually alive here on earth. You are one of the **Rishis** to whose goodness and holiness we owe the survival of humanity. Your individual Self is already identified with the Univeral Self. We have been waiting for you, Your Holiness. Your appearance among us has been predicted since long. Your arrival has been expected with anxious hope by myself and by Gobinder Nath, as we - more than all others - are intrinsically bound to your fate. There are many others who unknowingly have expected you with an impatience for which they have so far not found a reason. The **Karman** of many of us here - and by this I mean the end of our **samsara**, our miserable existence here on earth - is intimately associated with your presence and your influence, with your own existence in general. At this moment I cannot say anything more, because I do not know anything more. I do not yet know why you are so important to us, why you are here with us, in which way you are so intimately interacting with me, with Gobinder Nath, with the karman of all those with whom you come into contact here. It will only be possible to discover the answer to all these questions when we know what your horoscope has to tell. Permit me, Your Holiness my Prince, to cast your horoscope now. It will reveal your origin and your mission. It will tell us how far and in which way you fit into our personal world. It will above all tell us what duties are outlined for you, and how you are to fulfill them before your Atman can feel free to dissolve in the Absolute Reality".

I made a gesture with which I intended to express my surprise more than a request for more detailed explanations;; but the Old Man appeared to have taken my movement as my an indication of my consent, for he continued:

"I am ready now, my Prince, this very moment, to prepare your horoscope. Tell me, please, as far as it is possible for you to know, the exact hour, day, year - as well as the place of your birth".

By chance I did know the exact hour and minute I was born. It was 2:17 on February 17. My aunt Liza is an amateur numerologist, and she had enthused over what she had found intriguing, significant and promising - and in which I saw nothing but a coincidence.

Aunt Liza's enthusiasm was apparently now shared by the priests who had begun to unroll charts and open huge folios. Now began a long period of whispering and gesticulating, of pointing of fingers and of shaking of heads. Occasionally doubts, but more often joy and surprise were reflected on their faces. They filled many sheets of paper with calculations, formulas, strange looking symbols.

All this took a long time, a very long time. I do not know how long, for all through that long morning I somehow never felt inclined to look at my watch. Time had ceased to count. I was fascinated by all I saw and heard - although I did not understand a word of what the priests quite audibly whispered among themselves. I felt totally alone, totally isolated in that room. I felt totally excluded from my environment. With this I do not mean to say that I was in anything like a trance, a changed state of consciousness. I was fully awake. The words and the questions the High Priest had addressed to me continued to circulate in my mind; my thoughts wandered along the chain these words had formed. And when my thoughts were distracted by the attention I forced myself to give to my surroundings, especially the actiivities of the priests, they invariably returned to the impossible possibilities the remarks of the Priest had implied. However, my effort to find by a renewed search through the hidden recesses of my memories; and with all my willingness to give the suppositions of the Priest the opportunity to qualify for acceptance; and permitting my sense of fairness to act as a 'moderator'; I came up with nothing but a negative result. I could not excavate any memory, nor produce any association which would have fitted into the frame of what the priests were attempting

to reconstruct.

Throughout my life there had been nothing which, with even the most accomodating will, could be called unusual or extraordinary. Only this very moment; only this tableau in which I took part as one of the eight individuals seated around a carpet; only these long hours I was spending in Seth Gopal's sittingroom; were something out of the usual; something totally incompatible with my past life and experience; something which I could call truly and unbelievably strange. However, I nearly regretted that I was not emotionally shaken, that I was not tensed up in expectation of the priests' reading of my horoscope. When I took my psychological pulse it did not register any abnormal reaction whatsoever. Somehow I felt as if all this did not concern me; as if I was not part of what was going on; as if I had been placed in the role of the main actor. I saw myself only as an interested onlooker. I considered myself lucky, even privileged, to witness a scene which was certainly going to remain engraved for ever on my memory. I had not the slightest doubt, that all the seven men around me were not only intelligent - some of them I would even call wise men - but also that they were honest in, and convinced of, what they thought they knew as truth, what they tried to discover, what they hoped to convey. I hope you will not be surprised if I say, that although I was justified - nay even obliged - from an intellectual point of view, to be skeptical regarding the worth of a horoscope, about any former existence, of the concept of a karman, I sat there in that room opposite the five priests and did not feel that kind of negative attitude, nor that cynicism, for which my upbrining should have called. And though at times I felt surprised about myself, I reasoned this surprise away by making the atmosphere in that room responsible for having weakened my resistance against the mystical, the metaphysical against which I had all my life been on guard.

During all those hours - four ? five ? - Gobinder, sitting next to me, had not uttered a word. He had not moved. At times I had turned to him with the intention to make a remark or to ask a question, but his closed eyes and the serene withdrawn expression on his face had kept me back. He had been meditating, as he told me later, on the significance of his Guru's encounter with me. Seth Gopal, on the other hand, appeared less affected. He spent most of the time outside the room. This was understandable: he had to look after his business.

At last the priests had completed their calculations. They rolled up their charts, closed the big folios and packed them into white cotton blankets. Each one of the five priests in turn checked over the sheets of paper covered with strange ciphers and symbols. We three who were not part of the clerical group, must somehow have given the Head Priest the impression that we were glad our waiting had come to an end, for he smiled at us, and somehow made his hands indicate his approval of our patience. Seth Gopal could persuade us now to accept a glass of rose sherbet and some of his small cakes made of milk, suji - a kind of semolina - ground nuts and honey.

The light refreshment appeared to have restored the High Priests's energies. The sigh which escaped from him and his facial expression indicated that he felt also otherwise satisfied and relaxed. He looked at me know with half-closed eyes. He looted at me contemplatingly for a long time without saying a word. And I looked at him without my eyes hardly ever blinking. I was totally relaxed. I was in no way impatient to learn what my horoscope had revealed. Somehow I did not really care. I enjoed the actual moment. I was contented with having partecipated in such an unusual scene. I watched the Head Priest. I was determined to engrave for ever in my mind the memory of this man who had made such a great impression on me. I studied every detail of his serene face. I can recall to this minute his beautiful eyes, his high forehead, his strong nose, his delicvate mouth and his eloquent hands. He was clean shaven. Also his scalp was shaven except for the tuff arising from the vertex of his skull and hanging over the back of his head. The only colour in his pale face was provided by the vertical lines - ochre, white and yellow - which decorated his forehead. He was dressed in a white loin cloth and a long white shirt. I could see the "sacred thread" which crossed his chest. The other priests were similarly dressed.

Finally - as I thought I could interpret his facial expression - the Head Priest appeared to be satisfied by what he had read in my face. Or, may be, he was clear in his mind about what he was going to tell me.

"My dear son", he began. His voice, though low, sounded clearer, more energetic than before. Also his English, it seemed to me, was less accentuated.

"My son", he repeated. "Be welcome among us".

He paused. He creased his forehead. Then he shook his head as if to disperse some distracting thoughts to better concentrate on what he was going to say. He took a sheet of paper from the bundle which had been left in front of him. He looked at it for a moment. He cleared his throat and began again.

"Listen carefully to what your horoscope tells us.

"Some 2222 years ago there lived in Bihar, in the North of India, a Ruler with the name of Raja Surkhana. He was a very powerful Ruler, more feared than respected far and wide. He was not a good man. He indulged in every possible vice. Heappeared not to have cared about the effects his life was going to have on his Self, on his soul, on his future existence. Three of his four sons followed in the footsteps of their father. The youngest son, Price Ruhama, however, was an exception. He was given to dedicate his time to introspection, to meditation and to the performance of good deeds. He was far advanced in that knowledge, which leads to the ultimate acquisition of the Truth. He finally became identified with the Truth. His knowledge brought him the realization, the certainty I might say, that his soul was identical with Atman, the Universal Self. His unsoiled conduct in life, his good and selfless deeds, his thoughts so pure and free of evil, had so totally cleared his karman, and had purified his Self to such a degree, that the Powers Above Us had decreed that there was no need of any further rebirth. His samsara, the ever-recurring cycle of birth, death and rebirth, had come to an end. He had been granted unrestricted, total knowledge of his achievement, of his singular status. He knew he was assured of his impending dissolution in Nirvana after his mortal life had come to an end.

"In those times - more commonly than is custom today - every princely ruler had his own family priest - a Brahmin of course - whose duty it was to perform the prescribed daily rites and sacrifices through which alone the favours of the Deity can be assured. These priests - who were called 'Purohitas' - did not receive a fixed salary; they were instead amply rewarded with regular gifts, called 'Dakshina'.

"The name of Raja Surkhana's Purohita was Panthura Mandrobar. He was not only a bad priest but als a bad man. He not only blessed, encouraged and furthered the evil deeds of his master Raja Surkhana and his three sons, he tried also to corrupt the fourth, Prince Ruhama. He made every effort to lead the young prince astray. He made use of every stratagem at his disposal. He never gave up his endeavours to change the nature of the Prince by means of prayers,

of rites and of magic. In the use of the latter he was an expert. But he did not succeed. Year by year his conduct grew more evil. He spent most of the income he derived from his very generous dakshinas on a life unbecoming to a priest and a Brahmin.

"When the crooked Brahmin priest saw that all his efforts had no effect, he did not decide to henceforth ignore the young Prince and leave him to his fate. On the contrary ! His failure to corrupt Prince Ruhama turned him into a cruel enemy of the goodfearing young prince. He maligned him at Court. He spoke badly about him to the Ruler. And finally - in an attempt to damage the Prince still further, and in addition to punish the Ruler who had been indifferent to the accusations the priest had raised against the son - he performed the daily rites and ceremonies in such a purposefully wrong way, that they became not only ineffective but in all probability also harmful.

"At last the evil Priest succeeded in his scheming. The Ruler heeded to the calumnies of his Purohita and banned the young Prince to a distant village near the confines of the State. There he had to care for his own needs without the help of a servant; there he had to grow his own vegetables; and there he had to cook his own food.

"All things human of necessity come to an end; and in due course also the lives of all the actors in the drama came to an end. The karman of the Old Ruler and of the wicked Brahmin Priest had to such a degree become loaded with evil deeds, that the obliteration of these required innumerable rebirths. Again and again their cycle of samsara returned them to an existence on earth. In the course of centuries they went through hundreds of such existences. They lived as gnats, as worms - in short through every form and shape of animal until they were found worth of coming back in human shape again. Also as humans they have had to transverse many incarnations. They were reborn in all possible societies and in all four castes. Slowly and steadily they succeeded in cleansing their soul from the evil deeds in their past. Slowly and steadily they could unload their karman.

"In due course also Prince Ruhama's life on earth came to an end. He was ready for his moksa, for his liberation, for his entrance in and his disappearance into the bliss of Nirvana. The Prince knew of the endless turns of the wheel of samsara which were going to be the fate of the souls of his father and of the Brahmin. Without any justification he felt guilty on their behalf. He prayed fervently that their suffering be eased, that the series of their rebirths be reduced, that their karman be eased. He prayed to the Brahma-

Atman of the Universe, and to the one he harboured within himself, that he be granted to be of help to the souls of the Ruler and the Brahmin, in shortening their sufferings. He prayed to the Absolute that he may be granted the blessing which the Bhodisattvah, the selected among the followers of the Buddha had enjoyed, who instead of entering and disappearing for ever into Nirvana, were permitted to remain on earth so that they could help mankind through its difficulties and blunders. He offered to take upon himself a part of the sins of his father and of the priest. He begged to return again and again to life on earth - until he could accompany the two victims of their own uncontrolled weaknesses to their salvation and ultimate dissolution into bliss.

"And the Powers That Be, the Great Absolute, who is otherwise not approachable, decreed that the young Prince's request be granted. It was decreed that over the centuries, during which by constant rebirths the loaded karma of the two sinners was going to be eased, the soul of Prince Ruhama would be incarnated as an **'Avatar'** again and again, each time in human shape; that he was to be granted the faculties and the wisdom by which he could be of use to mankind; that he would be of help and support to those men and women who are so badly in need of blessings. Throughout the centuries he was to be, unknown to himself, a **Rishi**, one of the thirty-six men which always exist on one earth at one and the same time, who by their pureness and goodness make it possible that the human race can survive. It was further decreed, that the sphere of action in which the Prince was to perform his good deeds, was to encompass the entire earth. And it was decreed further, that when the right constellation has at last come about - that means when the souls which had once dwelled in the old Ruler and in that of the Purohita had been nearly totally cleansed of the effects of their adverse karman - they would meet here in India, here in Bombay, here in this room. And it has furthermore been decreeed, that the soul which had once resided in Prince Ruhama will once again have found a home in a man born as a prince; and that this prince would arrive here from far away, from over the ; and that would finally join here the other two souls and bring about their salvation".

The long recitation appeared to have tired the Old Priest. He stopped talking. His upper body had also stopped swaying. His eyes were closed. He closed his hands, which had been resting, palms upwards, on his thighs.

"But", he continued after a minute's rest, "it was also decreed that - after its emminence had been revealed - the soul of the Prince

should continue to be of use, to be of benefit, and to be of blessing for many more years to come to many more people on earth. He shall, therefore, have to spend many a day traveling, dressed as a Sadhu, through the length and width of India, in the company of the soul of the Ruler and under the guidance of the soul of the Priest. This duty sufficiently completed, the time wuill arrive when the souls, the Selfs, of the Ruler and of the Priest will be freed from their mortal hulls. They will at last gain their moksa, while the Self of the Prince, still in its pristine cleanness and total perfection, will be allowed the freedom to benefit mankind - as he had once prayed - for many more years to come. It will depend entirely on him for how many years - or even life cycles - he wants to continue on this mission. As soon as his Self expresses the wish to unite with the Brahma-Atman, he will be released from his task".

Again he paused for a short while. He took a few sips from his glass of sherbet and then continued.

"I and Gobinder Nath have known since years that our fates are somehow interwoven. Both our horoscopes foretold that our samara was soon going to end; that most of the enormous load of sins which had caused us and others so much sufferings, had been unloaded from our karman; that our series of rebirhs was going to end; that our salvation was going to come with the arrival of a prince, arriving from over the waters. But I did not know what was the association between us; what is the common denominator in our individual fate; what was our commonm background if any; and what exactly we could expect. Now I know !"

With the last sentence his voice had turned into a whisper and his speech slowed. His words were hardly audible. A faraway look had come into his eyes. Now he ceased speaking. After a few seconds he repeated in a whisper:

"Now I know. Now I understand".

There we sat around the carpet. Nobody of us said a word. Thus we remained for a long time. How long ? I do not know. Then the Priest began to speak again. He spoke in his usual voice, but more deliberate, more slowly still.

"In you, my Prince, resides the soul which was once that of Prince Ruhama. My body is home to the soul which once was that of the Pirohita. And Gobinder Nath harbours the soul of the Old Ruler".

Again he stopped speaking. His body had slightly stooped forward with his gaze directed to the joined palms of his hands resting in his lap.

He looked up now. He smiled at me. He bowed to me.

"My Prince", he whispered. "My holy Prince !"

He hoisted himself into a kneeling position, placed his hand in front of himself, and lowered his forehead onto the carpet. He remained in this position for a few seconds before raising his upper body again. Now the other priests repeated what I interpreted with embarrassment as an act of homage.

I did not react. In order to escape the need to react I closed my eyes. An artery in my head was pounding in a rapid rhythm. Also the rate of my breathing had increased. I felt myself ill at ease, greatly embarrassed by the behaviour of the priests. Incoherently my thoughts revolved concentrated on the fact, that throughout that morning and in all he had said, the Head Priest had never turned to Gobinder, had never directly addressed him. Neither did he do so now.

I kept my eyes closed. I did not want to see the eyes, the faces, the expressions of the five priests opposite me.

After an interval of total silence in the room, which conveyed to me a sensation of emptiness around me, I heard the voice of the Head Priest address me again.

"You have brought blessing, happiness and peace to us, my Prince. I thank you in the name of all whom your presence has blessed. Let me now complete what I have to say. It is clear, unmistakenly clear - in your horoscope it is revealed as an inescapable instruction - that as much as you have brought happiness to me and to Gobinder Nath, and as much as you have by your dharshan brought blessings to everyone with whom you have come into contact from the moment you have set foot on Indian soil, so you will continue your mission for as long as you feel you have the strength to do so and the willingness to continue. You have since long sensed that you possess much inner strength and grace, but you have never realized the why you are thus endowed, you have never been consciously aware of a motive and a purpose. You have never known you have a mission. You have instead explained to yourself the inner strength and power you possess as an unsatiable urge to search for the Truth, as an unquenchable thirst for the acquisition of knowledge. You must continue to bless everything within your field of vision however

you may explain your urges and activities. Now it is revealed to you, that the field you survey and in which you sow your blessings, encompasses the entire world, embraces all mankind. However, for at least in part and for a restricted time, you must dedicate your soul-strength to this sub-continent where your mission had its beginning. After that, after you have completed your duty here with us and to us, you may leave to wherever your spirit will lead you. Until that moment in time arrives, your horoscope dictates that you have to stay with us, my Holy Prince. This means in true fact and reality until the day, when I and Gobinder Nath will not need anymore your support and your blessings.

"It is, therefore, directed by the Powers Above and indicated in the readings of your horoscope, that you must - having donned the robes of a Sadhu, having hung the sacred cord of a Hindu over your chest, having placed sandals on your feet, having taken a begging bowl in one hand and a rod in the other - traverse this land of ours from North to South, from West to East. Gobinder Nath will be doubly blessed because he is going to accompany you on this pilgrimage. I have been ordered to stay here because my company, due to my waning strength, would cut your wanderings short. But when you have completed the span of your wanderings, you will find me waiting here for you, my Prince. You will know when to return".

He paused for a few seconds. The long talks appeared to have exhausted him. He sat upright, closed his eyes and slowly he breathed in and out. After a minute or so he continued.

"Take your time to get adjusted to your new life. Put your affairs in order in such a way, that you can take up your life again according to your dharma. You will wear the cloth of a Sadhu from the day you set out from here on your mission. You will know when to begin your pilgrimage in the way you will know when to end it".

These were the words, the instructions, the orders, the guidelines of the Old Head Priest, who had become my Guru too.

You will be curious to know, what I felt and decided, what I felt and thought after the Old Priest had interpreted my horoscope. Believe me if I say, that I have not felt the need to recall, nor the wish to analyze in all the months and years which has passed since, what I might have felt, what I might have thought that morning. Only now, telling you about that experieence, do my thoughts return

to that hour. Only now do I recall what I thought and what I felt. And in the same way I reacted then to what I felt in those moments, do I react at this moment too: I was and am surprised and astonished that I was not at all surprised; that I did not react negatively; that I did not refuse the instructions of the Guru; that I was ready to follow his guidelines; that I accepted what I heard him tell me as the most logical interpretation of my past and future life, as the most natural task for my future. I accepted the words of the horoscope, its analysis, its 'revelations' and its instructions as something with which I could agree, nay, as something which I had to accept; as something for which not other explanation, no different analysis was possible; as something from which no other advice or instructions could be drawn. And still ! There was at the same time also deep inside me a vague shadow of a doubt, which intellectually prevented me from a full conviction of the imputed insight of a horoscope. I did not blindly accept - at least not at that early stage of my new existence - as absolute truth what the Head Priest's reading of my horoscope had 'revealed'. I did in no way identify with that poor prince of times past. Nor did I feel in me the potency, the power and the vocation to help the people of India come nearer to their moksa, their salvation, by undertaking a pilgrimage through their vast lands.

You will ask me why I did not argue with the Head Priest; why I kep quiet and submitted as if I did agree. The reason is very plain: without being a fatalist, I have always believed in fate. I have always felt inclined to take the direction into which fate placed my feet - and so my reaction on that fateful day was more or less: 'O.k., if this opportunity is offered to me, it will suit me well ! I have often wished for such an opportunity. It may turn out to be a very interesting and instructive undertaking.
Have I not all the time in the world at my disposal ? So far I have not even decided which profession to chose, which direction to give to my life. It is clear that that the experiences I am going to gather will enlarge my horizon, will increase my knowledge. If nothing else at least my power of discrimination and judgement will benefit - and as the Priest had mentioned - I may do a lot of good to a lot of people. So be it ! I shall certainly not violate any ethical rules if I take upon me the role and duty the Priest and my horoscope have pressed upon me. So, why not ?'

This was what I thought and this was how I reacted.

I sat there in silence. I sensed I formed a ring, a chain with the other occupants of Seth Gopal's room. Nobody of us spoke. All were waiting for a reply, for a reaction from me. I realized all of a sudden, that I had adopted the same posture as the High Priest. I was sitting with my legs crossed, my right foot on the opposite thigh and the sole of my left foot pressed against my lower abdomen. My hands, their palms upwards, were resting on my thighs. I was surprised that I could adopt - and maintain for a long time - this unaccustomed posture. I noticed that my mind was going back to the years of my infancy, of my childhood, of my adolescence. I saw my parents and my sisters. What did they say ? What advice are they going to give me ? They too remained silent; they did not talk. They were looking at me in silence, without saying a word and without an expression in their faces. In those few seconds I relived many episodes which I had forgotten until now. I did not think at that moment whether I had to come to a decision. I did not notice, did not discover, did not experience anyhing which might have a reference to what the Priest had purportedly found in my horoscope. I did not think of Prince Ruhama and of the story the Priest had told. And still ! Somehow my mind was not blank.

I do not know how long I had been sitting there, immersed in what may have been my first attempt at meditation. No, I use a wrong word. It was not an attempt, it was in the truest sense a meditation. I had at that moment been granted the gift of meditation.

I do not know how long I have been meditating, how long I have been withdrawn into my world of silence. It may have lasted an hour. I cannot say more than this.

All of a sudden I was wide awake.

"So be it, Holy Father", I said. "I am willing. I shall inform you when I am ready".

Everybody relaxed. Everybody smiled. Everybody rose and moved his limbs as in confirmation that they had been very tense until then. The Head Priest tried to kiss my hand, but I prevented this by embracing him. I had to embrace also the other four priests. I embraced also Gobinder Nath and Seth Gopal. Then I returned to my room. I had so many things to think about, so many things to make clear to myself.

A few minutes later, while I was about to stretch out on my bed, there was a knock at my door and Gobinder entered. I believe I have earned great merith already at that hour by having, with my positive decision, caused the expression of radiant happiness which I saw on his face. He carried a tray with some chapaties, a saucer with curd, a glass of orange juice. "My Prince", he said as he placed the tray on the table near my bed. He folded his hands and looked at me. I kept my eyes closed and did not reply. When I heard him move to the door I called him back.

"Please take the tray with you. I do not feel like eating".

He took the tray and left.

I was suddenly very tired. The sun was about to set. I fell asleep. I slept until the following morning, when the servant knocked and woke me with a mug of tea and a plateful bananas.

I spent the following three days in my room. I did not feel like resuming my daily walks. I did not want to meet people. I did not like to talk to people. I was in no way depressed or apprehensive, nor worried or regretful. Gobinder and Gopal understood me well as I could deduce from their behaviour towards me. I read for many hours the books I had collected about the religions of India, about the people of India, about the history of India. I often found to my surprise that I had interrupted my reading to allow my thoughts to roam unhindered wherever they wanted.

On the evening of the third day I told Gobinder that I was ready to begin my pilgrimage. I asked him to inform his Guru accordingly. I asked him to tell the Head Priest that we would the following morning come to the Temple to get his instructions.

The following morning Gobinder and I presented ourselves at the Temple of the Head Priest. He received us warmly and respectfully. Again he tried to kiss my hands and again my embrace prevented him from doing so. The other priests paid homage to me in their way and again I felt deeply embarrased. The Head Priest enquired how I had slept, how I had spent the last few days, if I had learned anything new from my reading, if I had formed any specific ideas or had experienced any new or unusual saensations. I told him that I had nothing of importance to report, that not only an

unexpected serenity but also a considerable degree of happiness had taken hold of me. My words pleased the Old Man - and no less also the other priests, as well as Gobinder who sat with us on the carpet in the templeroom.

The Head Priesat told me that he was satisfied with my 'progress'.

"Start now on the preparations for your pilgrimage", he advised. "Settle your worldly affairs. The inner preparations for your pilgrimage you have already completed. Return here on the fourth morning from now. You will start your pilgrimage from this holy place, and you will return to this temple when your pilgrimage has been completed".

I was kept busy during the three days which followed. I rented a safe in a nearby bank and deposited therein my passport, my money, my other valuables and my documents. I spent a few hours with a Notary and made him produce a legal document - he called it an 'Instrument' - in which I transferred all my financial assets in New York to Uncle Robert and Aunt Lea. I felt very relieved when this was done and the document had been posted to New York. I had never felt happy in the knowledge that the money, the investments and the real estate I had inherited should be mine, while Uncle Robert and Aunt Lea had to live a rather less affluent life.

I packed my spare clothes into my hold-all which Seth Gopal promised to keep in storage.

I wrote many letters. One of the longest was for my Grandmother in which I informed her that I was well and that I was going to enter a period of apprenticeship which might prevent me for a long time from communicating with her, but that she should interpret my silence as evidence of my wellbeing. I wrote in a similar vein to my uncles and aunts, and also to Cousin Chaim Moshe in jerusalem. To the latter I gave a hint of my program in India, and I told him that I had instructed my friends in Bombay - I gave him the address of Seth Gopal - to inform him at once in case anything should happen to me; but that my silence and that of Seth Goipal had to be taken as an indicattion that all was well with me. I wrote also to many of my friends. To all of them I wrote that I was in perfect physical and mental health, that I was going to undertake a long pilgrimage -

and that they would in the near future hear about me only in case I could not do so myself.

Taking Leave.

On the morning of the last full day I was to spend in Bombay, I woke up at my usual hour. After my bath I dressed in my every day clothes and sat in the padded cane chair I had placed near the French door in my room. I continued reading in the book on Hindu philosophy which had absorbed my interest in the last few days. I was waiting for Gobinder to come to enquire whether I was ready for my breakfast.

Gobinder knocked and entered. But instead of my breakfast he carried on the tray a bundle of safran coloured pieces of cloth, as well as a pair of sandals made of some plastic material. He himself was already dressed in the robe of a Sadhu, the migratory Hindu monk. He placed the tray on my bed, bowed solemnly - and without a word left. I undressed down to my underwear, took the upper piece of safran cotton cloth from the tray and wound it in form of a dhoti around my hip. Then I took the long safran shirt from the tray and slipped it over my torso. I draped the short safran-coloured scarf around my shoulders and sliped my naked feet into the sandals.

I was dressed as a Sadhu. For a few minutes I walked from one end of the room to the other, back and forth. I felt comfortable in my new outfit. I called Gobinder for my breakfast. After I had eaten my breakfast Gobinder brought a black wooden begging bowl and a sturdy long walking stick into my room. He was accompanied by a barber who shaved off all the hair of my body except for a tuff of hair he left standing on the top of my scalp.

I spent the day in my room reading and writing letters - and

getting used to my attire. I told Gobinder that I had decided to leave the following day on our pilgrimage, that he should inform the High Priest that we would arrive at his temple early next morning, soon after sunrise, as I feared people might laugh about me, should they see me walking along in my monk's robe.

Very early the following morning - bathed, shaved and dressed in my safran robes - I was waiting for my breakfast. There was a knock on my door. On my invitation Seth Gopal, followed by his wife - whom I had seen only rarely during the weeks I lived in the hotel - entered the room. She carried a tray with food. Both she and Gopal greeted me respectfully, I may say even reverently. Gobinder followed behind the couple. He held his begging bowl in his hand. He made me sit on my bed. Both Gopal and his wife filled our bowls with rice, dhal, curds, an omelet and a few pieces of chapati. This was to be the introduction to the kind of food which was going to sustain us in future. This was the kind of food which I was to beg from kindhearted people for my one or two meals a day. Seated on my bed, my legs folded underneath me and with Gobinder sitting at my side, I ate my food with my fingers as I had seen people do in India. I enjoyed this breakfast more than any meal I have ever eaten in my life.

After I had finished my breakfast in the company of Gobinder and watched by Gopal, his wife and their four children who had joined them in the meantime; and observed by the awe-stricken hotel servants who crowded the doorway, I thoroughly cleaned my begging bowl in the way Gobinder was teaching me. This completed, I signaled to Gobinder that I was ready to leave for the Temple. We said our farewells, short and serene and without a trace of sadness. We went into the street. I was surprised, very surprised, to see our not very small - and not very narrow - street filled with people from one end to the other. Among the simple men and women, and the children of every age, whom I had encountered every time I had gone out or had come back home, I noticed many others with whom I had never exchanged a word before, or whom I had not even seen before. All these people had come at this early hour to see me off ! I was deeply moved. I knew that some of them had come from quite a distance. I could see also some policemen of the nearby Police Station who as a rule were on duty only in the afternoons.

There was no shouting and no sloganeering which on such occasions crowds consider as a rule their privileged and rightful

way to express whatever emotions they may want to express. I only heard a murmur of welcome, here and there a murmured farewell, some whispered good wishes and felicitations. I stood on the threshold of the hotel and looked over the crowd. I could not find the right words and preferred to keep silent. Now, for the first time, I came to feel really and truly that I might have a mission - that I was privileged. These people were my friends. They had come to see me off.

I do not think that Gopal or Gobinder had organized this 'farewell party'. I am certain, that the news had passed by word of mouth that I was going to set out at that hour on my pilgrimage; and this had been enough to bring all these people to the entrance of the hotel. I blessed them all in my heart and bending down with my respectfully folded hands. When I turned around to say a final farewell to Seth Gopal, his family and his people, I noticed that some of them were crying with a laughing expression on their faces. Never before had I seen men and women shed what were undoubtedly happy tears.

We set out on our way to the Temple - not only Gobinder and I but also many of the hotel staff and a large number of those who had stood in the street. Slowly we walked to the Temple situated hardly a mile away. Arrived in the courtyard, we deposited our sandals, our walking sticks and our bowls at the entrance to the templeroom. We entered by ourselves; the crowd remained outside the low marble building.

On entering the templeroom I saw the Head Priest as well as a number of other templle priests, young and old, seated on one side of a long carpet. They were singing prayer hymns. Without interrupting his prayer, the Head Priest invited Gobinder and me to sit on the other side of the carpet, which had most likely been left free for us. I sat down on the ground and studied the faces of the praying priest opposite me. By that time the Head Priest had ceased to take part in the prayers. While the others continued their sing-song, he seemed to have entered a state of trance. His eyes were closed. He sat motionless. He seemed even to have stopped breathing as I could not detect a movement of his chest.

Now the song ceased. All sat in total silence. The priests were sunk in meditation. I too meditated about my fate, about my surroundings, about my feeling relaxed and happy. A long time

passed. I do not know how much time. I had no watch anymore - and somehow time did not matter anymore. The Old Man opened his eyes. He looked at me and a smile played around his pale lips. He rose and we all followed his example. He approached me, placed his hands in silent blessing first on my shoulders and thereafter on my head. Then he blessed Gobinder Nath. He made a sign with his right hand and two priests came forward. Each had a small tray in his hands. From one tray carrying a row of small receptacles containing coloured pastes, he took some of the material on his right index fingerand painted an ochre, then a green and then a white vertical stripe on my forehead. After that he pressed a red spot over the root of my nose. He placed a similar red spot also on Gobinder's forehead. From the other tray he took a many-stringed cord closed in a large loop. It was a sacred cord of the kind the priests of the Temple were wearing. The Head Priest made me remove my shirt and placed the cord over my left shoulder from where it dropped onto my right hip.

"You are a Brahmin with a pure brahmin soul, my son. Wear from now on also the insignia of a high-class Brahmin. You have a great mission to fulfill, not only for us and all you meet on your pilgrimage, but also for yourself. Try to discover the Truth".

And then, placing a hand each on my and Gobinder's shoulders, he added:

"Go in peace, my children, and come back as happy and fulfilled men".

This was all he said that morning. He invited me to accompany him to the entrance of the Temple. Our way led through the court-yard. I was surprised to see it filled with a crowd of men and women. Most of these were the men and women whom I had seen in the street of the hotel; others must have joined them here. They appeared to fill the courtyard to capacity.

The crowd opened a passage for the Head Priest and me. Gobinder and the other priests followed behind us. When we reached the entrance to the street, a young priest handed me my bowl and stick and placed the sandals on my feet. The Old Man offered me again his farewells and indicated that we should set off. He prevented the people, who had made an attempt to leave along with us, from following us.

I was grateful for his understanding.

Gobinder and I set off at a brisk pace.

Our pilgrimage had begun.

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V.

THE PILGRIMAGE.

Sadhus on their Way.

We sat out on our travel through India - Gobinder preferred to call it a pilgrimage - clad in safran robes and with sandals on our naked feet. I soon gave up the use of the walking stick; but I insisted that Gobinder continue the use of his.

For a time I thought that we must have appeared a strange couple to the people who saw us in the streets, the buses, the trains, the temples. After a while - I must confess that this took quite a long time - it seemed to me that the passersby did not see anything unusual in our appearance; that they did not take any particular interest in us. Hardly anybody stopped us with a question - or expressed curiosity when we were offered food - who we were and where we came from. I never had the impression, that anybody viewed us with suspicion when we presented ourselves at the housedoors or at the foodstalls, where the kind people deposited a most generous amount of food into our begging bowls. Finally I became convinced, that people treated us like other monks and sadhus passing through their neighbourhood. The only interest we may have aroused by our differing from other sadhus was in our outer appearance, because we were always well groomed and cleanly shaved; we were not covered in ashes and did not sport matted hair like so many of the sadhu colleagues' we met on the roads.

However, notwithstanding all I have said just now, I have reason to suppose, that in the way we ourselves felt different also people saw in us a different type of sadhus - and treated us accordingly. After some time we did not anymore have to beg at the houedoors. It mostly happened that, whenever and wherever we sat and rested, kind people - mostly those of the poor and under-priviledged classes

- came to offer us some of their food. In the temples and ashrams, where we asked for accomodation for the night, or for protection from the heat of the day, we were - as this was apparently the accepted and customary standard - also offered a meal. Whenever we passed a vendor in the steets or walked through a market, we were asked to accept a cold drink, a glass of milk or some fruit - and we usually did, as we had learned from experience, that those who gave us to eat or to drink felt they were the gainers and beneficiaries and not we.

In those rare instances, when we passed a public eating place - it would be exaggerated to call it a restaurant - we were invariably begged by the proprietor or by one of the customers to accept some food, usually with the expectation to receive our blessing in return. When, in order to avoid walking long stretches through uninhabited parts of the country or through long stretches of desert, we made use of a public transport like a bus or a tram, the drivers never asked us to pay the prescribed fare.

At times we preferred to travel by train; and when Gobinder enquired at the station when the next train was scheduled, we were without exception also told that sadhus were not expeced to pay for the use of the railway. It often happened that, notwithstanding this concession, one of the travelers lined up at the ticket counter would request of us the honour of paying for our tickets.

In the early months of our pilgrimage I often felt embarrassed by such offers, and by what I saw as our abuse of the robes we wore. On such occasions Gobinder often invoked the help of the ticket vendor or of the station master or of some other person of authority to free me of my scruples.

Though we could have entered a better class railway compartment, We preferred as a rule to travel 'Third Class', as we wanted to sit among the simple people of the country. It was by no means a comfortable way of traveling, but to my mind it never failed to be interesting and instructive. This kind of company never failed to be of some intellectual benefit to us, even when - as it happened not rarely - none of the people in the compartment spoke Hindi or English, or when they spoke only a dialect which even Gobinder did not understand. As a rule these simple people vacated for us seats on the wooden benches - they never permitted us to sit on the floor - and they always shared with us their simple plain food.

Wherever we went we seemed to attract more than usual attention.

We were often stopped on the street by people who asked for our 'dharshan'. In the first weeks I was kind of embarrased by such requests, but - as Gobinder had predicted - I soon got used to all this attention and to these requests for our blessing. After a time I automatically placed my hand on the head or the shoulder of a person requesting my dharshan. When asked, I took for a few moments a baby, which a mother held out to me, into my arms, hugged it, murmured a blessing - in english - and returned it to the mother. I consoled myself with the thought, that none of these gestures, nor the smile which I had always ready for those who approached me, could not be interpreted that I was pretending to be somebody which I was not and which I had no intention to be. And when I saw that everyone of those I had given my 'blessing', thanked me with a happy expression on his or her face, I usurped for myself the right to think that I had done a good deed.

These attitudes of the peoples, which I have been describing just now, never ceased to surpris - and impress - me very much, as during my stay in Bombay I had heard so many complaints of a progressing secularization, of an inroad of reform movements, of the religions' loss of impact on life in modern India, of the general loss of respect people had nowadays for sadhus and monks. I had been told by educated people, that a large section of the Indian population saw in these migratory monks and sadhus a burden to the nation, considered them people who do not contribute to the economy of the country. I had learned - and had in the beginning felt inhibited by what I had learned - that these so-called 'holy men', as well as the faqirs and yoghis and the ascetics in general, are often not only called 'parasites' sponging on the people, but are at times not even allowed entry into a neighbourhood. I discovered that such ideas and objections were usually expressed by socially and economically better-off people, or by educated people, or by city people in general - while the poor people, the village people who had remained more primitive in their ideology and more religious in their beliefs - and more affected still by superstition - do not share this negative attitude to sadhus and monks. This latter behaviour of the villagers we could confirm; but on the other hand we had a totally different experience with regard to the attitude of the townspeople and the better-off classes; for I can say, that the kindness and welcome which I have described above, were shown us also in the towns by modern-minded and educated people.

For weeks and months - for many weeks and months which turned into years - we crossed the country, wandered through the open countryside, came through villages and cities. We passed through parts of the sub-continent where great distances separated one village from the other; and we came through other parts - like Cochin and Malabar - where the country was densely populated. We did not count the days, nor the weeks nor the months. On leaving Bombay we turned first northwards, then easstwards, then southwards. We chose whatever road appeared inviting to us. At times peasants would take us along in their carts, at others the driver of a motorcar would invite us into his vehicle. Whenever we wanted a more explicit change of scene - or whenever we did not anymore want to burden a region affected by famine, or one which was suffering from the effect of some other disaster where, to our sorrow, we found we could not be of any help - we made our way to the next railway station, entered the first train which left - we did not care in which direction - and traveled to an adjoining district. We had no money on us, and - as I have already mentioned - were never asked to pay for our transport. We refused to accept monetary gifts which were not rarely offered us by kind-hearted people.

In every part of India we had the same experience. We never starved. Everywhere people competed for the merit of filling our bowls. On the advice of a kind priest in Jaipur we changed our schedule of a single meal a day and were soon eating two meals daily; but we gratefully accepted all through the day the cold drinks - water, milk, juices - we were regularly offered, in particular by poor villagers, whose feeling of thereby being honoured we fully reciprocated. Barbers were pleased whenever we asked for their services; and whenever we had to replace our robes or our footwear, we found unstinted help.

We walked on dusty highways and passed through muddy village streets. We blessed the villagers for the pleasure they perceived when they offered us a chance to bathe our feet. At no time and on no ocasion did we experience hostility or even unkindness. Contrary to what other sadhus we met on the roads, had told us, the poorest villager, no less than the sophisticated townsmen were always ready to welcome us, to offer us rest and refreshment. We spent the nights wherever the opportunity presented itself. At times we found in a hut or in a shed or under a tree a welcome shelter for the night. But we preferred to stay overnight in a temple compound where guests are always welcome, where kindly priests

are always willing to entertain a pilgrim, and where the facilities for bathing, and the opportunities for washing our simple clothing, were always provided. The various sanctuaries we visited during the many months of our wanderings may have varied with regard to their religious denominations, but not in their eagerness to help and feed a traveling monk.

In the first days, even weeks, of our journey I could not free myself from the apprehension that I might be exposed to ridicule or even worse, as I was unmistakenly a European dressed in the garb of an Indian migratory monk. I was afraid I might be judged a follower of some of the strange sects which are now invading also India - like e.g. the Hari Krishna cult - or that I was pretending to be a pseudoguru, and that I might become the laughingstock to the populace. But my fears were unjustified. I had no reason or cause to think myself ridiculed or disrespected. Strange as it may sound, I soon freed myself from the fear that I was ridiculed or disrespected, that I was out of place, that I did not fit into the scene.

I am in no doubt that this was due to what I am inclined to describe as Gobinder Nath's sustained 'public-relations-effort'. I had long ago given up warning him not to tell people of the mystery-bulging story which the Head Priest had read into my horoscope. I am not ashamed to confess, that even though I never encouraged this kind of 'assistance' from Gobinder, I came to accept, at times even welcome, the advantages which therefrom accrued to me in form of the undisturbed progression we enjoyed and the unlimited confidence we encountered everywhere.

After some time my attitude, I may even say my program, had undergone a definite and fundamental change. While from the moment I had left New York I had been keen on making the acquaintance of people; of talking to people; of probing into their thoughts; of studying their problems; and of hearing their viewpoints, I had never become personally involved, had never shared the people's individual pains, worries and sorrows.

I started this pilgrimage as an eager seeker of what people perceived as the truth; and as such I was perceived by most when they answered the questions I put to them. I did not search for an answer to any question which could possibly have relevance to or might be of benefit for my own spiritula life. I felt as if I was engaged in a research project, in an exploratory expedition. I did not think of myself as a man searching for the truth as far

as this might have implications for himself. I simply wanted to know what others thought truth meant to them.

However, slowly and imperceptibly I became that which I have just now described I was not. I wanted to know the truth of, about and in things for my own sake, for my own benefit. This made it imperative that I look for mistaken, misinterpreted, misapplied concepts in the ideology and in the make up of the people. I felt bound to make it my task, to search for the cruel and selfish, for the wrongful and the deceitful ways in which spiritual leaders tend to misuse the - in their sublimity often awe-inspiring spiritual - doctrines of which they were the guardians. I observed the use of power - spiritual and material - by which the population was divided into ignorant sufferers, knowledgeable sufferers, cynical sufferers - and into the abusers of the sufferings of others. Above all I wanted to understand, what use was made of religion, what it meant to, and what it did to, the people of India.

This time, however, walking through the lands, the hamlets, the villages and the cities of India, I wanted to know what worried the men and women, whatever their social and economic standards. I wanted to know, what these men and women, whatever their educational and intellectual backgrounds, saw as the purpose in life. I made it my study to learn, how these men and women - whatever philosophical thoughts may have developed from the perspective of their religious conception and upbringing - perceived their life and their death; what they thought had been before, and what they believed was to come thereafter. All my questioning, my probing and my searching I did for my own sake, my own purpose, for my own maturing. I tried to absorb what I heard. I tried to identify with what I learned. I made my own the pains and sufferings which were described to me. I hoped that from all this would in the end grow that knowledge - I still hesitate to call it wisdom - which would give a purpose to my own life.

I shall tell you at a later stage what I have learned from all I have seen and heard, what conclusions I have drawn, what I have perceived as the value of man's life.

But before I define for you these conclusions, it will surely interest you - if not benefit you too - if I tell you some of what I have seen and heard, experienced and learned, on my three years' pilgrimage through India.

Politeness' Demands.

I feel the need to add now a short chapter which will make you share some strange, some interesting and some unpleasant characteristics of the inhabitants of the vast sub-continent with which I became acquainted. I cannot say whether the peculiarities or oddities I am going to mention, will turn up in what I am going to tell you of my travels through India. What I am going to mention in the next 3-4 pages may, however, make it, if not possible at least easier, for you to share our experiences - and my never negative sensations.

During our walks through Bombay, and under the guidance of Gobinder, I got my first instructions regarding the ways to address the representatives of the various religious and ethnic groups with which we came into conversation or made otherwise contact. And above all, what I had to learn to avoid offending their finely tuned sensibilities.

One of the first lessons brought home to me was, that the Hindu is a very polite and considerate person - to those whom he considers if not his superior or his equal at least worthy of esteem. I have also been greatly impressed by the respect an Indian shows to his parents and in general to the elders of his family. On the other hand it has often hurt me to observe the way an Indian will treat a beggar, a minor official, and above all an animal - and this applies even to the cow in which he is suppposed to see a sacred animal, one which he is obliged to venerate.

(You may ask me why the bovines are granted a superior position in the animal world. Apart from Ahimsa, the general interdiction

to kill animals or to shed blood; and apart from the application of the all-overriding doctrine of a possible rebirth in the hull of an animal, the real reason for the special position granted the cow in India - this I was told by many a learned person - is the extreme usefulness of this animal as supplier of milk throughout many years, and as a cheap replacement for the services a tractor does today provide to the farmer.)

"The conscience of a Hindu is not burdened with the obligation to be kind to inferiors or to animals", I was told by a christian cleric who had invited us to his house, and to whom I had mentioned an ugly episode of horse beating we had observed on the way to his house. "Neither does he see a reason to have pity on a sick or unfortunate or destitute person; or to have consideration for a dog or a horse, as they all harbour souls which have been put into these organisms in punishment for the sins they have committed in their previous lives. They only fulfill their Karman, and it is uncalled-for, wrong and harmful if by your show of pity you interfere in their Karman".

Gobinder, who had been listening to the words of the cleric, agreed with the latter's unkind evaluation.

But, as I said, to equals or superiors the Hindu will be polite, usually very polite - which made me at times wonder whether such a comportment might not be incompatible with the theory of a person's subjugation to the load of his karman.

A Hindu will always strive to be polite. Politeness - and no less also prudence - demands the suitable recognition of the superior position an addressee occupies. This can be done by attaching, whenever possible, the sillable 'ji' to a name, a title or a rank. Thus the father will be addressed as 'abbaji'; and the clerk - when necessary - as 'babuji'. I was told to address a person of whatever position as 'Sahib or Sahibji', and a woman as 'Bibbiji'.

"I was surprised to hear that here in India the respectful way to address a person, is to call him 'Sahib', I mentioned once to a learned historian. "I read somewhere that Prophet Muhammad's companions were called 'Sahibs'. Is this so or am I mistaken ?".

"'Sahib'", he told me, "means in arabic 'Master'. You are right; in old times this title-like word has been used mainly in designing the companions of the Prophet, who in their time were ranked at the side of the Prophet as the apostles had been in Christendom.

Later this title was applied to the associates and intimates of rulers of islamic states in India; and later still, all over India, to any respect-demanding person".

If one wishes to express one's unlimited esteem, especially to superiors or to those from whom one expects a favour, one adds the syllable 'shri' to whatever name or rank the addressee bears. The higher placed a person, and the more respect he merits, the greater number of 'shris' will have to be used in the address. Thus one may hear - or better read - an officer addressed as 'Shri Shri Shri Captainji Sahib'. In this sense and for such a purpose the 'shri' may be used up to 108 times in front of a name - and to make it easy to both the addresser and the addressee, it is permitted to start a letter to a very respected minister with 'Shri 108 times Ministerji Sahib".

Although I met many a high rankind and respect-demanding person - including spiritual and political leaders, maharajas and nawabs, I had never felt myself under the obligation to address any of them in such a to me humiliating sounding form. However, whenever it was indicated - and would have been so also in the western cultural world - I never felt embarrassed to address as 'Your Highness' or 'Your Holiness' a person entitled to be thus addressed.

I learned also that what in the West would undoubtedly be considered corruption or bribery, is in India if not condoned at least accepted, because it is seen as a natural phenomen, and by no means as evidence of corruption or as a punishable offense. It is no disgrace, even for a high ranking official or a political leader, to have been exposed, or even to have been punished, for having been corrupt or for having accepted bribes. What are judged asocial activities in the West is so common and so wide-spread in every stratum of Indian society - in government, in education, in business, in the army and in the police - that the honesty of an official is looked upon with admiration as exceptional for having cleverly hidden his dishonesty.

"It is a fact", I was told by an educated man, who appeared to indulge his cynicism, "that whoever is in a position to take bribes - in form of favours, money, pleasures - will never miss an opportunity do so. The Moslem will think that Allah has created that job for the purpose that the benificiary occupies the job to receive and to enjoy the windfall of bribes it brings in. Were this not so, either Allah would not have created that office, or

he would not have made that good Moslem occupy it. The Hindu has no less trust in what is to him his god's providence. He sees the opportunities to enjoy the beneficial side-effects of his job, as predestined in and as test of his karman - and if he is not very scrupulous in the way he handles his job, he has not to worry about it now as - should what he does be weighed as unethical - he will have to render account for his actions only in a future incarnation.

"This is the viewpoint of all those who are in a position to be bribed - and also of those who by their offering bribes gain all they wish to gain. Usually it is a chain reaction", my informant laughed. "The one who bribes his superior expects to be bribed by the one below him in rank. You must not be surprised if I tell you, that the anti-corruption campaign which is set in motion with uncanny regularity every year or so - or at least with every change of government - is seen as nothing more than a manoeuvre to satisfy the western world. For there is nobody among the highest ranking officials in this country who according to western standards is not corrupt".

I counted myself fortunate I have never been placed in a position where a bribe was demanded or expected from me. Or was I in truth a migratory bribe dispenser myself ?

There were many other things I had to learn, or get accustomed to, so as not to make our pilgrimage difficult by what might have been branded as rudeness - or at least as boorish. This was at times difficult - but in the end I did succeed in this. I am thinking at this moment of the average Indian's lack of social consciousness, of his lack of a sense of responsibility for his fellow-mankind. Such asocial sentiments, such neglect of obligations to one's fellowmen, I have often had to observe. I never condoned, nor did I ever agree to overlook, the callousness and selfishness which I saw nearly everywhere and every day in the way a Hindu will treat the beggar woman with the fly-covered festering eyes, or the murderous reaction of a Hindu when during a draught he assumes to himself the right to chase away a low-caste from the only well in the village which still contains some water.

Everywhere I learned from social workers or physicians or missionaries that infanticide was widespread, that villagers killed most newborn girls with the excuse that the family could not afford to feed one more 'useless mouth'. And worse than this was the apathy, the callousness of those who told me about this horrible

custom - and the insensitivity of the mothers whom I asked to confirm what I had heard.

But the most horrifying experience. I think, we had in Bangla Desh.

In Calcutta we learned that one of the regularly recurring hurricanes had recently caused great damage in Bangla Desh; that the people were starving and in great need of help. International and national relief work had immediately been set in motion - but it was far too little to be of real help.

We traveled to Dacca in the hope that we might be of use in the relief organization which were already under way. We had no difficulty to pass the borders. I do not know if this was due to our robes or to the general confusion which prevailed there. What we saw everywhere confirmed the general view that Bangla Desh is the poorest country on this blessed earth. We remained stuck in Dacca and could not travel upcountry. We learned that the floods coming in the wake of the hurricane, had isolated the people on innumerable small newly formed islands. It was impossible to reach em by road. Only by air could supply be brought to the stricken people. Travel by motorboat was restricted to officials and medical personnel.

The tales we heard from the men and women engaged in the relief work - mainly Americans and Indians - were depressing and shocking; they cannot be explained away by the urge of self-preservation nor consoled away by threats of a punishment after death.

I am going to give only a few examples. Many thousands had been drowned - some officials mentioned a hundred thousand victims - and it was important to bury the bodies as soon as they were washed on ashore. The authorities offered two rupees - the equivalent of 20 USA cents - for every body the people on the islands recovered from the waters and burried in the sands.

On every island a small gang, made up of the most ruthless elements, had appointed itself the absolute rulers. They had automatically taken over the 'burial business'. After officials had come, had counted the bodies displayed on the shore, had paid for them and had supervised their burial, the gang exhumated the bodies at night and displayed them again for next day's inspection by the visiting officials; and by this ruse the gang received twice

or even thrice the fee of two rupees for each dead and decomposing body.

The same gang, mostly made up of half a dozen men, also in other ways harrassed their conationals confined with them on those narrow stretches of land. They grabbed - 'confiscated' as they called it - the bags of rice and dried vegetables, of tea and fruit, which the planes or helicopters dropped at intervals of a few days. Most of whatever landed in their hands, they used for their own families and friends; they gave very little of it to the others, and sold the surplus to whomever had the money to pay for it.

We left Dacca after a week. It took us a long time to overcome the depressive mood with which this experience had affected us.

The Path taken by the Jains.

Looking back I am surprised to realize that in truth I had set out on my journey - you may call it even a prilgrimage - without a specific program, without any aspiration beyond the satisfaction of my curiosity. I did not expect I might acquire any specific exotic knowledge nor any spiritual maturing. But by the time we had reached Ahmedabad, my attitude to the program ahead had begun to change, and I felt sure that my horizon would be greatly enlarged, that I would gain from and about the religious systems and their adherents the kind of knowledge which was going to change my own self and my outlook on myself.

In hindsight I can also say, that the hypothesis I developed about the basics of religion, and my belief system evolving therefrom, which I am going to expound in the course of my narrative, had begun to form during my contact with the exponents of the Jain religion.

In the following pages I shall endeavour to describe the encounters and the conversations which have greatly contributed to my knowledge and my understanding of a subject which has since greatly interested me, viz:- the Indians' view of their soul and the responsibility this knowledge imposes on them.

From Bombay we traveled northwards in easy stages. Arrived in Ahmedabad, we decided to follow the advice I had been given by Dr. Dhanjibhoi, to become acquainted with Jainism, the religion of the Jains, whose adherents had established a large community in this industrial centre. Also Gobinder, who proved to have much

knowledge of the various religious currents of India, had suggested that we extend our stay in Ahmedabad, so that I might learn of the path the Jains had taken after they had separated from Brahminism some 2500 years ago.

We remained about three weeks in Ahmedabad. Without any great difficulty we could establish contact with every stratum of the local people. There we became aware for the first time what we were to experience everywhere we traveled: with every day that we passed in that bustling place, I noticed that we attracted an ever greater attention whenever we walked through the streets; and that we were shown an ever deeper respect whenever we came into conversation with Jain priests or teachers, or whenever we held discussions with learned Hindus and Jains - even whenever we became involved in a general contact with common people like workers, craftsmen or businessmen.

Walking through the streets inn the early morning hour of the day we arrived by train in Ahmedabad, we passed a building which on the outside looked like a temple, but in some way appeared to me to differ from what I had come to know as a typical Hindu sanctuary. Gobinder recognized the brightly coloured building as a Jain temple. We decided to enter and to watch what was going on.

We removed our sandals and entered the temple. The templeroom was nearly filled with devotees. They were singing hymns. The melody was unusual but pleasant. A white-robed priest with long greying hair and a long beard directed the hymn-singing. Now and then he added a handful of incense to the blueish flame which rose from the charcoal burner in front of him. Some of the members of the congregation had brought flowers, others were holding small oil lamps made of clay. The flowers and the oil lamps they presented as offering to the stone figures which were lined up along one of the walls. Gobinder whispered into my ear, that these figures represented the 'Holy Teachers' and were objects of veneration to the Jains.

The frequent glances which the priest cast in our direction were a clear indication that he was puzzled by our presence; no less so than the men and women in the congregation who too appeared unable to concentrate on the religious service. After the prayers had come to an end, we approached and greeted the middle-aged priest

who with a few appropriate words bid us welcome to the temple.

Then, with a deep bow and folded hands he expressed in addition his appreciation that we had taken the initiative to meet him. He invited us to a sideroom, away from the people who had thronged around us. He made us sit opposite him on the cotton rug which covered the floor.

"May I offer you a glass of milk ?", he began the conversation.

We declined his offer as we had finished our breakfast only a short while before.

"You will not mind if I break my fast", he said accepting a glass of steaming milk from a servant.

Then without any preliminaries, while steadily stroking his well-kept beard, he began to enquire from Gobinder about the purpose of our visit, about my person, about my background and about my personal beliefs. It seemed to me that the priest's curiosity, instead of being satisfied, had been still further increased by what he was learning from Gobinder, as I could deduce from the perplexed expression which did not leave the priest's round face. I do not know what else Gobinder told him as they had shifted from Hindi to Gujrati, but I am surely not mistaken in my supposition, that my friend had added to the appropriate information the florid overstatements which in that early stage of our pilgrimage had already become a routine ingredient of the way he explained our appearance.

Now and then the priest shook his head in wonderment. Again and again he looked at me with an expression of awe. At one stage in Gobinder's narrative he bent forward and touched my foot with the right hand, the tip of which he then placed for a moment against his forehead.

When Gobinder had finished his recitation, the priest turned to me and addressed me in excellent English.

"Your Holiness ! I learned just now from your companion that you are in search of the Truth. Many are the ways to reach the One Truth. I am certain you are on the right path toward finding the Truth. You can approach the Truth with the help, and in the company, of others who are equally searching. I am such one. Allow me, my Prince, to contribute what I have learned so far from my own searching. The best way to learn of the Truth is for you to look into yourself. Since many a year I have been searching for the Truth. I have not succeeded in finding the Truth, at least not all the Truth. Ask me what you are interested to know. It may be that I can be of use to you".

"I thank you very much for your offer, Revered Master", I replied in English. "I shall gladly avail myself of your offer. I want above all to enlarge my general knowledge. Within the frame of this endeavour I want first of all to know the essentials of the Jain religion. For it certainly contains many seeds of truth. I would be very grateful, could I learn from you what differentiates the theology and philosophy of Jainism from that of Hinduism. And, of course, I crave also to know what you hope to find in your search for Truth, and what you have so far come to see as the Truth".

"As far as is in my power I shall try to satisfy your wish to learn and to know. First of all I shall give you a short introductory survey of the principles of our religion. For a more complete knowledge and for a real understanding you will have to study the literature of and about our religion. I must warn you, however, that it may take you months of serious application to do so. I shall give you some written material with the help of which you can learn at least the basics within a few hours' reading.

"Take what I am going to say now as an introduction to your further serious study. Should I not be sufficiently clear in my way of explaning the material, do not hesitate to interrupt me. By the way: where are you staying overnight ?"

"We have found accomodation in the Shiva Temple not far from the Railway Station", intervened Gobinder. "We have gratefully accepted the sleeping mats offered us there. But in view of your offer to instruct us in the principles of your religion, it may perhaps be better for us to be nearer to your temple. Would it be convenient if we occupy for a few days a corner in the courtyard of your temple ?"

"You are welcome, of course. But I have a better idea. A very devoted member of our community, a Marwari - this means an industrialist", he explained, turning to me, "is grateful for every opportunity to fulfill the duty imposed on him by our religious precepts, namely that of offering hospitality to travelers,especially to traveling sadhus and monks. He will be happy to welcome you, I am sure. If you are agreeable, I shall later on take you to his house".

When we gratefully accepted, he ordered a young priest who had been listening to our conversation, to inform the Marwari of our impending visit.

We spent many hours in conversation with the educated and intelligent priest of the Jain Temple. We spoke not only about

Jainism, but also about the principle, the history and the philosophy of religion in general. In addition, we touched on questions of general history and modern philosophy.

The Jain priest surprised us by the extent of his education and the depth of his general knowledge. Some of the content of our conversation is worth retelling. I shall later on complement what I am telling you now with what else we were going to learn in the following days.

"Jainism is a doctrine of salvation", the Priest explained when I asked to know the fundamentals which made his religion different from Hinduism. "We see the world as made up of an enormous number of eternal, cognizant, individual souls, the 'Jivas', which a priori possess total knowledge, grace and moral completeness. In addition there is also the soulless matter - the media of movement and rest, of time and matter. By means of karman the soul is penetrated by delicate matter which cause in it good or harmful changes. You will have occasion to learn more about our concept of karman", he consoled me with a smile when I was about to interrupt him with the request of a more detailed explanation. "We believe in Redemption; and Redemption means the prevention by our moral conduct of the penetration of further karman-matter into our souls. If we succeed to do so, our soul will in the course of many rebirths become cleansed and will be empowered at last to ascend to the highest point in the world - and thereby become imbued with the highest bliss".

"This means you believe in rebirths, that is that Jainism accepts the transmigration of the soul ?"

"Yes, we do believe that the entity which leaves the body after death is the Jiva, the soul. Our soul is condemned to an unending series of rebirths as long as it is covered by Karman, which we perceive to be a dust-like matter which tends to penetrate the soul. We must prevent the generation and penetration of new karman; and by our good deeds we must strive to achieve the removal of the existing karman. If we succeed in doing so, we shall become liberated. Our saints - we call them the 'Conquerors' - have proved that it is possible to achieve liberation".

I was struck by a remark of the Priest that the Jain religion does not know a Creator, a God or gods.

"But you call Jainism a religion, don't you ?", I asked

"Definitely so".

"From your words I am given to conclude that Jainism has no gods - in other words that it is an atheistic religion. But here the question arises: can a true religion be atheistic ? Has the fact that you do not believe in a deity ever been the cause for Jainism to be accused of being a false religion, or even not to be a religion at all ?"

"A priori let me point out that no religion is false. Somehow every religion carries truth in itself, conveys a certain truth to its followers. There is no religion which does not correspond to some human need. In some way or other every religion has taken it upon itself to solve the problems of the time. Of course there are, there have to be differences between the various religions, as every religion contains a truth of its own. This is the truth even though some of the religions of today may appear to be more a complex philosophy than a faith".

"Let me formulate my question differently, Revered Master: is the idea of a godhead not essential in the make-up of every religion ?"

"Let me answer you in a very simple way: don't you think, our religion's strength, importance and survival - as well as that of Buddhism which too does not accept the existence of a creator and god - should be taken as sufficient proof that there can be and that there is a religion which does not contain a reference to a god or gods".

"This means that you do not believe in an Unknown and Unknowable Power, in a Mysterious Unapproachable Element which existed from the beginning and has created the Universe ?"

"My religion does not speculate on the Creation of the Universe. To us the world is eternal. The world always was. Neither do we speculate on the way Mankind was created. From the beginning man is and was part of the Universe. From the beginning was Man".

"Do your words not contradict the belief that the founders of your religion, the 24 Teachers - those you call the **Jinahs** - had in their perfection been god-like beings ?"

"Nobody was perfect in the beginning, not even the Jinahs. They were bormal beings of flesh and blood like you and I. In the course of time, during their evolvement, they became perfect on their own".

"I read somwhere that there are Jain communities which believe in some form of deism", interjected Gobinder.

"You must mean the followers of **Jinapati**, who is supposed to be a supreme Jina. The followers of this sect can hardly be called

Jains; they represent only a fringe group; they do not incorporate any of the real and true teachings of Jainism".

"Does your religion not in the way all religions do, try to explain, to make approachable, and even to make use of the supernatural, the mysterious, the unknowable; of a non-understandable power which created and rules the Universe ?"

"Do you realize, my Prince, that religion initially served as a substitute for - if you want as a substitute and replacement of - science and philosophy; and that the concept, the quotient of an Unknowable was a fill-in to help find a satisfactory outcome for the calculations which would otherwise remain hanging without an answer ? Do you realize, that religion has initially mainly reacted on - and thereby contributed to the development of - the human intellect ?".

"Is religion not first of all a system which regulates man's relationship with the divine ?", I insisted.

"Religion has not been created to explain the unusual, the exceptional - for this is all which is attributed to and is seen as the purpose of Divinity - but in order to make acceptable what is going on in life; to make comprehensible the events of every day; to render tolerable what the ordinary every day brings; to make intelligible that which is naturally happening; to fit mankind into that which is nature's rhythms".

"But does not a religion - for instance the moment it prescribes the funeral rites - implicitly also acknowledge the supernatural?"

"Yes, it is in general true that religion regulates the rites of the funeral, and that these in turn satisfy the survivors. Rites, even the most incomprehensible ones, even the most bloodthirsty ones, have a purpose: they satisfy some of man's needs in life. But rites are not the fundamentals of religion; they are only religion's theatrical props".

When the sun was about to set, the Priest led us to the house of the Marwari.

The Industrialist lived in an imposing bungalow situated within a large, well-kept, flower-filled garden. The house was solidly furnished and fitted. The Marwari welcomed the priest and us in a friendly and respectful manner. No sooner were we seated than he instructed a group of servants, whom we had seen standing at the entrance to the house and who had followed us to the door of the Marwari's reception room - they must have heard of our expected

arrival - to bring in the food which had been prepared for us. We sat in comfortable cloth-covered cane chairs arranged around a low circular table. We ate curds and chapatis, samosas and a thick lentil soup. We drank fresh cold milk. We enjoyed the contents of large basket - mangoes, apples and bananas - which had been brought in at the end of the meal.

During our meal, and afterwards during our conversation, I observed that now and then our host, who did not partecipate in our meal, all of a sudden put his hand underneath his shirt or inside his dhoti and removed from there what appeared to be an insect. Was it a bug or a flea ? He thoroughly inspected the insect, and then, careful not to harm it while holding between between thumb and forefinger, he threw it out of the open window into the courtyard.

We gratefully accepted the offer of hospitality of the Industrialist and spent the following twenty days in a well-aired room, sleeping on a woollen rug (which we made the servant thoroughly shake out in the garden every evening). Due to these and other precautions we took, we were not too much victimized by bugs and fleas which, we were told, might possibly harbour the souls of some unfortunate ancestors of our host.

Gobinder must not only have satisfied to the minutest detail the curiosity of the Marwari's household staff, like he regularly did that of the great number of people who daily interrupted our walks through the town - I did not understand their Gujrati language, nor did I ever make an attempt to learn it. This made it easy for us to meet the kind of people I was interested in meeting, and by whom my knowledge of the ideology and the teachings of Jainism - and what differentiates Jainism from mainstream Hinduism - was still further enlarged.

Most fruitful from this point of view was what we learned from the influential industrialist - Mohan Lal Sharma was his name - and from a certain Dr. Ratan Lal - a lecturer in the local University - whom the Industrialist had 'secured' to act as our guide and mentor 'for as long as we wished'. Dr. Ratan Lal, whose education had been financed by the Industrialist, planned to leave soon for the States where he aspired to complete his studies in religious history. He proved a very competent, and also patient, source of information.

On one occasion, while we were eating an early breakfast in the company of our host, we saw a senior servant enter the room, approach the Marwari and whisper into his ear. After a short hesitation I saw the master of the house indicate his consent with a movement of his head. The servant withdrew only to reappear immediately in the company of a blond young man clad in grey shorts, a blue shirt and open sandals. He was the type of Scandinavian or German 'Wanderbursche' we had often seen strolling through the streets of Bombay. The young man appeared embarrassed to see us. I did at first not see a reason why the young man to be embarrassed by our presence. He appeared ashamed, I thought. Why should he be ashamed ?, I thought - for I did not know yet of the 'business transaction' he had agreed to with the Marwari. I learned afterwards - through the information gathered by my always inquisitive Gobinder - that the young man had been offered - and had willingly accepted against the payment of the equivalent of ten dollars - to spend a night in one of the houses owned by the Marwari. That house had, until 2-3 years ago, been the residence of the rich man, but he had to vacate it and build for his family and himself the luxurious mansion in which we were his guests, because the former house had been 'overrun' by bugs, fleas and other insects thirsting for human blood. The Marwari felt duty-bound to make sure that these insects should not suffer starvation by his and his family's absconding themselves from their vicinity. This was the reason, why he engaged once or twice a week a volunteer - mostly one of the young european travelers whom his Major Duomo contacted in the local youth hostel - to spend a night in the abandoned, bug-infested bungalow. When the following morning the volunteer could prove by his swollen blotchy face, that he had not shirked his duty, our host expressed his thanks and made his servant pay out the equivalent of $10.- in rupees. And in case the bloodspender indicated in words, or by his attitude, that he considered the money insufficient for what he had endured, the Marwari was apt to sanction an additional few rupees.

Our host was kind enough to have Dr. Ratan Lal come regularly every evening to the house to teach us the basics of Jainism. He usually sat also with us while we talked with the Industrialist about the social conditions prevailing among the workers of his textile mills. Often the young lecturer accompanied us on our walks, during which he would introduce us to acquaintances of his whom he might ask to confirm certain ideas or facts he had expounded to us.

From what I saw I gained the impression, that in some way the Jains were far more artistically inclined than even the Hindus and Buddhists; that in their temples and houses they exhibited a far greater number of sculptures and paintings than these. Our mentor confirmed my impression, and offered to show us a large group of ancient temples with well preserved Jain sculptures.

The next day we spent on a visit to the famous temples of Fort Diogarth. We enjoyed the journey in the comfortable limousine of our host, but still more so the impressive ancient temples within the precincts of the Fort. Hundreds of figures of Jain saints lined the walls. Some of the statues were well preserved. These figures resembled those of the Buddhas I had seen, except that in the Jain temples all the saints were represented totally naked.

In the following half hour or so I am going to give you a short survey of what Gobinder and I learned about the Jain religion during the three weeks we spent as guests of the Marwari in Ahmedabad, from studying the relevant literaure we had received from the Temple Priest, from the books in /hour hosts' library or the ones Dr.Rattan Lall loaned us, and from our conversations with the on an average well educated citizens of Ahmedabad.

It will be impossible, however, to give you more than a rather superficial description of this very interesting religious system; but you will, I hope, learn enough to acquire at least a basic knowledge. I shall mention also a few of the questions and the difficulties which I had the good luck to have cleared up by my host or by Dr. Rattan Lal. There are still a number of points for which I have not found an explanation, but this is mainly due to my hurried and rather superficial study of the material made available to us in the Temple and in the library of our host.

I shall report here what I remember, as throughout my stay in India, and while I was engaged in my 'search' - or research, call it whatever you like - I did not take notes; nor did I keep a diary of any sorts. However, as you know, I am blessed with an unusually good retentive memory.

There is historic evidence that Jainism arose about 2500 years ago, around the same time as Buddhism. Somehow or other this epoch appeared to have been blessed with an intense interest in theosophism not only in India but also throughout the then known world. For it was during that period - that is to say around the 6th and 5th

centuries BCE - that most of the great religious leaders of whom we know to this day, made their appearance. This applies not only to the **Mahavira**, the founder of Jainism, but also the Buddha, to Isaia, to Confucius, to Pythagoras, to Zoroaster and to others. We may suppose that the religions which these leaders founded, were started as protest movements against the religions - or at least their applications and interpretrations - in vogue in their time.

This was certainly the case of Buddhism and Jainism. They arose in India in rebellion against the importance the ruling Brahmin priests placed on ritualism and sacrifice; and no less also against the Brahmin caste's supercilious domination of life in general. The founders of the Jain religion rejected a priori the Brahmin's claim that their caste was of divine origin and that they were, therefore, entitled to demand recognition of this preferred status from all the strata of the population in the country.

The Jains, however, do not accept this 'recent' history; they believe that their religion has originated long before their rebellion against Brahmanism. They claim even that Jainism has been in existence since eternity. According to transmitted history the religion of the Jains was created by Vardhamana, a contemporary of Gautama, the Buddha. He was given the title **'Mahavira'**, which in translation means 'The Great Hero'. He claimed, that even he was not the true originator, that there had been already 23 predecessors. These, along with the Mahavira are titled **'Jinahs'** - 'The Teachers' - and are venerated by the Jains as saints. It is in all sincerity claimed, that the chain of the 24 teachers had transmitted the wisdom of Jainism from a distant past; that the first of them, the founder **Rishaba**, has lived ⟩ 40 000 years ago - and this 'fact' is adduced as proof, that the Jinahs, the Jain prophets and teachers, have been involved in the formation and development of the Universe.

When I asked the Professor how the Universe came into being, he had his reply ready.

"Your and my conception of the Universe differ greatly", he told me. "What appears to us as the world, is somehow made up of a number of soul units. Man in his eternal essence is somehow the greatest spiritual presence in the Universe".

Jainism has kept on Hinduism's doctrine of karman, of rebirth, of the transmigration of souls. It teaches, however, that only men and not women can achieve **'Moksa'**, the release from the cycle

of rebirths; and not even all men are granted this opportunity - only those who have been born as members of the third caste of the Hindu caste system, that of the merchant caste. Members of the first two castes, the Brahmins and the Kahutryas - that is members of the priestly and military castes - are a priori excluded from ever achieving moksa.

A not very generous way to gain revenge for the humiliations of his caste in times past at the hands of these two superior castes, it appeared to me.

Jainism teaches, that the individual's salvation depends on the way he conducts himself in life. In our times the Jain community is basically made up of two main groups: one consisting of monks and nuns, and the other of the laity. The former group is bound to a religiously, socially and materially very restricted style of life, based on the principle of Jain theology which specifically states, that a life of scarcity and mortification will lead to final and eternal bliss.

Moksa - salvation - it is taught, can be obtained if one gives by one's right conduct the right direction to one's karman. This is the basic doctrine which is responsible for the strong ascetic aspect of Jainism's ethics. Those of the Jains who want to achieve moksa, the liberation from being reborn, have to dedicate themselves to an ascetic life. They must take the Five Great Vows: never to kill, always to tell the truth, never to steal, to dedicate themselves to charitable work, and to forego the acquisition of earthly possessions. Those do not want to take upon themselves such strict obligations, may take the Lesser Vows, which impose on them only relatively few restrictions.

Jainism differs furthermore from Hinduism by its doctrine of **'Nijara'** which says, that whatever one's karman - that is one's bondage to a chain of reincarnations - may be, it is bound to wear off in the course of time and finally will leave man free. One can achieve, accelerate even, one's Nijara through mortifications, fasting, penances, confessions, meditation and the control of one's basic instincts. But the true way to Nijara is via castigations, inner ascesis and long-lasting periods of meditation. A believer, who has fastidiously followed these precepts - our mentor explained - may reach the state of **'Kevala'**, which means 'omniscent knowledge' which in turn brings 'the assurance of that moksa which is one of all-comprehension and all-perception'.

"I try to visualize, if not to sense, the significance of such a state - but regretfully without success so far", I told Professor Ratan Lal.

"This is so, because - notwithstanding your exalted status - you have in your actual incarnation somehow not yet reached the higher state of wisdom. Your soul or **'Jiva'** is still in bondage here on earth, but you may hope you will one day, in the way the Jinahs did, free yourself from this bondage and obtain perfect knowledge, power and joy".

"Are you sure that I shall be able to free myself so soon from my earthly fetters ?"

"You have somehow adopted a style of life, that is to say you are somehow possessed by an attitude of spirit which - even without your confessing Jainism - is for us an indication that you are on the right path".

"I pray for your final perfection, my Prince", I heard Gobinder add sotto voce.

"My Prince", added the Professor, "you are a supreme example of that essence of man, which is somehow the greatest spiritual presence in the Universe".

I was surprised of the sudden unease his words caused in me.

"It is our belief", my instructor went on, "that when in the course of many rebirths a soul at last somehow overcomes the three main faults which bind it somehow to this world - namely wrong beliefs, lack of control, submission to passions - it is enabled to obtain moksa already in this world. Once this is achieved, one's karman is practically extinguished. While the soul is still in its physical body, it is in a state of 'all-knowing' - which is the state of Kevala I mentioned - a state in which the soul somehow continues to be associated with a physical state. We have reason to know that you are somehow in a state of Kevala, Your Holiness. This state persists until death comes and renders the soul, whose karman is now inactive, completely free. This soul, now freed from all matter and of all worldly activities, will ascend to the top of the Universe, far away in the Beyond, to the world of the gods at the confines of the empty space, where all the perfected souls will somehow enjoy, in form of bodyless spirits, the uiltimate happiness in the eternal rest of redemption. In other words: the soul will at last be able to realize its true nature".

"From my reading I have learned that Jainism is considered an atheistic religion", I reminded him, "but you speak of the soul

joining finally the abode of the gods..."

"Your objection is justified. I should somehow not have used this word. Jainism is somehow quite explicitedly an atheistic religion. Basically we do not know of a divinity. The 24 Jinahs, the founders of our faith, are not gods, even though they are objects of religious veneration. We see in them liberated souls which have succeeded in freeing themselves of their earthly fetters, and are now perfect, omniscent, omnipotent, blissful beings".

"That means that you do not know of a Supreme Being, of an Absolute Being ?"

"In Jain theology the Absolute consists of the plurality of liberated souls.....".

"You said just now", I interrupted the Professor, whose explanation of the complicated Jain theology was not very clear to me, "that Jainism is an atheistic religion, that it does not recognize a Creator. But we have to suppose, at least from a philosophical point of view if not from a religious one, that there is a beginning for everything, that everything had an origin - and this above all should apply to this world of ours".

"How do you know that this world in which you and I are living has at all been created ?", was his astonishing reply. "And even if this were the case, how do you know that it was a God who has created this world ? Somehow, according to the definition of whatever religion you may think of, God has no body, has no limbs. How then could he have created anything at all ? Should, however, a God somehow exist, he would have to be omnipotent. In this case we must suppose that he has somehow created everything which exists. But he has not built this house in which we find ourselves at this moment. Masons from among the people in this town have built this bungalow. Will you maintain now, that these men are gods ? Surely not. Neither are the bees, who somehow build their hives, gods; nor the birds who build their nests. Do not mind my simplicistic counter-argument, but I somehow wanted to illustrate what presents my personal opinion and that of the majority of the Jains".

"But I must add for your information", he continued before I could put in a word, "that there are among the Jains those who accept a form of divinity, that is those who believe in **Param Atman**, which is somehow best translated as "Self-Existing-Being'. And there are also among us those, who meditate on and worship what they see as 'liberated souls', the **Siddhas** who, according to their belief, possess god-like functions".

"Does this mean that the Jain concept of the human soul is

different from that of the Hindus ?"

"Quite considerably so ! We somehow believe that every being has its soul, its **Jiva.** These are ethical substances which - as I told you already - in joining together form this world of ours. There are two forms of soul-substances: the living spiritual one - the Jivas proper - and the lifeless, the non-spiritual one , the **Ajiva.** The Jivas are the numberless individual souls each of which forms an uncreated undestructible unit. They are all-knowing, morally perfect and very powerful. The Ajivas are the ether - the **Aksha** - that is the space; the **dharma** - that is the means of movement; the **Adharma** - that is the means of rest; the **Kala** - that is the time; and **Pudgala** - that is the matter. Matter, Pudgala, can penetrate the Jiva which thereby somehow loses its all-embracing knowledge, its power of cognition, its energy. Thereby it creates for itself suffering, urges, instincts. This state in turn leads to the 'flowing in' of karman. Man can be affected by 148 kinds of karman. These involve somehow all spheres of human life. In due course, after the karman has fulfilled its task, it will have somehow exhausted itself - but it will be replaced by another karman".

"All this sounds very complicated - but I think I have understood your system. However, I notice that your concept of the Atman is quite different from that of the Hindus".

"Yes, it is so ! You must have understood, that what the soul means to us is different from what the Hindu see as Atman. In our view the Atman is also something eternal, but it is somehow also changeable in state. The soul is unchangeable and exists since time immemorial. We perceive the cosmos as full of karman matter which tends to affect, to infect the soul. By means of the activities of the body, the mind, the spirit, karman matter penetrates the soul, the Self. We cannot say when there was 'a first time' or a 'first cause', when the soul has been affected, when it has become damaged - for the soul has in this way been associated with karman since the beginning of the world. Only from the moment onwards, somehow, when the soul has succeeded in freeing itself from the damaging effects of the karman, is it capable of knowing; that is to say, that the soul has lost the capability to know from the moment it became infected with karman. Karman obscures the omniscence of the Self, but never totally - for the Self has also in such a case somehow retained some degree of cognition. For were this not so, it would somehow cease to be the Self".

"How do you know, how can you prove that you have a soul ?" I interrupted him again.

"Consciousness is somehow the essence of the soul. Every living being possesses consciousness. The soul is not a material substance; it is something immaterial, independent and somehow separate from the body and the brain".

"What is the relationship of the soul with the material, that is to say with the body ?"

"Jainism teaches that the individual is made up of a soul attached to matter. This matter is the decayable body. Although by nature the soul is pure and perfect, it is subject to impurity and to limitations. The bondage of the soul to its karman will somehow underline this fact. The Karman is made up in accordance with the soul's passions - and the body in turn is made up in accordance with the cravings of the soul. Jiva, the soul, has many infinite qualities, but we consider somehow only those of importance, which are mainly made up of knowledge and consciousness. Driven by its own actions the soul will have to go through all the cycles of birth and death, of heaven and hell, of happiness and sorrow, until - after it has completely eliminated all the defects it has sustained by its own unacceptable actions in the past - it finally obtains its liberation, its Moksa. As you see, Jiva creates its own destiny. It is responsible for its own fate. And all this and everything depends on the individual's own karman".

"In other words: Karman is the fundamental factor in and of everything ?"

"You are right. You must never overlook the fact that somehow karman is imbued with activity. You must imagine it like a form of dust. You must picture it as made up of fine particles which infiltrate the soul - and the soul you must somehow imagine like a sponge which absorbs passions and emotions. Karman is the instance, the substance which connects soul and matter. Somehow a to the soul favourable solution to this state, a help out of this impasse, is brought about by the right kind of faith, the right kind of knowledge and the right kind of comportment. These latter are the three virtues - we call them the three jewels - of Jainism. It is important for us to gain knowledge, to become knowledgeable. Doubt for doubt's sake is somehow bad for karman. It should be our aim and aspiration in life that we somehow succeed to free ourselves from all karman - be it a good karman, be it a bad karman. Above all we should strive to free ourselves from all desires. We should somehow learn not to see in the acquisition of worldly possessions the aim of our life".

"I thank you for your excellent explanation, Professor. Now things are much clearer to me. There is still one more point I

would beg you to clear: according to the generally prevailing theosophic doctrine a soul, which after a long series of rebirths has once been harboured by a human body, will in any of its future incarnations never be incorporated in an inferior body - that is to say in that of an animal, an insect or a plant - but will henceforth always inhabit again a human body. I have gained the impression that this is not the way the Jains teach the fate of the reborn soul."

"You are right ! Jainism does not agree with this concept. There is somehow no assurance that a human soul will be reborn in human form. After death the soul can somehow enter the body of a bug, a worm - it can even be incarnated in what you Westerners prefer to call an inanimate subject like a tree or a stone. By the way, also Hinduism teaches this very same concept".

"All in all it seems to me that the Jain religion has a somewhat physical - I might say material - conception of the soul".

"Yes, it may somehow appear thus to you. I may go even further and tell you, that in some aspect the soul takes somehow on the shape of the body it inhabits at the time. It can take on the shape of a human or of an animal body. It can take on a male or female or a eunuch shape. Accordingly, it is in such a case also somehow endowed with the relative, the appropriate senses. Man, for instance, has all five senses. Earth bodies, water bodies, plant bodies and fire bodies have only the sense of touch. Those souls which have all the five senses, have also a mind. That means they know how to differentiate between good and evil. But the soul is not condemned to maintain for ever the shape it has taken on. It is possible, for example, for a lower soul to rise to a higher form of life. For instance ants, insects, worms can become human beings in their next incarnation. They may even turn into superior souls".

"Can a soul which is going to be reborn as a human being, select the body into which it will enter ?"

"Our past karman will determine the family into which we are born, as well as our appearance, our height, our skin colour, the shape of our body and so on".

Somehow I was confused by all this talk about the soul. For what appeared to me at that time an intellectual curiosity, but which may well have been in the interest of my own peace of mind, I wanted to have as clear as possible a picture of the Jains' concept of what we call the soul.

"You told us", I insisted therefore, "that the soul can free itself from bodily matter. How is this achieved ?"

"Liberation of the soul, which means complete detachment of the soul from matter, is somehow possible by preventing a renewed influx of karmanic matter into the soul, while at the same time going on with the elimination of the matter which had already penetrated. In other words: it signifies that we should by all means available to us avoid giving in to our cravings; and that we must somehow do our utmost to prevent our cravings and passions from gaining power over us, from doninating our life. A somehow very suitable way to acquire the necessary strength of willpower is through the study of our Scriptures which provide us with an excellent and efficient guidance".

"What is your religion's attitude to what western religions call 'salvation' ?", I asked Rattan Lal on another occasion.

"Somehow we Jains have a in this respect a concept which is similar to that of the western religions. Salvation is for us the stage, when the soul has been completely freed from the unpleasant matter to which it has become attached in the course of time. Once this is achieved, the soul is free and clean and can enjoy eternal bliss for ever".

"How is this stage reached ?"

"This stage of salvation is somehow achieved when the soul is not in a state of **'Adharya'**, that is, when it is not anymore unredeemable; when it is in **'Samvara'**, that means, when the invasion of any form of new karman has somehow been effectively repulsed, and when **'Nirjara'** has come about, that is when the old karmans have been erased".

"How do you go about to evade the penetration of new karmans; and how do you proceed to erase any old ones ?"

By passing through hardships, by suffering much pain and great sorrows a man desirous of salvation will somehow be able to free himself of his karman. Of course, all along he has somehow also to be careful, not to acquire a new karman; or if this is somehow not possible, he should at least do his best not to acquire too much of it".

"This does not give an individual much freedom to regulate his life and fate on his own, is it not so ?".

"You are right. Our doctrine of karman somehow does not grant us absolute freedom of will. On the other hand this does not mean that there is somehow any kind of predestination. And by the way: let me in turn ask you a fundamental question: do you believe there exists anything like a 'free will' at all ? If you have studied the philosophy of Spinoza you will have discovered, that only

ignorance makes us think we can somehow change our future".

"In my college days I have studied Spinoza's philosophy. But tell me, Professor, what is it that attracts you in Spinoza's philosophy ? He taught that philosophy and religion have each their own peculiar object reason; that philosophy deals with truth and wisdom - and theology with piety and obedience. I remember him insisting that there is no need - and no possibility either - to reconcile philosophy with religion since the Bible deals only with moral laws. It may attract you that though he accepts a deity, he insists that God has no personality as he has no will nor reason; that there cannot be any designing providence since the process of becoming follows mechanical and mathematical laws. It will also attract you that Spinoza calls God a conception of human imagination - a uniquely human phenomen. He too states there is no absolute God, but accepts that there is a God who is spirit without a body; that the essence of spirit is thought which is the intuition of God bringing about perfection, freedom and salvation".

"Yes, I too studied Spinoza with great attention and was attracted by his philosophy. In addition to the above exposure of his philosophy Spinoza also said, as Jainism does, that what the future will bring is unalterably fixed in the past. You might know that also Hinduism and Buddhism agree with this concept. This is the reason, why we should abolish fear and hope, as both somehow view the future as something uncertain, as something to be worried about."

"But you have not answered my question: am I right to conclude that it is ultimately Karman which determines the decourse of the various events in our lives ?"

"Karman does not actively determine anything. The word karman does not mean 'work or deed', as it is often translated in the West. Somehow it is, as I have already told you, an aggregate of fine particles which we somehow cannot perceive with our senses, but which somehow penetrate the pure and perfect soul. These karman particles we can somehow remove by meditation and by leading the right kind of life".

"Explain to me, please, how something immaterial like the soul can be affected, obscured, penetrated by material particles".

"In the same way as your consciousness - amorphous, immaterial and undepictable as it is - can be obscured, affected and changed by the use of alcohol and drugs. Or let me give you another example: pleasure and pain have somehow no physical shape either - and still they are brought on by something material. Does it not somehow follow that whereas karman can bring on pleasure and pain, karman

has somehow to be something material. In general you can say - I do not mind to agree with you - that there is something physical as well as something spiritual in karman. Every soul can somehow attract particles of both these kinds of karman. Such particles are everywhere, and there is a constant influx of these into the soul. Somehow man's most important task is to avoid the acquisition of any new karman. Even the unintentional killing of a mosquito or of a bug may somehow have grave consequence for one's soul. We must, therefore, somehow make every effort not to expose ourselves to such a danger".

"Are you alluding to **Ahimsa** ?"

"Yes, you may call this one of the facets of Ahimsa, which is somehow nothing but reverence for all forms of life. Also pacifism is a form of Ahimsa. It is non-violence in any form or aspect. It means somehow the avoidance of doing harm to any living being whatsoever. This can, of course somehow lead to exaggerations. For instance, a very orthodox Jain will, while walking, sweep the ground ahead of him; he will somehow strain whatever he drinks; he will somehow cover his mouth in order to avoid inhaling an insect, especially at nighttime. Of course, we do not consume meat or any other food of animal origin".

The time came for us to take our leave and to proceed on our journey; and after we had expressed our sincere thanks to the Industrialist and the Profesor, I asked the latter who had been of such great help to us:

"Permit me to ask you a question, Professor. You are fully entitled to consider this question stupid or even impertinent. I have noticed that you, in the same way as every second Jain we have been in contact with in the last twenty days, always qualify whatever you say with a 'somehow'. I know this could be nothing but a subconscious habit of yours; but this is unlikely to be so, as I have noticed such a habit not only in your way of talking but - as I mentioned - also in that of so many other Jains".

"You are right in your observation, Prince, and justified in your question. We Jains use the word 'somehow' as often as we possibly can, because our religion instructs us never to speak an untruth. And as somehow nothing in life is ever absolutely true, we somehow try to limit ourselves in this manner in our statements".

"This is indeed a wise precaution..."

"Every object has many characteristics. As a rule we have somehow only knowledge of one aspect of an argument or of a situation. This leads often to disputes and quarrels. Therefore

every judgement should somehow be expressed and softened by a 'somehow'".

Some of what I learned about Hinduism.

We were once guests in the house of a Hindu High Court Judge. He had invited along with us also some of his friends whom he wanted us to meet. (Later on, in a different context, I hope to tell you more about this encounter.)

The four stimulating hours we spent in the company of a group of highly intelligent men, were of considerable value to me. They contributed greatly to my comprehension of what is encompassed in the concept 'Hinduism'; and they helped me to acquire a more sharply outlined image of what represents the spiritual and intellectual India.

These men knew of my program, of my 'mission'. Through Gobinder they had learned of the fantastic 'revelations' in my horoscope. It appeared to me, that none of those western educated and highly intelligent men and women present in the Judge's house saw anything incongruous in the interpretation the Head Priest in Bombay had given to it; that is to say, they had no difficulty whatsoever to see in me the reincarnation of that Prince of old, and in Gobinder of that Raja of times long past.

They did not find it strange that - notwithstanding my having dedicated myself for so many years to the subject - I was still very ignorant in matters of Indian religions, of Indian philosophy and of Indian customs. And neither did they find anything unusual in the fact, that in my actual incarnation I had to 'relearn' these disciplines anew; that I had to adjust in this way my karman in oder to have it function properly; and that I had 'to ease its progressing on the prescribed path', as the Judge formulated what he saw as my immediate program, as my dharma. I was, therefore,

granted the right - I may even say, I was encouraged by my host and his friends to make as much use as possible of the opportunity their company offered - to ask questions, to ask for clarifications, to ask for explanations, in a way and in words which would most likely have been out of place in this ambience under any other circumstance.

I have not tried - never had the intention - to study the social problems, the economic difficulties, the political issues and the ethnic tensions of India. Not only did I lack a background for such a study, there was also the fact it would have been difficult for me to find the means, the access, the material to construct a study which was going to be beyond that which had been done by so many better qualified researchers. My only interest had been to learn of India's religious structure, its influence on the Indians' spiritual demands and its psychological effect on them. I realized from the beginning - that is since I faced the High Priest - that my light-hearted vaunt describing my program as a search for the 'Truth', was in truth the truth.

I wanted to know the first, the original role re;igion had taken on - not to initially to soothe the fear or anxiety of the people, or to explain phenomena they observed in Nature, but in directing mankind to attain that for which it had been created. As I said already, I gained much knowledge, acquired much understanding in the course of that evening in the Judge's house. Much of what had until then still remained vague in my mind, became clear to me after that.

Let me mention only a few of the points of which I can think at this moment.

"You appear to mix up 'Indian' and 'Hindu'. If you are not careful, this will in all likelihood make it often difficult for you to get the right picture", was one of the first lessons I learned. "'Indian' encompasses from a religious and ethnic point of view all the inhabitants of the geographic entity 'India'; but 'Hindu' denotes only those who belong to the Hindu faith. It is also important that you know what is meant, when you hear or read of the differentiation which certain authors or historians make between 'Brahmanism' and 'Hinduism'. The former refers to the ancient faith of the original Aryan inhabitants, which later - after Buddhism became a separate religious system - developed into the

form of Hinduism we know today".

"To complete the definition", one of the advocates present added, "a Hindu is a person who was born by Hindu parents, that is to say he is a Hindu by birth. He follows the rules and laws of his caste; he marries within his own caste. He believes in Brahma. He venerates the cow. He cremates his deads".

"What is the original meaning of the word 'Hindu' ?", I asked.

"It referred originally to the people who lived in the regions around the river Indus. The words 'Hind' or 'Hindu' are, however, of rather recent origin. They have been in use - in a religious connotation mainly - only since about the 8th century of our era. In old times the ones who are now designated Hindus, were called 'Arya Dharma' - and it may interest you to know, that in recent times a movement is afoot which agitates for the re-introduction of this ancient designation of a Hindu".

"Could you give me a definition of Hinduism", I asked the Judge.

"This is a rather difficult undertaking, my friend, beyond saying that it is that religion which prevails among the Indians. Hinduism embraces such a vast field, that no man can on his own survey the mythology, the philosophy, the dharmas and the relative Indian literature. But I shall try to give you a short definition. Hinduism means the religion of the Hindus. This religion has unusual characteristics. First of all, it places much value on ascetism. Furthermore it is not a monotheism in the strict sense of the word; but on the other hand you must not conclude from what you see, hear or read, that the Hindu religion puts any much importance on polytheism. The values of our Hindu religion are to a far greater degree reflected in its philosophy and theosophy than in its polytheistic pantheon".

"Permit me to interrupt you at this stage, my dear", a lady who had been introduced to us as one of the leading modern artists of the province. "Could you, please, explain - perhaps not for the beenfit of our Sadhu guests only but certainly for that of us less educated individuals here present - what you understand as religion, as its philosophy, psychology etc ?"

"Your request is justified, my dear lady", was the Judge's reply. "We cannot argue a point without having it clearly defined. I think Professor Dewarji, the leading intellectual light present in this room, can best answer your question".

"With pleasure", the professor accepted. "But you will have to be satisfied with the explanations of a man who labours under the rather unjustified reputation of being an agnostic".

"Nevermind", he was told by one of the journalists present.

"We shall know what to ignore and what to absorb".

What followed was more or less a dialogue between the professor and the journalist, who, we were told, was the editor of a magazine.

"Basically religion should be viewed as an allusion made up of human fears, as an institution to satisfy human needs, to overcome the doubts and self-illusions plaguing man. But for the pious man religion is the way of life, the functioning of his inner life; it is the mainstay of his existence and that of the community of people with similar views of which he is a part. The objectives of religious sentiments are symbolic - and from a scientific point of view religion as an experience is a social phenomen. There is also the factor to be taken into account that the psychology of religion forms the psychology of the religious man".

"What of the psychology - and for that matter of the philosophy - of religion ?"

"Psychology of religion studies the origins, the methods and the means of the religious developments from a psychological angle. In particular it examines the relationship of a man's religious sentiments to his dependence on God, or his attitudes to anything mysterious or his reactions of awe to whatever he religiously perceives".

"How does this apply to your own, your personal kind of philosophy of religion ?"

"Philosophy of religion in general studies the problem of our real knowledge of the Absolute as opposed to my own agnosticism. It investigates the problem whether religion is at all necessary; what is the essential meaning of revelation; what is man's relationship to his God. However, it may also mean theism: that is the validity of a belief in the supreme reality of the world or of God".

"What is in general the relationship between philosophy and religion ?"

"Eastern thought does not separate philosophy and religion. Here the main interest is soterological, that is to say that our philosophy and our religions focus mainly on the ultimate salvation of man. Many - but usually and fundamentally still the same - are the ways by which salvation can be achieved. As you know, Hinduism offers it by the union of the Self - that is of the Atman - with the Absolute - that is the Brahman. In Buddhism salvation or enlightenment mean the attainment of Nirvana. In both these religions salvations means the release from Samsara, that is the

cessation of rebirths. What each of you will have to explain to himself is the specific element in both these religions which maintains, that the chain of births and deaths are perpetuated by the individual's cravings or unaltered ignorance".

"Has any better answer been offered by any of the western philosophers ?"

"An immense library could be filled with what the philosophers of the western world have to offer. Let me give you one instance I like best, that of William James. Religion, he says, is chiefly concerned with the strategy to call all human beings back to their true selves from the illusion of natural existence. It can be said that philosophy has as its main concern the attainment of a comprehensive theoretical understanding of the various levels in the Universe and their relation to each other, including the conception of the place to be assigned in the cosmic scheme to human beings and their experiences".

"Somehow all this sounds incongruous to me. Can you, for instance, call a non-theistic philosophy, the refusal to grant God a place in the Universe, a religion at all ?"

"It is not the nature of the belief which counts, but the nature of the believing"

"Do you think that those who seek to vest their lack of true religious feelings into rites,rituals or slogans; or those who rationalize their disbelief into political movements or convoluted philosophies, get the same emotional support as the truly religious do from their faith ?".

"I have no doubt that the Communists, the Fascists and their likes experience the same deep satisfaction as the Catholic on his knees, the Moslem in his Mosque or the Jew in the Temple".

"What about the ethic values of religion ?"

"Morality is part of every religion", one of the senior judges took the word. "Religion and ethics form a unit because the evolvement and the evolution of religion are moral ones, because the formation and the sustenance of morality have been one of the aims, if not the tasks, of religious development"

"In other words: a religion has to be trustworthy if it wants to be accepted by man as the platform of his ethical existence".

"And as I agree with you, we have to come back to the only possible conclusion: the measuring rod for humanity is decency, and its guideline is morality", concluded the Judge.

One of the advocates who wore the signs of membership in a Brahmin class on his forehead, took the word. He gave us what I

might call the 'official explanation', as we were to hear this definition whenever we raised the question of theultimate aim of man's existence in a discussion with educated Hindus.

"Basic to our religious philosophy is the conviction with which we have been indoctrinated: that life is full of vanity and represents a period of travail. Hinduism preaches that there is a Truth which surmounts and dominates all there is in the Universe - and that our life's aim should be to discover this Truth. Only those who acquire the right knowledge can lift the veil which hides the Truth. Man is, therefore, duty-bound to strive for the acquisition of as much knowledge of every kind and nature as he possibly can - as in the vastness of the general knowledge that of the Truth is included. Those who have gained this knowledge of what is Truth will be able to overcome the lures of this world. Having achieved the victory over the temptations around and within themselves, they will be able to lift the veil overlying the Truth - and having finally come into possession of the knowledge of the Truth, they will at last be able to discover the Absolute".

"Even as a non-Hindu I can in full accept what you say, Sir", I acknowledged. "It would, however, interest me to know how a learned Hindu reacts when in his studies or in practical life he comes in contact with other religions ? What is in this respect, as well as in general, his attitude to other religions ?"

"Ours is a very tolerant religion", the Judge told me. "We can coexist with all forms and kinds of religion, I can assure you; for we know that ultimately all faiths lead to God, that in every religion at least some truth is contained".

"There is a specific reason which made me put this question, Sir. I had wanted to ask: what is, within the frame of the caste system, the fate of a Hindu who converts to any other religion ?"

"Even if a Hindu adopts the principles of another religion; even if he identifies with the doctrines of another faith, he will still remain a Hindu. Not only is thereby his religious status not jeopardized, but we think that whatever his own religion has to offer him will be further enriched by what his new religious orientation offers him; for he is bound to benefit from absorbing in addition to what is already his knowledge that which he perceives is the truth in and of whatever other religion he acquires. Do you know of any other religion which is in tis regard as open and as tolerant as Hinduism ?"

I had to confess that I knew of no other religion which under such circumstances would be as tolerant and as accommodating.

"This leads me to the next question, Judge: is it possible for an outsider, say a European or African, to become a Hindu ? What would be his place in your religious world, especially within your caste system ?"

"Conservative Hinduism does not recognize conversion. It is impossible for an outsider to become a Hindu. He would not be able to fit into a caste - not even the lowest one. There are nowadays reform movements which have no scruples in this respect. Of course, without going into any of the legal complications, yours is an exceptional case, a coming-together of most unusual circumstances. Fortunately, we are not required to come to any specific judgement or even adjustment in your personal case, my Prince".

"Hinduism is essentially a religion of law and order", the Judge continued. "It is not a compacted, rigidly circumscribed religion, but a compendium of religions and philosophies. It is a historic fact, that most religions have at certain times and under certain circumstances - and when transported into new environments - undergone changes, mainly by adopting cultural and social features of their surroundings, by absorbing certain impressions of their new habitat, and by adapting to colourings from what from time to time has become their background. Hinduism is no exception in this respect. Due to acculturations - often for certain strategic reasons, I have no difficulty to confess - Hinduism too has over the centuries undergone much of such kind of syncretic processes".

"Is there not the danger, that over the years such a process of pervasion by foreign principles might bring about also a change in Hinduism's basic principles, in its fundamental principles ?"

"Not necessarily. At least not as a rule", answered another, a younger judge. "A main reason for this is the fact, that whatever changes a modernizing trend may introduce, the principles of **'Dharma'** and **'Karman'** will always maintain their central position in Hinduism. However, let me add that notwithstanding all this it can be stated without fear of any possible contradiction, that Hinduism is in no sense a rigid religion. It is fluid and flexible even with regard to its basic principles. In fact, it does experience constant changes. It never ceases to evolve ever new reform movements. This should not appear too strange a phenomen to you, if you learn to see in Hinduism not only a religion but also a culture".

"This cannot have been originally thus", I wondered aloud. "It can only have developed this Weltanschauung in the course of many centuries. It can only slowly have acquired characteristics

like these. If this is indeed the case, which of all these changes and adaptions have come first ?"

A man, who had been introduced to us as a teacher of English in the local High School, indicated by a gesture that he wanted to answer my question.

"In ancient times the creation of a religion came about by the attempt to find an explanation for and a solution of all which puzzled people about the natural events they saw happening around them, and and understanding of all the unexplainable things which affected their lives. Even before a religion was formulated and formalized as such, these problems - and the attempts to find an answer for them - had already formed the basis for the first tentative stages of intellectual activities which were to initiate an early form of cultural life in the primitive societies. In turn, that which made up culture's equipment, had at a later stage to serve as the foundation for the developing religious institutions. And later still, cultural values came again to the support of man in his struggle to rise from the darkness in which his ignorance - and the superstitions the religions had fostered fighting in turn for their own predominance and power - had kept him imprisoned".

"Permit me to contradict you, Sir", I countered. "It seems to me, that the simple, logical and uncomplicated way religion is supposed to have developed according to your theory, does not conform to realities. I would be unable to cite any religion whose origin and birth - if not so at least its early evolution - were not bathed in uproar and upheaval".

"You are right, Prince, but do not overlook that as a rule this was the case, because unqualified people had without any justification vested events caused by social conditions and by political upheavals - as well with the help of conventions therefrom evolving - with the nimbus and the paraphernalia of a religion".

"Don't you think, that the pressure of the social conditions, and the evocation of the established or evolving conventions you mention, came into play because they promised to make the acceptance of the offered religious system easier and also more likely ?"

"I would be ready to accept your hypothesis, had the course of developments as you describe them, been as a rule and generally accepted as such. I would even agree with you, had the upheavals - which were caused by changes, hopes and threats - been incorporated and exhibited in a system of idol worship, as in this case they would assist the worshippers to easier concentrate their minds on

whatever deity the religious system in question pays obedience. It would not matter in this case if for the majority of the devotees the faith retains - or even degenerates into - a very superficial form of religion".

I was not sure whether this was the teacher's honest opinion, whether he was serious in what he had said; but I was surprised to see the Judge applaud him. The Judge had appeared to me to be a very religious man, fully convinced of the truth of his religious belief.

"Would not a religious development of the kind you depict, at a certain stage open the door to agnosticism or possibly even atheism ?", I asked the Editor.

"Not necessary", the Judge replied in his stead. "The original purpose, sense and meaning which religion had, was to explain natural phenomena, and to find a way and a method to control - or at least to make acceptable - the threats and dangers which result from them. Only later generalized cultural developments, and the specific refinements the religious structure itself underwent in due course, made man search in the religious system for a spiritual aim for his life and an ethic purpose in his existence. From this developed the expectation, that after death mankind will be offered, even promised, salvation and redemption by its religions".

"Are these only theoretical consideration or does all you have said also apply to the background, to the evolvement and to the development of Hinduism ?", I asked the Judge.

"Yes, this applies also also to Hinduism's background in the dim past, its original evolvement and development. This applies also to the goal it had to offer. However, Hinduism has since taken a different approach. Our religion's primary aim is man's liberation from this material world, from the materialism of this world. But this does not free us from our obligation to be ethical individuals, to do right and to be just also in this world. The power of dharma and moksa prevent us from ever forgetting this our aim and this our end. However, we are conscious that a certain tension exists between the two, the aim and the end. There is on one side **Senatana dharma**, the absolute moral order, and on the other side the **dharma** of caste and order, which is in detail outlined in our codes of law. These two dharma systems are very often in conflict".

"The discrepancy between the two", added one of the older judges present, "has in clear terms been outlined by Mahatma Ghandi who saw in the one the divinely inspired social order and in the other

a man-made order. By the way: the caste system is one of the outcomes of the situation created by this tension".

"And so is the losening of the morals we witness in these our days", intervened one of the attorneys present. "For the essentials of Hinduism - the denial of one's Self and the assertion of the Self's spiritual essence - have been pushed into the background".

I have tried to keep my story from becoming too technical, but I realize now - while telling you about this encounter in the High Court Judge's drawingroom - that it is necessary I do so, even if much remains still unclear to you; and should you decide later on to dedicate the required time to study on your own some relevant books about the many-faceted aspects of Hinduism, much of what you have heard from me will certainly turn out to be of use to you. For completion's sake I shall make an effort to describe in as short a time as possible, only what in my view is essential.

What I am describing now is not only the outcome of my reading, but is also born out of the information, the instruction, the advice and the explanations I received from many a kind teacher - and from my personal observations.

But first some introductory remarks.

Various periods and stages have been differentiated in the evolution of Hinduism. Each has its own characteristics and sets of specific doctrines.

The **V e d i c P e r i o d** ranges from 2500 to 600 BCE. This period originated with the invasion of the Aryans from the North, and was characterized by the philosophy and the civilization they brought with them.

The **E p i c P e r i o d** followed. It lasted from 600 to 200 BCE. It witnessed the production of the great epics, the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata.** The **Bhagavad-Gita,** which is best known abroad, is a part of the Mahabharata. It was during this period that many of the so-called **'Smrtis'**, the traditional texts - among them the **Dharma Sastras,** treatises of social and ethical philosophy - were compiled. It is worth pointing out here - as I intend to do in greater detail at a later stage - that this philosophically and culturally fertile period in the history of India coincided with similar flourishing ones in Greece and Persia.

The same period saw the rise of the orthodox systems of Hinduism - **Shaivism** and **Vaishnavism** - as well as the unorthodox systems of Buddhism and Jainism.

The next period, which continued into the early christian centuries, was that of **Sutra.** Various schools of Hinduism arose, each with its own sets of rules, hymns, rites and guidelines for its initiates.

Six such systems were presented in Sutra form:

NYAYA	= logical realism
VAISESIKA	= realistic pluralism
SAMKHYA	= evolutionary dualism
YOGA	= disciplined meditation
PURYA MIMAMSA	= veda-connected, relating to conduct
UTNARA MIMAMSA	= veda-connected, relating to knowledge

Then followed the **Scholastic Period,** in which the commentaries on the Sutras were composed. In this way these were at last made understandable to the general public. But the commentaries have not found general acclaim; numerous critics judge many of these commentaries as often polemic, too verbose and more than confusing.

A stagnation along with a flattening out of the Hindu culture occurred in the aftermath of the periods during which at first a Moslem and thereafter a British political, cultural and political impact exerted their influence - when the former tried to eliminate whatever aryan influence while the latter used ridicule to subdue it. In the course of this development many english-educated Indians were heard to confess themselves ashamed of their past culture and of their tradition in general. They found a refuge in cultivating british thinking and habits.

Hinduism owns a great treasure of scriptures of various degrees of importance (or 'inspirations'). But, it has to be pointed out, Hinduism has never prepaired a body of canonical scriptures or a Common Prayer Book. There is no General Religious Council, i.e. there is in India not an institution of the like of Canterbury or Rome. And there is no school for priests either.

The earliest of the Scriptures is the **Veda.** It consists of four compilations, each of which is made up of **Mantras** (hymns), **Brahmanas** (lithurgical writings), of the **Aryanaka** (the forest book) and the of **Upanishads.**

The only scripture which binds all Hindus is the Veda; it contains the ancient writings and traditions, and represents a circumscribed standard of beliefs and conducts. The earliest Hindu

doctrines and beliefs are to be found in the Vedas. The Rig-Vedas ancient hymns about nature express worship of the deified elements which are mostly represented as benevolent gods. The Brahmins are the custodians of the knowledge contained in the Vedas; they alone are competent to perform the sacrifices and the ritual observances; they alone understand Sanskrit which is the language used for religious purposes.

It appears that the Vedas have been influenced by Babylonian customs and myths; and in addition also a hellenistic influence can be detected.

The Ritual of the Hindu service is made up of mantras and brahamanas. The mantras are formulae used during the sacrifice. The Brahamanas which date from the 7th and6th century BCE are invocations of the gods in form of hymns; the texts prescibe the formulas which have to be used for the sacrifices and rites. The Aryanakas describe a substitute for the rituals to be used by hermites who have retired into the deep forests.

The **Upanishads**, also called 'the sacred writings', date from the } th to the 5th centuries BCE. They are sources of philosophical wisdom. They contain the **Sruti** (the 'learnings'). These are the 'eternal words heard by the sages of immemorial times', as one of the historians describe them. Later on they were followed by the **Sutras;** these are made up in form of aphorisms which summarize the teachings of the Veda in the light of the interpretations of the different schools of Hindu philosophy.

The Upanishads outline the two ways to be possibly taken after death: the way of rebirth or the way of the gods. These writings speculate on the mysticisms of nature and gods - in a way and in words which are understandable even to the uneducated masses. All physical and mental activity, it is taught, is a natural reflection of cosmic processes. Every action leads to an end. One's behaviour in the past has determined one's situation in the present, and the totality of one's actual actions will determine one's future.

The **Vedanta** has arisen from the Upanishads. It is concerned with the practical observance and not with the ritual in the predominant religious and philosophical perception of India, where philosophy and religion go hand in hand. It teaches that everything is identitifed with God. All which is not Maya - that which is not a matter of unreality and illusion - is God, is Brahman. And Brahman is all-compriising. He is also undefinable.

And finally there is the **Mahabharata,** a very long epic which contains the **Bhagavad Gita** ('The Song of the Lord') and the **Naharya.**

There is in addition another ancient epic, the **Ramayana,** which sings of King Rama and his wife Sita. This mythological epic of enormous length contains also certain mystic characteristics: it describes how Rama, the God, appears frequently on earth in human form, i.e. as an **Avathar,** as the reincarnation of the godhead in human or other form. **Vishnu** and **Siva,** the avathars of Rama, have created a very rich Indian mythology.

To return to the Vedas: among all available recorded Indian literature it is the earliest and most important. It has to this day maintained its great influence on Indian thought.

There are four Vedas:

The RIG-VEDA	which is made up of over 1000 verses
The VAJUR-VEDA	which contains sacrifical formulae
The AHARSA-VEDA	which contains magic formulae
The SAMA-VEDA	which contains medical formulae.

The dates of their compilation are unkown. It is, however, certain that these hymns have been in existence and use long before they were written down. Some were known to have existed before 1500 BCE. Originally the Vedas had been handed down from one generation of priests to the next by word of mouth because they were thought to contain sacred knowledge of which the uninitiated - especially the lower castes - should not be made aware. Later on the Vedas were written down in Sanskrit, the holy language, because in the course of the centuries it had become difficult to ensure a correct oral transmission. Nowadays the Vedas have been translated into Pankrit, 'the profane language' - and translations have been made into all the western languages in existence.

Although among the researchers, and even among the followers, some are found today who dismiss the Vedas as half-formed myths, as crude allegories or as immature idea complexes, we should not entertain any doubt, that from their origin onwards the Vedas have exerted a great influence on the ideologies and philosophies of India.

The Vedas - the word means wisdom or knowledge - were the instrument by which the sages of India hoped to gain certain basic knowledge and a fundamental understanding. I give you a few examples of the questions which are asked in the Vedas: Which god or gods shall we adore with our devotions ? Who can in truth know and

explain where our world was born and whence it comes ? What came first, the Creation or the gods ? How can we know when the first being was created ?

It is interesting to note that originally there had not been elements pointing to idol worship in the Vedas. At the time the Vedas were composed not even temples had been in existence. Religious services took the form of sacrifices which were performed in open spaces or in forests. Temples, sculptures, paintings, decorations were later introduced under the impact of an influx of Greek culture. It seems that this same influence had also prevailed on Buddhism.

The Vedas outline the main purposes of man's life:

The observance of Dharma, the religious and social duties.
The enjoyment of legitimate pleasures which life offers.
The earning of one's living expenses.
The absorption of one's Self into the Great Absolute.

The Bhagavad-Gita -or 'Gita' for short - is the most important part of the Veda.

"It is to the Hindus what the Bible is to the Jews and Christians", I was told by a learned Pandit. "We respect it even more than the Moslems do their Qu'ran. In the Gita the theistic character of the Upanishads comes to its full development. It is a religio-philosophical text composed in Sanskrit. It is the most specific and characteristic material of Hinduism, and it represents the manual for the Krishna cult of Bhakhti".

"Do you consider the Gita a revealed scripture ? ", I asked him in turn.

"We do. We conclude this from the fact that in the Gita it is repeatedly written '...and the Lord Krishna said...'. This points to revelation, does it not ? Such, however, is not the case with the Upanishads. In view of the latter's pantheistic character it would in any case be impossible to picture them as a possibly revealed literature. In the Gita God speaks to man. This is the first time that this happened in any of our Scriptures. The Brahmins knew to make good use of this fact, because by knowing the minutest details outlined in the Gita, they were allowed to claim that they alone knew the real way of pronouncing the right formulas, and the true method of how to perform the sacrifices in the only effective way possible. This claim to unique knowledge assured them not only an important position in society, but it provided them also with a steady and good income".

The Gita describes the three paths which lead to the union

with God, the 'Ultimate Reality'. They are:

The KARMA YOGA = The Path of the Disinterested Service
The BHAKHTI YOGA = The Path of Devotion
The INANA YOGA = The Path of Saving Knowledge

The Gita preaches in particular, that whatever good deeds an individual may perform, these should not be done for the sake of his karman; that is to say with the purpose in mind of acquiring benefits and advantages for the next existence.

One can say that the Bhagavad Gita is the widest read text in modern India. "It is our source for religion, philosophy, ethics and much more", underlined once a learned Hindu with whom we had come into conversation. "Philosophy is far less of importance in human life. Active life is no less important", a companion of his added.

As I have already mentioned, there are orthodox Hindus who see in the Upanishads, and specifically in combination with some hymns of the Gita, evidence that Hinduism is to be considered a revealed religion. They include often also portions of the Rig-Veda. However, the Pandit I just now mentioned, disagreed; he decried most if not all of these scriptures as pantheistic. Educated orthodox Hindus are in his experience disinclined to accept the polytheistic aspect of Hinduism. They are more and more inclined to a theistic concept of their religion. I was told that the Bhakhti Cult, because of its clearly defined theistic message, has in recent years gained the adherence of large masses of Hindus of all classes and all strata.

Once I requested a schoolteacher, a serious student of the Upanishads, to explain this complex of Scriptures to me in simple terms, as it would have taken me far too long to get acquaintaed on my own with this vast material each of my interlocutors had at every occasion advised me to study.

"The Upanishads", he explained, "are ancient treatises of philosophy and theology. As soon as they became available in the West - say about 200 years ago - through their translations into nearly all possible modern languages, they have with justification impressed and intrigued the intelligenzia of Europe. Schopenhauer called them "the summit of human wisdom". European researchers and devotees, interestingly, conceived the Upanishads above all

as secret teachings, as esoteric material, as directives to a mystic approach to the deity. It would lead too far for me mention even only some of the many Upanishads which reveal so much wisdom and knowledge. It may, for instance, interest you to learn that the Aitarya Upanishad describes the Creator God in terms similar to those of Genesis in the Bible. It says: "In the beginning Atman - the Great-Self-Soul - was here, one only. 'Let me create the world', he thought. And the world was created". Is this not interesting ? ", he challenged me.

"Do you know", I told him, "that what you told me just now does not surprise me at all, as much of what I know already of the Upanishads reminds me of certain of the rabbinic writings. You should take time out to study these too".

"Thank you for your advice. It will surely prove interesting. Is it also the case with the rabbinic writings that they do not anymore represent a single, clear, unaltered philosophical system, because in the course of time so many commentaries have been added to them ? This was certainly the case with the Upanishads, whose original teaching has in this manner been put into a totally different form and shape; and whatever of the sayings, the directives and the interpretations had once upon a time been clearly and precisely formulated therein, has by these additions and commentaries become confused, indistinct and smudged ? "

"Also the rabbinic writings have been loaded with commentaries of other rabbis, but these have been kept separate and have left the outlines of the original reasoning clear. But explain to me, please, what importance the Upanishads had and have for the Indians', that is for the Hindus' everyday life. I have read parts of some of the translations of this opus, and I must say I have been greatly impressed by their philosophical approach".

"Above all and basically the Upanishads preach that life is an evil thing, that existence - the unending chain-like series of existences which is called **'Samsara'** - involves an infinite series of births and deaths. It details, that the individual's **'Karman'**, that is his actions and deeds in life, determine how and when and in which form the individual will be reborn. It makes it clear, that there is no escape from Karman; that man's aspiration should be to escape his eternal cycle of samsara; and that man should strive to gain **'Moksa'**, his liberation, his salvation. The Uppanishad teaches further, that moksa, the salvation, can best of all be gained by the acquisition of knowledge of the Supreme Truth about **Brahman-Atman**, the Absolute. By having gained this knowledge the individual is granted the ultimate power to decide his own fate and destiny".

"The Supreme Truth is the knowledge and acceptance of God ? Of a single God ?", I asked.

"The many deities of Brahmanism are concentrated into one principal impersonal abstract deity who is the essence of all which exists. And ultimately, this divinity is contained in man himself, or in other words, man is part of the divinity".

"How do you know this ? How do you perceive this ?"

"To gain this knowledge, to acquire this experience, it is enough to concentrate on one's Self by meditation".

"Is there no active, no external approach to the Deity ?"

"The Brahma is enthroned above everything - but man is free to find his way to him. However, invocations and sacrifices, prayers and propitiations are not effective, are not called for - man carries in himself the power to approach the Absolute and to find salvation. This is the ideology, you may say the theology, of modern but conservative Hinduism".

"Do these ideas, does this theology not form the basis of a church ? "

"How do you define a church ?"

"I would define a church as a society whose members have the same concept of what is sacred and what is part of the profane world. They translate these common belefs by practices accepted by all. It is not important whether they are guided by priests or not".

"In this case no religion is without a church, whether it embraces the entire nation or only a segment of it. And you may also add to your definition that a church acts as a paradigm of the expected and promised salvation".

"What do you understand as salvation ?"

"Salvation is the final goal which man's soul aspires to reach. In Hinduism salvation is attained by, and is manifested in the abolition of all desires. It is finally **Nirvana**, which is the disappearance into the Absolute. It is the dissolution into Nothing".

"What place has God in this scheme of things ?"

"You will not find in the Upanishads an exact circumscription of the concept of God. God is vaguely presented as some kind of a depersonified being. Certain parts of the Upanishads may even be described as apparently atheistic. However, the kind of presentations which seem to express an atheistic concept are very exceptional, for the Upanishads are in the main theistic - or if you want to be particular in your definitions, you may call them pantheistic. The formulas, the prayers, the ceremonials, the rituals and so on are specifically addressed to gods. It is clearly said

in the Upanishads, that whoever understands the essence and the demands of the gods, cannot do any wrong. This has to mean, that the individual has to take care of his soul, of his Self; for whoever strives for the good of his Self will not anymore have to know of good or evil. He will be already near the Absolute".

"What is exactly the 'Absolute' mentioned in the Upanishads?"

"I can impossibly give you a definition. It is not only due to my own inability or ignorance. It is a divine fact. 'It is impossible to qualify the Absolute', say the Upanishads in very clear words. 'It is impossible to describe the Atman. It is impossible to define the Brahman. Every definition which man may attempt is a priori wrong and has to be denied. God is the opposite of what man thinks of him', say the Upanishads".

"This can hardly be called a definition. What you said just now, has not left me any wiser".

"Believe me, my friend, the Upanishads are full of wisdom. All of us who study the Upanishads in search for knowledge, are not disappointed nor frustrated. Learn from the Upanishads. For instance, the Nundaka Upanishad teaches that self-control can bring knowledge. It teaches that self-negation is important. But know also, that man cannot achieve this knowledge by himself, on his own. Only by revelation - which is granted by the Great Self exclusively to certain selected individuals - can this knowledge, this supreme achievement be gained. He who knows the Supreme Brahman becomes himself Brahman. He becomes immortal".

"Would you call me mistaken if I interpret your words as saying that ultimately God, the Absolute, the Great Brahman is the Self, and that he can only be perceived by us mortals as residing within ourselves ? "

"You may say so, provided you also say that it is there whereto man has to direct his searching".

"In old times, I have learned, this could be achieved by the proper sacrifices and rites. Have the Upanishads been instrumental that the sacrifices have lost their importance ?"

"Yes, they have. The Upanishads oppose sacrifices. They teach that search for knowledge should replace the sacrifices".

"Why this change ? What hapened ? "

"This attitude of the Upanishads can be seen as a protest against the overpowering impact which the Brahmins, the priestly caste, had on the daily life of the general population at the time the Upanishads were composed. The Brahmins preached, that their ritualistic performances were essential for the wellbeing of every individual and for the community as a whole. They threatened, that

life would come to a standstill, that mankind would be ruined, were sacrifices not offered to the gods in exact accordance with the prescribed rules and rites - which only they, the Brahmins, knew and could perform. That is to say, they had the monopoly for the right approach to the gods. Their's was a very profitable racket, I can assure you, for they extorted a high price for their services".

The teacher took a book from a shelf.

"Let me quote to you what David Hume wrote in his book "The Thirteen Principles of the Upanishads": 'The whole religious doctrine of the gods and the necessity of sacrificing to them, is seen to be a stupendous fraud of the monistic unity of the Self and of the world of Brahman and Atman".

5.

Of Dharma and Samsara, of Karman and Brahman.

The longer I stayed in India, and more northwards we traveled, the less I had problems with the language - not so much because I had learned to master Hindi, but because the english language was much more commonly used by the people who, as a rule, were keen on conversing in English. This was even more the case when we reached the South of India. My initial worry, that the 15 official languages and the additional 874 local dialects in use in the various parts of the sub-continent might turn out to be a handicap, was thus dispersed.

I have to add another observation: Except for some remark here and there, I am not going to talk about the political situation we could see steadily deteriorate along with the down-sliding of the social and economical conditions. Although we were keen students of what was going on also in these spheres, it would be beyond the scope and the purpose of my talks with you to enlarge on these issues - especially so as the situation in all its explosive potentialities is not a steady one and is nearly visibly changing from month to month.

I shall, therefore, concentrate on the cultural trends and the religious specifics we observed - and of these I shall tell you mostly about the ones which impressed me most, which helped me to construct for my own better comprehension a common paychological platform underneath the religions practiced in India. That is to say, that my interest and my studies were directed to those elements in the Indian religions which are not particularly underlined or elaborated in the generally available literature about India.

"Can you, please, tell me what you mean whenever you speak about

'Dharma' ? I have heard of so many definitions that I have come to think that there is no definite definition. I mean to say that I have found 'Dharma' to have so many meanings, that I have been induced to think that it must have also many facets".

These words I addressed once to a man who had involved us in conversation when we walked around the University Campus of Delhi. I learned later on that he was a well-known and respected figure in the intellectual circles of the Capital. He had introduced himself as a professor of philosophy; and I greatly welcomed the opportunity he offered us, during the various times we were thereafter guests in his house, to clear up questions which had remained with me even after I had diligently read up a subject.

"This is not so", was his ponderous reply. "It has not many different facets nor faces, my friend. It only seems so, because what you see as disparate aspects are only different approaches to the same principle. Know and accept a priori, that the entire human fate rests on Dharma. Dharma drives away all evil. Dharma is the highest good. For instance, also Ahimsa, of which you have surely heard much already, is dharma. There is the rule that 'if you destroy dharma, dharma will destroy you'. Without dharma life cannot go on for the individual nor for the human race. Dharma is the rule of conduct which governs every moral society".

"Is the dharma system not identical with the guidelines, nay the demands, which are in general represented in the religions ? "

"Yes, the principles of dharma can be equalled to those of a religion. It is the set of established order, usages, institutions, customs and rules which are supposed to regulate man's life. Dharma is the treasure chest of the moral merits, the virtues, the good works which fill in man's life. In short: it represents what is right, just and lawful".

"If this is so, why do you not give it the name of religion ?"

"What is wrong with the name 'dharma' even though it is made up among others also of religious belief and practice. It is derived from the Sanskrit meaning of 'upholding, maintaining'. Yes, I concede that in Hinduism dharma has the meaning of something like religion. It is also something which is established, which is proper, which is customary, which is true. It stands also for responsibility, for moral duty. It is the ethical principle. And as it represents and teaches and demands what is permitted, it is eo ipso also legal".

"Your definitions indicate that this order of conduct, in the sense which makes it also represent a religious system, regulates and affects human behaviour not only in the social sphere but in general also with regard to all other aspects of life ?

"In everything which is, and in everything which goes on, dharma is the highest authority".

"When was it first introduced ? How and in which sense was it first used ?"

"Dharma was first revealed in the Rig-Vida where it has the meaning of cosmic ordinance, of natural or divine law. It was made to mean that it maintains cosmic order. At the time the Brahamanas were composed, that is in the 9th to 6th cernturies BCE, dharma meant the fundamental laws of the Universe which were not only reflected in the gods' actions but also in the exact performance of the rites by the priests. Dharma became in this way aligned with Karman; it came to mean the sum total of one's obligations by which one fits in with the natural world, the social world, with one's caste".

"What meaning, what value has all this in today's world ?"

"I can hardly add more to what I have just now expounded. You can learn all you want to know through a thorough study of the Gita; for all what Dharma means is to be found detailed therein", lectured the Professor, who apparently loved to lecture. "The Gita is not only a philosophical treatise, it is not only concerned with ethics, but to a great extent also with the duties imposed on mankind. For instance, the Gita's chapter on **Dharmasastra**, that is its doctrine of the right behaviour, has no philosphical basis. Study the Veda from its practical aspect and you will find that it represents the authority and the source of dharma. And you will find also answered what you asked before: that in the dharma mankind's duties are outlined no less also from a religious point of view".

"What precisely does it say in the Veda ?"

"The Book of Dharma prescribes first of all that every man has to work. Nobody, not even the ascetic who has withdrawn into the forest or the hermit who lives in a cave, can abstain from all activities and remain idle; like everybody else they have to do some kind of work. For even God Allmighty is never idle; he is always active. From many a point of view it is important that man is busy, that he performs his duty - but he has to be busy without ever thinking of reward; he has to be active without the fear of punishment. The Dharmasastra, the book of duties I have mentioned, differentiates between rules which apply to everyday life - that is our worldly life - and the blessings to look forward to by striving for perfection which brings about one's moksa".

"Could you, after all this detailed explanation, please tell me how exactly you personally think you benefit from performing your duties in the spirit of dharma", I insisted.

"Dharma is the rule of life and conduct I have made it my duty and task to follow, as I want my deeds to be of spiritual benefit to me.

Darma's rules are the rules which I have to learn to follow, as I want to learn how to adjust myself to the laws of the Universe. Dharma means my duty to life. For dharma has to govern my life. It leads me to righteousness. To me, a conservative Hindu, it means in addition the duties my caste imposes on me".

"Is all this not a rather self-centred view of dharma ?"

"No ! On the contrary ! It is a rather altruistic attitude, as it leads me to selfless deeds; for most all of the activities we perform in the realm of social work, are engagements in which we perceive the ideal way of life. You have only to think of Ghandi to understand what I mean".

"You want to say, I suppose, that I have to understand dharma as meaning the performance of one's duties in accordance with one's place in the social and on the ethical level of one's society ?"

"This is precisely so. Whoever adheres to these rules of dharma will be blessed with the enjoyment of an inner sense of fulfillment. Provided, of course, that one performs one's duties without the expectation of material profits and benefits. But all in all, and ultimately and basically, these duties are imposed upon me by the rules and regulations, by the limits and the prescriptions of my caste. It is true that the Caste Council supervises these duties and punishes any contravention - but an upright and moral man should not need such a supervision".

"This means that man should be kept in check by the range of his personal ethics. If you build a picture of dharma on logical lines you will have to conclude, that dharma means nothing else but religion and righteousness. And continuing in this direction dharma can in addition also have the meaning of God".

"Finally and ultimately it means man's purpose in life".

"In other words: dharma is a practical guide through life and has no metaphysical or philosophical imputations ? "

"You are wrong. Dharma is finally and ultimately to be understood as a philosophical concept. You have to see in dharma a universal law of automatic causation, as something without the intervention - or the interference let us say - of a guiding principle. Everything is conditional. Everything is dependent on a cause. Every cause is followed by its effect. Whatever we perceive has an apparent existence only; but at the same time it is dependant on something else which in turn will not get away without having left some effect".

"Would you call this a 'law of cause and effect' ?"

"It enters into such a definition. Man's failure to grasp this principle of causation is at the root of all his troubles. Man's karman is based on this principle. Karman means basically man's existence as

an individual unit. His actual existence is the effect of his past - and his future will be the effect of his actual existence".

"In short", I said, "whatever happens makes something else to happen. Whatever has a beginning has also an end ?" I had intended my words as a mild joke.

"This is an apt conclusion", surprisingly the professor agreed. "But dharma means still more. It means preserving order. It means also conformity. It means the status quo - and arising from this it means also dedication to righteousness, to justice, and to obedience of the law".

"And how does dharma fit into a belief in God ?"

"Our theists are convinced that dharma has been predestined by God. But you must not take this to mean that also man's fate is predestined by God. For man has an absolutely free will. It is man himself who determines how to manage his own life. He reaps what he sows. Some maintain that man is made up of desires. As he desires so goes his will. And as his will goes, so are the deeds he does. Whatever he does, so will he become. When his soul returns into a new incarnation it will reap the fruits of the past existence's actions - be they good or bad. Thus: according to how man behaves, so will he become".

"Does he receive any guidance, any instructions to this effect ? Is he told how to act, what to avoid, what to aspire to ?"

"There are what one can call instructions and restrictions, like certain rites and rules about washing and about eating - but these are only superficialities. Manu, the great lawgiver, described each caste's duties, that means every person's dharma, in clear and unmistakable terms. Obedience to the rules of one's dharma means in fact acting and living in accordance with the laws of one's caste - and this will ultimately bring one to the aspired salvation".

"Talking of castes ! There are four of them as far as I know".

"And each has innumerable sub-castes - but I do not want to go into details. Suffice it to name the four main ones: The **Brahmin**, the priest, has to serve his deity. He has to study; he has to teach; he has to perform the rites and sacrifices; he has to give alms; he has to receive gifts. The **Kahatrya**, the warrior, has to cultivate his strength; he has to bring sacrifices; he has to give alms; he has to protect those who are under his care. The **Varshya**, the workman, has to work. And the **Sudra**, the last of the castes, has to serve the other three castes".

"The caste system with its divisions, rules and duties has been created more than a thousand years ago in and for a society vastly different from ours of today. This system cannot have remained unchanged since then; that is to say, it must from time to time have been adapted

to the changing times and cannot be today the same as it had been at the time of its introduction ?"

"Of course they have not remained the same. Of course they have changed in our days. How could this not be the case ? Our modern society interpretes the rules established in ancient times according to the ethics of our days. Thus we think today that an individual's dharma is not determined by his birth; that he has not to follow the profession he has inherited as a member of his caste, but can select any which accords with his individual qualifications and personal preferences, with his temperament and his capabilities".

"Have the ordinances issued by the various modern Governments not also to a great degree interfered with the caste regulations even though in their modern interpretation you have just now mentioned they may not appear too incongruous ? "

"I am going to be honest with you and will concede, that the old conceptions - notwithstanding the attempts of Government to regulate the issue by laws - that is to say the ancient interpretations and old established directions of dharma, have for us Hindus not lost much of their importance; they are somehow still in effect, even if only in attenuated form, at least in the eyes of the orthodox and the uneducated strata of our society. The reason for this perseverance I see in the fact that fundamentally nothing has really changed in the socio-religious attitude of the people. In other words: dharma - along with **arta** (wealth), **kama** (passion) and **moksa** (liberation) - is still acclaimed as one of the four guidelines with the help of which mankind has to regulate its life. For in our spiritual and philosophical world the principles of dharma cannot be changed because they have such a great significance in and for our life".

"I have to conclude then that notwithstanding all the changes which over the many centuries have taken place in the world, dharma - in its old established shape and more than anything else - still dominates the life of the Hindu".

"It is indeed so, because not only in theory but in actual fact and in everyday's practice it represents to a Hindu the most ideal way of conduct. This was the case in ancient times, and it is thus also today. Yes, dharma is possibly the most important factor in a Hindu's life. It is the strength, the life-blood of Hinduism. It finds a clear expression in the concepts of the Yoga system; it makes tolerable man's submission to the fact of the soul's transmigration after death; it renders possible man's necessary surrender to the fate imposed on him by his karman; and finally it makes the caste system acceptable. Without dharma the idea of **Samsara** would be intolerable - even unbelievable".

"Tell me about Samsara, please".

"Samsara means wandering; it encompasses everything that exists. It is an unending, frustrating - and meaningless process".

"Samsara means to you all which can be summarized as the burden of our life ?"

"More than that. Samsara means also worldly existence. It means all the disadvantages life brings along. Samsara is the evil of desires. Desire has called man into being, and desire keeps man in the endless process of existence. Man thinks only of his pleasures, and the more he pursues his pleasures, the more he is chained to the wheel of his existence - and this is samsara. Nobody can deny that there is a relationship between man's fate and his imperfections. This explains the transmigration of the soul - which forms the chain of life. For this is the reason why the soul has to come back again and again by way of a rebirth - and always in a different shape. Deeds done in this life will be compensated for - and/or expiated in - the next, until deliverance is achieved".

"It means that Samsara is responsible for the unending transmigration and never ceasing reincarnation of the human soul. When did this process of the cycle of death and rebirths start ? There must have been an onset, a starting point to the transmigration of the soul, of the entire complex of the samsara ?"

"For us it is the inalterable truth that human karman exists since time immemorial; that it passes from one existence into the other in a continuous cycle of death and rebirth; that the conditions and the circumstances of each new form of existence are determined by karman; that the merits or demerits of the actions that have taken place in previous forms of existenece are evidenced in our actual existence. Life is thus an inescapable experience full of frustrations, struggles and defeats - or at least a meaningless repetition of pleasure and pain. It ends with death, which is only a new beginning of an existence. There is a constant rebirth and death. Both, birth and death are inevitable effects of karman; they are a chain of actions and reactions following from the initial deeds. Man is caught in the cycle of the consequences of his deeds".

"Thank you, Panditji. I think I have now a good understanding of the philosophy of dharma and samsara. They are specific Indian concepts, as far as I know. Did they arise from or did the create the concept of reincarnation ? "

"The concept of reincarnation is supposed to have originated in India. But from what I have learned it was and is also known in the tribal cultures of nearly all the world. The Hindu concept of the soul's reincarnation has been later on adopted and adapted by the Greeks - by Pythagoras, by Empedocles, by the Orphics - and it came to occupy an

important place in the philosophy of Plato".

"Logically reincarnation presupposes that there is a soul, something which is separate from the body. Do you agree ?"

"In one form or other the belief in a mind, in a spirit, in a soul is basic to the belief in a reincarnation. In general it can be said that such an idea is common to all people who ponder this problem. Hindus, Platonists, gnostics etc. believe that man has a soul; that souls are created again and again or that they pre-exist. Christians, according to Augustine, believe that souls are created but do not pre-exist before the bodies. Moslems, according to Avereros, believe that there is one universal intellect into which individual intellects are absorbed after death".

"..and all these ideas were given shape in the individual religions past and present".

"Are not religions the creation of the human mind in search of an answer for the why, who and how ?"

"Agreed. But what happens to the soul ? What will happen to all the souls in the end ? Hinduism makes us hope that one day all mankind will achieve samsara, that all will be blessed with moksa - and what then ? Will the world we know come to an end ?"

"I do not look so far ahead. Our horizon should be more limited: As my dharma will hopefully one day overcome my samsara, so that my soul will achieve moksa and will end in nirvana - this end state of the soul which is significantly best translated as being 'blown off' - I cannot but adopt the attitude, that we have to accept what we are and what we are going to be - without losing ourselves in endless speculations".

"Do Nirvana and Samsara represent to you psychological or ontological states ? I mean to say, are they in your conception states of mind or a kind of existence ? Do they refer to this our actual world ?"

"All this might be understandable to you if you see Nirvana in the image created by the poets of our Scriptures as the 'farther shore' or as a 'state of bliss beyond the world of birth, death and rebirth'".

"I am afraid I am getting somewhat confused - or subconsciously unwilling to accept such standard explanations. Could we leave the issue of dharma and sansara for a while as I would like to hear from you what meaning **Nirvana** has for you, a man of intelligence and progress ? I know it means the end-stage of samsara, the final goal to be aspired to. But what is the ultimate purpose, what is the achievement of a soul being created, made to undergo unending tests and sufferings - only to end in nothing ?"

"I can well imagine that the generally spread-about definition of Nirvana will puzzle a man of western culture. But let us start from the beginning. Nirvana is the spiritual goal of all Hindus - and no

less so also of the Buddhists. It is a very ancient part of Hindu culture. It has been wrongly defined as 'Enlightenment', especially in relation to the Buddhists' views. Literally it means extinction, blowing out. Its true meaning is the 'blowing out' of all desires; it means the final blessed achievement of freedom from all desires. It is the opposite of reality. It is the opposite of the wheel of samsaric existence with all its transitions, all its sufferings, all its unreality. Nirvana is the blessed state "...when the thinking mind with all its discriminations, attachments, aversions and egoisms is forever put away; is where the logical measures are no longer seized upon...where the notion of truth is treated with indifference", says one of our old scriptures, the Surangama Dutra which dates from the first century of our era. In another Sura, the Leukavatura of the 4th century, Nirvana is represented as the entrance of the soul into a state of rest; as the subduing of all wishes and desires; as the indifference to all pain and joy; as the state where good and evil are meaningless; as the absorption of the soul in itself; and as the freedom from the rules of existence, from birth to death and from death to new birth".

"And what is left of the soul or whatever it may be called, after it has reached the state, the bliss, the nothingness of Nirvana ?", I insisted.

"Philosophically and theologically nirvana is viewed by us as the extinction of the Self in Brahman. It clearly implies to me the extinction of my Ego, of my false Self into a higher Self, into the source of all knowledge. It is the final end of all existence, and with it of all pain and happiness. Whoever has gained this understanding, or even the knowledge of the possibility of such an understanding, unites himself consciously with Brahman, the all-pervading and divine Being. This consciousness is a "transcendental consciousness; it is the samadhi of the Yoghins, it is the nirvana of the Buddhists, it is the union with the Shechina of the Jews, it is the Kingdom of Heaven of the Christians", said one of our wise Swamis".

On another occasion I was given, also by a professor of philosophy - whenever possible I searched for the opportunity to meet such men - a very thorough explanation of the meaning of **karman.**

"I notice that you speak of 'karman' while I am used to hear of 'karma'. What is the difference ?"

"There is no difference", he laughted. "Karman is the nominative form of what is generally spoken of as karma. It is better to use the word karman".

"Whence is this word derived ?"

"It derives from the Sanskrit 'Kr' which means to act, to bring about. Originally, in the sacred Vedic hymns of the 12th century BCE karman meant prayers, the praising of the gods. In the Vedic Brahamas of the 9th century BCE it meant a properly executed elaborate ritual performed by the priests as gifts and entertainment to the gods; in the Brahmana scriptures the sacrifices were called 'karman actions'. The benefit of these ritual actions were to be reaped sometime in the future. This concept of a future recompense for a devoted deed led later to the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration. Later still any correct activity in general was called karman. In due course our spiritual leaders enlarged the concept of karman to mean an impersonal system which implies a life in which all that happens is the fruit of seeds which have been implanted by one's behaviour and disposition in the past; and the dread that one's present actions will have a determinative continued effect in a future life. These ideas developed in due course into the doctrine of transmigration of the souls, of rebirth and have led to the actual concept of Karman".

"I am greatly surprised by what I learned just now. I did not know that the karman principle started in this manner, that the concept of a dreadful fate made up of past sins having to be paid for in one's actual existence and so on, was not the original content of your faith system, but that it has evolved from the usual rituals of prayers and sacrifices which all religions more or less practice. That means that what is karman to you today has not been the original ideology, the primary theology; that it has been artificially created, has been later added, has been implanted at a later stage. Who has introduced this change in the conception of what is evil and of how sin will be punished ? There must have been a reason, a purpose behind it all. As you will agree that there is no evidence that the karman principle has been introduced by a divine revelation, it must have been a man-made innovation. By whom has it been created ? And why ?"

I must have sounded excited - and I was excited. Somehow this revelation threatened to take away some of the respect which had been growing in me for the ethics I found imbued in Hinduism.

The Professor must have been aware of my excitement, my inner upheaval; for he leaned forward and patted my hand.

"I think you take an exaggerated view of the development our faith has taken. In the course of time and cultural evolution all religions adapt the shape and change the form in which they transmit their doctrines, their ideologies, their programs".

"You have no supreme religious councils which could bring about

such changes".

"That which you call changes has been introduced by our philosophers in the course of the progressing development of the human mind".

"Is this to you a philosophical or a religious matter ?"

"In Hinduism philosophy and religion are one".

"Karman is in some form or other also reflected in other religions as far as I can make out". Although I could not accept the Profesor's off-handed explanations, I had already quietened down and could continue the conversation in a normal voice.

"It is an original concept of Indian culture but it has influenced thinking all over the world. I may say to a far greater degree than any other Indian cultural contribution".

"Can you give me a precise outline of what Karman means to you ?"

"I could not do better than to recite Mircea Eliade, the famous Romanian anthropologist, who wrote: Karman is '... the impersonal transethical system under which one's current situation in the world is regarded as the fruits of seeds planted by one's behaviour and disposition in the past, and the view that in all one's present actions lie similar seeds that will have continuing and determinative effect on one's life as they bear fruit in the future'.

"This is the Indian way to explain the cause of human suffering and the variations in human fate. Very ingenious indeed".

"You may say so. A person is born into the kind of world which he has made for himself. One cannot complain or object. One's circumstances are determined by one's actions. It is a factor which leads a soul from one body to the other as it moves from birth to birth".

"What can one do to remedy one's bad karman ?"

"Karman is usually perceived as an inexorable, impersonal law. Every thought, every word and deed necessarily bear their fruits. But one can in the course of one's lifetime work off the karman of past sins. The Bhagavad Gita teaches that only the suspension of all activity can lead to the avoidance of wrong deeds; but whereas one cannot avoid all activity in the interest of society, and whereas the social responsibilities of the individual are prescribed by divine laws which demand, that priests should perform the rituals, that soldiers should fight the battles, and that merchants should do their business. All this has to go on not because the priests, the soldiers and the merchants want to, but because God has thus ordained. If all these activities are properly performed by those charged with these duties, they cannot be considered evil and lead to continued rebirths. But it is those acts and activities which arise from the desire for certain results, and not the activities themselves which give rise to the evolvement of karmic processes. Freedom from the bonds of karman comes not when one ceases

to act but when one acts without desire, when one renounces the atachment one has for the fruits of one's actions. The renounciation of desire for specific ends can only be attained through Bhakhti-Yoga, the loving surrender to God's will. For God - that is Krishna - said: 'Those who dedicate all their actions - their karman that is - to me; who are intent on me with unwavering discipline; who are meditating on me; those who revere me - for those I am the Saviour from the cycle of deaths....'; and those who see their actions as God's actions and as the result of God's will, 'are also liberated from the trap of karman'".

"Doing ones duty, in other words, will lessen the karmic load".

"Good deeds may remedy inborn defects. Withdrawal from life and the renunciation of life; spiritual practices and patient acceptance of one's present duty and station - that is one's dharma - may dilute, even elminiate the accumulated bad points. In Bhakhti Hinduism God's grace, given in response to fervent devotion, can burn away bad karman".

"How can the suffering of small children be explained in the concept of karman ? Is it for the purpose of affecting therewith the adults,the relatives, the onlookers ?"

"Hinduism - no less also Buddhism - does not know of innocent suffering. All suffering in the world - whatever the age of the sufferer - is determined by the sufferer's karman".

"This makes the suffering of the innocent child acceptable to the Hindu mind, I see".

"Yes. You have to accept this fact. As is the case with salvation, so also in the matter of karman, God and the gods play no, or at the most a subordinate role".

I remained silent.

"You must have realized already that the karman doctrine represents a most important religious dogma in Hinduism", my host continued after a short pause. "Its basic meaning is that punishment and reward for any of the deeds committed in a past existence are given in the form in which one is reborn in the next. The tragedy of existence and the suffering of living are crystallized in karman, in the law of man's deeds, of what he is doing and what he has been doing. The chain of cause and effect is without end. In these our modern times even a western-educated and liberal-minded Hindu is unlikely to have discarded his belief in karman and in the transmigration of souls. For the sake of his karman, and for the sake of a better status in his coming rebirth, a Hindu will ceaselessly be engaged in - or at least think of - the acquisition of as much spiritual perfection as is given to him to achieve. He will endeavour - while still being enslaved by the karman which his former existence has shaped and formed - to keep the karman he is actually

forming in his present existence as little loaded with negatives as he possibly can."

"How do you visualize your relationship to, you action upon your karman in your daily life ? "

"Karman means performing the religious rites or 'actions' in accordance with the prescriptions and instructions of the caste to which one belongs. Karman means change without beginning and end. As I have already pointed out, every action is the effect of actions which have been done before, and they will inevitably give rise to further actions which will take place in the future. You may see your karman as a chain wound around your neck by which you are, unwillingly as a rule, led to your next incarnation. Your next existence may happen within a higher or a lower human status. You never know: you may even be next incarnated into a celestial being. On the other hand, you may in your next incarnation reappear in the shape of an animal, or in that of an insect. Unless this chain is broken there cannot be an end to the perpetual round of births, deaths and rebirths".

"What ist that which is transmitted in this endless chain ? What form or shape has it ? "

"According to the Upanishads, karman is the only thing which is left of an individual after his death. Karman is that force which prescribes the migration of the soul from birth to rebirth. In the opinion of many of our philosophers man may not even be endowed with a soul, and his karman may be all that is left and transmitted after his death. This left-over karman forms the nucleus for the next birth. Karman, the invisible force, is further formed and shaped early in life. It determines the physical and psychic conditions of man's existence. It is the exclusive force which is automatically and unrelentlessly active. Imagine this force equiped with its own very sensitive computerized automation and a finely tuned giro compass. However, all considered nothing can happen to an individual which is not intrinsically based on reason and logic".

I was greatly intrigued by the idea, the concept, the philosophy and the psychology of "karman"; and I never missed an opportunity to explore and to collect ever new aspects of this principle which is so deeply rooted in - and which so greatly affects - the life of the Hindu. I never missed a chance to engage man of knowledge and inspiration in a conversation about this subject.

"Whence and how did the concept of karman originate ?", I once asked an 'unfrocked' Brahmin, that is a man of the Brahmin caste who confessed that during his studies abroad he had eaten non-vegetarian food. But

against my expectations - I had expected him to turn out a cynic or an agnostic - I found him of a no less conservative mind than others I had met. It interested me to hear him give a different interpretation to the questions I had already addressed to so many others. In his case I had the advantage that I knew how to formulate my questions.

"This idea, this concept of karman as we know it today originated at the end of the Veda period, mainly in the Upanishads", he told me. "It started with the image of the soul which escapes after death, loaded with all the deeds its bearer had performed in life. As were these deeds so was the reborn soul to become - good, bad or holy. This concept of karman invites man to live on a higher ethical level, and it will induce man to use every opportunity to improve the quality of his life from existence to existence. Karman is based on the axiom: as one acts so will one be reborn".

"In other words: karman means that a man's activities in the actual life will determine the conditions under which one has to live on one's next return. Does this not mean that life of man is predetermined ?"

"You must not see in karman a form of predestination. Nor is any shape of fate imposed on man by outside factors and circumstances. Man carries his past with him. This, in my view, represents a profound justice far beyond the justice meted out by the legal systems in existence here or anywhere else. Man's sins and crimes cannot be glossed over, cannot be disregarded. We cannot, even with all possible precaution and care, hope in our actual lifespan to erase the guilt of all our past existences, as well as what our karman is taking on in addition here and now in this life. We are going to pay for all this accumulated guilt in our coming existence. To a sensible and moral man this is a warning, a guideline which will prevent him from straying into anything for which he will have to render account. This is also the basic significance of the moral teachings of every other religion - but nowhere is it as drastically modelled as in Hinduism and Buddhism".

"That means, that unless one leads the life of a hermit or a saint one cannot avoid the relentless accumulation of more and more guilt !"

"It depends. It is true, man holds his future in his own hands. He has the opportunity not to continue with the further accumulation of guilt. It depends on what he is doing in his actual life. It depends on this how his status will be when he returns to life in his next incarnation. In short: it depends on his actions in this life whether his status rises or whether it is lowered in the next".

"What you tell me makes me see karman as a kind of cosmic, or even as a kind of retributory justice".

"The karman process is based on justice - but not in the sense you imply. For instance, if a person is born deformed or incapacitated,

it must be so because of the sins he committed in a former life".

"It seems to me that by believing in karman you are provided with an easy explanation for, and an escape from all the problems you have to face in life".

"How else would you explain the fact that physically and materially all people are not equally provided and equiped, that individuals are born into diverse and adverse situations and conditions ? Karman explains better than anything else the inequality among men with regard to their position, possession and disposition. Through karman the instincts, passions, personality, character which we have brought with us or have acquired in life, are carried over into the next life. Only this can explain the sudden appearance of a guru or of an unsocial character in an otherwise average family. You have no doubt genetic or other scientific explanations for such phenomena; but you cannot point to any other religion which provides such a clear-cut answer to any of these eternal questions".

"You mentioned earlier, that more or less even the most modern-minded and assimilated Hindu continues to believe in karman and transmigration. I am surprised to hear you say this".

"It is so, because this doctrine, this faith-system, provides an easily understood, a clearly outlined program and an accepted aim in life, as well as a logical explanation for man's existence. There is also another reason: karman persuades man that there is an absolute justice. It makes him accept his fate, prevents him from feeling guilty when he sees others less advantaged than he himself. It makes him accept and submit that there have to be social inequalities. The endline is that it assures social peace. Karman makes those who live a deprived and unfortunate life, or those who are affected by misfortunes, accept their fate as something which is due to them and against which they cannot object. They know, that they have to accept the circumstances and conditions under which they live; that they can impossibly change them or blame others for them, because they are paying for the sins they have committed in a former incarnation".

"Does such an attitude, such an outlook on life, not bring about also a lack of initiative ? "

"Not at all ! Karman makes people believe - and accept - that their life is not ruled by a sinister fate. It is true that our philosophy explains misery as well as happiness as the effect of an accumulated karman; but this knowledge makes life tolerable even in the knowledge that the effect may come to fruition only after a long interval. Man

is given the opportunity to work an improvement of his karman. But he knows that even if this were to depend on, could be managed with, his own free will, any such attempt would in no way interfere in the inexorable decourse of his karman; only the good deeds he will have an opportunity to perform in his following existences can offer him a chance to counter-act his evil past. This is the plain fact and truth. We are not even offered the consolation to attribute the sorrows and vissitudes we encounter in our actual life to the whims of a god or to the hostility of the society in which we live.

But lookat all this also from another angle: the knowledge that the effects of our karman are inevitable, gives us the assurance that the Universe is a moral institution, that a just system regulates our existence. However, all the knowledge of the inevitability of the fate we face should not make us forgo an active life, should not deprive us of our self-control, should not make us avoid dedicating us to good deeds, should not make us think that we are deprived of the right to make our own independent decision; we should be gided by the assurance that in due course we shall be compensated; that we shall receive a suitable reward for our good deeds; that we shall benefit from our self-control and so on even if this will accrue to us only in the coming incarnation. And after all this said and done we have to remind ourselves again and again, that even the karman is not the final end of the road; that also to the problem of karman there is an ultimately favourable solution; that 'beyond karman there must of necessity be a world of freedom, a nirvana', as the Buddha said".

Once, when we spent a few days in Jaipur, I had an interesting, many hours lasting conversation with the venerable Abbot of an ashram under the continued protection of the former Maharaja of the State.
"How would you define the religious orientation of a Hindu ? ",
I asked him in the course of our talk.

"It depends on which of the two forms of Hinduism you have in mind", he replied. "The one is mainly spiritually oriented, while the other is more primitive and superstition-loaded. As you can image, the latter form is especially tailored to the needs and for the comprehension of the uneducated masses. It is important, that you keep this distinction in mind whenever you observe or study the Hindu religion, because there is a considerable difference between these two forms".

"Into which of these categories would you fit the sacrifices which were regularly performed in the past and in some form and in certain places are continued to this day ? "

"Sacrifices are performed in honour, if not for the benefit, of

the many gods who inhabit the heavens, the earth, the atmosphere, as well as for the benefit of the priests and the rulers. Sacrifices are an absolutely necessary institution. They have to be regularly and constantly performed so that the Universe will be preserved and society kept functioning harmoniously. The performance of these sacrifices required not only an exact knowledge but also great wisdom. The Brahmins, the priestly class, has from the beginning of our history been appointed to this task and is to this day specially trained to perform these sacrifices in accordance with the prescriptions outlined in greatest detail in the Brahamana texts".

"Your words confirm that the sacrifices are still performed ?"

"In some form or other they still continue - and will for ever continue, though not necessarily in the form of slaughtering an animal. There are many reasons and causes when a Brahmin priest is called to perform a sacrifice; but the devotional service which the head of the household performs daily in his home is nothing but a sacrifice too".

"Are these animal sacrifices ?"

"Not at all ! In the course of his prayer the devoted father of the family may offer flowers or ghee - that is clarified butter - to Vishnu or the godhead of his choice. In this context you must also consider another distinction: you can discover many forms of religious expression among the Hindus. They range freom monotheism to polytheism. This is in particular the case in the villages; most of them have selected from the general polytheistic gallery - call it from the pantheistic supply - their own specific god of whom they expect that he protect the village. In addition you may find in many a village also some form of animism; that is to say you will encounter instances where gods are associated with trees, rivers, stones and so on. Also snake-worship is frequently met with. However, you must never overlook that basically all this is only an expression of a particular form of monotheism; that the entire pantheon of deities is only meant to represent the various aspects of the One God, of the One and Absolute Reality. Never forget that although the number of gods may be enormous, they are perceived as nothing but the innumerable forms of incarnations, as the many manifestations, of the true Godhead, that is of Vishnu who mostly manifests himself as Siva and Krishna".

"What you say is that all these manifold gods are the manifestation of Brahman, the Supreme Reality ? And that Brahman is also Atman, the Self - a pantheistic representation of Hinduism as a fundamentally monotheistic religion ?"

"Brahman is not to be confused with the gods; these latter possess power and have a place in the structure of things thanks to and as the result of the original power of Brahman. Brahman is unique and all-

embracing. He is the permanent factor of consciousness in the ongoing process of creating and maintaining the world of being. He is the continuing power that pervades and upholds the total structure of the Universe".

"And where does the Atman fit in ?"

"Atman, the Self, is Brahman too. While Atman came to mean the innermost essence within a person, Brahman is meant to represent the ultimate essence of the Universe".

"And over everything Brahman reigns supreme".

"Brahman is the source of all existing things, of all vital energies, of the worlds, of the deities - in short of all being. Brahman is the Self is the Atman is the expression of the 'Real of the real' as our texts say".

"How is this to be understood ?"

"Atman-Self-Brahman is the ultimate essence that constitutes the formulation, the core, of which that which is apparent is made up. For that which appears to us real is real only in a secondary, in an apparent sense - while Brahman is reality itself and not an empirical object which we perceive as real but which is not real".

"How, in what form, does Hinduism perceive the Godhead ? ", I asked the Abbot after some reflection on what he had just now explained.

"Foremost we perceive God as the Ultimate Reality which in his omnipotence has created the Universe. Basically this concepts has its roots in the doctrine that the Universe is dominated by a 'Reality', an all-pervading spirit. In other words: by a Divine Entity whom you call God. He is to us **Ishvara,** the **Absolute.** He is **Brahman.** Ishvara is God is Brahman is the Universe. This makes it understandable that there may be many manifestations of God - but whatever their form they stand in for One God only. They are always nothing but the various forms and manifestations of the One and Only God. As it is clearly written in the Rig Veda: '...though man may call it by many names it is really only One. Brahman is Saguna; as such he can be known. He is the Universal Reality. He is wisdom and love. We are his children irrespective of race and creed...' And here is furthermore to be added what our respected philosopher Radakrishnan has said: 'Within each incarnate dwells the God-consciousness which all must seek to awaken'".

"Yes, I remember having read this beautiful statement", I said, and I remembered also how greatly I had been impressed by all else which Radhakrishnan had written.

"Brahman is unchangeable", the professor continued. "He created the world of space, time and action. He created all things, irrespective of their being good and evil. The Eternal Reality always was; it is

the uncreated eternal Spirit. It is identical with an existence of virtue and righteousness. Brahman becomes incarnate in order to create dharma, to become dharma. However, the rules of righteousness outlined and prescribed by dharma are made for man and not for God. God himself is not bound by the rules of dharma. God is beyond good and evil. We believe that we harbour a soul. In and by our soul we perceive God as the consciousness which animates all beings. The soul we carry within us is that consciousness. We differ from the animal by our being conscious of our soul. The human soul is divine. It is part of the Supreme Spirit. The Universe in its entirety is a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit. Brahma, the Impersonal Power, is also the All-Soul. We become aware of him as associated with Atman, the Self which aspires at dissolution into the Universe. But in the utmost finality Brahman and Atman become identified as the One. This explains the Oneness of God, of the Universe and of the soul. Man who knows God becomes God-like - but this does not yet mean man's total absorption into God, into the Ultimate Reality. Man is part of God. God is everywhere. Man can achieve union with God".

"How do you, Venerable Abbott, personally see, feel and know your God ? "

"God is my Self. He is the Supreme Self which is in my very own Self. I know also that the same Self is in all human beings. This realization points out to me what my responsibilities are. They tell me that I have to identify will all my fellowmen; that I have to dedicate myself to charity. I know furthermore, that this Self resides in every living thing whatsoever - and that I have, therefore, to make Ahimsa my main program in life".

"Could you be more specific, Your Holiness ? How do you personally perceive your God, the Absolute ?"

"Let me point to the Veda where the conception of God evolved from polytheism to monotheism. The Upanishads view the Supreme Reality as impersonal as well as personal, as transcendent as well as imminent. God is the Creator of the Universe. He is omniscent and omnipotent. I see the Absolute as it is presented in the Veda: as the One, as the Supreme Being, as the Existence, as the Consciousness - as the Ultimate Bliss. Out of all these potentialities of the Absolute the Universe has been formed. This is how I see not only the Absolute but also the Universe. It is a monistic universe which has been divinely created and is divinely governed. And when the time comes, the Supreme Being who created the Universe will also dissolve the Universe".

"And how do you see your personal God ? ".

"I was coming to your question, Prince. Brahman is my Supreme God. Brahman is the only Ultimate Reality. He is the Ultimate Principle of the Universe, but he cannot be defined. He can only be defined in

negative language, as what and as who he is not. In the course of the theistic development Brahman becomes Ishvara, the Supreme Lord. Now Brahman becomes identical with Nirvana. However, the quintessence of this theology is that man cannot worship Brahman because he cannot visualize Brahman. He can only realize Brahman when he feels Brahman within him, when he is himself Brahman. He can only approach the Absolute in the forms in which it manifests itself, in the conceptions, in the knowledge, in the ways which are perceivable to human beings. Whatever the shape and form may be in which Brahman manifests itself, they will always lead to Brahman. This concept is suitably expressed in the metaphor of the many rivers which originate in various parts of the continent but will all finally flow into the same sea".

"Do you want to say that man finds himself on the right path and in the right direction if he faithfully and conscienciously follows what he perceives is right and what he thinks is divinely inspired ? "

"God declares in the Bhagavad Gita that whatever the form in which man seeks and sees him, in that very same form God will reach out to him; and that whatever the form or formula in which the devotee expresses his faith in God, in that very way will God conform to the individual's faith".

"This is a beautiful concept of man's relationship to man. The same is, by the way, also known in Judaism".

"There is also another approach to this question. Upanishad Kena asks: 'wherefrom comes Brahma ?' and it gives the answer: 'It is conceived by whom it is not conceived of. He, by whom it is conceived, knows it not".

"This sounds rather complicated".

"You may find this concept easier comprehensible if you listen to how Upanishad Chanvogya formulates it: it tells us that the Universe is the Divine Substance and Essence which in truth are nothing but the Highest Self. All around us is Brahman. All we do and think is Brahman. There is only one Ultimate Reality - and he is Brahman".

"There is a question which has bothered me since some time, Holiness. In which specific or general way can theism ever agree with karman ? "

"Why not ? Theism is an ancient concept of Hinduism. In essence Hinduism is theistic, though it may be hidden away behind many non-theististic appearing presentations of the divinity".

"I cannot perceive the function of the karman principle without a soul independent of the perishing body being seen as the carrier of the samsara principle - and though from what you said a short while ago you accept the exustence of a soul within man, it seems to me that in general, if not in principle, the main stream of Hinduism more or less denies the existence or at least the function of a soul".

"You must not overlook that in India a priori every form of theism is associated with the concept of incarnation. For transmigration and incarnation a soul is essential as the vehicle of karman. This will very well become evident to you if you study Vishnuism. Study our two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and you will find confirmed what I said just now".

"Allow me, Your Holiness, that within the frame of what you have so far explained to me with such wisdom and patience, I take up a subject on which I have not found sufficient material in the literature I have so far perused: what are the meaning of evil and of sin in the context of the karman principle ?"

"Let us be clear that evil is an existing element brought in from outside, while sin is created every time anew by the individual. We find that evil existed since ever in our world. No one of us initiates evil, though it affects us all even if only by creating a sense of guilt in us".

"How can we avoid doing evil things ?"

"To do evil things in one form or the other always means making the next man suffer in some direct or indirect way. Once this principle is understood it becomes also the direct answer to your question".

"How does man's doing evil or being sinful affect his karman ?"

"Karman indicates - as you well know - that our present experiences are the outcome of the evil we did in previous existences. Our desires and our sins are the links in the endless chains of evil".

"In Judaeo-Christian mythology the 'Fall' indicates that fate is to be blamed", I told the Abbott, although I should have known that he knew already what I was about to say.

"In the Bible evil is created by the snake", he pointed out. "It represents temptation - and ultimately temptation means that man is offered the choice between good and evil, that he has the possibility to be good. From this fact it has been concluded that God created evil as a positive elements in the Universe".

"The interpretation I heard once of this myth is that man is being tested by the offer to chose between the Good and the Evil - and the Bible tells us that man failed the test".

"...and that by failing the tests man was expelled from Nirvana - and he is given the opportunity to regain nirvana-paradise by his own efforts", the Old Man smiled.

"How does Hinduism view man's doing evil, sinning, committing a crime etc".

"Sin is to a Hindu a social or ritual offence, not a defilement of the human soul. In the Hindu's view morals depend not on religion

but on his relations to family, caste or clan. In the absence of well-defined sanctions for moral deficiencies, the ordinary Hindu feels only responsible to the Caste Council for breaches of moral or social laws as interpreted by the elders of his caste. In practice a Hindu believes that he will be able to work off his sins by performing a penance, by an appropriate gift to the Brahmins. And ultimately he believes that an individual who acts in accordance with the cosmic laws - that is in accordance with his dharma as determined by his karman - becomes good by his good deeds, or evil by evil deeds".

"The Jews and Christians are better off, it appears. In their eskatological perception - that is what they believe their final and ultimate fate is going to be - the solution to man's sinning is provided by the doctrine that human life transcends personal death and the righteous will essentially receive their full reward; and that a blissful life in the Hereafter will more than compensate for the suffering the individual experienced in life".

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6.

An Excursus into Hindu Philosophy.

Permit me to insert at this stage a few general words about Hindu Philosophy. I think this will help you to a better understanding of the manifold aspects of this religion complex. We have already indulged to such degree in an exploration of the theology and psychology of Hinduism, that for you to grasp its fundamentals an additional exposé about its philosophy has become a sine qua non.

Indian philosophy is a very complicated and often enigmatic system. Even experts who have dedicated many years to the study of this matter, have at times had to discover new approaches and new threads. I myself had at first been only moderately attracted; but soon I felt challenged to search for a wider, more complete understanding of the trends, the roots and the ramifications of Hinduism's various philosophical system - and to explore whether I can organize them into a general, primordial, original religious system sharing common roots with other world religions; whether I can possibly discover in Hinduism if not evidence at least an indication pointing to the derivation from a kind of universal 'Mother Religion'; whether there are indications that those reputed to have founded the various religions had scooped their material from a well commonly used with other religions. I had no illusions, however. I knew I have not the educational background for such a study in depth; I realized also, that even if this were the case, a lifetime lasting study is required to learn all there is to learn. But this did not detain me and I set out to acquire, as far time and circumstances permitted, a deeper insight into the main trends, and to gain a comprehension of the basic differences which exist

between the various derivatives of Hinduism. I think I have to some degree been fortunate in this my endeavour; that I have been able to successfully round up my program.

To a great extent my successful penetration into the ideology and philosophy of which Hinduism is made up is due to my having had the fortune to encounter a great number of gifted and learned men who willingly and diligently explained to me the complex concepts and perplexing precepts of Indian philosophy in general and that of Hinduism in particular.

However, I have to warn you. Do not expect that you will find in what I am going to tell you in the next hour or so more than a rapid overview. And accept that you may at best benefit from what I am telling you by acquiring an urge to set out on your own on a more concrete study of the subject.

For a great enrichment of my knowledge of Hinduism, and for having learned to discern its finer points, I am very much indebted to Professor Ram Das Chopra, whom I was fortunate to know in Madras. As had become our preference, Gobinder and I entered the University Campus of Madras, engaged in conversation the students we saw wandering around or sitting about in the courtyards. Whenever an occasion offered itself, we sat among the students in the class-rooms; and although we never interfered by remarks or questions with the lecturer or the lecture, nor ever partecipated in an ensuing discusssion, we inevitably did attract the attention of the lecturers and the curiosity of the students.

At the end of one such lecture we approached Professor Chopra to express our admiration for the clarity with which he had exposed his conception of man's imaging his place in nature. The ensuing animated but friendly discussion culminated in an association - I venture even to say a friendship - with the grey-haired professor, and was responsible for us to decide on a prolonged stay in Madras. I shall give you a short survey of what I consider a very profitable private course of instruction we received from the professor.

"What would you in principle describe as the fundamentals, as the basics of Indian philosophy, Professor ?" was one of the first questions I put to Professor Chopra.

"The original Indian philosophy is based on the Vedas and the

Upanishads; it is quite explicitedly reflected in the orthodox system of the Brahmanas and in the independently developed systems of the Jains and Buddhists".

"I am familiar with its outlines, for this is the kind of philosophy which is known in the West today. Is this type and style of philosophy still taught as actually significant ? Has since its outset no approach to modern concepts been added ?"

"The original basics are still valid within newly framed interpretations. You will become aware of this if you go back to the original fount and view its outflow without preconceptions and bias. If you want to get truly acquainted with our philosophy you must first of all get rid of the ideas which your writers in the West have formed and spread about Indian philosophy. And having succeeded in this, you must discard whatever you have heard about the place and the importance gurus are said to have in our system, and swamis in our culture", was the rather heated reply of the professor. "Do not misunderstand me ! I have great respect for the wisdom many of them possess; and I do not deny that such men do occupy an important place in the world of Indian philosophy and of Hinduism's theology; but this in no way applies to the individuals who have settled in Europe and the United States and who pass themselves off as gurus and swamis. These men are hardly the types from whom you can learn the specific and proper ways which Hinduism teaches. Many of them are outspoken swindlers. Others may be learned men in their own rights, but they can impossibly have completed their studies, and they certainly have not advanced far in their progress to that knowledge which a guru and a swami are supposed to have acquired. Were they in possession of such knowledge - which leads ultimately to wisdom in its truest sense - they would never have gone abroad. These men, who dare to call themselves swamis and gurus, have gone abroad to make money, to earn fortunes, and to enjoy the life of luxury which the West can offer to them. I am greatly repulsed to learn to what degree these men have confused the minds of european and american men and women. They have defaced the true meaning of Hinduism and distorted its philosophy".

"Considering the enormous following of which these men can boast abroad", I encouraged him, "I am interested to hear you judge them thus, Professor. In the States I have heard and read about these gurus and their ashrams; but personally I never had contact with any of them".

"I hear the american public is slowly waking up to the true value of these men".

The Professor sounded genuinely upset. It took some time before

he had quietened down. I was surprised about the depth of his anger - and resentment.

I realized that there were many lacunae in my knowledge and I was determined to receive from Professor Chopra a good grounding in the specifics of Indian philosophy.

"What do you view as the main difference between Indian and western philosophers; that is to say, in which way does Indian philosophy differ from that of the West ?", I asked Professor Chopra on our first encounter, on the morning we had for the first time spoken to him after one of his lectures.

"In their own researches Indian philosophers take a different approach than their western counterparts. Indian philosophy does not primarily aim at exploring and understanding the universe, its purpose, its origin and its eventual endstage. We here in India concentrate mainly on acquiring an insight into the laws of cause and effect by which mankind might be liberated from its earthly suffering. In addition, the Indian philosopher concentrates on circumscribing the guidelines of man's moral conduct in his actual existence so that it will bring about a beneficial effect in a future existence. I personally endeavour in my writings and lectures to make my disciples and students realize that one important lesson is to be learned from this philosophy, viz:- that ultimately and in principle all living beings are essentially equal - at least in philosophical theory".

It proved that with this question I had started him on what turned into an introductory course on Indian Philosophy.

"Firstly, Indian philosophy is more intimately associated with theology than is the case with western philosophy; and next, our philosophy differs from the western one insofar as it is much less to be measured in terms of any possible practical applicability".

"I dare to say, that is not a unique approach, as both these distinguishing characteristics do certainly also apply to much of western philosophy".

"I have to agree to much of what you say, Prince. But there is certainly a difference: Hinduism's philosophy <u>is always</u> associated with religious perceptions - while western philosophy <u>can also</u> centre on religious and metaphysical issues. In other words: our philosophy always and exclusively occupies itself with questions pertaining to religion - karman and dharma take up a

pivotal place therein - but western philosophy does not always do so. Let me also point out that - with the exception of the Schools of Charvaka and Mimamsatta - all Indian schools of philosophy occupy themselves with, and firmly believe in, extra-sensory perceptions. And I have further to point out, that Hindu religion and philosophy incline greatly to monism and not to dualism. With us the Absolute, the Absolute of the Universe, alone is real. All else, including all which appears to us humans as being of concrete existence, is only an illusion. It is nothing more than a dream. And another specific of Hindu philosophy still is its disinterest in delving into an analysis of nature, in probing nature's secrets, in persuing research or speculation in the origin and creation of mankind. Our philosophy's endeavours centre on the efforts to make man understand, to make man realize, the true spiritual side of his, of man's nature. Man has to learn to realize and to know that there is in his soul a constant, an eternal, an unalterable spiritual essence which is in danger of being suffocated by an excessive egotism which threatens the spiritual part of man by its blindness and ignorance. These defects - that is man's egotism and blindness - are the reason why the individual is prevented from becoming aware of his true spiritual nature. It is, therefore, necessary - and this is the task of the philosopher - that man receives a thorough education in ethics. But we have no illusion about the difficulties this task implies. To gain such an education one has to get the help of a guru, of a personal guide. The people in the West, you will agree, are not confronted with such problems. And there is also another great difference between our conceptions and those one encounters in western philosophy, namely, that you in the West see in man a microcosm in whom the macrocosm, the Universe, is repeated and reflected - while in Indian philosophy this concept is simplified by our view that man himself is the macrocosm".

"What importance, what practical applicability, has your kind, or for that matter any kind of philosophy for the average learned Indian ?", was my next question.

"Philosophy is highly respected, because it is synonymous with the acquisition of wisdom - and wisdom is more than anything else respected here. For we know that the person who has acquired wisdom is on his way to his liberation, to his moksa. The faith we have in this effect of knowledge - and viceversa the effect which this knowledge has on this faith - deeply affect the Indians' culture. This is the reason why philosophy occupies such a honoured place with us - and why so many of us concentrate on and dedicate ourselves

to the study of philosophy".

"....and why philosophy and religion go hand in hand", I said.

"You are right", he confirmed.

"I have had conversations with other learned men, but I find that your view of, and also your attitude to, the philosophy of Hinduism is not the general one, is not shared by many others".

"You may be right - but mostly so because many different schools of thought exist here in India".

"I hope I shall have occasion to meet Indian philosophers who are adherents of some of these various philosophical schools, and shall learn of their different viewpoints".

"I am certain you will have many opportunities to hear others air their ideas - and for yourself to satisfy your curiosity about other philosophers' views. You will discover - if you have not done so already - that the Indian intellectual, to whatever faith he may belong, loves to talk about philosophical, theological - and even political subjects. I may even simplify my statement and say that he loves to talk - fullstop".

"You have on a former occasion confirmed what I had known already - though not in any detail - that there are many schools of philosophy in India", I returned to the subject on an another occasion. "You mentioned already two of them".

"Our Indian philosophy is very complex", the professor seemed amused about the insistence with which I pursued the subject. "You would need a lifetime of study to get to know all the the systems they represent. But if you are satisfied with a less extensive range of knowledge, it should suffice for you to study no more than six of the basic systems in Hinduism. But beware ! These six too have quite a number of their own sub-systems. Add to this the four main systems of Buddhism, the two schools of Jainism - and if you can still find the energy - add also the materialistic philosophy of Charvaka".

"This sounds overwhelming ! I learned that basically Hindu philosophy is divided into two groups only: **Astika**, the theist one which believes in a godhead; and **Nastika**, which is the atheist direction taken on the authority of the Veda".

"The situation is much more complex. Indian philosophy is basically the **Atmanvidya**, which means the knowledge of the Self, of the soul. You can start your searching for the Truth with the study of the external, of the visible world; or with the exploration of your inner nature. But Truth is best found, if man concerns himself exclusively with what goes on in his inner life. I can

assure you that you will best - if not exclusively - find the kind of Truth you are looking for, within yourself. This is the reason why we in India give more importance to the study of psychology and of ethics than to that of the sciences. Do not take this to mean that we neglect or even detest the sciences. You may know that we have, and have had, many outstanding men in the field of mathematics, astronomy, physics and so on; but the true searchers know that the inner spirit of man tells more about our reality and that of the Universe than any of the exact sciences".

"If this is so, Professor, and if you do not mind my repeated insistence on the same issue, let me ask you again what you would call the main characteristic of Indian philosophy ?"

"I can best answer you in the context of what I have said just now that the way it concentrates on spiritual values is the main characteristic of Indian philosophy. The philosophy of Charvaka is an exception, as I mentioned already. To us neither man nor the universe are physical, that is material, in essence. We do in any case not think that material welfare is the goal of our life. But I have to warn you not to be surprised if you discover that with respect to philosophy and religion the mind of the Indian does not proceed along fixed and rigid lines. You can discover this fact, this characteristic, in many ways and forms. It becomes evident in the acceptance and the presentation of apparently conflicting doctrines. But if you have patience and look deeper, you will find that in reality they are conflicting perceptions; that they will turn out to be nothing but different forms of expression of, or approaches to the same definite complex of thoughts or even of convictions".

"We have started to talk about the different philosophical schools in India, Professor", I reminded him. "When was the first of these various schools founded ? That is to say, when did the first need to a diversification of ideas became noticeable ?"

"We know that philosophical discussions had taken place already in the earliest years of Hinduism. In the ancient orthodox schools, which were based on the Vedas and Upanishads, the Sutras had been responsible for organized and systematic thinking along philosophical lines and in philosophical terms".

"In which way did the Sutras represent the material for such forms of thinking and for such kind of discussions ?"

"The Sutras are aphorisms, short mnemotic statements which served as starting points, if not as framework in general, for meditation. Like all ancient scriptures they were originally passed

on orally from one generation to the next. Only much later were they written down".

" You once said that Indian philosophy has no practical use, no practical applicability. Could you explain to me, please, what you meant with this statement ?"

"I wanted to state, that the philosophical discussions were and are conducted mainly and mostly for discussion's sake only. It has never been a consideration whether - and if at all - they might be of any practical use. The only exception I am willing to make, is what the 'Gardua Column' hints at. You say, you have never heard of this column ? It is a column which has been excavated somewhere in the Punjab. On it was found an inscription which is attributed to some Greek king who had turned to Hinduism. The inscription says: 'Three immortal principles when practiced, will lead to heaven: self-restraint, self-conscientiousnes and self-sacrifice".

"Could you, please, clear up another point ? You mentioned once that here in India philosophy is intimately associated with religion. I never did realize this before".

"It is indeed so. Religion and philosophy are for us intimately associated because philosophy is after all, to a great part at least, a spiritual activity; and because religion as well as philosophy are concerned with the spiritual life here on earth and in the beyond. I want categrically to state that in principle all the religions in India and all the philosophies of India aspire to the promotion of spiritual life. This is the primary reason why religious as well as philosophical authority enjoy such great respect among us Hindus. This is so, because those who really know what is the Reality are identical with those who have realized the Truth; and we know that only these men of knowledge can and should guide us to our destiny. We know, that we have to follow them blindly without allowing reason to interfere, so that we too might acquire the comprehension of the Truth which these individuals have seen and realized".

"Am I right to say", I made use of this opportunity to probe deeper, "that what you call the 'Reality' is that which we know as 'God' ? How do you and the Hindus perceive the God-Reality ?"

"Among the intellectual elite the philosophical idea of God is perceived either as a monistic or as an atheistic concept, while

it is polytheistic among the masses who think of God or the gods in rather personal, clearly anthropomorphic terms. The sophisticated Hindu's religion is either monotheistic or henotheistic. Under the latter term I want you to understand the belief in a single god who, however, is not the only god in existence. In both the monotheistic as well as in the henotheistic faith system the God these Hindus visualize and accept for themselves is conceived as manifesting himself in a variety of forms. The Godheads who appear or otherwise manifest themselves in various forms or appearances are called **'Avatars'**. Avatars are thought of as mythological 'descents' on earth among mankind of the Godheads in the guise of human beings or of animals or even in form of natural phenomena. You may call it a form of 'theophany', i.e. the appearance of God to man".

"What favours do these believers expect from these gods ? What extraordinary power do they - and you yourself - attribute to them ?"

"Along with me the orthodox Hindu believes in Brahman, the one God. Brahman is one omnipotent God. He has created everything, including whatever is good and what is evil. Everything is in his hand; not only the good things but also the evil ones, originate from the one and only God. He has even the power to cancel the karman which is attached to your soul. Should this be your fortune, you would yourself at once be turned into a Brahman".

"But those among the religious-minded Hindus who have an atheistic view - and they represent possibly the majority - can hardly agree with your statement !"

"You are right. They cannot. I specifically spoke of those who see Brahman - whatever form he takes on as an Avatar - as the one and only God. On the other hand there are others who are good and religious Hindus but have a different view of the Divine. There is, for instance, the dualistic **Samakhya** philosophy which in a specific sense is fundamental to every form of Hindu faith. It is independent of a belief in God, and is instead based on the belief in the eternity of the soul".

"But still, I am given to think that whereas in some form or other every Hindu accepts that he harbours something eternal, something undestructible, something like a soul - and that the soul will ultimate reunite with the Ultimate, with a Godhead whatever one's personal conceptual perception of the soul and the Godhead may be ? "

"This applies in full to the theists who believe that God is not only the soul of all beings, but the primal creator; that the

original souls originally existed but somehow were unborn; that they will proceed from one embodiment to the other. All souls pass into God after the dissolution of the body, and from there they will emerge again into the next cycle. Finally they will reach the stage when they enter Brahman, will cease to exist and will become one with Brahman. This union with Brahman is Nirvana".

"Is this also accepted by the followers of Samkhyana ?"

"No. In their philosophy the soul migrates straight from one body to the other; it is only dispensed from further attachments to a material body in the unending cycle of rebirths, when it has acquired that which is pure and complete wisdom - that which is a true comprehension and realization of the knowledge that 'I am not', that 'nothing is mine' - which knowldge will finally lead to that of 'nothing is'".

"The Samkhyana system sounds to me not much different from that of the Yogha".

"True ! It has great affinity to the Yoga system. It goes even further; it rejects the essential unity of the individual Self with any universal, any all-pervading Self or with a world-soul in the sense of an absolute and unconditioned static element which knows nothing of time and space, and on which death has no hold. It is pure Being, pure Consciousness, pure Bliss. It is life.

"This does sound to me like life - perhaps lif-in-death may sound more appropriate".

"You may be right. The life this philosophy envisages has the immobility of death but not the consciousness of life. It does, however, not mean an indefinite prolongation of human life in Time. Neither is it Samsara, a living death. It is, let me clearly point this out, not death-in-life but life-in-death".

"Would what you have just now described not confirm the judgement of the many western writers that Hinduism is a religion of negation and abstraction ?"

"Such a sweeping judgemen is unjustified. At the most it may be true with regard to the pure monism of **Advaita-Wedanta** as it has been expanded by **Sankara.** The Sankara teaches that the so-called future is already present in the past as latent potent objects. The Advaita, a non-dualistic principle of philosophy, denies that Creator and Creation are two units; it views the Ultimate Reality in a purely monistic form, at times possibly also in a pantheistic one. In this non-dualism one form or appearance is essentially identical with the other, i.e. the distinction of one person from another is merely a matter of phenomenal form".

"How does this form of Advaita view Moksa, the liberation ?"

"There is no difference from the generally accepted view. Also in the Advaita's view is Moksa a monistic phenomen. That is to say that this school is in agreement with the usual view that moksa is the deliverance from karman and any further reincarnation; that moksa is the liberation of the soul from the world of senses. However, contrary to the generally accepted doctrine this school it insists that moksa is not a newly acquired status which the soul - the Atman - has to reach, but an original status, a status once owned by the soul, which has long ago been lost by an accumulation of ignorance and which the soul can regain through the re-acquisition of true knowledge".

"And what is Moksa to the Hinduistic atheist ?"

"While in the general theistic view the individual Self is not an illusion and Moksa represents the fulfillment of the special relationship between God and the soul, in Hinduistic atheism Moksa means the isolation of the Self from all worldly things and from the Self of other people. This means, in other words, the isolation of the soul, the continued existence of the soul. The soul is eternal and continues to exist after its liberation from samsara. The soul does not in the end disappear into Brahman".

"Whatever the philosophical orientation and whatever the theological diversification, the interpretation and the effect of Moksa are pivotal to all philosophy, I see".

"You may go even further and say that Moksa is the central philosophical idea of India. It is a state of existence. It is an ideal state of existence wherein there is perfect bliss without sorrow and without imperfections. Having achieved Moksa by whatever means, the individual's soul does not anymore have to return to samsara, to the world of deaths and rebirths. All systems - with the exception of those inclined to be dominated by atheism - see in Moksa the ideal of a supreme spirituality. It is the destiny of man. It is the goal of life. In addition to all this it is also a religious ideal".

"I have often heard it said, that a Hindu is very much engrossed in his own salvation and cares very little for the salvation of others. Is this true ?", I asked the Professor one evening when I had been telling him about some social inequity I had observed.

"This is not correct. Look at our saints, our mystics, our gurus, our priests ! All these men work and pray for the wellbeing of the society as a whole. Even more than that: they pray of the happiness, the order and the salvation of the entire world".

"This may be so", I insisted. "but I cannot free myself of

the impression that the various forms and aspects of Indian philosophy you have expounded are mainly tailored to the needs of the individual".

"I agree. This may sound thus. It may even be so. But on the other hand you must take into consideration that while moksa is something which is obtained exclusively by oneself and for oneself without any relationship to others, his dharma is others-directed, this is to say that fundamentally man can fulfill his dharma only by deeds and actions in an inter-relationship with others."

"I was thinking of moksa of the achievement of salvation, which is a totally self-directed psychological quest and diorective".

"I agree. Moksa, which is something extremely valuable, is an immediate, a true, a personal experience. Moksa is not a dream or a theory. It is neither the outcome of reasoning nor of logic thinking. It can only be gained by active personal involvement. One actually and actively seeks moksa in order to realize something of a supreme value for oneself. Moksa is a message of joy. It means freedom from any further sorrow. Man, who in his life on earth suffers from outside interferences, from supernatural forces - and from himself - will by moksa obtain the freedom from all these interferences and will gain the termination of all his sufferings. In moksa all strife and tension have ceased once for ever. All possible doubts and all kinds of disbeliefs have totally vanished. How ?, you will ask. It is through the acquisition of the knowledge what is Truth; that one is handed the guidelines on the way to moksa, to salvation".

"May I ask you a personal question, Professor ? How far has your own life benefited from what you have learned from your study, from your knowledge of philosophy ?"

Only after I could be sure that our friendship had sufficiently advanced, did I take the liberty to address him with this question.

"For us here in India see philosophy and life are one. Truth is found in both and Truth binds both. This means that in this context theory and practice are inseparable. Whoever, therefore, wants to dedicate himself to the study of our philosophy, and who like you yourself, has set out on the search for the Truth, should first of all study his own actions and reactions; should study his reactions to what is essentially an ongoing test of his mind; should control his weaknesses; should meditate on the divine in himself; should endeavour to know the difference between the eternal and the non-eternal within himself. He should above all be a persistent

and avid questioner. He should subjugate all his desires so that he may gain advantages from his searching, be it in this life, be it in the hereafter. In general, he should renounce all petty desires, all personal motives and all worldly interests. He should first of all strive to acquire an inner tranquillity, a true peace of mind, a total degree of self-control and much, unlimited patience. He should above all have an all consuming wish for moksa, for his release from this life".

"How do you in practice apply in your life all this and other knowledge you have gained ? "

"I have already pointed out to you that in our, that is the Hindus' view, there is a definite intimate relationship between philosophy and life. It is the practical application in life of what philosophy teaches us. It is by no means only a matter of theoretical dispute, of an intellectual exercise, of a study for its own sake. For us theory and practice, doctrine and life are intimately related. We are not engaged in this studying and enquiring purely from an academic point of view; we are not looking for knowledge for knowledge's sake. In searching for knowledge we search for the means by which to set man free from the burden of his fate. Do not misunderstand me, please ! Let me make it clear to you once for all that our interest and care is not restricted to the value truth may have in practical life. We are looking for the knowledge which can lead us to that degree of truth which will finally lead us beyond this to our salvation. In other words: though our philosophy revolves around the practical problems of life, the outcome of our unrestrained immersion into what philosophy has to offer will hopefully lead us to the Truth, which in turn will solve the problems which obstruct the way leading to our salvation. With the study of philosophy, and by the application of what this study has solved, we aim to benefit not only ourselves but ultimately all mankind. In India we live our philosophy. We not only want to know the Truth - we want to live the Truth. We want to reach by our own effort the Ultimate Truth, and we want to realize it at least for ourselves. And we want to become in the end ourselves the Ultimate Truth".

"This is a very idealistic program of life, Professor. Is it practical enough to have a hope of realization ? "

"There is no denying that an introspective interest of such a nature must ultimately lead to a philosophy of idealism. This would not be far from the truth. I am ready to accept the definition of Hinduism as a monistic idealism. For basically the knowledge we want to gain and the realization we want to reach, is the truth

degradation and humiliation, is made acceptable to the various strata of people in this country ?"

"The division of the population into a four-fold caste system is accepted, or let us say made credible, because it has first been mentioned in the Rig-Veda. It has been structured into the corner-stone of the community system of Hindu society. There and thus it has remained. And it has remained unchanged since its inception".

"How do the **'Parias'**, the Untouchables who make up the lowest of the four castes, react to their humble place in society ?"

"You make a fundamental mistake ! The Pariahs do not take up the lowest rung in the caste system. They do not belong to any caste. Had they been one of the castes, even the lowest of all, - or let me say had it been possible to line them up as one of the castes - we would have been blessed with five castes. But it could not be done; it was never even thought of as a possibility. The Parias, the Untoucahbles, are counted separately, as a separate unit. They are the so-called 'casteless' group. They are without a caste and therefore without any rights whatosever. At least without any social standing. You would not go wrong if you see them as the true victims of the caste system".

"Which then are the four castes ?", I asked. Although I knew the answer, of course, it had been my policy to again and again ask for a basic definition of a subject under discussion.

"These are the four castes: the Brahmins - the priests; the Katryas - the warriors; the Vayshas - the merchants; the Shudras - the artisans".

"There is to this day still no change-over between one caste and the other ?"

"Certainly not. The orthodox Hindu values the caste system far too high to permit any lowering of the borders. He sees them as permanent and binding. However, a certain slackening has become evident nowadays. Not in the inter-caste delineations, but in the original professional directives inherent in the various castes. In this respect have since some time certain changes been allowed. In these our days not all the Brahmins are priests, and not all the Katryas soldiers. But I supppose it is not this what you asked. You most likely wanted to know whether one can, during one's life, leave one's caste and join a higher or lower one ? This is totally impossible".

"And the casteless ones cannot join even the lowest caste ?"

"It is impossible for them even to think fo this. It is sad fact that the problem of the depressed class - or 'scheduled' classes as they are also called - nor the iniquities of the caste system

as a whole have so far not been satisfactorily solved. However, if you look around you will discover a waning interest, an ever increasing lack of care with respect to the entire business of the castes. The caste is today defined more as a unit of people who follow the same profession. In short: one can say that although the caste system is still in existence, it is less important than it was in the past. Also the insistence on ritual cleanliness according to caste rules is slowly but steadily disappearing. The Hindu's main interest today is in his family unit, the Jathi, which with some justification you may call a sub-caste.".

"Do the various castes at least mix with each other ? Do they have normal social and regular commercial or professional contacts with each other ?"

"How can a constant contacting and mixing between the various castes be avoided in this our modern society ? But more intimate contacts, like intermarriage or similar family association any kind whatsoever, are totally excluded. And so are intimacies. A man belonging to a superior caste, especially a Brahmin, still cannot consume his food in the company of a man of an inferior caste. It was not rarely the case before Independence that a ruling Maharaja was of a lower caste than his court officials or even than certain of his servants; or it can happen in these our days that a Minister is of a lower caste-rank than his clerk. This dilemma is especially acute whenever a Brahmin pays a visit to the home of such a type of Maharaja or Minister where he cannot accept even a cup of tea".

I remembered - and described what I remembered to the young priest - an experience we had some time ago in one of the former princely states in North India. The old Maharaja, although he was no more the autocratic ruler of his State, had maintained his old habits and customs, his influence and his court.

When we presented ourselves to thank the Maharaja for having invited us to stay in the palace as his guests, and for the other manifestations of his hospitality we had enjoyed, we found him engaged in the business of eating his midday meal. He was seated all by himself at a small table on the terrace in front of the dininghall. His sons, his other guests, his ministers and officials - about 40 in number - stood at some distance, forming a half-circle around him. They applauded everyone of his frequent burps; they exclaimed in praise to heaven whenever the Maharaja gave physical or vocal evidence that he enjoyed the food; they frowned whenever the Maharaja frowned.

We were made to join the half-circle. After the Maharaja had

completed his meal and washed his hands - a pitcher and a basin were offered him at his table by a kneeling servant - we were permitted to approach the Old Man who turned the occasion into an audience conducted with old-time grace. After that we could join the sons and other dignitaries for our meal in the diningroom.

"Do nowadays", I took up the thread again, "members of the higher castes still exhibit signs of snobbishness and rudeness towards those of a lower caste because they consider themselves of a superior quality ? In other words: do the higher-caste Hindus still think they are entitled to exhibit a sense of superiority towards the lowewr castes ?"

"As a rule this does not happen anymore at least not to a marked or objectionable degree in our days; and in particular not in an urban environment. At least not under normal everyday circumstances, and even then not in civilized circles. Caste does not mean now what it once had meant. Today you should see in the caste organization more a kind of social system dating from times back than a religious problem - and as such its is generally accepted today as a fact of life over which one should lose much thought and hardly much more than that".

"Can I conclude from your words that the 'business of castes' has lost much of its significance if not of its meaning ? "

"Of course, matters are not as simple as as I may have made them sound just now. There are among the Hindus many different opinions, attitudes, reactions about all this. Some of them see in the caste system a divine arrangement of the professional, the social and the material life of mankind, connsidering that there is the belief that the castes system had its origin in Brahman, in God. This is expressed in the raditional folkore which says that the Brahmins originated from Brahma's mouth; the Kahatrya from his right arm; the Vashtrya from his left arm; and the Shudras from his feet".

"Do folklore tales this kind, do such pseudo-historic or religion-based explanations reduce the resentment which the lower castes must of necessity harbour ?"

"You approach the matter from a very wrong angle, my Prince. Why should there be any resentment at all ? Everybody is born into a specific caste. This is his karman. Every caste has its place in the social order. Every caste has its circumscribed duty. This, after all, is man's dharma. In every caste every man has his predetermined place and task. You will only be able to gain the right perspective if you view our society as an orchestra-like

organization in which every player has his place and where every instrument contributes to the smooth presentation of the totality of the performance. There is, therefore, no reason why a member of a lower caste should be resentful. He has his assigned place among the Hindus, and he has to function in accordance with the duties allocated to his dharma and his place".

The young priest's explanations failed to convince me, however, and I insisted:

"Does the fact that there is such a compartimentalization of the Hindu society with its social and possibly other advantages and disadvantages not create resentment and unrest, exploding at times even in a revolt against the existing order ? "

"On the contrary ! By fitting into this pre-ordained situation, and by acknowledging that the responsibility for an individual's actual status has to be attributed to his karman, society is saved from the chaos which labour unrest and shifts in the social status have produced elsewhere in the world. You must accept it as an undeniable fact that with our caste system the question of social inequality is never a matter of dispute. Everybody has his place in society. Everybody has his permanent place"

"Are there no instances where the Untouchables rebel against their miserable state within the Indian society ? "

"I might visualize such an outbreak of unrest or rebellion for political reasons or on the basis of political agitation - but not because these people object to their caste status".

"May this protest not under certain circumstances be vested in a religious rebellion ?"

"A religious rebellion ? A rebellion of one current in Hinduism against the other ? This would be unthinkable. Hindus are tolerant. They do not suffer from the religious narrow-mindedness you meet in christian and moslem countries. However, I may concede that not rarely in India anti-moslem slogans are heard - and that here and there anti-moslem riots do occur. Apart from economic reasons the cause of these conflicts has to be searched for in a reaction against the religious ostentatiousness and implied superiority of the followers of the islamic religion. Hindus of all classes and castes call Moslems arrogant and belligerant - and now and then the economically and socially deprived masses will react with rioting".

"Is the tension among Hindus and Moslems which you describe not abused by high-caste Hindus who must be alarmed at what they perceive as an increasingly improved social status of the lower

castes - and no less also of the Moslems ?"

"Your conclusions are to a certain degree justified. However, the question of castes plays a minor role. In these anti-moslem riots all kinds of Hindus have been seen to take part".

"This is to say when it comes to anti-moslem riots all caste restrictions disappear ?"

"It means that any still persisting differentiation of the castes which I have described, applies in these our days only to personal and social affairs. Otherwise men and women are not in any way limited by the caste to which they belong. They may fight together and they may riot together. And also the limitations along professional lines have been abolished. A Shudra may become a rich merchant, a Brahmin an industrialist, a Kahatrya a judge and so on - but they remain Shudras, Kahatryas and Brahmins".

"Yes, I have already noticed that you said just now applies to vast sections of the population - for example to politicians and industrialists. But there is the question which has bothered me much: what does a high-class Hindu, any caste-Hindu for that matter, feel about the Untouchables ? Does he have pity for these people ? Does he make an effort to improve their lot ?"

"A Hindu to feel compassion for the Untouchables !? Why should he ? These caste-less people occupy a pre-ordained place in society. By the evil they did in their former lives they themselves have brought on their miserable fate".

"So your words imply that today, in these times of social and spiritual progress and understanding, that in the light humanism spreads today, there is no trend among the educated people of India to change the situation, to ameliorate the fate of these pariah people ?"

"There is such a trend, of course. It is mainly expressed in the demand that the positioin and place of an individual should not be determined by one's membership in a caste, in a Varna; that a man's standing, rights and opportunities should not depend on his birth or should be formed according to an inherited occupation, but on the duties and functions one has in one's society, as well on one's capabilities and one's inclinations. However, although caste and Jati may have today lost their ancient meaning - they have fundamentally remained archetypal institutions and as such they have retained at least some of their power. Notwithstanding all progress, all the humanism and all the civilization of our days, it is still remembered and accepted by the geat majority of the Hindus that everybody has to live and act within and in accordance with the demands of his caste. It is not forgotten that this caste

system has in the past been responsible for social stability. I dare even to say that everybody knows subconsciously - and this includes no less the rebels and the agnostics - that one has to follow one's karman of living and the dharma of one's actions according to the rules of the caste. This was - and to a great extent still is - the accepted rule of life among the Hindus. This will explain also, at least to some extent, that so relatively few of the people from the lower castes - especially the casteless Parias - have become Moslems or Christians in the hope of thereby escaping the misery associated with their untouchability. But let me in conclusion and in general say, that with respect to the caste system things have greatly changed in the last decades. You can see today members of the "scheduled class" occupy the chairs of high offices, and you will find them accepted as equal and valuable members of Bhakhti congregations".

"This is interesting - but in truth it does not indicate that any fundamental change has taken place. Much of this is certainlu imposed by legislation. Has there ever been a popular movement to change, to totally abolish the entire caste system in all its manifestations and residues ? Have, for instance, the Brahmins, the best educated class, ever taken such a step ? "

"On the contrary ! As you know the Brahmins, the members of the priestly class, occupy the highest rank in the caste system. They believe themselves - today no less than they ever did in the past - of nearly divine status. As it grants them so many advantages, they were - and still are - the strongest defenders of the caste system. They insist, nay demand, that 'Varna' never be abolished, because the individual's belonging to a lower caste is entirely the effect of his karman and we have no right to interfere in a man's karman. In other words: it is God's will that things in life are arranged thus and not differently".

"Yes, I agree with what you say. I have noticed that the Brahmins still do consider themselves to be of superior human material, that they think themselves entitled to respect and deference from every other human being. I am even ready to call these people a supercilious lot. You must not think that I identify with them because I am kind of 'honorary Brahmin'", I laughed.

With these words we parted from the young priest who - I could not avoid thinking - might have been breathing freely again when he had no more to come face to face with such powerful karmans as ours.

9.

....and the Brahmins form the toplayer.

From what you have heard me describe so far you must have realized, that since the first days after my arrival in India I had been interested not only in the religious but also in the social differentiations of its population within the frame of the various religious systems. Mostly - and this was in no way due to or associated with my having been appointment an 'honorary Brahmin' by virtue of my horoscope - I was intrigued by the role the Brahmins played in modern Indian society, by their attitude to their changing world and by their world's attitude to their self-acclaimed superiority. I was furthermore intrigued by the status the Brahmins have occupied in the past, at least as the political,religious and social guides of the Hindu society.

Brahmanism designates a higher and more philosophical form of Hinduism. It led to Vedism, the animistic worship of the greater power of nature, in which the great spirits which control the chief energies of nature have been raised to the status of gods.

I never missed an opportunity to enrich my knowledge whenever the opportunity presented itself. I spoke to many Brahmin priests, to many Brahmin professors - and to many of their opponents and detractors.

On our journey across India Gobinder and I passed through a great number of the 550 000 villages scattered all over the subcontinent. I soon gave up keeping account of those we had visited. The reason was not because it would had been a monotonous exercise to do so. Most of the villages we visited did leave some, though usually minor distinguishable mark in our memory; for none

of these possibly thousands of villages we passed was the same as the other; each of them had its own character and its special problems, its own conglomeration of worries and its special difficulties. While many were more than excusably neglected, we registered with pleasure that most of the villages through which we passed were well kept and reasonably administered by their **Panchayat.** (This is the name of the administrative group made up of five elected Elders of the village.)

The Panchayat is a complex juridical and administrative system which has been in existence long before Europe developed its self-governing institutions.

Had I the appropriate inclination, I could write a book about these villages - not one more book of the kind which deals with the ethnics and the economics of rural life and which are available in abundance in every bookshop, but a book analyzing the psychology of the villagers; a book studying the attitude of the villagers to the gods they perceive in threateningly great numbers hovering above the fields and houses of the village; a book describing what these villagers feel towards their human masters here on earth.

One such village - Udaipur is its name - was of special interest and profit to us, because there we met in the house of a well-to-do farmer a young man, a student of mathematics on vacation from his nearby university. He introduced himself as a self-proclaimed marxist. He had seen Gobinder and I arrive in the farmstead and had invited himself to the house of the farmer, his neighbour, with the intention of starting a discussion - if not a fight with the two of us. He began by calling us 'parasites, so-called men of the cloth, living on the blood of the poor'. But when he realized that he could not disturb our equanimity, that we even enjoyed his tirades, he gave up and turned friendly and informative. I soon discovered that the cause for his rage against 'people of the cloth' had more than anything else been the priest of the local Hindu temple, 'who had the rich and leading farmers of the village in his pockey' and could and did dominate the Village Council through them. It would strain your patience too much, were I to repeat all his accusations and describe all the various layers of his hostility; but we learned much from the long talk we had with him.

We learned much about the Brahmin caste, the one which 'since ancient times has played a monopolistic role in the realm of religion and worship', as the young man formulated it.

"The Brahmins, the men of the priestly caste, represent the

highest class and caste among the Hindus. In their conceit they claim to be 'thrice-born' men; that is to say they claim to possess three lives: the first life they get when they come into the world; the second when they are initiated into their caste and thus become qualified to perform the priestly rites; and the third life begins when they are reborn in heaven. They carefully guard their caste secrets into which males are initiated as soon as they reach the age of eight.".

"Do you know, or does anybody else outside the Brahmin circle know of what these secrets consist ?", I asked.

"Maybe some non-Brahmins know what these secrets are made of. I do not know - nor have I ever cared to know. It is, however, common knowledge that in a long and sacred ceremony the eight-years-old boy - under certain conditions the initiation may be postponed by a year or two - is handed the 'sacred thread' which he has thereafter to wear day and night throughout his life. He is henceforth a member of the Brahmin caste".

"And henceforth such the young boy of eight is entitled to feel superior to everybody else outside his caste", I remarked with surprise.

"Absolutely and totally. He feels entitled to feel thus. The Brahmins are very much conscious of their elevated status - so much so that at times they even think they have the right to identify with the divinity. No wonder they claim they are entitled to all the rights and privileges such a status has in their opinion to offer".

"Do they indeed claim that all the rights and privileges they claim have been granted them by God ?", I wondered. "If so, I would feel very uncomfortable with my own appointment as a 'honourable Brahmin'".

"This should not bother you, my Prince. On the contrary - it may even help you in your pilgrimage. You have, as I have already noticed, a healthy sense of self-criticism, not like the average Brahmin who thinks that all he does is right - that he cannot do anything wrong. He is firmly convinced - and all his actions are motivated by this conviction - that by virtue of his birth he belongs to a privileged class; that he has been placed into this superior position by his excellent karman. And should you ask anyone of them if this means that he has been appointed to these privileges by God himself, he will answer confirmatively; and if he does not do so, his reply whatsoever would only represent semantics, would be nothing but a play of words. The Brahmins feel entitled not to follow the general rules and laws which are prescribed for

everybody else; for them only those are valid which they themselves have formulated for themselves. They are the ones who have composed the canon which is applicable to all the Hindus - but they do not think they themselves are bound by it. I will concede that there are many liberal-minded Brahmins who will agree with you that the opinions, the activitis and the behaviour of the priests are to be condemned, that the entire systems should be reformed or otherwise changed - but still, even these people are not willing to openly say so, to condemn, or to criticize even, their co-Brahmins. And it is interesting to note that they in turn are not condemned, are not even called upon by their peers to render account for their unorthodox opinions and attitudes".

"You mean to say that nobody dares to criticize the Brahmins openly, that all other Hindus meekly accept what these priests prescribe and order ?"

" You should view all which goes on as an indication, and the reaction of all the other Hindu castes as a proof, that the Brahmins prescribe the religious attitudes of the Hindu population and dictate the spiritual doctrines dominant in India - and that nobody dares to question their authority".

"But is it right to generalize in the way you do ? Is it just to say that this applies to all the Brahmins and all the non-Brahmin population of India ?"

"All I have said applies, of course, only to the orthodox, to the traditionalists among the Brahmins; fortunately, there is nowadays a progressive liberal trend among them, that is the number of these orthodox traditionalists is steadily diminuishing. But there is still a large reservoir of Brahmins who continue to uphold the duties of the priesthood and will not give up the right to perform as of old the **Sandhya**, the prescribed complex and complicated rituals - be it in a temple if they are attached to one, be it in their own homes, be it in the house of a rich man".

"Explain to me, please, the priestly duties of the Brahmins".

"Originally the priests had to perform the daily sacrifices. The sacrificial rites date from the Veda. The vedic sacrifices were supposed to be so powerful that they not only won the favours of the gods but even created new gods. Interestingly these vedic sacrifices are supposed to have a direct influence on heavenly phenomena but without any divine intervention".

"The sacrifices had be performed according to strict rules I heard".

"These rites and rituals have to be performed in a most exact, minutely prescribed manner, as they will otherwise not succeed in

their purpose - which is to prevent natural disasters - in particular to protect the sun from being affected by all the lurking dangerous influences which threaten to make it disappear for ever".

"What represented these ritual actions ? Why were they so important ? "

"A wise man - I do not remember where I read this - said that rites are the rules of conduct how man has to comport himself in the presence of, in his approach to the Sacred".

"I can add to this" I felt the young man intelligent enough to accept what I was going to say, "that ritual actions were originally and essentially not decorous or traditional ways of doing things on solemn occasions; they were performed in order to achieve some desired things, usually of a spiritual nature. It may have initially been associated with the practice of magic. But the general meaning of the ritual is that it creates a spiritual potency by the very act of being performed".

"What you said certainly applies to the rituals and sacrifices of the Brahmin priests".

"Of what kind are these sacrifices ?"

"Not animal sacrifices anymore, of course. I am sorry ! I should not have said 'of course', for animal sacrifices are still performed here and there. Even hymns sung in the right way are suitable sacrifices which can, for instance, make rain fall without the intervention of the gods, even against the wishes of the gods. In the main, however, these sacrifices consist of twice daily offerings of the **Homa**, that is sacrifices of juices, flowers etc.; these have to be offered to the God of Fire on a small copper altar, and certain ritual washings have to follow the sacrifice".

"How, in what form, do the Brahmins who continue to practise their priestly professions, earn a sufficient sustenance in these our days ?"

"As in the past so also today do the Brahmins live well on the payments they receive for offering prayers on behalf of petitioners. As in the past so also today will sun eclipses, earthquakes, floods, draughts and all other unusual natural events provide the Brahmin with a good income. For the Brahmins have decreed that only they can prevent nature's threatening disasters, that only they can approach the godhead with any hope of success. Unto this day, in our modern times, no non-Brahmin is allowed to offer prayers and sacrifices directly to God".

"The Bhakhti religion permits this, however", I corrected him. "I saw in the Vishnu temples and congregations people offer direct prayers to the gods, and place flowers and candles at the feet of

the statues".

"This is right. Those who follow Bhakhti Hinduism have no need for a priest to intervene on their behalf in the devotional worship. In general one is justified to say, that nowadays there would not be sufficient income for all the Brahmins, should all of them follow their priestly profession. At least this is the explanation a Brahmin will give you whenever you ask him why he has chosen a career in Government or in business, or why he has become a lawyer or an industrialist".

"They cannot be too badly off, I think. From what I have seen on our pilgrimage, there seem to be still a considerable number of Brahmin priests 'manning' the many temples".

"This is true. A great number of Brahmin priests are still officiating in the countless temples and shrines which crowd our cities and the countryside. A Brahmin priest may have his own parish and receive his maintenance from his parishoners; or his temple may have large endowments; or the Brahmin priest may have no financial worries because his temple owns large properties made up of houses and lands which bring in a good income".

"This will make them not only financially independent but will grant them also great influence over the people, especially in a village", I remarked.

"No doubt about this. My village is an appropriate example. As a rule these priests do have great influence over the people, especially in the villages. It is here where at times they may even be called upon to perform animal sacrifices. But one has also to acknowledge, that as a rule they do not interfere with the ways the villagers express their faith, as every village has usually one or more shrines dedicated to specific village gods. This system, which grants the individual villager the right to approach on his own the god of his choice within its own shrine, has the advantage that he can safely entrust his god with his wishes and plans, his anger and frustrations against enemies and competitors in the village, without having to fear - were these presented through the Brahmin priest for further transmission - that the Brahmin might break for the sake of his own advantage the seal of confidentiality and abuse the knowledge he has acquired in such a way".

"Considering what you told me about the power and influence of these priests, I come to think that everybody must wish to be reincarnated a Brahmin".

"I am not at all sure that this is a worthwhile wish. I at least have no such wish. These people are far too much stuck in their old lines of thinking and behaviour. While all other castes,

as you might have observed, continue to adhere to the caste rules though in a very lax and superficial way - a development which I and my friends very much welcome - such a cavalier attitude is only very rarely found among the Brahmins. The kind of occupations they can chose is very restricted; their range of activities is severely limited; and their ways of life is strictly outlined within definite limits. Accordingly they are greatly restricted in all they can do - and might wish to do. Even in case some of them should have acquired a progressive liberal attitude with regard to their caste obligations, and even if they might be inclined to modernity, they are as a rule unable to overcome that instinctive, deep-seated inhibition which to all appearances seems to interfere in every phase of their social life. And even though most of these men are no more practicing priests and have taken up business or professional careers, their behaviour and their thinking remain typically those of the traditional Brahmin".

"One sees Brahmins in great numbers in every sphere of daily life and activity; but there must be many more Brahmins in circulation than those who are recognizable by the specific distinguishing marks on their foreheads ? "

"There are two different groups of coloured signs one sees the men wear on their foreheads or on their bodies in these days. Men of the priestly branch continue to put on the coloured marks on their foreheads. Also Sadhus and Monks may do so. But in their case it is not done as a sign of identification. In their case they are marks of devotion. We average Indians do not need any distinguishing marks to recognize a Brahmin. We recognize them as such by their features, by their personalities. For instance, I would have classified you as a Brahmin even if you had not the caste signs on your forehead - and even if you were wearing western clothes".

"In which case then do these marks serve as distinguishing signs ? "

"In cases where they indicate membership in a private Hindu sect. Next to particular mantras every one of the many sects has its own distinct marks placed on the forehead or any other part of the body of its members. Thus that man you see over there", he pointed to a man, apparently deep in meditation, seated in a niche of a nearby shrine, "reveals by the two perpendicular white stripes on his forehead, with a red line between them and with a transverse white streak connecting these lines above the root of his nose, that he is a member of the Ramanayas".

"Are many Hindus members of such sects ? "

"I cannot tell you exactly. From a friend of mine who is now a member of such a sect I learned recently, that it is not easy to be admitted to a sect. The prior permission of the Guru of the sect is required. The initiation, during which the Guru whispers into the ear of the candidate his personal secret mantra, and all the other procedings, are covered with a veil of secrecy".

"Many Brahmins, I suppose, are not recognized as such, because they dress nowadays like people do in the West, is it not so ?"

"As a rule it is so. But you must not overlook that many of the clerks and merchants - the majority of our Babus, that is the clerks in government offices and commercial enterprises are Brahmins - dress like most other people in long shirts and dhotis. That is to say, one cannot distinguish between a Brahmin and other Hindus by the way they dress. The easiest way to recognize a high-class Hindu is by the sacred thread he has to wear across his chest - but this is not always possible because it is not rarely hidden underneath the man's shirt".

"Thank you, my friend ! I have learned from you quite a number of things I did not know. So far I had thought that every Brahmin has to wear the caste marks on his forehead".

"No more. Nowadays you will see such marks mostly on the traditionally clad Brahmins, those who wear a long white shirt, a dhoti and open sandals - and possibly an umbrella. A great number of the Brahmins thus dressed are practicing priests who spend their time in the service of a temple. There you will see also other orthodox Hindus with caste marks on their body who spend many hours every day in the performance of the prescribed rituals".

"You say, that strict rules regulating the daily life apply to orthodox Hindus in general ? Do you mean to say this applies to Hindus whatever their caste ?"

"Yes, definite and strict rules of behaviour, strictly defined rites and customs are enforced on all orthodox Hindus whatever their caste - except, of course, for those who adhere to the Bhakhti form of Hinduism. Every orthodox Hindu, to whatever caste he may belong, has to follow definite rules not only in his devotional ceremonies but in general also in every phase and at every stage of his daily activities. To give you an example: it is prescribed that the Hindu has to squat down and face the west or the east when eating his food. Before he starts on his meal, he has first to offer it to the gods. He can eat only with his right hand. He has to consume his meal in total silence. When he goes to sleep he can stretch out only in the east or south direction, never west or north. And in this and other ways every minute of his daily life is regulated".

"I must say you have painted for me the picture of a quite complex society".

"Yes, this is so. A foreigner cannot realize how complicated life can be here for a Hindu, how many problems one has to face, and how many such are created anew again and again. The caste situation which I have described and which you call complex, will appear to you still more complex if you realize that there are nearly 3000 subcastes, that is subdivisions of the four main castes. Most of them have been established within the Sudra caste. To give you an example: The subcast of the shoemakers who work in their cubicles in the streets, is looked down upon by the members of the subcaste of shoemakers who work in a factory. And in the caste of drivers the tonga- or victoria-driver on his horse-drawn carriage is considered inferior to the members of the subcaste made up of taxi drivers".

"I thank heaven that I am not involved in your caste system".

"But you are, Swamiji", the young man laughed while I readied myself to protest, "Only you are so far not conscious of this; however, even in case you should become conscious of this, you will still not become directly involved or affected. You are, according to what our sages have discovered, a living and unique exception".

"You mean all these rules and regulations apply to me also in my actual status of a reincarnated Hindu ?"

"You are not affected by the rule that a foreigner cannot become a Hindu unless he is first made a member of a caste. A Hindu is a Hindu by birth. Hinduism, and in particular Brahminism do not accept proselytes. Is it different with the Jews of old or with the Zoroastrians ? However, under rare circumstances, and only after many years of sojourn in this country, can an exception be made and a foreigner may be admitted - but only into one of the lower castes. But it is never possible to get admitted in such a way into the higher two castes. All this does not apply to you, for you are after all a Hindu. You are for all practical purposes still a Brahmin. You are a member of the Brahmin caste and as such you will have to fit into its social structure. But let me point out now that all I have said just now has been purely theoretical in nature. Nothing of all this does apply to you, as we know that you have reached - or are at least on the way to approach - that stage of perfection in which all caste distinctions are abolished".

I was surprised to hear such a sweeping statement from the young man who only a short while ago had to such an extent and with such fervour indulged in extolling marxist ideas. I did not react.

I did not refute. It did not distantiate myself from his definition of my status. But this was in part also due to my having become used to being told that I was a 'holy man'; and whenever I might have forgotten this, the reverential attitude of Gobinder Nath would have at once recalled me into a serene and fitting behaviour - one feature of which was to avoid disputing and arguing.

As I said, I had become used to such situations and to such appraisals, and for this reason I only remarked:

"I hope that also all over India the case system will soon be abolished for everybody".

"It has been officially decreed, and it has been incorporated into the Constitution of Independent India, that castes do not exist anymore. But this is only on paper. Caste distinctions do still exist. They have not yet been abolished. This is by far not a new experience. Demands for the castes to be abolished are not new. In the last 1-2 centuries - that is to say long before the Indian Constitution was written - there have been Reform Movements which have agitated for an end to the caste system. But even these Reform Movements, which continue to flourish to this day, were not the first to put forward such kind of demands. Already some 2500 years ago have reform movements come into the foreground protesting the injustice of the caste system and objecting to the restrictions placed on the common people by the excessive rigidity of already by then antiquated ideas. Jainism and Buddhism grew out of these protest movements. There have been, of course, many other reasons why these two religious currents split off from Hinduism - but the abuse of the population by the caste institutions has certainly been an important factor. And notwithstanding the protests and the objections, the laws and the constitutions, the division of the population into castes continues - and as in times past many people are also today hurt by the excesses this system unavoidably brings along".

10.

Some Nuggets of Knowledge.

Yesterday evening you remarked, Moshe Chaim, that in all my narrative I have hardly ever mentioned an encounter with women - and it is in your opinion inconceivable that I had not been given an opportunity for many such encounters. You wondered that I have never talked about the role women play in the make-up of India although you have learned from the newsmedia that women play an important role at least in the field of Indian politics.

Your criticism is to a certain degree justified; looking back I have hardly ever talked about what I observed of the important position of the modern Indian woman - and on the other hand that I neither mentioned so far what I learned about their suppressed status in many respects of daily life. But as I have pointed out I have decided to avoid as far as possible dealing with sociological and political matters, and a detailed disucssion about the place of the woman in Indian society would inevitably penter this field.

However, making use of my personal experiences I shall endeavour to correct this deficiency as far as I can within a few short sentences - for a more thorough knowledge and a more explicit exposureyou will have to make use of the literature available in your University Library.

I shall use this occasion for some additional remark about what may possibly amount to an increase in the negative side of my narrative: that I have so often deviated from the steady flow of my tale, from the straight line of an argument, and indulged in a question-and-answer dialogue which can be only of little or no interest to you. But I beg you to realize that hardly a day passed during our pilgrimage through India without our being offered

for mental absorption and digestion new and variegated impressions. As a rule we invited these ourselves by our keenness to have new or even known things again and again explained to us.

Please do not mind if this introduction oand the following small chapter will make my narrative appear chronologically still more disorganized by my looking back at early stages of my itinery; or by my presenting a general picture only without any definite localization in space or time. You will somehow have to explain away this deficiency in the way you "edit" the content of the tapes you are filling with what I am telling you; that is to say that in addition to my effort to censure myself with regard to the material and the space my story takes up, you will have to cut out what may make the manuscript too bulky and unmanageable. However, you should not worry that I might miss out on something of interest or importance. I shall not hesitate, nor miss the opportunity, to expand my tale whenever some particularly interesting impressions and experiences turn up.

After this lengthy introduction I am going to add here - as I have promised - a few words about the place women occupy in Indian society.

The daily life, the sphere of activity and the zone of interest of women of nearly all the castes and classes are confined to the house. Their duties encompass the totality of the household tasks. In this the women of the farmer community are an exception; they work no less hard in the fields outside the villages than the males.

The Hindu society is at every level male-dominated. The woman submits, without ever thinking even of rebelling, to the rule that she has to be meek, that she has to obey the master of the house. Even when her husband dies and her son becomes the senior male in the house, she has equally to submit to his orders and commands. However, in a civilized, well-organized Hindu family she is the matriarch who reigns over her household without any male interference - and whose voice carries great weight when it comes to the education of her children and when their marriages have to be arranged.

Life can be rather unpleasant for the younger female members of a housea old - be she a junior wife or a daughter-in-law or even a legitimate daughter; she has uncritically and unfailingly to submit to the orders of the matron of the house. If she has newly joined the household by way of marriage, her fate is rarely an easy one; she has to accept without demur the - often harsh - treatment she may have to experience at the hands of her motherin-law. She cannot

enjoy the consolation nor the support of her own family, for once a woman is married, she has to totally cut off her relationship with her own family.

I noticed with surprise that many Hindu women - those living in the cities and those of the higher social grades - veil their faces whenever they leave their houses. They must have adopted this kind of 'Purda system' from the Moslems. For obvious reasons the women of the rural population, even among the Moslems, are allowed to go about without a veil.

Of course, all I have outlined in these few words, does not apply to the ever growing strata of educated and modernized women whose feministic demands are no less revolutionary than those of their sisters in the West.

I am going to use this break in my narrative to add a few remarks on some other matters which I had overlooked at the opportune moments.

In the first weeks of our pilgrimage I felt very insecure, I must confess; not so much due to my appearing in public in the way I was dressed, as because of my total ignorance of the manner in which I was supposed to act and behave. Gobinder was, of course, of great help; but I never missed an opportunity to further increase my knowledge about the mode of conduct expected from a man dressed in orange coloured cloth on pilgrimage through India.

"Please describe for my benefit the various forms of worship which I may encounter", I asked a very well-versed professor of Hinduism, who was more than willing to offer me all possible help after he had been 'initiated into my personal secret', that is my supposedly former existence and my actual program.

"In ancient times", he told me, "animal sacrifices - the **Yagas** - were regularly performed by the Brahmins. This was in no way specific for Hinduism; as you will know, this has in ancient times been the common form of worship everywhere, as the Bible illustrates only too well. The Brahmin priests' theology laid great importance on lithurgical actions and penance. The value of these is denied by Buddhism for whom only morally justified actions count. In Buddhism also mental acts are important as there is no physical act without a mental action. 'We are what we think; we are what we will' is the Buddhists' motto.

"The Brahmin priests had their own specific explanations. They told the people that the sacrifices were going to keep them in harmony with the powerful forces of nature. These sacrifices took place in forests, on hilltops, in caves. Temples did not yet exist in those days. The sacrifices were more or less abolished in the wake of the Buddhist revolt some 2500 years ago. It was during that period, by the way, that under the impact of the hellenistic culture temples and shrines were constructed; that idols were installed in these; and that worship - widened and deepened by the incorporation of Vedic rites - was addressed to and concentrated on these idols. In the course of the years, and most likely dictated by the policy of forestalling the threat of liberalization, divine worship became an ever more elaborate proceeding".

"From what I have observed, idols are not always the object to which prayers are directed. Is this not so?"

"There are three grades of worship which a Hindu may follow: the worship of idols, the muttering of mantras, and the offering of prayers. The **Puranas** are the sacred texts which contain the exact rules how worship has to be performed in temples and in the home. The Puranas are very popular. Also the silent prayers are considered most effective. In addition we are advised by the Upanishads that meditation is of great value. However, prayers are not always identical with meditation. Meditating on the sacrifices is of special spiritual benefit, nearly as much as the performances of the sacrifices themselves. It is even said that the efficiency of such **Makasa Puja** is greater than all other forms of ceremonial worship. However, intelligent and educated people have realized, that rituals and ceremonials are only an aid with the help of which the true worship by inward contemplation can be induced. The more an individual is spiritually advanced, the less he needs externals, rituals and similar things for his worship. The less people are spiritually or intellectually endowed, the more they require ceremonial proceedings and festivals, rituals and symbolisms. For instance they can indulge in the many feasts and fasts in honour of the gods - mainly for those who are the Avatars, the reincarnations of Rama and Vishnu; or they can abandon themselves in the momentous events in the history of these gods which are viewed as sufficient reason to arrange days of splendour-filled festivals. And there are the so-called 'Purification Festivals'; these are special days exclusively devoted to prayer and worship".

"I have seen many temples, and enjoyed many festivals dedicated

to individual gods. But I could not find out in which way the prayers to individual gods are expressed ? That is to say in which respect they differ from Bhakhti ? "

"**Prapatti** is a main characteristic of these purification prayers. It means total surrender to the god. This principle is based on the passage in the Gita in which Krishna exhorts Arjuna, his disciple: 'Renouncing all duties take refuge in me alone. Grieve not for I shall releave thee from evil'. But there is a great difference between these festivals which maintain the old-established silent decorum in the temples while the priest is the only active perfomer, and the **Bhakhti** worship where men and women, without regard to castes and social status, congregate for their prayers in the temples devoted to Krishna and other gods".

"About the idol worship....", I began, but the Brahmin gently interrupted me.

"I know what you are going to ask. I can assure you that even the most primitive and uneducated among the people know, that when they pray to a statue it is not the stone or the brass which they worship but the god these are meant to represent. I dare say that an Indian peasant is more conscious of this fact than the catholic devotees whom I have seen pray to the cross or kiss the foot of the St.Peter statue in the Cathedral of Rome".

"As is the case with prayer in every religion, I suppose also in Hinduism people offer prayers to gain the favour of the godhead they approach in this way ? "

"In general and in the main a Hindu does not pray for personal favours or gains; he prays for the liberation from his **samsara**, for his early salvation".

"And not for forgiveness ? "

"There is, of course, also such a form of worship. But for this kind of prayers one has to engage the services of a Brahmin priest. Neither can an average individual pray for the end of a flood or for the cessation of a draught, for the prevention of an earthquake or for the general wellbeing of mankind; this is the domain of the Brahmin priest - his prayers alone are effective".

"And for what prays an average man, an intellectual for instance, who wants to express his piety ? To what or to whom is for instance the worship of a person of your kind directed ?"

"I do not mind telling you that I pray for the acquisition of knowledge, for gaining knowledge of the Truth".

"Is it divine knowledge you have in mind ? Is it spiritual knowledge for which you pray ?"

"There is above all a sacred knowledge; it is for this for

that all reality is ultimately and intimately spiritual in nature. Even though many of the philosophical and religious systems in Hinduism may appear to you dualistic and even pluralistic, you will discover, once you have really understood them, that they are truly and objectively monistic. At the same time or in consequence you will also come to realize that Hinduism's philosophy, which declares life and reality a monistic idealism and an idealistic monism, is fully justified".

"Do you want to imply that reason plays no role ?"

"This is not my intention. Reason is an imperishable gift granted to man. Life would be chaotic without reason. Aristotle may have taken his wise saying from us that reason is that by which the soul thinks and judges. We certainly agree with St. Augustine who preached that... 'the Allmighty does nothing without reason, though the frail mind of man cannot explain the reason'. Reason plays a more important role in Indian philosophy than in that of the West. However, we are not dominated by a blind submission to reason. We see in intuitive thought the only method by which the Ultimate can be known. Intellectual knowledge and reason may suffice to provide you with an understanding of the goal to reach - but Reason, though often and in other relations certainly very useful, can and will in our context only lead you astray. Of this you should be aware in your studies, in your thoughts and in your meditative approaches to the Truth".

"Denying reason an over-all light must lead to overlook the borders where reality begins and ends".

"Reality may be approached but not possessed through reason".

"I agree. One has to experience reality in order to know it".

"It is the same as with the Truth - which thus become a reality. You must not only know the Truth, you must also realize it. And you realize it in yourself. Reason can demonstrate the Truth - I agree - but it cannot reach it. Reason cannot discover the Truth. Only by intuition can you comprehend the Truth, the Ultimate".

On one of my visits I asked the Professor "....it seems to me that Indian philosophy is excessively concerned with what it senses as 'an all-pervading evil in man's existence' - as I heard this outlook once described. With my Western mentality I cannot but see in this a purely negative approach. And furthermore: it appears to me that your philosophy's interest is mainly, if not exclusively, concerned with man's release into a permanent state of bliss from what you see as the pain and sorrow created by one's

forced existence as a human being".

"Yes, this is true. Indian philosophy is fundamentally very pessimistic in nature. We perceive life as made up of desires, of impulses and of instincts which, if not controlled and eliminated, are liable to prolong man's existence in the wheel of samasara - and with it his perpetual misery. Yes, for us life means suffering. Everything is pervaded by this trend of thinking. It has also taken hold of a certain part of Indian mythology which divides the existence of the Universe into four periods or **Yugas.** According to this division of the world's existence we live actually in the fourth Yuga, the **Age of Kali,** the most cruel of the four stages of existence of the world".

"Do you accept the characterizations and the prognostications based on such myths ? "

"I do. And you tell me now: do the facts of life and the state of our world not justify my faith in the pessimistic predictions of these mythologies ?"

"Does such a pessimistic faith, such a negative outlook not invite you to give up all interest in life ? Does it not make you feel inclined to retire from all which goes on around you ?"

"Non-attachment to the world is a spiritual attitude; it does not mean that one tries either physically or mentally to escape from the world and its realities. It permits one's continued partecipation and immersion in life's activities while enjoying them - and profiting from them".

"How can this not indicate a profound negativism - if not also a negativism ? ", I insisted. "How can the concept of life being only pain and sorrow not induce in man a state of pessimism ? And how can the idea that there is no purpose in doing anything not lead to cynicism ?"

"You are profoundly mistaken. It is not as you say ! We are and remain within what appears as the realities of life. The lessons and ways taught by the **Karma Yoga** of the Gita, which deals with man's devotion to act and do and work, has great significance in Hindu thought. What I have outlined to you does not mean the renounciation of activity but renouncing the benefits resulting from such activity. You should not judge our attitude to life and its problems from what the Brahmins practise and demand in their attitudes and teachings; for you should know that the pessimism of the masses of average Hindus - except for the ascetics among them - is not as profound as that of the Brahmins".

"How is a Hindu's pessimism manifested ? "

"To him and his life pessimism means that except for moksa

there is no hope. And you will agree that Moksa as a goal is pure optimism".

"I do not notice much pessimism among the young Indians I have met so far".

"You cannot measure the basic pessimism of Hinduism by the behaviour and the arguments of our young people. They follow more and more the Bhakhti direction. But the average conservative Hindu is in principle greatly inclined to be pessimistic, desirous to escape worldly contacts as far as possible. His ideals have remained unchanged by modern conceptions of life. He sees in you, the Sadhu who has abandoned a comfortable life, an ideal of completion and perfection. He perceives in the ascetic a man who has discovered that in truth nothing exists and who, in consequence, has drawn the only possible conclusions. In the eye of the public Sadhus and Ascetes are holy men - although I have never been able to understand why such holy men should believe that holiness means being unwashed, unkempt and covered with ashes".

"And what is more", I added, "those who dedicate themselves to an ascetic life have to abandon their families and as a rule neglect all their social duties. What does the general public think of this ?"

"Nowadays the uneducated public - the people making up this part of the Hindu public call themselves modern and liberal - is inclined to ridicule these people. But this is so because the 'modern' Hindu does not bother too much about the future of his soul. He leaves it to the holy men to provide mankind with religious and spiritual benefits. However, you must not conclude that even the most modern and liberal Hindu has given up believing in the reality of Moksa".

"He neither denies the reality of Karman, as I have myself been able to discover".

"Of course not. It explains to him the cause of suffering and the variations in human fate".

"Let me ask you a question I have asked so many others.: does Karman not bring on a sense of fatalism ? "

"Not so much fatalism as resignation. It is the consequence of - and no less also the reason for - the Hindu's passive attitude to life. This is most understandable in the man who belongs to a poor family or is a member of a low caste; this man will be resigned to his fate in the expectation that in his next existence hewill be reborn into a socially higher life, into better circumstances and into a less poor environment".

"This reminds me of the words of an Untouchable we met a short

while ago. He said he is not interested in moksa nor does he care for nirvana - he would only wish to be next reborn a maharaja".

7.

From Vishnu-Krishna and Siva-Kali to Bhakhti.

When we passed through Dera Dun during a hot summer month, we decided to stay in the pleasant nearby hillstation Mussooree for the two or three weeks before the expected arrival of the Monsoon rains and their coolong effect on the ehats in the plains.

Another attraction which influenced our decision was the information we had been given that the Bhakhti, an interesting modern version of Hinduism, is strongly represented in that himalayan region. We had since quite a long time been looking out for the opportunity to meet intelligent and educated followers of the Bhakhti line of Hinduism.

In Mussooree we gladly accepted the invitation of the abbot of a large temple dedicated to God Krishna, the avater - that is to say the incarnation - of Vishnu, to stay in its precincts. The temple stood near a monastery of the Krishnavaite sect.

We had known since long of the great importance, of the valued position the Bhakhti movement was granted among Hindus, and we had often become aware of the significant influence as a liberal and reformed version it has acquired in Hinduism. There in the summer resort of Mussooree, hight up on the top of the mountain, which we were told was a centre of Bhakhti devotion, we hoped to find the right human material, the adequate atmosphere and the leisure to study firsthand this form of Hinduism, this religious concept in Hinduism.

We spent nearly all our time either attending the prayer services in the temple or in conversation with the abbott and his priests. I was greatly impressed by the unusual, emotion-filled

prayer service. This was not the first time I found myself in a Bhakhti congregation, but this time I felt myself somehow greatly impressed and emotionally affected. I was also intrigued to observe, that the congregation embraced members of all social strata in the country. Rich and poor, peasants and officials, residents and visitors sat next to each other and conversed with each other as if the caste system had been abolished. This phenomen induced me to study Bhakhti more thoroughly and to contemplate the unusual way of faith-expression I had the occasion to observe in that temple. My undertaking was greatly facilitated by the welcome discovery, that every educated person among the congregation was articulately ready to talk about his or her religious attitudes - and could on an average do so in a tolerably good english.

Observing the service while seated in a corner of that Krishna Temple in Mussoore we were favourably impressed by the seriousness with which the men and women prayed, by the apparent deep faith which we detected in the celibate clergy, and by the devotion and selflessness of the monks who spend their life in the service and worship of Krishna. At the first opportunity I had one of the priests translate for my instruction the '**Premsagar**', the important part of the religious service which recites 'The Ocean of Life', an old Purana which describes in arousing language the glorious deeds of the Godhead.

I further learned from the priests of the temple, that in addition to Krishna the devotees assembled in the Temple were addressing their prayers also to Brahman, Vishnu and Shaiva. And over the following days I learned furthermore from these priests - who acted with great enthusiasm, I may even say dedication, as my tutors - about the distinguishing elements of the Bhakhti religion.

Bhakhti was founded by a certain Krishna Vasudeva, a member of the Ksatrya caste, we were told by the learned young priest who had had attached himself to us from the first day of our visit and who continued to act as our guide and mentor throughout our stay. In the course of time Vasudeva became identified with God Vishnu who in ancient time had figured as the sun-god.

"Bhakhti is the leading sect of modern Hinduism. Instead of going the way of 'karma-marga' - the path of work - or the 'jwana-marga' - the path of knowledge"- which the other systems in Hinduism have taken, we lay stress on the value of 'bhakhti-

marga' - the devotional path of faith - as the approach to salvation.

"I have been told that Bhakhti knows only one single God; but the number of godheads addressed in your devotional service I see an indication of a polytheistic trend ?", I interjected.

"You are not entirely wrong if you think you can see in certain aspects of the Bhakhti religion an indication of polytheism", conceded the serious young priest. "A polytheistic element may once have been present but is today no more in evidence. Bhakhti is based on Vishnuite Hinduism. It is a monothistic religion. It is based on faith. It is the belief in a personal God. It contrasts with the pantheistic Brahminism of the Upanishads".

"How then do you perceive the Godhead ?"

"There is only one God named Bhagvat, the Adorable, the Endless, the Indestructible. He has created everything and he rules over everything. Our souls once issued from God; and though thereafter they continued to exist forever as distinct undestructable individual units, they will in the end rejoin God agfain".

"Where do the other divine units, those others which are mentioned in your devotional service, fit into this concept ? "

"Deva, the God of Bhakhti, the Supreme and One God, has created Brahman, Siva and all the other countless subordinate deities as his incarnations or his ministering spirits. They carry out his orders. He leaves the ruling of the world to them, but at times he himself becomes incarnate to relieve the world from sins or prevent it from being overcome by troubles".

"What are, apart from the special form monotheism you describe, the other specifics of Bhakhti ? ", I wanted to knw.

"Bhakhti Hinduism is a mixture of popular and priestly Hinduism, of Vedic and non-Vedic practices. In Bhakhti our religious devotion is expressed in the adoration of personal deities. We follow the Hindu form of theism whose main representatives are Vishnu and Siva. Our theology refutes the sacrificial rituals and that which is the transcendental aspect of Hinduism".

Here as on other topics I had to learn that in India - and with regard to religious interpretations in particular - there are manifold approaches to and manysided explanations of even the basics of a doctrine, although fundamentally these basics remain the same whatever the approach and the explanation.

"Do the deities you venerate in Bhakhti in any aspect differ from the way they are perceived in tra[illegible] ?

"The basic precepts of the Bhakhti, in the form of the Krishna and the Siva Cults, are identical with those which arein general valid for Hinduism. **Brahma** ranges as the highest god. Together with **Vishnu** and **Shaiva** he forms a trinity, the **Trimurti.** God Brahma, in the undifferentiated form of **Tat,** exists since eternity. He is the Creator of man. He is the life-breath of the Universe".

"I would have expected to hear from you that Vishnu is honoured as the highest God; for he definitely occupies in the Gita the leading position among the gods", I wondered.

"You are not wrong, my Prince. He is given all honour and devotion by us. He reigns supreme in the theistic world of the Gita. He is a benevolent god. He too was not created by an outside agency or in any other way. He always was. He originated by and from himself. And he constantly regenerates himself. He is an element of the total Godhead. Above all he was, is and will be eternal. 'I condition my own nature', he says in the Gita. 'I am born by my own supranatural power. Where necessary I am reborn as an avator to help the good and to destroy the evil. Whoever has come to know this truth will not be anymore reborn but will himself become a Vishnu'".

"And what is his relation to Krishna ?"

"Krishna is the re-manifestation, the re-incarnation of Vishnu. In other words he is an avater of Vishnu. He is the ideal God-man. He is Apollo, Hercules, Orpheus rolled in one. There is no need for him to take on only human shape in his manifestations; he can also become manifest in the incarnation form of an animal, like e.g. a boar, an ape, an elephant and a tortoise. Another very appreciated avater-form of Vishnu is that of **Jagganath,** the god of love and mercy".

"And whereas in this divine trilogy Shiva is the representation of evil, also evil is in your eyes a creation of God like everything else which exists ?"

"Yes, everything that is has been created by God. Shiva, who is a part of God. personifies what is worst in life - and much more than that even. At the same time he is - independent of the shape he takes on - the power, the energy, as well as the destructive form of life. He represents the end of the world and its following regeneration. We, his devotees, can never free ourselves of an extreme sense of unworthiness whenever we come face to face with this fierce all-powerful god who, as you will know, is as a rule presented in the form of a lingam, as a phallus-like symbol".

"And his wife is Kali ?", I tried to show off my knowledge.

"Shiva's spouse is **Sakhti.** It is true she is often represented

as **Durga** or **Kali,** but she has a hundred other names too. To large sections of Hindus she is the greatest among the gods. This goddess is far more terrifying than Shiva even. You must on many occasions have seen Durga-Kali depicted as the bloody mother goddess with a necklace of human skulls. It is thus that she is perceived by her followers. You can find in nearly every village a temple dedicated to her".

"How do you explain the preference the people have for such a cruel type of god ? "

"Sakhtism, the devotion to the goddess Sakhti, is the worship of the female principle in nature. It is this factor which is the attractive element. It does in no way repulse these very same people who pray to Sakhti and the female principle in nature, that the worship of this deity is so often accompanied by obscenities and cruelties".

Many months later, when we arrived in South India, we discovered that the Krishna Cult was far more widespread there than elsewhere in India. The Tamils, the subdued original inhabitants of India, acclaim Krishna their supreme God. They cherish the tradition that the Krishna cult had been introduced and consolidated from among their ranks by the **Alvars,** a group of men of the } th century, today respected as saints and teachers, who were reputed to have had an intimate knowledge of the god. The Alvars had in their sermons greatly deviated from the religious philosophy then in dominance: they had taught that moksa on its own will not bring the desired release.

"Moksa, the release from samsara, depends entirely on God's mercy", one of the priests in the Krishna Temple in Trivandrum told us in the course of explaing the different interpretation the Alvars had in their days introduced and which continues in today's theology of the Krishna Cult. "But however long it may take for the soul to achieve the union with God, it is certain to reach this goal in the end".

Also the Shiva Cult has many adherents in South India. The Alvars, the Tamil saints whom I have mentioned just now, had - in the rules and laws which they promulgated and had presented in their teaching and preaching which are collected in the **Shaiva Saddhanta** - objected to the strict ordinances and rigid rules of the then domineering Brahmin priests which to an excesively great degree overlaid the ceremonial practices they performed.

One of the Shiva Cult's features - which most likely is the cause why it attracts such large parts of the population of India - was the teaching that the individual, by a total surrender to Shiva, can achieve salvation without the help of sacrifices and magic formulae. There may be also a contributory element: the extreme sense of unworthiness the devotee is made to feel when facing this all-holy god. It appeared to us that the Krishna-Shiva Cult had created a profound sense of guilt in the Tamils. They were constantly reminded that whenever in his daily life man distantiates himself from God, and be it for even a moment, he will turn currupt and evil and will become alienated from divine grace.

"What exactly is the 'Shaiva Saddhanta' which you mentioned some time ago ? ", I wanted to know. "This is the first time I hear about a Scripture with this name".

"Shaiva Saddhanta outlines man's conduct in life within the limits which have been sanctioned by the Alvars, our saints", a priest explained to us. "This set of strict rules and customs which these saints introduced more than a thousand years ago have remained valid to this day. Whatever the original reasons and purpose may have been for the establishment of such guidelines, they are lost and forgotten today - but this makes the preservation of these originally social rules and customs more secure and their application the more effective, as they have acquired the advantage of a historic patina and the aura of sanctity".

I was intrigued by the sets of ideological-theological doctrines and the philosophical-psychological constellations on which the **Bhakhti, the Krishna and the Shaiva Cults** rest, and I never missed an opportunity to questions their spiritual leaders and devoted followers, although I learned only rarely anything I did not know already.

It was in Vizegapatam in South India where we witnessed one of the most impressive Bhakhti prayer meetings.

After the service a young schoolteacher sat down next to us on the meadow in front of the temple. He wanted to know who we were, whence we came, what we wanted to achieve. He spoke a very accentuated sing-song-like, but to us by now familiar english. We had since long become adjusted to the curiosity we evoked among the people - and had already learned, that such curiosity did not violate the accepted standard of good behaviour; that it was a kind

of national trait and not one we had by our appearance specifically evoked.

After Gobinder had with a few sentences satisfied the young man's curiosity, it was my turn to have the young man satisfy mine. Although we had already acquired a good knowledge of the history and the ideoilogy of the Krishna Cult, I was interested to hear how a man of South India, evidently a man of a low caste and a descendant of the original inhabitants, was going to explain his faith.

We were not to be disappointed by his approach and by the way he expressed his devotion.

"I understand, my dear young man", I addressed him, "that you are a member of this Vishnu Temple. Can you give me some details about your temple service ? What differentiates it from other currents of Hinduism ? Tell me how it came into being and so on I must confess we are very ignorant in this regard".

The young man, apparently an enthusiastic follower of Bahkti, was willing and ready to give us a lecture about religious inclination. He gave us an interesting introduction. I wondered whether he used the same sing-song intonation when teaching his pupils in the Tamil language.

"The School of Bhakhti has developed in ancient times out of Vedic doctrines and Upanishad speculations. It is a very old religious movement. It is older than Jainism and Buddhism even. In common with these it started as a revolutionary-reformatory movement. Bhakhti turned away from the Vedic sacrificial rites then in vogue and insisted, that all religious expressions of worship - and eo ipso this includes also the way to salvation - be by devotional services only. Bhakhti - due to the efforts of our great teacher Tulsi Das - became a popular movement sometime in the 16th century".

"What differentiates the Bhakhtis from other Hindus ?"

"In early times - that is when the new doctrine came in to the foreground - Brahmanism had offered salvation only to those who were of aryan birth. Therevada Buddhism and Jainism were no better. In the latter's opinion only monks can expect immediate salvation and none of the other mortals. Bhakhti, which has from the onset developed as a theistic religion, offered salvation to all its devotees, independent of their caste and standing".

"What does Bhakhti teach ?"

"Bhakhti aims at the union with God. This is basically the aim of Bhakhti. The usual ethical, ceremonial and sacrificial additions which one finds in all other religions everywhere, have no place in Bhakhti. Only prayer, devotion and a total surrender to the adored deity are of value. We do not perceive the great pillars which are offered by Hinduism, that is moksa, salvation and liberation, as gifts. In our belief they are not dispensed automatically or granted as a favour. We have sincerely to aspire to gain them, we have to earn them by our own honest efforts".

I remember now how the schoolteacher - a dark-skinned individual like most inhabitants of the South who had once been the original inhabitants of the sub-continent, had been driven southwards by the invading Aryans from the North, and had been forced by them into the social status of despised Untouchables - tended to indulge in a stilted english and to get lost in non-essentials. Although I had often to make him return to the topic I had initiated, and had at times to painfully draw from him in simple words what I wanted to know, I enjoyed the insight he gave us not only in his character but also in what I supposed was one of the characteristics of his southern countrymen.

"And what are the specifics of Bhakhti ?", I repeated.

"Bhakhti is a loving devotion to a personified deity. It had started as a spiritual-religious movement in which salvation is offered to all, as I mentioned already. It exerts great influence on the religious and intellectual life of every stratum in the Indian population - without, however, in every instance fully replacing any of the ritual, social and meditative elements of Hinduism".

"These changes must have greatly shaken up orthodox Hinduism, has it not ?"

"This has surely been the case. Viceversa it had also a certain beneficial influence on Hinduism itself. With the rise of Bhakhti, Hinduism could not but undergo decisive changes. For Bhakhti doctrine teaches that in addition to one's personal effort and one's total engagement, the help of a god above was needed - and that such help was always available to whoever asked for - provided the request for help is properly expressed and devotedly presented in form of prayers. Bhakhti has stated as an imperative that man approaches the personified deity, his personal god, with loving devotion. Bhakhti is the 'surrender to God'. God is addressed as 'Hari', as "The One Who Removes Sin'. People are instructed and guided to identify with God. He is Realization. God is

everywhere. He is also inside man. Through the total submission of all he is and hopes, man is placed in the position to appreciate his relationship with God".

"Is Bhakhti entirely free of a mystic component ?", I asked a Vishnu priest with whom we had been conversing on and off in the course of various days.

"Even if this were the case, such a factor would be of very litle importance. It is true, Bhakhti knows saints and teachers who were mystics", he told me, "but in truth Bhakhti is a straight forward religion without the usual trimmings of the other religions. For this reason it is a popular religion in every sense of the word. And considering the prevailing general tendency to introduce reforms which, in their externals at least characterize our times, we can expect the Bakhti movement to spread still further. The Bhakhti system is today the most accepted approach by which people give expression to - and find satisfaction for - their religious needs. Its main feature and greatest attraction", the priest repeated again and again, "is the direct and personal partecipation of the individual in the devotional program. It must have been also your experience, that a divine service of such nature will educate the individual to cultivate a more effective self-discipline. This has been at least my own experience, that is to say, that it induces man to discipline his senses".

"How would you define Bhakhti: as a cult, as a sect, or a religion ? ", I once asked a Professor of philosophy in Madras, a fervent follower of Bhakhti.

"It exists and funcions under all three labels. But it is not a cult in the sense I understand a cult, that means it is not an unconventional religion. Perhaps I should call it a sect, the best definition of which is a reformed, an in some form new organization of an existing conventional faith ? Experience shows that a sect lives in a state of enmity and tension with its original church institution. But this does not apply to Bhakhti. Should I prefer to call it a new religion, though in its faith system and its ritual only a few specifics have been given a new if at all any revolutionary interpretation ? I think it is best to call Bhakhti a new religious interpretation; one let us say, which has the great advantage of feeling comfortable in its environment and enjoys the benevolence of its mother religion Hinduism".

"Would you call Bhakhtism a polytheistic religion ? ".

"Basically it is not", he told me. "Bhakhti gives importance, and grants a place, to those post-Vedic gods - mainly Vishnu and Shiva, and in particular Krishna - who today dominate the devotion of large sections of Hindus. Our's is the most generally accepted religious principle among the Hindus. We perceive Krishna as an Avatar, as Vishnu incarnated. Our religious system is outlined in the most popular part of the Gita. It appeals to all classes of Indians. However, it does not engage the intellect - and in our case it is an advantage that it is not an intellectual religion. It offers also another advantage: hymns and prayers are expressed in the vernacular. If you look around you will agree that in their very simple attitude and plain approach to the transcendental our people are happy people - although they are well aware that this is not the way to acquire that knowledge which would bring them ultimately the salvation they crave no less than all other human beings".

"I find it remarkable, however, that at the time it was founded, Bhakhti Hinduism has not abolished the caste system as Jainism and Buddhism did".

"At that time it would have been incongruous for Bhaktism to do so. The Brahmin caste was considered an integral part of the sacred order; and it was generally accepted that salvation could only be achieved with their assistance. At the time Bhakti was born, it was the all-overwhelming belief, that whoever learns the right way to feel and show the true kind of devotion, will reach God only with the help and through the knowledge of a priest or by offering a sacrifice which was performed on his behalf by a Brahmin priest".

"Have the priests lost their influence ?"

"The Brahmnins as priests have - but we accept them and their guidance as gurus. The Bhakhtis show the Guru today as great a respect as in ancient times. His views are accepted as the voice of God and full devotion in word, act and deed must be shown to him".

"Does today every Guru preach mainly devoted love for Krishna".

"This devotion for Krishna can in no way inhibit the functioning or the value of a Guru - but neither does it depend on him. In Bhakhti the writings of the Bhagvad Gita and the Puranas are of basic importance. In the Gita the deity is implored to show mercy as 'a lover to the beloved'. This is the principle of Bhakhti: to offer our love to God and to pray that it be reciprocated. For God has power over karman - he can save the devotee from further incarnations".

"This means that in Bhakhti the monotheistic concept prevails?"

"Yes, mainly so. In Bhakhti man approaches God in a true relationship. Man offers loyalty, devotion and love. Whoever has reached the right path, can become one with Brahman-Atman. The effect of karman is weakened, and is finally overcome by the grace granted by the godhead".

"How does one approach God in Bhakhti ?"

"Man can be freed of his sins by the continuous recitation of the divine name and by singing hymns. By fervently praising Krishna or Vishnu one may be freed from one's karman and samsara. The soul is derived from God; it is chained to rebirths and ever repeated transmigration until it is saved by Bhakhti. One may even be able to evoke by deep devotion the presence of the deity".

The Basics of the Caste System.

You will never gain a true comprehension of India and in particular of her inhabitants' mentality and social behaviour, whatever the latter's ethnic composition, their educational background and their social status may be; you will never truly know how to explain their character traits, be they attractive or repulsive in your judgement; you will never understand their religious attitudes, be they rigidified or reformed; you will never be able to develop either an sincere friendship or an honest hostility towards the Hindu society, their circumscribed groups or their separate individuals- without your having gained a somewhat sufficient knowledge of and a certain degree of understanding for at least the basics of the Indian caste system.

I am not indulging in semantics now nor do I intend to enter into polemics here. The statement with which I have started this chapter is based on what I have personally experienced and what after long deliberations I have come to conclude from my own experiences. And even if on learning of the ramifications, of the functioning and of the effects of the Indian caste system you will be shocked or at least perturbed, never forego reminding yourself of your luck that you live in a society where this system is unknown; that should you ever in person witness the outcrop of this system, it will not affect you personally; that should you at any time emotionally or psychologically be affected by such an experience it will certainly not be for ever - and you will be able to relax in the assurance that it will in no way affect your family either.

However, let me warn you, that whatever you learn and observe will not penetrate and dumb your mind as long as treat what you learn and observe as a purely theoretical experience or as an

academic question only, as long as the human degradation implied in the caste system does not stimulate you into any kind of action or also otherwise makes you think you are called upon to get personally involved.

When we reached the ancient town of Puri, we first visited the famous Temple of Jagganath, an important centre of Vishnu worship. We were readily granted the permission to spend, for as long as we might desire, the nights within the temple precincts.

As was the case with all the temples dedicated to the Vishnu Cult, also here no caste restrictions or limitations of any kind existed within its confines - not only during the prayers but also in the social intercourse between the devotees and between them and the temple priests.

On the occasion of our sojourn in the temple of Puri, I was given the opportunity to gain a thorough knowledge of the caste institution's background and meaning, of its effect and curse. The various priests of the temple, by whose knowledge and devotion I was no less impressed than by their cheerfulness and their selflessness, acted as my mentors.

Among these we were mainly indebted to a young priest, a university graduate who had given up a promising academic career when he entered the priesthood. He was our main guide and instructor throughout our stay in the temple.

"The caste system is as old as Hinduism", he explained to us. "In all its aspects and ramifications it is a particularly Hindu phenomen. It is entirely based on - or let me better say determined by - birth and colour. You are free to call it the effect of - and if you so want also the cause for - racial and ethnic prejudices; but in view of the particular emotion-loaded pejorative meaning these notions have in the West, you are in danger to miss their right understanding if you apply them to the caste principle. This system had most likely been originally introduced, in the shape of a legalized system, as a kind of protective measure by the invading light-skinned Aryans who were clearly determined to be distinguished, and thereby isolated, from the dark-skinned - in their eyes racially greatly inferior - original inhabitants. These social and legal barriers had been mainly erected because the pale-skinned conquerers wanted to avoid with all the means at their disposal the intermarriage of their people with the dark-skinned conquered races".

"From the surprisingly light-coloured skins of your Brahmins I see they did succeed quite well".

"There is no doubt that the Brahmins had been the mainly interested party in this campaign - and in the elaboration of the caste system. There is no doubt that it had been this priestly class which had insisted on the legal, racial and mythological division of the population into separate groups - that is to say into clearly distinct and socially circumscribed castes".

"There are Indian historians", interjected Gobinder, "who think that our Hindu caste system was not a new institution, neither of the Brahmins nor of Hinduism in general; that from its origin mankind had already been divided into classes/castes according to **Gunda** - their working capacity - and according to **Kama** - the functions which they performed. In the course of time the lines of this original division had become smudged due to hereditary factors which had intervened - until Hinduism re-established the differentiations".

"I know of the theory brought forth by these historians - but if they are right that past system had been cleverly made use of by the interested party of the priests".

"What is the origin of the word 'Caste' ?", I asked. "It does not sound to me like an originally Indian expression".

"You are right. The word 'caste' derives from the Latin term 'castus' which means 'pure'. This word had been first introduced by the Portuguese, who were among the first colonizers of the Indian subcontinent. To them this specification had originally the meaning of 'breeding'. We Indians never use this expression; we use the word **Varna** when we talk about the caste system. It will not be surprised to learn that this word means 'colour'. You are right to conclude that the word 'Varna' is more than sufficient proof that it had been the intention of the light-coloured Aryans to distinguish themselves from the dark-skinned Dravidians and the other original inhabitants of the subcontinent".

"It is evident from what I see and hear that after so many centuries the original division into castes is still kept up in all its rigidity. How is this possible in these our days which are considered to be blessed by 'Enlightenment' ?"

"Unfortunately this division of the Hindu people into castes has in no way changed. Whatever progress - call it 'Enlightenment' - we may have enjoyed here in India, it has in no way affected the Caste system - even after it had been officially and legally been abolished by the Government after India had gained independence".

"However can this possibly be explained ? How is it possible that such a kind of social system, which to a majority must mean

which I pray. It is called **Para Vidya,** 'the Higher Knowledge'. It can also be translated as the 'adoration' or even as the 'secret teachings'. Grace, **Sadhana,** is perceived with the acquisition of this knowledge. There may be many other, many more variegated systems and approaches, but they all have the same Sadhana, the same goal - and also the same attitude to the world. But this is not the only approach to a superior spiritual grade; there is a simpler though not always easier approach through **Carya Marga,** the 'Vicinity of the Universe' which can be achieved by means of religious and social observances, by supporting the construction and the consecration of divine statues and temples. You can achieve grace by Carya Marga in the vicinity of the Numinous, and you can also become aware of the Numinous by means of meditation - **Inana Marga.** The later is the highest and truest way to salvation. These two Margas are those of deeds. There is in addition the **Bhakhti Marga,** the way of loving dedication with which you are acquainted".

He stopped for a few seconds and looked intensely into my eyes.

"There are, as you can see, many ways open to you", he continued slowly. "All of them are effective and all lead to the spiritual goal at which your prayers aim. Follow the one which you think will suit you best. Once you have built up the right concentration and have acquired the just spirit, you will be graced by a sudden realization of the Truth".

Most people with whom we came into conversation, wanted to know the purpose of our travel through the country - but surprisingly we have hardly ever been asked why we dressed as Sadhus. I do not know if Gobinder had been responsible for my being generally and everywhere accepted as a Sadhu. If this was indeed so, he must have provided the questioners with explanations arising from what he perceived as my spiritual existence. I do not know what he told the curious people; for when I saw him in the streets, in the temples and in eating places become engaged in conversation with groups of people, I usually continued to walk slowly on or, absorbed in my thoughts, I remained seated somewhere in an isolated place. Whenever I was personally asked the purpose of our traveling, I answered that I was in search of the truth - and this appears to have been a sufficient purpose and a satisfactory explanation of my purpose in the eyes of all the enquirers.

Looking back I realize only now that I have never been asked such a question by any of the many Indian Moslems we met, most of

whose intelligence and learning I had every reason to respect.

Of course, the consequence was so very often that among the enquirers here and there some good soul had an explanation, a definition, a condensation ready of what Truth meant to him personally and which knowledge he offered to share with me. I must confess I did not gain very much thereby, for the 'informations' they gave me were more or less always the same:

"You are on the right path, for Hinduism is the pursuit of truth", I was told by teachers, priests, merchants - and coolies. 'Mahatma Ghandi called Hinduism the search for truth by non-violent means. His **satyagraha**, truth in action, meant to him that God is truth. Yes, Hinduism is a religion of truth. Truth is God. You may deny truth but you cannot deny God - and viceversa".

"Where can one find the truth - **the Truth** ?", I usually asked when I found myself in the company of individuals from who I had reason to expect a more sophisticated answer.

"It is difficult to find the truth", I was on such an occasion told by a wise Brahmin. "Not even every mystic achieves this grade. Says the Bhagvad Gita: 'Among thousands of men but one, may be, will strive for self-perfection, and even among the Yogins who have won perfection, but one, may be, will come to know me as I am'. But let me bring to your knowledge", the Brahmin continued, "that Truth is within man's soul. God is there. He is the Truth. The Rig Veda says: 'Truth is One'. All wise men experience this, though they call the truth by different names".

"But you must know truth, at least some of it, before you know whether it is truth or not", I objected.

"Turn to Hinduism and its wisdom", was his reply. "There you will find the way which will lead you to where you can discover the answer to your querry. There is that knowledge of truth which is teachable by the search for truth itself. Have faith. The essence of faith is the searching by every means to see the truth. One way man can achieve this is by salvation. But be on your guard and beware of the lurking misunderstandings. Salvation from wrong-doing at least you can gain without too great an effort through self-knowledge. You must steadily progress and look instead for salvation from basic ignorance, from moral blindness. Truth is not the attempt to find a way how to bring into agreement subjective knowledge with the objective order, nor with the universally valid knowledge. Truth is in the practice of ethics. This means strict observance of the rules of conduct, of the dharma among other things.

Indeed, truth is ethical behaviour. Once you have acquired this type of knowledge, you will get to that truth which will bring you release from all your sorrows. Rest assured ! You will be released from your samsara, and you will be freed from all further sorrows the moment you come to know the truth. For **the** truth is among other things to be known by knowing oneself. With such knowledge you will also have come to realize the great truth that you are one with the Brahman-Atman. For whosoever has experienced cognition of Brahman-Atman is freed from the eternal cycle of rebirths".

"This means that with such knowledge and in such a state my soul will no more be bound to my mortal body".

"Yes, it is so. But there is much more. Consider what I have told you just now as only the introduction to the truth which is known to every Hindu. Salvation means the separation of the soul from the mortal body. The soul will then come into permanent union with God in **Nirvana.** This is the Leitmotif - you may say - of the Hindu faith".

11.

Another Story of Another Prince.

Gobinder and I were seated on the bank of the river Ganges. Under the impact of the sanctity of our surroundings we were more than usual sunk in silence and exchanged only very occasionally a few words or a short sentence. This did not disturb us; it had become our habit to remain silent for hours at a time. Each of us was usually engaged in his own thoughts, and we often remained for many hours at a time closed off from each other and from the world around us into an all-excluding meditation.

Whenever I merged myself into the all-encompassing cloud of meditation, I submitted with an immense inner joy to the soothing peace which pervaded my being; and I could blissfully float along in a state of harmonious equilibrium which knew not of the problems for which the men and women I met expected an easing solution from me. In this more spiritual than mental release I felt blessed - and remained totally relaxed for a long period thereafter - while I slipped away from the problems of mankind and the conflicts of life which we were daily made to face, and which never ceased to pile up around us without our in any way intentionally searching them out in our daily contacts with the world of which we had become part.

Do not get me wrong ! The state I described just now, the hours of deep meditation in which I was totally unaware of what was going on around me, has nothing in common with the state of limited contact with the conscious world - which in no way and sense can be called a state of trance - in which I found myself that morning seated next to Gobinder on the bank of the River Ganges. I remained throughout aware of myself and of my surroundings. But

in such a state of mental, if not spiritual, suspension I can view in my mind in clearly conceived outlines and with a truthfulness untainted by non-essentials the real meaning of the things I had seen, heard and thought in the course of the preceding hours - and days even - which otherwise might have been stained and distorted by my subconscious wishes and objections, and thus would have been made to appear in a form and shape which did not correspond to their inner truth.

Let me express myself more explicitedly: in my way of meditating and in my concentrating on a subject, I had after the long period of my apprenticeship learned to remain unaffected by the inner and outer influences of which in my conscious state I could not totally isolate myself and which otherwise would have been liable to distort the true facts. Deeply merged into meditation I could see things as they are, and as they were in fact meant to be seen; I could follow their crystalizing into their pure filtrates of truth and facts.

However, during the hours I am about to describe, I was not in need to clear my mind or to isolate myself from disturbing stimuli, nor of putting any my thoughts and impressions into their proper order. I had not totally isolated myself from what was going on around us.

We had been already since a week or so in Benares and were still fascinated by the goings-on near the holy river. Seated on a tree trunk at a distance from the 'ghats' - as the places of main activity on the river bank are called - we were not directly affected by the hustling and pushing to which we had to submit whenever we mingled with the crowds.

We saw great throngs of bathers dip their entire body repeatedly underneath the surface of the water. We saw sick and invalid people carried on stretchers or in chairs or in the arms of strong men to and into the water so that they too could get their dip into the sacred waters of the Ganges. We saw men and women empty into the waters urns or simple paper boxes containing the ashes of those cremated not so long ago. Nearby we saw black smoke - and an unpleasant smell - rise from the innumerable funeral pyres. I wondered whether the bodies had been brought here from a distance for being cremated, or whether the pyres burned to ashes the bodies of people brought here while still alive in the expectation of their dying soon in the vicinity of the holy Ganges.

A cacophony of noise filled the air; but although strident and grating, it maintained that subdued tension which gave the all-containing sacredness of the place its specific patina.

My expectation of encountering here an atmosphere of gloom or sadness, or at least one of restraint or solemnity, was belied by the hustle of the singing or arguing crowds, by the cries of the vendors hawking their wares, by the shouts of the guides offering their services - and above all by the songs and recitations with which the Brahmin priests contributed their own sacramental part to the well established - and to my eyes flourishing - local business of death. A very great multitude appeared to make its living from this unique enterprise of religious tourism.

Something brought me suddenly back from my reverie. I had become aware of a large group of people approaching at a distance. They had formed into a procession headed by a more than usual number of white-clad Brahmin priests chanting their hymns in a monotonous sing-song. Behind the priests walked a long row of well-dressed men and women, of soldiers and policemen. The spectacle should not have appeared to me in any way unusual; it was one of the constantly passing processions carrying the urn with the ashes of a dead to be immersed into the Ganges.

We sensed that somehow it was not the kind of cortege which one could constantly observe making its approach to the river. It was not made to appear different by the more than usual large number of the ubiquitous bystanders which surrounded and followed the parade-like procession.

Gobinder and I had risen from our seats and had approached the procession. For a distance we walked alongside the men and women, the officers and the officials in the procession. We observed the partecipants and watched the reactions of the onlookers.

It was, I realized, the festive way most of the partecipants were dressed, and the joyous manner in which they comported themselves, which made this funeral procession appear so much out of the usual. It was evident that the mourners - I call them thus although they did not give the impression that they did mourn the dead person - belonged to a superior class of society, and that, therefore, he dead person too must have been a person of rank. This impression was further strengthened by the middle-aged woman who walked immediately behind the young man carrying the urn covered with an embroidered cloth. Something in the white-clad woman's proud bearing concentrated my awareness on her, made her appear

to me the centre of my attention. Or was it only the respect, approaching obeisance, which was shown her by those making up the procession and the policemen leading it ? Or was the scene I witnessed made so very unusual by the joyous expression on the woman's face which reflected that radiating from the face of the young man craddling the urn in his arms ? Or was it the reverence which even the bystanders showed to the dead man's ashes ? Most likely it was the combination of all these factors which made the spectacle appear most uncommon. These deliberations, however, did not supply me with the explanation why I had begun to sense in me that transmission of and that partecipation in the rejoicing which could not have been brought on only by observing the procession's exhibition of an air of restrained joy. I tried to identify with the mourners - but did not find the answer why there was the unexpected total absence of even the slightest trace of sadness. I must confess: I was intrigued.

However, after a few minutes my interest abated. I felt I had seen enough. Sure, there had been something unusual associated with the funeral, I reasoned; and though I knew that my mind would occupy itself with this phenomen if not now then certainly at some future time, I somehow did not feel like lingering on.

But Gobinder was not satisfied. As was his habit, he had to know all the details of whatever attracted his attention - otherwise he could not relax, could not withdraw into himself. In the course of our association he had developed an enormous curiosity about things - which was in an inverted ratio to any I myself experienced. Gobinder explained his inquisitiveness with his hope to find some relationship between his and my karman and that of any person or event which subconsciously brought on this urge to ask and to explore. Good old Gobinder saw in this kind of activity a part of the service he owed me. He felt called upon to act as my proxy, that is to say he did not want me to miss any experience which might possibly be important to my further evolving my karman, which his faith painted as one of a most unusual kind; and whenever there was really something I had missed, he made sure to 'collect' it on my behalf.

I watched him walk along at the side of one of the Brahmin priests at the head of the procession and enquire from him about the more than expected non-solemn spectacle. I could conclude from the friendly way the priest reacted, that my friend was going to have his curiosity satisfied in full.

I returned to our resting place at the riverside and sat down on the tree trunk. I must confess that my mind was soon no more occupied with the funeral procession, as I had become fascinated by a procession of ants, carrying their eggs, emerging from underneath the tree trunk and disappearing into a nearby hole in the sands.

After a while Gobinder returned. His quick walk, so different from his usually unhurried small steps; the manner in which his hands gripped the walking stick he held across his lower back; the way he kept his chin lowered on his chest, were to me indications that he was pondering a difficult problem or that he was analyzing a thought complex which had arisen in his mind.

Without a word he sat down next to me. He remained silent. I did not disturb him with questions or remarks. I knew that in due time he would speak if he thought there was anything of interest or of worth to speak about.

Thus we sat in total silence for nearly two hours, each of us occupied with his own thoughts. Then, without lifting his head or opening his eyes, Gobinder began to speak.

"This is a remarkable story, my Prince. The woman walking behind the urn is the well-known Maharani of a formerly independent princely state in the north-east of the country. Since the death of her husband, the Maharaja, some 24 years ago, she has herself, with the help of an efficient and dedicated staff, administered what was left of the state and the estate. She enjoys the reputation of an efficient, highly intelligent, modern-minded, strong-willed - and hard-drinking woman. Her name - and reputation - are known to me. In the past I have on and off heard about her. Many stories about her have been circulating in Bombay. I was surprised to see her here. She was not known for ever having had an inclination towards a religious dedication or for piety in general. She has, however, as I learned just now, continued to support a small, greatly respected Krishna Temple here in Benares, which centuries ago one of her forefathers had founded.

"The ashes which the Maharani has brought here for immersion into the Holy Ganges, are those of her son Jal Singh. He was a not much less well-known figure than his mother. He had once been a very clever and good-looking young prince, known all over India as a sportsman - and no less also as a womanizer. But he was also

afflicted with the family curse: he turned into a compulsive drinker. During the war with Pakistan he held the rank of Colonel in the army. One day, while on duty on the front, he was discovered to have retired to his tent in a drunken stupor. He was court-martialed and cashiered. Only political considerations and the high esteem in which his mother is held in New Delhi, saved him from the firing-squad. Since then he has become an uncontrolled alcoholic. He was drunk all day and all night. Neither the entreaties of his family, of his wife and children - you saw his oldest son carry the urn in the procession - nor the treatment by a battery of medical consultants had any effect. Finally the desperate mother turned for advice and help to the Brahmins of her family temple here in Benares. These cast the horoscope of Prince Jal Singh. Therefrom they discovered what was the cause of the Prince's debauchery, what was his destiny, and what was going to be his fate".

Gobinder paused for some time and then he continued.

This is the story of the Prince and his horoscope.

In former days I might have felt inclined to call it 'a strange story' or a 'fanciful story' even; but such a labeling would sound incongruous coming from my lips today.

"Some 444 years ago", Gobinder recounted, "there lived here in Benares a Brahmin who had acquired the total knowledge of the Perfect Truth. He knew to perfection that his Self was identical with that of the Atman himself. He had gained perfect knowledge of his True Self. He had been made to know that his samsara, his wheel of existence, had come to a stop and that his moksa, his liberation from continued rebirths and deaths, was at hand. He had been able to purify his understanding of his destiny by the good intentions he had formed and followed in his past lives; by his having passed the unending ongoing testing of his moral strength; and by his neutralizing the load on his karman by the good deeds he had accumulated in the course of his many incarnations. He knew that he had to complete 44 years of life here on earth before he could enter that state of bliss, that nirvana which he knew was his to gain. He decided to leave his place of residence in the Himlayas and to spend the remaining few weeks left until his final dissolution, in meditation and ascetism here in Benares. He knew that in the vicinity of the Holy River it would be easier for him to cope with his impatience.

"One late afternoon, sunk in meditation about his approaching submersion into nirvana, he was walking along the bank of the River; and reaching the outskirts of the town he was roused from his state of meditation by loud noise emerging at a distance from a group of dancing men and women. Their behaviour expressed great joy and happiness. And as in his opinion this was an unusual environment for such unrestrained exuberance, he thought he was perceiving a group of Bhakhti followers expresssing their devotion to God Krishna. He approached them with the intention to give them his blessing. However, when he came nearer he realized that it was a group of young people surrounding a number of soldiers, whose leader, a young man dressed in splendid armour and seated on a white horse, was hailed by these young men and girls with songs, with garlands and with endless drinking of wine. Our Brahmin enquired from one of the yung men the reason for this boisterous celebration, and he was told, that the young warrior on the horse was a locally well-known military figure who had just then returned with his soldiers from a victorious campaign against a neighbouring state.

"The Brahmin continued on his way. 'Strange are the ways of Brahman', he said to himself. 'There is this warrior who does not care for the sacred principle of Ahimsa, who day in and day out kills, drinks and whores; who, admired and loved by all, enjoys a happy life. How can it be permitted that a man who loads his karman with so much evil, lives such a happy life !? Sure, he is going to suffer in many coming incarnations for his evil doings, but at this stage and here he is a very happy man. And here I am, a Brahmin whose holy soul has reached the perfect approach to the Divine. I stood there with that crowd, ignored by all, covered with dust by the dancing celebrants and looked upon by them as if I were a beggar. No ! I was not even given the attention the beggars standing nearby have received, for none of the young people has thought of offering me a sip of wine or one of their garlands of flowers'.

"And" - Gobinder continued after a short pause - "the holy priests in the ancient Krishna Temple here told the mother, who in her sorrow and distress had approached them for help, advice and consolation, that the Powers Above had decided that the fleeting moment of envy which the Brahmin had known on that dusty road watching the jubilant crowd celebrating the warrior's victory, had stained the Self of the Brahmin, had loaded the cleansed karman again, had losened his attachment to Atman, had made the soul unfit

to join the Atman-Self. In short, moksa was not yet to be his. It was ordained that for four hundred years the soul which had at that time been harboured by the Brahmin would again and again have to return to life on earth, would have to pass through one rebirth after the other, be it as a beggar, be it as a warrior - or even as an animal should he in these passages have loaded additional sins and guilt into his karman to be cleansed away. But in his last rebirth, it was decreed, he would turn up as a prince in the houehold of a royal family. There he would enjoy all those vices and pleasures of life which he had envied in that warrior-prince 400 years ago. And it was further decreed, that after having completed a turn of the wheel lasting 400 years of rebirths, he would, at the age of 44 years culminate his earthly existence as a debauched, admired, drunken prince - and then finally reach his nirvana. his dissolution in the Great Soul he had missed.

"This was the message the Maharani was given by the Brahmins of Benares about 3 years ago. She returned home and has since been free of apprehension and worries. She submitted to the will of the gods. She allowed her son all the freedom he wanted; she allowed - nay encouraged him - to continue with his licentious lifestyle. She knew what the final outcome was going to be. Last week was the Prince's 44th birthday. His friends and admirers had organized a large party in his honour. He was drunk, very drunk as usual - and that night he fell down a flight of chairs and broke his neck".

Gobinder was silent now. He sat upright with eyes closed, unapproachably sunk in meditation. I too had, by picturing to myself the events he had described, ample material for thought. I let my thoughts carry me along for many hours. I fought not to give in to wondering about the metaphysical in what I had heard - but I failed.

12.

How and what I learned more about my immortal soul.

With your permission, Moshe Chaim, I shall now interrupt the flow of my narrative and insert a chapter which - apart from the possibility that it may on its own merits interest you - will indicate what has induced me to form my hypothesis about the changes through which the religions of the world, deriving from one single common original source, appear to have passed; how they have been made to adapt, in the osmotic relationship between peoples and cultures, to the needs of the peoples, to the current coexistent philosophical conceptions - and to the view those in culturally or socially or hegemonically advanced positions had of their own values and the ways to protect these.

In these past years I learned that even those religions which try to adapt to their times and absorb progressive trends, do as a rule not permit their adherents to deviate into a newly organized direction, into conglomerated form, a new way to express themselves, their perception of and their involvement in the inherited, the faith which does not anymore provide their need. It is, of course, left to the exponents of reforms and changes in the individual religion - in the way it is granted to the expounder of its sibling, the philosophic system - to find their own methods to build the approach road on which to express its ideas; but while the philosopher - in the self-assuring belief that his followers are intellectually of a higher standard - can entrust the seeker with a detailed roadmap as his guideline, as the lightbeamn to the promised goal, the religion-founder, the religion-transformer and the religion-administrator use the power they have over their followers - of whose intellectual and moral standards they appear to have a poor opinion - to prescribe a faith diet, packaged in boxes on which impressive symbols and attractive illustrations are

meant to make the content desirable - and will give effect to the dire threats, shown in not-too-smallprint, which warn of dietary aberrations.

For the next hour or two I shall make the attempt - with the help of a short description of the conception the various religions, cultures and philosophies have developed about the soul, its form and functions - to illustrate what I have just now only vaguely hinted at. (I am fully aware of my shortcomings, i.e. that I am not an expert in even a single of the variegated aspects of the basic concepts philosophers and theologians have developed about the soul of and in man; and that even if I had the intellectual means and the knowledge to develop my hypothesis into a theory, any effort to convey to you my thoughts would require much time and space; and as I could impossibly dispose of the necessary time for such a program, any attempt would most likely, by the paucity and the insufficiency of its outcome, turn out to be more confusing than instructive.)

I shall, therefore, ask for your indulgence, and proffer you the advice, that should what I have said so far, what I am going to say now - and what I shall most likely have to say when I summarize my experiences and my thoughts at the end of this program - awake in you that mixture of interest and curiosity which will lead you to an independent study, you may call yourself blessed indeed.

Since my college years the field of religion and religiosity in every one of their aspects have been of major interest to me. In my private studies and in my discussions with philosophers and theologians at the College I had concentrated a great part of my interest on the question, on the problem, in short on the fact of there being a human soul, as the pivotal theme of every religious faith. I was intrigued by what these experts of the human mind and these custodians of the human soul knew about, thought about, believed about the human soul - or for that matter about the complexities arising from the belief in, the assumption of and the question about the existence of a soul - and indirectly of God.

Over the years and continued to these days, I have indulged in a study of this issue, this problem, this question - call it what you may - and I think we both shall profit and gain a better understanding of the Hindus' religious and metaphysical views, if

I summarize in a general review what elsewhere has been thought and believed in this respect.

The Bible "deals" very distinctly with the soul of man; but if the experts appear not too sure how they should interpret the various biblical facets of the soul, this is due to the fact that Judaism's conceptions have undergone quite fundamental changes in the course of the centuries.

'Neshama', 'Ruach' and 'Nefesh' are the three parts of the biblical soul-system: Neshama is the immortal soul man received from God which after death will return to God; Ruach is that part of the soul which relates to God, which is the breath by which God brought Adam to life, is that part of the soul which does not exist apart from a living person, which becomes extinct with death; Nefesh is life itself.

In the Old Testament the soul itself is a simple entity; it is part of the material body for as long as one lives. The living breathing body and its soul - both of which emanate from God - are inseparable. In the Bible we read that God has given life to human beings by transferring to them something of a non-material kind, his breath or spirit, and that upon death the breath will leave the body and the 'Nefesah' will return to God, while the dead human being' essence, still in possession of its soul, will enter 'Sheol', a shadowy place like the 'Hades' of the Greeks, there to find its eternal home, there to 'join its ancestors in sleep' - and there to continue to vegetate with its vitality greatly reduced. There was no indication in the Bible if, when and whether these bodies would arise from their everlasting sleep.

This pessimistic interpretation of man's fate after death, that is to say the existence of the soul for all eternity somewhere in the underworld in discomfort, in despair and in unhappiness was also a factor in the mesopotanian culture - "There is no way back from the 'Home of Death'" is the complaint - and was most likely the source of the biblical view. The Egyptians too believed in the survival of the dead in the underworld, although the rich and mighty had a greater chance in the beyond. In ancient Greece 'Pseuche', the personality of the living person, leaves the body after death. After the proper funeral has taken place, the soul had to descend to the underworld, the Hades - the realm which is ruled by the god Hades and his wife Persephone - never to return from there. A few of the souls who are more fortunate could rise straight away to the Eleusyan Fields. A similar poor prognosis with regard to the ultimate fate of the soul we find in Babylon and in other ancient semitic cultures.

Greek philosophers exerted great influence on the way their contemporaries perceived man and his soul. Aristotle viewed the soul as merely an integral part of the physical body - and both perish with death. Later Plato's view was to prevail: that the soul is an immortal part of man, and it will return to its original abode in the heavenly area.

In hellenistic Judaism the soul is pure and it is the body which is the source of sin and impurity, while the Talmud states that the soul contains both good and evil impulses which have to be controlled. Under rabbinical influence a change occurred: the soul is now perceived as a part of God; the body serves only as the vehicle. However the soul is now also viewed as an active element, as being responsible for the sins man commits in his lifetime. Jewish philosophers of old tried to reconcile Jewish traditions with the Platonic view that the soul is a distinct entity which enters the body from a spiritual world and acts by using man's body as its instrument. They taught that God has bestowed the soul to man's terrestrial body; that at the time of conception the soul is made to enter the womb; that during sleep the soul returns to heaven; that God takes the soul back after death; that God will on the day of resurrection restore the soul to its former body. Maimonides taught that "the soul...comes directly from God in heaven...and the soul is not destroyed by its carrier's death as it does not require physical life for its activities". The Cabbala contributed the view that man is a spiritual being whose body is merely an external wrapping; the Neshama, the highest part of the soul, is created through the study of the Torah and the observance of the Commandments.

The Christian view is in general similar to the Jewish one - but is somehow not very clearly defined. There is the 'creationist' school: God creates every individual soul; the 'traducianistic' school which maintains that the soul is transmitted by the parents along with the body; and the 'reincarnationist' school which teaches that the soul pre-exists. However, it is commonly accepted that man is not a priori entitled to immortality - that only those who believe in Christ will be resurrected.

The view Islam has evolved about the soul contains many Jewish elements like 'ruh' and 'nafs'. Every single soul is created by Allah anew after the human body is created. Death means the separation of the body from the soul; the latter - with the exception of a few fortunate ones - will have to undergo severe punishment

in hell, and will be returned again to its material body at the time resurrection takes place.

Although the doctrine of a personal survival in a general **resurrection** of the dead is supposed to have entered Judaism about 200-100 BCE, such a concept had already been mentioned long before in the Books of Daniel and Yesaja. Influenced by the Zoroastrian ideology - to which the Jews had been exposed during their captivity in Babylon - that a Supreme God overcomes the forces of evil, will establish the rules of righteousness and will vindicate the faithful who will be restored to a new existence; and under the impact of the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul which is separate - and at death will be separated - from the body, Jewish thinking underwent a profound change. Jewish writing of that period - that is of the 2nd century BCE - began to speak of the resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees fully identified with this belief as did the rabbis of that period.

Judaism became also familar with the concepts of transmigration and reincarnation.

Transmigration represents the concept that something - either a spiritual or a material part of the personality - leaves the dead body, migrates and enters, that is to say is reborn into, another body, human or animal, or even a plant or a stomne. It implies a non-physical entity; it presupposes that a soul, an 'anima' exists separate and separable from the body.

The concept of transmigration is unknown in western monotheistic religions. It is also unknown in classical, that is biblical and rabbinical Judaism. It was first mentioned by Sa'adia Gaon in the 10th century. He had most likely taken it over from Islam's Sufism which flourished in his time. The concept of transmigration was in the 12th century further developed in mystic shape as the 'gilgul' - the 'wave' - by the Cabbalists.

The concept of transmigration is, as much as that of the eternity of the world, incompatible with christian dogma.

Reincarnation is the belief that the soul or the spirit or any essential part of a being having specific personality traits, along with one's merits and demerits, passes after death into another body. This concept can be found in more or less all cultures of the world. In ancient Greece reincarnation was accepted by Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, the Orphics and Plotinus. It was also taught in Manichaeism - Manu's Persian religion - and in

gnosticism. It had, for instance, been expressed in the wide-spread ancestor worship. It has an important place in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Sufism. It has influenced the caste system of the Hindus, as the soul is supposed to return into an individual of the same caste. In Buddhism, however, it is not the soul which is returned but an organic process of the karmic energy.

Reincarnation is not accepted in normative Jewish thought; but it has a place in the Cabbala within the 'wavw'-concept of 'Gilgul'. Also in Islam have the mystic schools accepted the idea of the soul's possible reincarnation.

In modern times too, and in a new environment, has the idea of a soul's reincarnation made its appearance. Should you have had occasion to read the modern theosophistic literature, for instance that written by Blavatzky or Besant, or should you have studied from that angle the writings of C.C.Jung and those of Aldous Huxley, you would have met such an idea complex.

I am going to tell you soon what I learned from Hinduism with respect to the issues I have touched upon in the course of the last hour; and in a later context, when I come to talk aboy my study of and my experience with Buddhism, I shall enlarge still further on the perceptions this unusual religious structure has evolved of these matters. However, at this stage, for completion's sake and to remove any complacency you may have developed about this matter, I am mentioning here and now that in the Eastern faiths reincarnation is built up into a complex system, and that it is made to play a decisive role. For instance Buddhism teaches that a person can be reborn in five different forms: as a god, as a human being, as an animal, as a hungry ghost and as a denizen of hell. However, there is also the consolation that whoever forsakes the life of social responsibility in the world and follows the rules of Dharma exclusively, can hope to achieve salvation in this world.

After this rather short introduction, which I hope will make you 'appreciate' the different, the metaphysical eastern world to which I am introducing you, I am going to continue my tale.

In Delhi we made the acquaintance of a learned Pandit. He sat down next to us while we were resting on a bench in a public park. He was a learned man indeed; and in addition to his great knowledge and to his pleasant character he was one of those people who knew to make matters clear to his listeners - and to enjoy very

much doing so.

When I answered his question about the reason of my being in Delhi with my, by that time already standard, statement that I was 'searching the way to the truth' - to which Gobinder did not fail to add in a staccato recitation, what had become his standard contribution, the background material which he termed 'very essential information about this holy prince's expiring karman' - the Pandit kindly offered to guide me in my search. And as he limited his offer with the words 'ask whatever you want and I shall answer as far as this is within my power and in the range of my knowledge' - which is a kind of reply I rarely heard from others, whether they proved to be as learned and experts as they had presented themselves, or whether in the end they turned out to be frauds - I gladly and without hesitation made use of his kind offer.

I was in those weeks mainly interested in finally obtaining a clear definition of what had in most of my conversations with learned Hindus been mentioned as 'The Self', which at one time or the other I was made to understand that it means or the soul of man, or the soul of the Universe, or the soul of the godhead, or possibly the godhead himself. I had great hope to obtain on this point a definite and unequivocal explanation from the Pandit.

"First of all tell me please, Panditji, whether Hinduism teaches that a human being possesses a soul", I asked him.

"I know of no religion in existence where the notion of the soul is not met with, where within its comprehensive system a clear definition of the soul's origin, essence and destiny is not to be found".

"I agree. But in how far your religion does accept the concept that the human soul is the seat of man's personality ?"

"Man has a soul. The soul is a divine part complete in itself. It possesses the inbuilt qualification of weighing its attached karman; of deciding whether by the development of the Self in the last incarnation the karman has been cleansed in part at least; of judging whether the tests had been effective in the lifetime of the individual; and of concluding whether further testing - and if so of which kind in which form of incarnation - is demanded".

"But what is, according to Hinduism, the nature of this soul, what is the soul's relationship to the human body, and where is the soul localized in man ? Some religions locate the soul in the heart, some in the brain or the liver or the blood..."

"For us this is not even an issue about which we feel the need

to ponder. The human soul is man's Self, and the human being **is** his Self".

"In what form do you visualize the human Self, the human soul, to manifest itself at the moment of its reincarnation ? Is there a family affinity...."

"This question too does not apply to us. We do not teach that the newborn baby carries all or part or even any trace of the ancestral soul. The soul is a potency of its own and it forms with its karman the personality of the individual into which it is planted".

"Then you agree with Leibniz who says that the soul is only the symbolic representation of the human personality. By the way also Kant expressed a similar opinion".

"You misunderstood me. My words did not imply anything which would agree with what Leibniz or Kant may have stated. In our philosophy the Self, that which you prefer to call the soul, is the true personality".

"This is the fundamental teaching of Hinduism ?"

"This is right".

"Every Hindu has to acquire this knowledge. has to incorporate this knowledge into his spiritual and intellectual make-up ?"

"This is right".

"This knowledge leads to, and ultimately also means, man's realization of his Self ?"

"This is right".

"Without this knowledge, without this realization, man cannot advance to his moksa ?"

"This is right".

"In how far is the realization of one's Self the initiation of the process of salvation ?"

"The very quest for salvation begins with man's entering the path to the discovery of the Self".

"Please do not mind if I put the same question again: what is the Self ? How do you visualize the Self ?"

"The Upanishads answer your question best. They say that the Self is all present, is ever existent. It is the level of existence beyond the Atman even. Know that Atman is immortal, that Atman is Brahman, that Atman is Rama, that Rama is God. To remember Rama, to recall him, to evoke him at every opportunity will bring you ever nearer to him - and to salvation. Call on Rama in time of stress or whenever you feel the need to express your thankfulness and you will be helped to advance to salvation".

"Now I understand why the mortally wounded Ghandi's last words

were 'Ram ! Ram !'". I had indeed for [illegible] pondering what these words had meant to Ghandi at that moment. "But tell me, please, how does moksa fit into this ?"

"Basically, intriunsically, totally Moksa is the conception of salvation. It means deliverance from the human condition, from human existence as such - but it does not mean deliverance from moral guilt. It is deliverance from being alive, and in particular it is the deliverance from the wheel of samsara, the process of continued rebirths according to the law of karman. Once you are beyond samsara, you come to the final truth: there is bliss and there is reality. Notwithstanding these long-range views, and notwithstanding the fact that all these solutions, all these promises and all these benefits are far away in the future, man should not despair; he should know that God is never far from man. For God is within man. God, the Universal Atman, is the Absolute Self. He is in every individual Self, in every individual's soul. This knowledge should convey to you the assurance, the certainty even, that all beings in the Universe are one. This is the truth, This is **The Truth**, which man will come to know the very moment he realizes that his Self and Brahman are one and the same".

"And how is this realization achieved ? By what steps, by what action, by what attitude is it facilitated ?"

"There is only one way and only one approach: salvation; that is to say the identification with the Brahman has to be achieved by one's own efforts. It cannot be brought on by a specific karman, neither can it be granted by a god. Good deeds will be rewarded, of course, but the reward is limited and only temporary. The eternal Atman is above all reward and punishment. Not any actions, no active deeds of any kind are required for man's soul to be united with Atman or Brahman; but, says the Veda, whoever wants to reach Nirvana 'should free himself from good and evil'".

(At this moment, talking to you, Moshe Chaim, I realize more and more how difficult it is to gain, without a prolonged study, a sufficiently clear picture not only of the differences in the theology and philosophy of the various schools of Hinduism, but also of their common basic precepts. I should be the last one to deny this fact. I had in the beginning the same difficulties to face. It took me a long time to sort out the principles involved in, and to discover the common red thread passing through all of them, as nearly every one of the learned and deeply pondering Indians I met, talked to, interrogated at length - and admired - had his

own interpretation, presented his particular viewpoint, evolved his personal analysis of even the most basic elements in the philosophy and theology of his religion.

One of Hinduism's most fundamental elements is that of Nirvana. I had more difficulty to ingest this principle and come to a full understanding of how it is perceived and what it implies, than anything else in the theology of Hinduism. I never failed to invite my contacts to speak about Nirvana and to carefully listen to the finest nuances in their interpretations. The talk I had with the Pandit in Delhi was one of the occasions. Let me confess, however, that notwithstanding all the detailed descriptions and the manifold interpretations I received; and that although I finally did acquire the comprehension of what nirvana is meant to represent, I could not understand the logic, the ethics, the purpose even of this principle. I shall tell you why and more when at the end I come to evaluate with your help what I have learned during the years I stayed in India.)

"Please do not take it amiss if I interrupt your flow of thoughts at this stage", I told the Pandit who in relation to me had more or less taken on the role of a Guru. "You mentioned Nirvana just now. I have been deeply interested in gaining an understanding of what it represents to a learned and serious Hindu like you. For us people in the West it is a most significant aspect of Indian thought. I know it means the total extinction of the soul, the 'blowing out of the Self'. It is difficult for me not only to visualize the process but also to understand the meaning and purpose of such a process after so much suffering and at the end of such a long evolution into perfection. Can you give me an indication, a hint how you see Nirvana, so that it might help me in the more extended study I intended to initiate on my own ?"

"To avoid your getting confused, let me point out that Nirvana is visualized by the Hindu in a quite different form than by the Buddhist".

"I know, Panditji, that Nirvana, to be reached via moksa, is the supreme goal promised the faithfulk also by the Buddhist and the Jain systems. But they both say that this can only be achieved by way of a extreme self-deprivation, by leading a disciplined, a quasi saintly life".

"Yes, thus goes their doctrine".

"But this doctrine of Nirvana as the ultimate goal, this doctrine of a total extinction in the end, must have discouraged every trend in man to develop an interest in an advantageous material

position during his lifetime, to have him make an effort to work for his material advantage".

"You appear to repeat what so many modern critics have wanted to imply - and to somehow finally also to establish as facts", the Pandit replied in a resigned voice. "If you look about you, you will see that this is not the case, that your conclusion is not justified. You will find that we definitely form a society where every individual is on the lookout for his own material advantage. However, in a certain sense I must agree with you: this has not always been th case; this is a development which has become possible only since the process of secularization has taken hold of our spiritual world".

"Am I right to say that such changes must also have breached the defences of man's soul against evil ? ".

"Allow me to answer your question - it seems to me it is more a statement than a question - by quoting from one of the Upanishads: 'It is not he who has desisted from evil ways who can realize the Self through knowledge'. And also the Gita states: 'Thoughtless men whose souls have remained undisciplined, will not find God, even if they strive. There is no salvation, no happiness for the man who always doubts'. In other words: the ethic individual cannot be made to deviate. The worshiper has to find his understanding for the Oneness which is Brahman. When he does understand, then his soul will enter the Great Soul".

"And - this state being Nirvana - it is absorbed therein, disappears therein ? "

"No, it does not disappear therein. It becomes part of it and remains part of it. Once he is part of Brahman, man has no more desires and he is freed from the Wheel of Existence".

"What then happens to the soul after a person's death ?"

"A priori you should know that in Hinduism the soul is not a spirit, does not hover around the dead body or his grave as is the belief of so many other religions. We do not know of any ancestor worship in which other religions indulge. We neither believe that the soul of a deceased worries about those left behind on earth; nor that it does become again manifest in one of the family members of any of the next generations, The soul is harboured by the body, leaves the body once death has occurred, and has thereafter no contact anymore with the family. How could it be otherwise in view of nothing being left of the body after it has been consumed by fire".

"Panditji", I returned to this issue again on the next day.

"I have often been puzzled by the thought, that the concept of man's soul ultimately merging into Brahman must contradict the principles of pantheism, which you will agree is a marked feature of Hinduism. How can you explain this ?"

"The concept of man's soul merging with the Atman-Brahman is in no way contradicted or complicated by the concept of pantheism. Let me, with the help of a simple example, make clear to you what basically Pantheism means not only to me personally but is the specific meaning in Hinduism. What I am going to tell you now is an example mentioned in our Scriptures and is in no way the child of my own imagination. Call up into your mind the image of a lump of salt which is dissolved in a basinful of water. The taste of all the water, of every single drop of water in the basin, will have turned salty. That means that every single drop of water must contain a particle of salt. Similarly the Divine is present in everything and everywhere. By this simple experience, namely by tasting that water, you will know that God exists. Atman is contained in everything. In everything that is in nature. But never forget that man is not different from an animal; for man's soul can be re-incarnated in an animal. And you should furthermore know that Atman is identical with Vishnu. He is the Light. He is the Day. He is the Height. He is the Food. He is the Earth. And he is Death. Know and accept that to us humans the Divine is incomprehensible. That the Divine is unrealizable. That the Divine is also omnipresent. It is in everything that is, thatever we see, whatever we touch".".

"In other words: you want me to know that Atman is the soul of man, of the Universe and everything within the Universe - and that this is the meaning of the pantheism in Hinduism".

"Yes, this is so. You have found the right words. And add to this that this soul is without sin. It is without faults. It is free of age and death. It does not know hunger and thirst. Yes, my Prince, your Self is your soul. It is Atman. Man is a soul which has taken on a body. And finally the truth is also that there is no plurality of souls. There is only one single soul. It is the Eternal, the Infinite. And let me repeat: the Atman is not only the individual Ego but also Brahman, the Universal Self. As there is an individual Self, there must also be a Universal Self".

"Let me ask you again: what, in simple everyday terms, is the Hindu's concept of his soul? "

"Simply and plainly that man has a soul ! Fullstop ! There should not be anything unusual in this statement. Even primitives assume man's possession of a soul which survives him some in some

form of life underground. How else will you explain the ancient custom of placing food and drink into the graves ?"

"What in more exact terms does your philosophy say about the soul of man ?", I insisted.

"Acording to the Veda the human contains an 'unborn or undying' part which is not destroyed by death. It is a spiritual and not a material something. It has its origin in a common, solitary and universal spirit, the Atman-Self. The Upanishads as well as the Veda teach that the Atman, the Self, the soul is within man. Atman and Brahman are the final reality; they cannot be described nor rationally known because they are non-phenomenal, have not visible or invisible form, configuration or even existence".

"Can you explain this more extensively, please ? How does the individual Self behave, react in this constellation ? "

"Nothing is permanent, Reality as Atman is devoid of Self. The individual Self distinguishes one individual from the other; but this does not mean that anybody or anything has an unchangeable or permanent Self or soul, for everything is always changing. Once man realizes that the 'I' which faces annihilation is itself only something imaginary, this knowledge of the 'fact of non-selfness' brings freedom from fear, doubt, insecurity and pain. This is a mainly Hindu conception - but Buddhism has the same concept of Atman as Hinduism".

"And what says your Weltanschauung - its psychological, its religious and philosophical facets - to you about all this ? "

"It says all which I have just now defined for you. And it says also more. It says that man's soul - his **Jiva** - survives the death of the body. It says that the soul migrates from life to life. It says that it is more important to take care of the soul than of the body. It says that it is inconvenienced by outside factors. It says the soul is indivisible. It says that one cannot have commerce with it. It says it is impalpable. It says it does not possess any specific physical characteristics. It says its essence is the firm conviction of the Oneness of the Self. It says the soul is tranquil and mild. And furthermore it agrees with the Mandukya Upanishad which says of the soul that 'it has cognizance neither of what is inside or what is outside, nor of both together'. And it finally says that the soul causes the phenomenal world to cease - which saying of my Weltanschauung is the meaning of **Maya.** Have I answered your question in full ?"

"Yes, thank you. But there is the point you might still clear up: Does the concept of Maya you just now mentioned, not also include the doctrine that the world is nothing but an illusion ? "

"Yes, the daily world which we perceive around us is only an appearance, an illusion. Yes, it is an illusion only. It is not a dream - for a dream is an individual experience - but the illusion of a manifest world is a generalized finding; it is shared by all. For there is only one reality: the Supreme Essence, Brahman, God. But Maya is by no means an endstate; behind the illusion is the Ultimate, the Supreme Reality. Whatever you see and perceive a round you, and even in yourself, is only a relative reality - and it is ultimately false. It is the outcome of the creative illusion of Brahman. The Supreme Reality of Brahman though beyond the perception by the senses of man is still there to be perceived by man. This perception is achievable by him who succeeds in conquering his desires and his instincts; by him who avoids what is called 'the life of flesh'. Man can achieve the perception of the Supreme Reality if he practices charity, if he exercises restraint, if he shows mercy. This is the way to the Supreme Realization - to the acquisition which grants man moksa, liberation, salvation. After that there is no more Maya".

"Is this the generally accepted concept ?"

"Not by all, I must confess. The advaitic doctrine, for instance, perceives moksa as not to mean that the soul will merge into Brahman in the way a river flows into the sea, but that it realizes itself as **The One Brahman or Atman**, as the Supreme Being, as Consciousness and Bliss. When this final realization and identification has taken place, Maya itself is shown to be totally unreal and it will disappear. However, one must be careful and understand that when the Upanishads say that ultimately the soul is identical with Brahman, the Unchanging Being, the Source of Everything that Changes, it is not meant to imply that this Soul is the same as the Self which transmigrates from body to body carrying along its load of karman".

"I know that this is the traditional outlook. Have there been any marked changes in this conception in the course of the last few centuries ?"

"To a certain degree there have been such kind of changes. The early Veda period, for instance, was outspokenly pantheistic. It adopted later on a monistic facet which says, that all is centred on the One, is identified with the One - that the human soul is identified with the Absolute. This formula is nowadays revived with stress being laid on moksa, the liberation of the human soul from time, space and matter. It is a monotheism concentrated on Vishnu and Shiva - and thus on the Absolute Reality".

"Is this doctrine accepted by all Hindus today ?"

"Most Indian philosophers accept the existence of a soul, its eternity and its immortality. The thinking and believing of our days is, as I have pointed out, that the Atman is man's soul - is identified with Brahman. This philosophy is accepted by more or less every stratum of Hinduism. The exception is the School of Chavaka, a hedonist philosophy".

"Let me be make things clear to myself, please, Panditji. I know we have already talked about this matter, but I require a more exact definition. Your doctrine says that the soul is liberated after the death of the body. As you will know, this belief is also contained in most other monotheistic religions, namely: that after being liberated from the body the soul merges forever into the Absolute, which is God. The difference between your and the other monotheistic religions' view is, that in the latter this mergence is a fusion with God for ever, and the soul becomes again part of God. Your religion does not see that same finality of the union of the soul with God. In other words, the monotheistic religious systems as a whole teach, that the soul was part of God and becomes again part of God".

"Our belief is that after his death the soul of man does not disappear for ever into the Absolute, in God. It does not even merge temporarily with the Absolute after it departs from the dead body. In the final, the aspired to end, however, this will take place - that is to say when the soul reaches Nirvana. Otherwise the soul remains intact; and it is returned unchanged to life within another body - be it that of a human being or that of an animal or that of an insect and so on. The relative shape or form or species of the body which is going to harbour that soul on its re-incarnation will depend on the deeds done by that soul's person in a previous life. Good deeds are rewarded, bad deeds are punished - but, as I said, not in the lifetime in which they were committed. Reward and punishment for things done in one's actual life will come about in the life to be lived after one's next rebirth".

"Such a philosophy, such a theology, such a theory could induce me to think, that it is not worth living, or at least that it is not worth making a special effort or any sacrifice in life".

"You are not the only one to think so. The concept of samsara, the cause for the rebirth into a new lifeform, has to a great extent contributed to the pessimism, to the stagnation, to the lack of interest in social engagements which is a common trait of the Hindus. You can see many an indication of this among the people of every layer of society. Those who believe in a rebirth are too much conscious of the mishaps and of the sufferings in man's life; of

the inevitability of life and death and rebirth - and also of the futility to hope for a change in one's actual life".

"All this sounds so strange. Inevitably one has to compare your philosophy with the promise of immortality which most other religious philosophies offer their devotees".

"I think you are making a mistake now. We know of immortality too. It is to be found in the world of freedom which is beyond the world of karman. You may know the passage in the Upanishads which say: '....lead from the unreal to the real. Lead from darkness to the light'. Is this not a prayer to be placed on the road to immortality ? We teach and learn that immortality can be had by the person who has reached salvation, but only through the knowledge of the Self and of Brahman. True knowledge is the light which illuminates the path to Brahman and to immortality".

I thought of this conversation when later on I chanced to read what Goethe had to say about the concept of immortality.

He expressed it in the following words:

> '.....I am not at all bothered by thought of my death, for I am fully convinced that our spirit represents a being of an absolutely undestructible nature. It is something continuous from eternity like the sun which appears to disappear to our human eyes, which never disappears,however, and continues to shine without cessation".

You can find in Goethe's sentiments the same faith as that of the wise Pandit - but reached by a less complicated approach.

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13.

A few words about the Hindus' holy scriptures.

I get the impression I have been amiss in not having provided you with the required background by not in some detail describing the ancient writings which occupy a no less an important place in Hinduism than the relative scriptures do in most all other religions.

The following explanatory descriptions will hopefully correct this omission..

The **Bhagvad Gita** - the name is usually shortened to **'Gita'** - is only a small, albeit the most important part of the **Mahabharat** epic. It is the shortest, and also the most beautiful, of all the scriptures which are sacred to the Hindu. The entire opus is made up of only 700 verses. It can be said that the Gita is the Scripture which is most read by all classes of Hindus, that is to say these verses form not only the Hindu's most common reading material in his pursuit of spiritual advancement, but the reitation of them serves also as daily prayer.

The Gita is by all strata of the society valued as a guide through life. It teaches philosophical detachment from the lures encountered. Its recitation is suited to induce a state of emotional devotion in the reader and in the listener.

The **Puranas** - which the ancient sage Vyasa is supposed to have authored - retell the old legends and myths, which to a great part can also be found in the Mahabharata epic. The Puranas reveal that man can achieve moksa, the liberation from the cycle of rebirths, and therewith from all suffering, if he succeeds in purging himself of all passions. The way to reach this goal is by escaping from the profane world into ascetic isolation, or by otherwise succeeding

to overcome one's greed, one's selfishness - and last not least by fulfilling the duties which are imposed by one's caste. However, all this cannot be achieved by one's own will and effort. It is with the help of God that this aim can be achieved, provided one succeeds with the help of Bhakhti, a sincere and deep devotion, to induce the help of the godhead. Guided by the Puranas, which present these basic doctrines in form of legends and homilies, man can be led to acquire the necessary knowledge. But by the study of the Puranas are useful also for man's actual wellbeing: they provide the devotee with an outline of the ways and means with the help of which he can create for himself a life of happiness in his actual existence.

For many a month I had been studying the Gita under the able guidance of Gobinder, and had come to thoroughly enjoy the Puranas. I had already acquired a considerable degree of knowledge about the ancient writings - and this had also made me realize that I needed the help of well informed men to fill in the lacunae which my self-study had left.

From a high-ranking Hindu official, with whom we were fortunate to become associated when we passed through Delhi, I could within a few days learn much about the scriptures in which he was extremely well versed.

"I have thoroughly and repeatedly read the Gita, and I agree that it contains much material for reflection and meditation", I remarked to him when we had tea with him in his garden.

"The Gita is a great opus", said the man, whose erudition had greatly impressed me. "It is of invaluable importance to us Hindus. To us it is what the Bible is for the Jews and the Christians. Read it again and again and study it well. It can teach you very many things. It teaches, for instance, that man should withdraw from life, that he should resist the cravings of the flesh. It preaches **Datta**, that is to be charitable. It teaches **Damayata**, that is to be self-restrained. It teaches **Dayada Vama**, that is to be merciful. And above all it teaches that truth is of supreme value. It promises delivery from evil. It teaches reverence for the Supreme Being. It teaches man to perform his duty according to how it is ordained for him. And it teaches, reveals and promises that every act which is performed in one's line of duty, will be a flower with which one adorns God".

"These are indeed ethical guidelines every decent person will have to appreciate. I learned once that the Gita has been highly appreciated by Ghandi, that he has been guided by it, that he had

organized his life in accordance with the Gita's teachings".

"Yes, he called it his 'source of spiritual refreshment".

"Am I wrong if I say that God is quite distincltly placed in the centre of what the Gita has to teach ?"

"There is no doubt about this. The Bhagvad Gita emphasizes theism in unequivocal terms. God is the primordial teacher, the guide, the friend. Nowhere in the Gita will you find dogmatism advised or intolerance taught. The Gita quite distinctly teaches, that he who acts in the spirit of Brahman and avoids all other spiritual attachment, will become free of sins and will be assured of finding happiness".

"You may mention also that to a great extent it directly and immediately affects all aspects of the Hindu's everyday life".

"Yes, it does. The Gita stimulates in addition man's social conscience; it reminds him of his duties to his fellowmen. It says that 'he who cooks and eats for himself alone, eats sin. He who covets more than he needs is a thief who has to be punished'. It demands furthermore, that the man who has become wealthy by his conducting his affairs in a righteous way, should show hospitality to as great a number of guests as possible".

"All in all these messages found in the Gita have been taken up by the School of Bhakhti as its guidelines, as far as I can judge".

"You are right. These lofty ideas, these moral precepts, are the lights which illuminate the path of Bhakhti. They are suited to be every man's consolation, hopes and roadsigns through life. The Gita is a supreme teacher. You can concentrate all it inspires into these three spiritual pillars:

1. There is Master of the Universe who must be worshiped.
2. A discontinuation in the cycle of rebirths is possible.
3. Life on earth can bring satisfaction if it is perceived in the right spirit and if one aspires to be a good and pious person. One can achieve this within the framework of one's daily activities and within one's usual surroundings. There is no need to turn ascetic and to retire into the forests or to hide in a cave.

"How do the **Tantras** fit into here ?"

"They are a technique by the help of which one is uplifted. The **Tantrikas** are books which provide the initiates with detailed knowlede of the rites and cults. It is this knowledge which is transmitted by the Tantras. These are made up of the **Tattva**, 'the meaning of the principle', and the **Mantra**s, the hymns. Combining these in the proper way, man can achieve deliverance from his eternal bondage. The Tantras have the same aim as the Vda. There is no

difference between the truth you may gain from the Tantra and that which is to be found in the Veda".

"Is there not in all this also a dose of magic?"

"I was about to mention this. In truth the Tantra has, in its popular application within the Hindu's expression of his faith, become a ritualistic and symbolic form of magic. By the way: the Tantras are the only traces of Buddhism still noticeable in India - along with their monuments. We are happy to have the latter still with us, as very little material from our past has survived; most manuscripts of an immense Sanskrit literature have been destroyed when Islam penetrated into India and suppressed Buddhism".

About Ahimsa and other Holy Cows.

It is, of course, understood that in the picture I am painting for you, Moshe Chaim, I pay also worthy attention to the even to me still strange appearing attitude of respect amounting even to veneration which Hinduism professes for the cow. I knew about this institution before I came to India, but this did not prevent me from being very much surprised - though not impressed - by the worship-like attention which the Hindus are supposed to pay to the female representatives of the bovine species. I know what the Hindu Scriptures say about the cow, but I am still not sure whether the individual 'every-day' Hindu really worships the cows, whether he tolerates them as a not-to-be-hurt animal species because it is written he should revere them; whether in truth he does not consider them a nuisance difficult to get rid of.

The worshipful cows are nobody's property - not even that of the temples or shrines. But this does not mean that theirs is an enviable state of existence, one into which a Hindu might wish to be born. What I have just now said may perhaps be the explanation why this strange situation appears to create an ambivalence in the Hindu's attitude. It can with justification be said that this apparent 'worship' of the cow is for these animals in truth a life of unending suffering.

Wherever Hindus live one can see these animals roam around freely - singly or in groups. Most of them are diseased, and very often they are also in a poor state of nutrition. It is true they are allowed to move around freely and without restraint, but whenever they come too near to a house, a bazar shop or a restaurant door they are invariably chased away with sticks or stones - possibly to the hurt of some sensitive orthodox Hindus witnessing the cruel

ways these cows are treated. There is not a western country where such a treatment of the animals would not be condemned as cruel - and punished.

It is commony seen scenario: the cows lying down in the most inconvenient places, for instance on a road crossing where they stop, or at least restrict, at least one line of traffic; or one or two of them blocking one of the narrow streets in the bazars; or watching the vegetable vendors constantly on guard to prevent a stray cow from grabbing food off their open stalls.

Cows are undoubtedly worshiped by the devoted cow-lovers among the Hindus, but as a rule these very same devotees will cruelly drive them away with sticks and stones the moment they become a nuisance. The only benefit they bring to the economy - at least to the villagers as far as I could observe - is the dung they produce: it is eagerly scooped off the ground, often by urchins who fight each other for this privilege; the stuff is patted into pancake-like shape, pasted onto the outer walls of the houses to dry, and used as welcome and efficient material to feed the household fires. But I could also frequently observe that the cow's urine too is greatly valued. Whenever a cow-devoted Hindu sees a cow start to urinate, he will run to her, put his bare hands underneath the flow and then rub the urine over his eyes, his forehead and his chest.

One day the Moslem owner of a teastall in the main bazar of Chundrigarh requested us to honour him by accepting his hospitality. We gladly accepted the chairs and the glasses of tea he offered us. The man was a very pleasant and intelligent fellow. We talked about his personal and family problems, and inevitably he came to tell us also about the problems specifically affecting a Muslim living in the midst of a Hindu majority.

In the course of our conversation he pointed to a group of cows leisurely ambling through the bazar.

"Look at these miserable creatures ! The Hindus will tell you that the cow is holy to them; but this does not prevent them from being without mercy for their sacred cows. Without any compunction they allow a sick and maimed animal to suffer. Whenever you see a vendor in the vegetable market offer food to a cow, he is most probably not a Hindu but a Moslem. You can be sure that a Hindu is more likely to use a stick to drive the poor beast away. We Moslems also own cows; to us they represent food. I remember the bloody riots which regularly broke out whenever one of us

slaughtered his own cow. These riots alway claimed many victims among the Moslems. My uncle in Kashmir was jailed for seven years because he dared to slaughter one of his own cows to feed his family and friends on the occasion of an Id festival. Not far from here is a big dairy farm. It is owned by a Hindu, a very religious man. He has hundreds of milchcows. When any of these gets old and does not supply anymore milk; or whenever one of the cows gets sick - many of his animals suffer from tuberculosis - the problem arises for the owner how to get rid of them. Should he send them into the streets - as is usually done in such cases in our country - most of the animals will sooner or later find their way back to the farm. This rich and pious Hindu has discovered a safer system: during the heavy monsoon rains or during the cold winter months, he keeps the useless cows for three hours in an overheated shed; he then drives them out into the rain and cold; and after an hour or so he drives them back again into the shed. This game he continues until the wretched cows catch pneumonia and die. He loves the cows, the venerates the cows, he uses their urine to cleanse himself and his house - but he will not kill them in a more mercyful way. He loves his cows so much, that he was not rarely responsible that Moslems who dared to slaughter a cow for food, were sent to jail for a long stretch".

To my surprise Gobinder agreed with the Moslem teastall owner.

I told this story to a Hindu lawyer with whom we had come into conversation in a temple in which we had found accommodation. The man was not at all amused, it seemed to me. He only shook his head and sighed.

"Everybody has fortunately or unfortunately - interpret it as you like - the responsibility for his own deeds".

I took this opportunity to ask him also about his personal outlook in the matter of cow worship.

"It is a religious injunction as well as an established fact that the cow is sacred to us Hindus. This worship for these animals has come down to us from ancient times. In some way it may have been connected with the bull worship of the Dravidians, the original inhabitants of North India before they were driven southwards by the invading Aryans. As you may know, the excavations in Mohenjadaro - an ancient settlement on the Indus bank in today's Pakistan - have brought proof that in old times the bull had been venerated by the people in those parts of the country. But this is not a

very impressive or unusual argument. As you will know, worship of the bull - and no less also of the cow - are known to have prevailed also elsewhere in Asia and Europe. There is also the additional - though not the only and exclusive - economic factor, which you must have frequently heard brought forward: that the cow will provide mankind with protein-rich food over many years as long as she can give milk and with her flesh when she is slaughtered - not to mention the use which is made of her skin. The major inducement for the original cow worshippers, her providing milk for a number of years, has been taken over by Hinduism. The importance of the milk-providing cow for the people of a vast and poor country cannot be sufficiently underlined. It was possibly a stratetic move to declare the cow holy so as to prevent the animals from being eradicated in times of famine or war. As you see, in order to protect the cow and to assure her usefulness for as long a time as possible, religion has, as has in this case as in so many others, been made to act as the agent. There is also the additional factor that we Hindus are made to contemplate the possibility, that the soul of any of the cows we have in our possession or which we see roaming around, might once upon a time have been residing in a human being - and that this very same soul may once again be reborn into the body of somebody near to us. An Upanishad says: 'The Atman - the soul - is the very same as the vital force in the elephant, in the gnat, the ant, the four quarters of the Universe'. In other words, the Atman in man, the soul of any living being - and this includes also that of the cow - are part and parcel of the same entire Universe".

"You want to say that this is a case where the religious principle has been dictated by economic considerations ? "

"Not necessarily - at least not consciously. There are many other, many idealistic or ideologic reasons. You may know that Mahatma Ghandi had been an ardent defender of the sanctity of the cow. 'Cow protection' he once said, 'is an article of faith in India. Apart from its religious sanctity, it is an enobling creed....it is very dear to the Indian's heart. Whoever does not believe in cow protection is not a Hindu.....We gave that to the world'".

"For Ghandi, as it is for most Hindus also I suppose, the sanctity of the cow was intimately associated with **Ahimsa.** Would you say, that to a great degree it had also been the principle of Ahimsa which was responsible for the rating of the cow as a sacred animal ?"

I put this question to the Advocate - pleased that I had an

opportunity to bring also up this subject into our discussion. I was familiar with much of what has been written about Ahimsa in the West. I had also encountered this concept in my contacts with the Jains. I knew that Ahimsa was one of the main articles of faith in Buddhism, and that also the Hindus submit to this principle - at least in theory.

"Ahimsa, the principle of non-violence is nothing new; it was already known in the Upanishads", the Advocate replied, "but in them it was not granted much importance. All this changed, and Ahimsa became an important factor in Hinduism, when the Buddhists, who condemned all forms of sacrifices and the shedding of blood in any form, gained an important place on the religious stage of India. Ahimsa is not only the interdiction of shredding blood; it is respect for the inevitability of life. It is an important means for man to gain perfection. Ghandi said: 'As man has not been given to create, he has not the slightest right to destroy the smallest creature that lives'".

"Ahimsa, as Ghandi implies, includes the welfare of all animals, not only of those who are part of the human economy ?", I asked.

"Yes, of course ! Look how well we treat the cows. Have we not just now discussed how holy they are to us !?".

"Would you permit me to say that eo ipso the same kind of respect has also shown to be shown to human beings ?"

"Of course ! We very much respect every human life !"

"Can you say that this applies also to the coolies you see there on the streets toiling under their heavy loads ?"

"Of course ! Each one of them - like you and I - harbours a pure soul. That they are poor, that the they starve and suffer - is not their fault nor our responsibility; this is due only and exclusively to their karman. They have to live this life of theirs accordingly; we are not allowed to interfere in their karman".

At this point in our conversation I mentioned to the Advocate an experience we had in Srinagar - a place in a country where we had possibly observed more evidence of disregard for human life and disrespect for human dignity than elsewhere in India. I had still not forgotten the impact this experience had on me.

This is the story I told the Advocate:

We had been walking through the streets of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. Although it was hot, we enjoyed walking about for hours

at a time as the air was clean, the view elating and the breeze refreshing.

Suddenly we heard from nearby a choir of low voices call in an incessant rhythm the single invocation 'Ye Allah! Ye Allah !'. We stopped and waited for what we thought was an approaching group of pilgrims. We saw instead a large, open two-wheeled cart, loaded high with firewood, pulled by four Moslem coolies and pushed by four others who either put their shoulder against the backboard of the cart or with their helped turning the spikes of the two wooden wheels. All these men were over middle age, grey-haired and -bearded, dressed in grey long shirts and trousers. They were barefeeted and wore small off-white caps on their skulls. These eight men encouraged each other with the rhythmic 'Ye Allah' we had heard.

Their choir was directed by a heavy-set Hindu who, walking alongside the cart, indicated the rhythm by beating his cane on the side of the cart.

We followed the cart until it stopped at the gate of a bungalow. The eight men unloaded the wood and carried it to a place somewhere at the back of the bungalow. When the entire cart had been unloaded, the Hindu entered the house, while the eight hard-breathing, tired Moslems rested at the roadside.

After a short while the Hindu reappeared.

We approached him. He looked at us with surprise but without hostility.

"Ji ! Are you the contractor ?", I asked him in Hindi.

"He did not appear to understand what I said.

"Sir ! Are you the Contractor ?", I repeated in English.

This time he understood.

"Yes, I am the Contractor".

"You supply wood to peoples' houses, I see ? "

"Yes, I do".

"Please do not misunderstand me", I attempted to quieten the man who began to show visible signs of unease or irritation or possibly mistrust. "I do not intend any criticism. I ask only because I want to know something of which I have until now been unaware, and because I am always on the lookout to learn something new. My brother and I are surprised to see you have this big lot of wood transported on such a primitive cart drawn by eight old men. It certainly requires an enormous physical effort to pull and push this cart up and down the hilly roads of Srinagar. Why don't you use a more efficient method of transport, for instance a motorized lorry ?"

"My dear Sadhu", the man replied with a shrug, "my business does not bring in enough money to buy and maintain a lorry for the transport of such kind of stuff. And tell me, please, how long do you think will such an expensive vehicle last on these terrible roads ? How could I ever pay for the necessary repairs ? "

I agreed that this could be a major problem. I told the man so, but I could not help myself to add:

"But why don't you use at least a pair of oxen ? I have seen here many such oxcarts in use on the roads".

"Reverend Sir", the man sounded annoyed now. "Do you know that I am asked this question at least once every day by one or the other of the european and american tourists who come to this place ? I am surprised that you do not know better and affront me too in this manner. Let me give you the same honest answer with which I apparently succeed to satisfy the foreigners: Do you know what it would cost me if these oxen die, or even if only one of them dies ? In the way I handle my business I am giving jobs to eight poor Moslems. It is true, they earn only two rupees for a full day's work, but it is enough to live on. Should one of these coolies die, there are hundreds of others who will only be too happy to take on his job ?"

Two rupees, the daily wage of these coolies, was worth twenty american cents !

I told the Advocate this story. He was not at all impressed, and even less amused.

"Was the Contractor a Hindu ?", he asked.

"Evidently yes".

"Then he has as evidently acted according to his precepts which demand of him, that he has not to interfere with the karman of these coolies".

15.

Religion, Mysticism, Asceticism - the Keys to Heaven.

On the day of our arrival in the Ashram in which we were to stay for a week, we had the good fortune to listen to an unusually high-level discussion between a well-known Guru, the Head of the Ashram, and two visiting Indian professors of philosophy.

In the evening, while I was taking my after dinner stroll around the Ashram campus, the one of the two professors whose contribution to the discussion had made a great impression on me - and of whom, by the way I had learned that he was entertaining the ambition to become a swami - asked me if he could join me on my walk. I was, of course, delighted to agree as I could foresee a profitable talk with this man whose argumentations that morning had revealed not only much knowledge but also a great source of wisdom.

"It appears to me", I began our conversation after we had exchanged the usual preliminaries, "that in one form or the other Atman, the Great Self, is placed into the centre of the Hindu cult. This cannot fail to contribute to the development of an intimate and beneficial relationship between man and Atman, between man and the Divine".

"You are right", was his answer. "But this does not alter the undeniable fact, that with all this it still remains very difficult to approach Atman. For whoever tries to approach Atman in the hope of reaching him, will have first of all to renounce everything he values, like wife and children, house and property - in short everything he possesses".

"This sounds like a quite difficult pre-condition. Is such a step really a sine qua non ?"

"There is no other way. You see, the man who has not rid himself of everything he owns, will remain preoccupied with, will continue to worry about his possessions; and the man who is plagued by an inner restlessness whatever the origin and cause for this may be,that is to say the man who has to worry about profane matters, whose interest is taken up by petty things of whatever nature, will never be able to concentrate his thoughts on anything else, anything beyond the profane. Such a person will never have the opportunity to discover Atman. Only he who has brought himself to give up all his possessions, who has left behind himself all his commitments, and who has above all freed himself of all his desires, can succeed in comprehending the omnipresence of Atman, can come to the discovery that Atman is within himself; and only then, only when he has seen and comprehended this profound truth, will it be granted to him to embrace the Godhead. He will become one with Atman. He will cease to be only an onlooker, a seeker, an enquirer. He will become a 'knower'. In most cases the one thus favoured is a man who, after having lived an active life in his family and his society, has withdrawn into solitude and has dedicated himself to a life of spiritual concentration, meditation and austerity. Such a man is henceforth no more exposed to temptations."

"You are speaking of the mystic ?"

"Yes, in a certain sense I do refer too the mystic, to the man who has freed himself from the world of senses, to the man who has resigned from a consciously experienced life, to the man to whom Atman is his own Self. He becomes aware that Atman is the metaphysical experience of the soul - that he is the soul itself, that he is Atman. The mystic has become identical with the divine, the holy, the mysterious. For many a mystic there will come the moment when he achieves perfection, when he will have reached the stage where he can exclaim in ecstasy: 'Aham Brahman - I am God'"

"This is intersting, Professor; for also the Sufis are known to exclaim in their state of ecstasy 'Ana l'haq'- I am God".

"Quite right. At a certain stage also the Sufi mystic feels that he is God".

"Is it not a pity that such an experience is reserved for the mystic and the ascetic only ? "

"This is not necessarily so. Whenever the average orthodox minded Hindu squats down in meditation and prayer, he too is

given to feel as if he were Brahman".

"Does he feel himself incarnated as Brahman, or only that he is near to Brahman?"

"Deeply merged in his meditation he feels himself to be Brahman".

"Would your description not justify the opinion I have often heard expressed abroad that mysticism is made to play a great role in the world of Hinduism".

"This is not far from the truth. You may have heard, that such a world-involved, from every point of view most practical person like Indira Ghandi, the late Indian Prime Minister, had throughout her life been much dedicated to mysticism. It is a well-known fact that she had surrounded herself with astrologers, yoghis and gurus. I must, however, add, that this affinity to mysticism is not only characteristic for Hindus; also Buddhists and Jains have a similar inclination to mysticism".

"Has mysticism often, if not in every instance, some association with asceticism?"

"It is mostly so, but not necessarily always. Asceticism is quite widespread. It is among Hindus a very much appreciated and honoured religious trend; mainly so, I may say, because a person involved in the practice of mystic asceticism is supposed to have freed himself of all that is profane in him".

"How has a devoted person to proceed if he wants to become a mystic ?"

"A Hindu ascetic is an individual who has raised himself above men and has acquired a special degree of sanctity by fasts and vigils, by silence and retreats, alongside with other privations - rather than by acts of positive piety like prayers, sacrifices and other kinds of offerings to the gods. By the way: this trend to dedicate oneself to a life of asceticism is much more common among the Buddhists whose saints are essentially all ascetics. Among the Buddhists it is believed that by living the life of an ascetic makes people become equal to, if not superior to the gods themselves".

"Strange as it may sound, I have on my pilgrimage only very rarely encountered a true ascetic. Is this possibly due to the fact that in these days the practice of asceticism has become rare in India?"

"I am not sure your conclusion is right. I do not think asceticism has today become a rare rare religious practice among Hindus. It is in certain circles still an esential part

of it - at least to some degree. But I have to point out that, in contrast to the practices in other religions, asceticism is in Hinduism not associated with self-castigation - except for the faqirs who in every aspect represent an aberration".

"I am sure that also in the western religions the practice of self-castigation is unknown. Except perhaps for certain religious sects or for the trend among certain catholic monastic orders, I have not heard of any form of ascetic practices in the western religions. How do you explain this ? ", I continued our conversation after having pondered the profesor's words for a minute or so.

"Is there really no asceticism there ?", was his surprising reply. "I am ready to state that it is not even rare ! I am not talking now of certain, often extreme practices favoured by Islam. But what else is the catholic priest's life-long celibacy ? What else the useless, profligate way monks and nuns waste away their lives in the monasteries ? If you define ascecitism as the voluntary abstention from certain activities in life, as the self-imposition of renounciations and of restraints, you will have to agree with me. However, such a definition does not fit our ascetics in the East; they require another definition and the application of different standards; to them their strict asceticism is the total, the exclusive scheme of their lives. To them it has become their existence".

"Do you think being an ascetic means much suffering ? "

"To many it does - and it does so most of the time. But you may be surprised to learn that often the opposite is the case. To many an ascetic his way of life has ceased to be a suffering after he has learned to endure, after he has become immune to the suffering. It is often difficult to come to the right conclusion as one or the other among them may think he is called upon to evoke in those who ask him about this or who observe him in his lair, the impression that they suffer greatly. And one or the other among them thinks it even incumbent on him to make those outside his circle, the profane world, believe that on behalf of the world and of all mankind he has taken upon himself all the suffering in the world".

"What, do you think, is the character, is the kind of psychological peculiarity of a man who is willing to live an ascetic life ?"

"I am reluctant to make a physiological deviation or psychological aberration responsible. Still, I can somehow not avoid the impression that all this business of asceticism

may well have been a reaction to the social and economic conditions which prevailed in our country in the past and continues to do so today; for Hinduism is in no way a religion which values world-renounciation. Yes, coming to think of it, it is most likely that economic factors, in other words the effects of poverty, have contributed to the great number of ascetics one finds in this country. However, we cannot deny that also ideological factors play a role; asceticism is after all the practice of that withdrawal from the realities of life which Hinduism proclaims as praiseworthy. And it is furthermore a fact that even the modern-minded among us Hindus see in ascetics holy men who are approaching perfection and salvation. They are greatly respected and their livelihood is always assured, because a Hindu thinks he will acquire considerable merit if he supports these mystics and ascetics".

"It is interesting to hear you say this, for I do not have the impression that there is much charity nor any great keenness to help the underdog here".

"You are mistaken. Sure, there is the strong karmatic belief that the man who suffers is given the opportunity here on earth to cleanse himself from the sins of his past lives and that we should not interfere with the opportunity he is given to achieve this. But notwithstanding this consideration most Hindus see great merit in doing charitable deeds; in regularly helping the poor among us with donations and also otherwise; in establishing charitable trusts and in building hospitals. The wealthy Hindu, the established householder, is expected to support those who dedicate their lives to study, to meditation, to asceticism. A well-situated Hindu is suposed to offer hospitality and to make gifts to those in need; and this he does, as I have just now mentioned, by establishing schools, parks, wells in addition to founding hospitals and so on".

"Let me request you to clear this point further, please: do these charitable works not interfere with the karman of those who benefit from these charities ?"

"Only the superstitious or the uneducated will think so".

"Is there much of such or other superstition among the people".

"Very much indeed. What else can you expect from a people which is 90% or more illiterate. After all, superstition is to religion what astrology is to astronomy".

"There is another question to which I would appreciate your answer, Professor", I continued after a pause. "Is there anything resembling 'mysteries' in Hinduism of the kind so many other religions harbour ?"

"We do not know the kind of mysteries as were enjoyed by the Egyptians in form of the Osiris legends, by the Greek in form of the Eleusian or Orphirian ones, by the Christians as justification for their mass. Neither do we know anything approaching the ancient mystery religions which had been so successful in the mediterranean area because they promised immediate salvation, a friendly reception in the world beyond the grave etc., by attracting the benevolence of the gods during the initiate's lifetime. However, I will agree that you have a case if you see in the hinduistic rites, in which symbolism plays a great role and in which recitations and mimic actions can be associated in the dramatic performance of scenes with a definite mystical character. The purpose and the effect of such a program was after all one of the needs for which religion is supposed to provide, that is to say, to explain what appears unexplainable - and has,therefore, taken on an aspect of the mysterious - in the world. Simple or uneducated people continue to be in need of religious rites and ceremonies to teach a lesson, to provide an explanation for tjhat which is unexplainable, and to bring consolation to the people who witness what is incomprehensible to them".

"Does, from your point of view, the need for such a program not turn also science into a religion - and vice versa ?"

"Those are not entirely wrong who maintain that both, religion and science, basically pursue the same end. I am also ready to agree with those who think that scientific thought is only a more perfect form of religious thought. But this relationship which had undoubtedly existed in the dim past is today not so easily recognized anymore".

"Because of the overlay of magic on religion ? "

"Magic - and its helper the ritual - have stepped in where our knowledge has become insufficient. In his simple concept of the true value and the real purpose of religion the primitives of our own society attempt to produce, or at least to cite, miracles and wonders. This I can accept as a harmless, understandable and permissible trend. But this does not mean that religion should ever be allowed to encroach on the domain of science and reason. A person who is true to his religious beliefs, even if he cannot prove that his beliefs conform with

reality and facts, should be granted that what he believes in is true for himself at least, even if he cannot argue his thoughts and beliefs and convictions in philosophical terms of some kind of other".

"You are talking of something which does not require proof, viz:- that religion does not demand, does not require anything even approaching a scientific basis".

"You have stated a long established axiom. Science has long ago divorced itself from religion. Science's constantly new developments, and the revolutionary changes it undergoes from time to time, have made it take a path away from religion. Christianity had the right answer: 'Tradidit mundi homini disputationi', which means 'He gave the world over to the disputes of man'".

"But can you deny, that instead of coexisting harmoniously religion and science are today in an often deadly conflict with each other ?"

"Regretfully this is true. Today we witness a steadily increasing conflict between religion and science - mainly because science indulges in denying religion the right to exist".

"But there is no reason for this conflict....."

"No, there is none. Religion completes where science leaves us without the ultimate assurances. Religion provides moral guidance, it offers man a guideline - but it is not an aim in itself. It is, on the contrary, only a means to an end: to help man get onto the path to perfection, and/or remove the doubts and the obstacles precventing him from setting foot onto this path. But whatever effect his religion may have on man, it may be expected that his faith will induce him not to prefer stagnation or to revert to negativism".

"I was going to say that science can in any case never take the place of religion".

"You are right; there should not be any conflict between them. In religion there remains always a speculative factor sui generis which is alien to science. The latter can at best deny religion the right to diagnosticate on the Universe and on Nature in general, on their origin and their functions; the definition and exploration of these complexes science will never cede to religion. Religion on the other hand has the advantage that it can construct for itself theories for which faith acts as the skeleton - a luxury which science can only afford at the risk of losing, in case of the foreseeable

failure, the totality of the trust it generally enjoys. However, religion has no right to the claim that it has a scientific basis - in its case a failure carries a much greater risk: the loss of faith which will inevitably ensue. There is only one solution: a modus vivendi in which science and religion each recognizes its limits and grants respect to the other".

On the day we had decided to proceed on our way early the following morning, and when we took our farewells from the people in the Ashram, our friend the Professor invited us to a meal in a restaurant in town - and to a final talk.

This gave me the opportunity to present this unusually well informed man with a question which I had only rarely dared to ask less intelligent and less tolerant men.

"What means religion to you, Professor", I asked him.

"Religion means to me what the word means to convey: it means to join, to link. This by the way is also the original meaning of 'yogi'".

"The same applies also to philosophy", I said.

"Insofar only as religion and philosophy see in man a spiritual being whose existence points beyond himself. In every other aspect they go their own ways, although they are very much supportive of each other".

"Unless they are not hostile to each other - or ignore each other. Aristotle and the philosophers following him see in man only an animal with reason, while Paul Tillich defines man in terms of his link with the ultimate or the divine".

"And Carlyle sees in religion a morality touched by emotion. Every philosopher, every theologian - and not rarely also many a vegetable dealer - feels honour-bound to produce his own definitions of religion, of God, of man and of sin. Let us stick to what I venture to call facts. Religion is a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of human life. It is the search for a way to avoid the horror of death. It is the struggle of man to find an atttitude with which he can face frustrations. It is the antidote against all the evils which threaten to endanger human social interrelationship".

"What is the ultimate benefit which religion can provide to you, a believer?"

"Religion has always been part of human society. This

is no less also today the case. Those for whom religion has no meaning do not possess the antidote to alleviate their inner tension; the tools to erect a barrier against their fellowmen's hostility; the moral strength to ease the impact of the ever threatening human tragedies".

"Religion - or better the creators and organizers of the various religious systems - have provided ample sets of rules and regulations; but has any religion succeeded in providing the faithful individual with the benefits you have just now enumertated ? Is it not a fact that even in the best organized and materially best provided society evil, hostility, suffering continue to survive and to withstand all religious influence".

"And you may add the fact that philosophy and science - in company with the latter's satellites like astronomy, medicine and others - continue to chisel away at the very foundations of religion. We have to accept this. These are facts of life. The major problems mankind has to face since its inception - and today more so than eve -, have remained unresolved".

"Does this mean to you, Professor, that religion has failed in its duty or at least in its purpose ? "

"I think you have started from the wrong premises, my venerable Prince, or at least you have not started at the beginning. Religion has not to explore the unusual but the ordinary of the day; it has, without resorting to speculation, to explain the regular events around us, that which is a natural process, that which is the rhythm of nature. You must see in religion the system which tries to organize the relationship of man with the Divine - and only secondarily, as a sideline I might say, it regulates by means of rites man's daily routines, among them the arrangement of the funerals and the disposal of the dead".

"And what about God ? Is the idea of God not an essential characteristic of religion ? "

"It certainly is. But not an exclusive one. Not all the religions relate to God or to the gods. There were and are religions and cults which do not relate to God but still are true religions, and their followers are very religious individuals too. This is related to the fact that religion substituted at times - especially in the beginning - for science and philosophy and has contributed by manifold ways and means to the enrichment of the human intellect. And let me also remind you that no religion is false. All contain some truth

of their own even if they appear to you very primitive".

"Can you imagine mankind, our existence, without there being religion ? "

"It is not imaginable - provided you start from the very definition I have just proposed".

"Would you also agree that without religious guidance mankind would sink into emotional chaos and intellectual confusion ?"

"I agree with your hypothesis, but only under the proviso that a true and honest form of religion is offered to society, and that in its presentation an unbiased and humanistic method is used. Man needs religion, if only because the idea, nay the knowledge, of man possessing a soul is the cardinal factor in religion. And also because religion divides the world into the sacred and the profane. The human individual who is blessed with language; who is capable of verbalizing; who thinks of his future; who knows of his eventual death, has to form his own ideas about what arises from these faculties and this knowledge. He has to form for himself explanations for all the inevitable failures he has to accept; for all the many frustrations he is facing, for all the cruel injustices he has to suffer. He needs religion to interpret all which in his daily life and its variegated experiences points to some ultimate good. He has to create for himself the kind of perspective into which he can fit himself and all he lives through from day to day - otherwise life and fate would not be tolerable. All this applies in relative measure also to the society and to the nation of which the single individual is a part. Mankind will always be inclined to form religious groupings in which the fears and the difficulties, the anxieties and the threats of human existence are shared and spread - and become acceptable".

16.

Yoga and the Yogin.

In the course of the many hours lasting conversations in which the learned men among the members of the Ashram went out of their way to provide us with an understanding of aspects of Hinduism of which I had little knowledge - and of the practical application of which also Gobinder was not rarely ignorant - we learned also much about the Yoga system.

I shall tell you about these, but shall omit all which is less interesting, or at least that which can be learned from general reading.

"What is the meaning of the word Yoga", I asked one of my teachers, a former student of philosophy who had instead dedicated his last few years to the study and practice of yoga.

"Yoga means 'joining or union'. It specifically implies the union of the human soul with the universal soul. The Gita praises Yoga as the highest state a human being can reach as it is a state in which there is no suffering and pain. Originally the word Yoga had meant a collection of philosophical writings made up of ancient teachings. These described in detail how man can find liberation from samsara through the union with the All-Soul by means of the various approaches outlined in these scriptures".

"Can you describe these approaches, please ?"

"There are many forms of yoga, the most important are those which base the soul's final release - the moksa - on concentration and on mediation, on bodily postures and on breathing exercises. These latter exercises lead to the main purpose of Yoga, the reaching of that spiritual level on which man understands that he has to bring himself to perform his duties without any care of possibly being rewarded or without a fear of possibly being punished".

"I have heard about this latter program; and I was greatly impressed by the way it has to be performed and by the ultimate goal it aspires to achieve. Can one reach this goal without a superhuman effort ?"

"It certainly demands a superhuman effort. Not everybody is capable of completing, not even of partially undertaking such a program. This phenomen shows, as you will have to agree, the strength of our religion for having been able to develop the technique of Yoga with the help of which so many men of dedication and strong character can make their desires to disappear; and to replace them with the kind of trends, desires or instincts which are in full accordance with the philosophy of Hinduism".

"Which type of philosophy have you in mind ?"

"The philosophical system of Yoga takes up in their totality the interest, the heart and the mind of the Yogins - as those who practise Yoga are called. In due course the Yogin will have come to recognize how much he has in the past been victimized by the thoughts, the ideas and the wishes which have penetrated into his mind through outside influences; and he will come to consider them not only unwelcome but outright hostile infiltrations".

"Is this how you would define Yoga and Yogin ?"

"In part only. Yoga is far more complex than this. I think I can best define Yoga as a form of asceticism which aspires to the total mystical identification with the Supreme Being. Asceticism demands of its practitioner that he renounces the world so that a union with Atman can come about. Yoga teaches that within us we harbour our own soul - our Self; that it logically follows that a Self - a soul - is equally owned by the next man; that as there is this 'I' in me, such an 'I' resides also in the next man; that the 'You' with which we correspond is in the next man his own 'I'; and that mutatis mutandis my own 'I' will appear to him as the 'You'. Logically it further follows, that the character defects and the moral faults which I might detect in the next man, must be the very same ones I myself must harbour. This is the **'Tat Swamasi'** of which the Hindu is made aware; it is the **'This Is You'** principle which he has to acknowledge as his guide all through life. This cognition which Yoga teaches is taught to every Hindu, so that he can acquire a better knowledge of himself; and in this way he has to learn never to judge others in too harsh a way".

"This is indeed a very impressive guide through life. The full accomplishment in the practice of this Yoga doctrine should certainly have made the Yogin earn his salvation, his moksa".

"The approach to moksa via Yoga is indeed a very difficult

one. Great physical and moral strength is required for this. Only those who possess these qualities should enter the road of the Yogin. It has been rightly said that Yoga is a knowledge which brings liberation to wise men and brings bondage to fools. Those who have not the necessary physical and mental qualities should wait for a better chance in their next incarnation".

"Has one to be a young, enthusiastic and unencumbered man to start on Yoga?"

"Anybody can start Yoga at any time, even in old age. Many do so in fact. However, it is not that simple. A man who intends to take on Yoga will first of all have to find for himself a Guru who can show him the right way. The aspiring Yogin must learn to sit for hours without moving. He must learn to control his breathing. He must repeat endlessly the word **'OM'**, following the instructions emanating from Krishna according to the following passage in the Gita: 'Let him utter the word 'OM', the Brahman in one sillable, keeping me in mind'. Again and again there is the warning that nobody should start Yoga on his own; for in doing so, such a person exposes himself to the danger of sustaining great damage to his psyche".

"This is interesting. A similar warning is also given regarding the study of the Cabbala".

"I am not surprised. This warning applies to whatever form of mysticism practiced anywhere".

"I have heard it said that certain yogins claim to have acquired the capability to look into the future".

"It must have been said about the rare person with super-normal perceptions. Such people exist, you may be sure. They have unusual knowledge of the past and of the future. But with regard to the latter, they cannot predict events in details; they perceive these only in the potentiality of what may occur".

"How would you circumscribe the direction into which Yoga aims to lead the Yogin ?"

"Yoga is the combination of a psychological and physiological effort to break through the confines of consciousness by way of mobilizing the deeper forces inherent in man. It aims at liberating the mind of the Yogin, of the practitioner of Yoga, from all its bondages. It directs him to aspire to self-control. It wants him to adopt a life governed by perfect morality. The Yogin is directed to be more truthful than any other mortal. He is advised to remain celibate. He should be pious, content and strong. He should strive to reach the stage where he is not anymore controlled by his mind - that is by his subconscious. Yoga teaches that man's span of

intellectual faculties is limited - and that the way to gain true knowledge is by intuition, by way of trance, and through the state of '**Samadhi**'".

"What is Samadhi ?"

"Samadhi is that state when the mind becomes one with the object of thought. In other words, when in the totally still and motionless body also the mind becomes absolutely still and motionless".

"As far as I remember there are various systems of Yoga. Do these rules and methods apply to all of them ?"

"Yes, there are various forms of Yoga and each takes a different approach. Each one of them has also its own philosophy, doctrine and aim. However, it would take up too much of your time and energy should I tell you about them in great detail. I shall mention only some of them.

"There is, for instance, the physical side of Yoga, the **Hatha Yoga**, which aims at the acquisition of poise and physical fitness. It teaches self-control, breath-control, meaningful bodily postures; and in addition it prescribes certain kinds of ablutions. Breath control, by the way, has been an exercise which was generally known in India since time immemorial; you will find few Hindus who do not practice a certain degree of this form of Yoga every day.

"And there is the **Raja Yoga** which is a doctrine concentrating on the training of the mind. One is first made to learn how to reach an enhanced power of concentration by not permitting one's thoughts to wander, by not allowing anything to distract one's concentration. One is taught to listen into oneself. One is guided to meditate on one's dreams. One is also taught to meditate on the various manifestations in which the Deity appears. By the way, it may interest you to learn that the practicant who has beeen blessed with success in this form of meditation as a rule reaches the conclusion, that basically and ultimately all religions contain the same truth. The Yogin is furthermore directed to concentrate his spiritual activities into his silent prayers. He is directed to aim at reaching a state of mind where he becomes indifferent to what goes one around himself. Once having achieved perfection in all these aspects of life's conduct, this Yogin will finally be led, by his mergence into Brahman, to a permanent stage of bliss".

"In the course of my wandering I have observed what you mentioned a short while ago: that many Hindus practice some form of Yoga without thereby turning into a Yogin. Can you explain what their status is in the Yoga scheme ?"

"Not the average Hindu, I would say, but the Orthodox may spend much time every day in self-concentration and in meditation. Yoga

is not only one of the six philosophical schools of Hinduism, it is also a physical, mental and psychic technique practiced in the endeavour to live within the concept of Hindu ethics. The aim and purpose and hope in dedicating onself to Yoga's mental or physical exercises is, that it will bring about some degree of spiritual benefit, or will, when very successful, produce a state of maximal physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing. Application to yoga of such a kind and with such a program in mind, is also practiced by Buddhists and Jains. And furthermore it is also an essential part of the **Samkhya Yoga,** whose philosophy makes use of the theoretical basis and the technique of Yoga in order to achieve the highest goal possible, namely the individual soul's total isolation from all other souls and from nature as a whole".

"You never mentioned so far what role a state of trance plays in what you call the technique of Yoga".

"The Samadhi, which I have just now mentioned, may be called a state of trance. It is the successful outcome of one's total domination over one's bodily functions; of totally regulating one's breathing; of completely withdrawing one's mind from inner and outer distracting influences".

"Forgive me that I have prevented you from continuing with the description of the other schools of Yoga".

"I have still to describe the **Karma Yoga,** of which the Gita makes mention. It teaches that one should be active without looking forward to be awarded for one's deeds, and that in one's being active one should not become too much involved in what one does. This school of Yoga teaches further, that one should endeavour to always perform one's duty in the right way and and in the just manner. All this may sound easy, but I can assure you, it takes a long time to learn the technique of even this kind of Yoga".

"I agree its sounds easy but must be less easy in practice".

"And last though not least there is the **Bhakhti Yoga,** which demands, that one should learn to surrender oneself to the Divine not by offering sacrifices but by love and devotion and without the expectation of a reward. This is a very important principle, as by practicing it the devotee will come to realize that the social order is divinely ordained".

"Tell me, please, whether you think that all the yogins whom one sees and of whom one hears, are really and sincerely engaged in their yoga".

"I mentioned already that there are many people who practice yoga for only a short time every day. There are others who are engaged in their yoga throughout the entire day. Many ascetics

are yogins. But I suppose you wanted to know whether there are Yogins who are not true to the teaching of yoga. I have to concede that there are many yogins among us who have selected yoga as their profession, as in this way they can avoid doing an honest day's work. You may take this to mean that they are fakes and cheats. They may be in possession - and in command - of all the technical knowledge, but it is without any spiritual content; nor is there any ethical value or spiritual motive in what they do. This is one of the reasons why so many of the modern reformers have taken a stand against Yoga and Yogins".

17.

A Medical Intermezzo.

You have asked me about my health, whether in all those months and years I had spent in India I had ever been ill; whether the physical efforts, the climate, the food, the impossibility many a time to attend to even primitive rules of hygiene, the onslaught of filth etc. had affected my health. To all this I can only say, Moshe Chaim, that throughout all those years I have been well and fit, and that I had been only once in need of medical attention.

I am going to tell you about this experience - it contains some elements which, I suppose, will throw a light on the waves created by the clash of cultures and civilizations.

One day, while we were spending a restful week in Hyderabad-Deccan - the capital city of what had once been the realm of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the moslem prince who ruled over a large population the majority of which were Hindus - I noticed that a mosquito bite on my lower right leg had become infected. My friend Gobinder urged me to consult a doctor; and as I felt increasingly uncomfortable - and possibly feverish - I consented. On enquiring in the local Ashram, where we had found accomodation during our stay, we were given the name of Dr. Prem Nath, who was reputed to be one of the leading physicians and surgeons in town.

The brass plate outside the house showed that the Doctor was a physician and a surgeon too, that he had an M.B.,B.S. degree and it indicated further that also Mrs. Prem Nath worked therein as a 'lady doctor'. The waitingroom of Dr. Prem Nath's surgery

was full of patients. All of them were men. There was, apparently, another waitingroom reserved for females in quest of Mrs. Prem Nath's services.

Some of the men rose from their squatting positions when we entered, and saluted us with a 'namaste'. The Reception Clerk, a Hindu, his scalp shaven except for a whip of hair on its zenith, approached us with a toothy smile. He bent down to touch our feet. He made us sit on a bench which the occupants had vacated for us against our will.

Gobinder took the Babu by the arm and led him aside. Whatever he was told must have made a great impression on the man, for he bowed repeatedly in my direction, each time deeper than before, his face serious and reflective. After the Babu had disappeared into the doctor's office, Gobinder joined me on the bench. Soon the Babu emerged again, and beckoned us to follow him into the presence of the doctor.

Inside the office - where behind a screen the doctor was busy washing his hands - I could ascertain from the diplomas exhibited on a wall, that the doctor was a graduate of the Medical College of Bombay, and that he had received his post-graduate training in London and Manchester.

Dr. Prem Nath, a balding, dark-skinned, corpulent man with a congested face, large glasses and a red mark on his forehead, eyed me for a moment with surprise, but at once and without saying a word, he set out to examine my boil in a careful, gentle and impressively professional manner.

"The boil looks very angry", he said after he had completed the examination, "and there is in addition already a swollen gland in your groin. I shall have to lance the boil, and you will have to go on antibiotics".

"Do as you see fit, Doctor", I replied.

"You are a foreigner, Swamiji", he addressed me while he readied himself and his instruments for the incision. "I can well understand that you do not trust our practitioners of native medicine, but as a Sadhu one would have expected you to do so".

"It would have interested me to undergo in person once at least a treatment according to the Ayurvedic or any other native system of medicine, but even a layman as I knows that the boil has to be opened and an antibiotic to be prescribed. I know also that this kind of treatment cannot be provided by the dispensers of native

medicines. I have, therefore, decided to turn to you for treatment".

"You did well to decide thus - but in one respect you are wrong: also the Ayurveds do nowadays hand out antibiotics, sulfas and other so-called 'allopathic medicines'. Some of these fellows treat their patients even with injections. But, as I said, you have been wise not to entrust your health to these chaps. I wish that also our people here would show so much commonsense. And no less condemnable is also the belief of some your colleagues, the sadhus and gurus, who wander all over the country and who, in addition to their knowledge of things holy, consider themselves also experts in medicine. Let me tell you a story which happened a short while ago.

"Last month such a migratory monk - he demanded to be addressed as a Guru - passed through our town. His reputation as a holy man as well as of a successful healer had preceded him - and was of great help to him. I learned that he not only provided his followers with tantras and mantras, but that he treated them also with some form of magic. Our Prime Minister had been informed of the Guru's arrival in town. I have treated the Prime Minister since many years for a chronic intestinal ailment. I confess I did not cure him because so far no cure is known for this kind of disease; but I can claim that I could at least keep the patient's symptoms in check, and could maintain the man in such a state of health that he can function in his important office and also otherwise lead a more or less normal life.

This gentleman invited the Guru to his house. The Guru did not even examine the patient. Seated opposite the Prime Minister he remained for a long time in some kind of a trance. Finally he gave the patient the following instructions:

"For three weeks you must every morning, immediate on arising early from your bed, take off the golden ring you wear on the middle finger of your left hand and deposit it into a silver mug filled with fresh water from the well in the courtyard of your servants' quarters. This silver mug you must place in a spot on the roof of your bungalow which is most of the day exposed to the rays of the sun. After the sun has set, half an hour before your evening meal, you must drink all the water in the mug; and while you are drinking the water in the mug, the ring will have to placed on the small finger of your right hand"

"And mind you", concluded Dr. Prem Nath with a mien of disgust, "the Prime Minister, who had received a very good education here and abroad, and who is generally known as a modern-minded intelligent man, has been going on drinking every evening the contents of the silver mug, as he had been instructed by that Guru".

"Did the Prime Minister experience any improvement ?", I wanted to know.

"He thinks there is an improvement in his symptoms. But he is an easily impressed gentleman, you should know, and I do not place much value on his judgement".

In the meantime the doctor had drained the pus from the boil and had applied a bandage to my leg.

"You better see me daily for the next 3-4 days", he advised. "Thereafter you can continue to put on the dressing yourself. And take one these capsules every six hours". He gave me a box with antibiotic capsules.

We thanked the kind doctor in a suitable way. We could in any case not have compensated him in any other way for his help. When we returned to the waitingroom the number of patients waiting there appeared to have increased to at least twenty-five men. They all rose, bent forward with the palms of their hands closed together in greeting and reverence, and those nearby tried to touch my feet or at least my garment, all the while murmuring something which I did not understand. I was surprised not so much by their behaviour - I had by then become used to the effects of Gobinder's Public Relations efforts and to the uselessness of my protests in this respect - but by the fact that the majority of the patients appeared to be Moslems. From behind a curtain separating the waitingroom from an adjoining one - most likely the waiting area of the female patients - a few veiled heads protruded emitting an imploring wail.

With some difficulty, and with the help of the Babu who appeared to have usurped proprietory rights on us, we could extract ourselves from the crowd and leave the house.

Arrived in the street Gobinder turned to me with a grin.

"What a charming character this doctor is ! And what an interesting story he told us. Do you agree ? The doctor appears not to have appreciated the cleverness of that guru. I do not know how far your education embraced some knowledge of chemistry, but - as yopu know I once studied chemnistry - I can well explain in biochemical terms the treatment the guru had prescribed. The gold ring inside the slightly impure water in the silver mug will set up a tiny electric current and will therewith produce within 10-15 hours a mild colloidal silver solution, which is bound to have

a mild disinfecting effect in the insides of the Prime Minister".

"Very interesting indeed", I agreed.

"The native medical practitioners of India know many a 'trick' of which modern medicine in the West has only recently become aware. Take for instance the use of extracts from animal organs. We here have known their therapeutic effects since ages - but only recently have they been discovered by western scientists and decorated with the name 'hormones'. Or take the fungi molds which the Ayurveds have since times immemorial applied to wounds and cuts - and which some doctor in the West has discovered only this century as penicillin".

We had, as you can well imagine, many similar encounters and experiences which could provide ample material for tales like the one above. But this would carry my narrative too far.

I prefer to tell you instead about the clash I witnessed of modern education with old-established customs, of the confrontation of modern conceptions with antiquated viewpoints.

18.

East and West do meet - and coexist.

During the months and years of our pilgrimage Gobinder and I must have talked to many thousands of people. We have seen and heard most interesting things. We have lived through memorable experiences. We have witnessed man's villany and man's greatness. We have certainly absorbed also many an important lesson. I have been at times attracted, and at other times repulsed, by what I saw and heard - but I have refrained from uttering any criticism of the people because they were after all acting according to the principles they had been taught and dictated by their religions.

I can say that I have been able to form for myself a valid philosophy of life - or let me better say that I have been able to clarify, to circumscribe, to consolidate a concept of life which appears to have been resting within my subconscious since I do not know how long. I am speaking of a concept which had been vaguely pressing for validification; which had waited to occupy in totality my mind; and which strains now to guide my steps through life.

I added to my knowledge with the help of the thousands of hours I spent in the libraries of universities, ashrams and temples. In this sense also Gobinder benefited to a great extent. We had ample occasion to read books which we would otherwise have missed for lack of time. I am thankful I have acquired, through these studies and through my conversations with scholarly and wise people a large treasure of learning and a great amount of understanding.

These my theoretical and practical studies were not only the best approach to gain knowledge and understanding of the people of India - these studies had also been, at least in part on the conscious level, the primary aim and the original purpose of my journey to the East.

You can well imagine, I suppose, that it would fill volumes should I tell you all and everything there is to tell. In particular I came to sense what the original program of the men who founded the Indian religions must have been; from where they had gathered their theology and philosophy; and how best they thought they had to apply what they knew. I learned of the impact Hinduism and all the other religions lived in India had and has on their people.

Most of what I have learned about the theologic content of the religions activ in India; and much of the knowledge I have acquired about the philosophic principles underlying these religious systems you can, should you be at all interested, read up in the literature which is available everywhere. However, there are so many things which you cannot find in books - or only after much searching - to which I was fortunate to have received an excellent introduction and a most comprehensive instruction, as you must have realized from what I have told you so far.

But having said all this, having tried to outline for your benefit the sources from which I have acquired my new knowledge, I am going to share with you also that awareness and that insight which I would never have gained from any book nor treatises, namely the impact my personal experiences had on me - and the interpretation I could give to the adventures I had.

I have since long given up seeing coincidences in anything unexpected which happened to me. I have learned to interpret such occurrences - in most instances at least - as indications of a destiny-connected development of great intrinsic value specifically affecting me personally or through me other singular individuals.

However, before I start to tell you about all to which I have alluded - or have even only hinted at - let me add a vaguely outlined but most important footnote which will make you comprehend into which direction I move, and which will hopefully convey to you the sense of which I intended you to be aware throughout all my narrative: the years I spent in India have convinced me that man's fate is intimately interwoven with a divine scheme; that certain individuals' lives evolve in a specific direction, in some cases possibly under a special protection; that the existence of everyone of us has - or at least originally had - a specific purpose, and be it only a probe of our

steadfastness and a challenge to our honesty and a test of our morality.

And the final outcome of all I have learned, and which for many a reason I have decided to communicate to, if not to share with you, is my ultimate duty to try and apply my knowledge - if not what I feel are my inspirations - to the existence, to the destiny, to the fate of all you here in Israel and of all mankind in general.

I have been favoured insofar as I could see a set of complex theologies and of vague philosophical ideas - which as I realize now, and as I have hinted already, had occupied my mind in some dim outline before I reached India - begin to shape into a concrete concept of what life aims at, what it represents and demands. It must have been this subconscious urge which had induced me to travel to India, to search in India and among Indians the catalyst with which these ideas and theories would crystallize or evaporate.

Do not be surprised, Moshe Chaim, or even disappointed or discouraged by the material I adduce. All you have heard from me so far represents mostly only the bricks and mortar with the help of which I am constructing my theories. You will have to wait for the completion of the structure of these theories, or you will have to build it by your own efforts.

I am going to mention first - though only in short outlines - an issue which you yourself would certainly sooner or later have asked me to speak about: the role women play in public and private life in India. It will not come as a surprise to you that Gobinder and I had become interested also in what is a social problem. I have already here and there registered some of our impressions concerning this issue.

In general one can say that the women's social standing and their civil rights correspond to the degree modernization, liberalism and general enlightenment have penetrated the society to which they belong - whereby I have to preface, that to the male dominated orthodox Hindu world everything which points to assimilation, modernization and liberalism is a priori tabu.

I had on more than one occasion been offered the chance to discuss this matter with men and women of every stratum of society and of every degree of religious persuasion and educational achievements.

"From my observations I have to conclude that there are today large strata of men and women in India who object to - or at least to not feel bound by - the orthodox concepts of Hinduism". With these words

I introduced on one occasion this topic into my talk with a highly placed government official. "Does this cause great tension among the men and women who are directly or indirectly affected by these changes, whether they have been alreadya effected or are only still contemplated ?"

"This question of the modernization of inter-human relations is not only the one between men and women, and is neither a cause of tension within one or the other class or caste, but is a problem between two totally diverse and opposed Weltanschauungen within the world of Hinduism. There are plentyful instances where the struggle between the orthodox and traditional Hindu on the one side, and the westernized and modern one on the other side has caused a variety of greatly disturbing and inconvenient situations.

"Let me illustrate what I said just now by telling you of a case which happened a few years ago.

"It happened in one of the neighbouring states. The office of Prime Minister in this princely state had for 2-3 centuries been a hereditary institution entrusted to a high-class Brahmin family. It continued to be so under the British rule. This arrangement has been only recently cancelled.

"The oldest son and heir of the latest Prime Minister had received a very good all-round education in Cambridge. Today he could not anymore expect to inherit the office of his father,
but at the time of which I am telling you, he was assured of being in due course placed at the head of the administration of the State. He instilled great hope in us all that under his government the rather backward State was going to be turned into an advanced, liberalized, modernized one. On his return he was to start his career in an important posting, where he could try out his modern ideas of tolerance and social justice, and where he could be sure to count on the willing help and the guileless collaboration of the superior ranks of the Civil Service.

"At the time he had completed his studies abroad he was still a bachelor - a situation not considered commensurate with the status of a young man starting on a career of responsibioity. Without delay, and before he could start on his first job, he was married to a girl his parents had selected from among the suitable Brahmin families. The young couple set out on their honeymoon journey to the USA by sea - today certainly a more attractive way of holidaying than the crowded aeroplanes. As soon as they had embarked the young bride unpcked a dozen or so brass figurines of the gods she was used to address in her prayers. She arranged them on a small table in her cabin. Her husband was outraged. Most likely he was ashamed he

might be judged a backward fellow. He threw the brass figurines through the porthole into the sea. After their return home the young man had to face an enraged family, an excited populace, the hostility of the priests, as well as curses and recriminations from other most unexpected quarters. Had there still been an office of Prime Minister to inherit on the death of his father, it would not have anymore been his. It would instead have gone to his younger brother".

"The moral of what you told me indicates, that much has changed in India - and that much has remained as it was in the past". The uimmature behaviour of the young man had not surprised me - I had witnessed similar cases when the two cultures clashed.

"It depends how you look at things. Incisive changes in India's social life had been introduced in India already about 250 years ago. These changes have been great accelerated in recent decades, and still more so since we have gained Independence in 1948. There is no denying the fact that the long-lasting influence of the British Raj, in combination with the increasing contact our people have with western civilization, with modern ideas and with liberal views, have been mostly responsible for these changes".

"I learned that a number of reform movements have been created in India. Are they the outcome of this ongoing trend?", I asked.

"There are indeed some such movements; and we should pray that they will be successful, as without their influence India will not be able to maintain its place among the civilized nations of the world. The Indian hears himself always admonished that he 'should look inward and concentrate on himself'; and this as well as the Hindu's constant occupation with his final dissolution, his samsara and his moksa, have in recent years more than ever presented a great handicap to the entry of the Indian society into the twentieth century. It is this handicap - the shadows cast by those ancient ideologies and theologies - which the reformers, who have come to the foreground mainly in the course of the last 150 years, want to do away with. However, they do not want to totally eradicate these ancient concepts which have on their own the patina of respect- demanding traditions. The reformers strive to give these ancient traditions a modern shape, and their effort is to deprive them of their paralyzing sting. They toil to remove them from the domineering position they have for so long occupied in the life of the Nation".

"Whom would you crown as the most influential, the most effective among the modern reformers?"

"I would chose Shri Radakrishna and his disciple Vivekanandha. Radakrishna concentrated his efforts on changing what is antiquated in the Hindu religion. For instance, in his writing and teaching he

pointed out that it is not necessary to indulge in all those old, so clearly and carefully defined metaphysical religious principles in order to gain salvation; and he assured the people that nobody of them will have to fear being plunged into hell should he or she follow this advice. Radakrishna tried to weave the spiritual principles of all the major religions with those of Hinduism into a kind of unified all-embracing world religion. Vivekanandha, his disciple, was more progressive still. He demanded far more extended changes. For instance he wrote in one of his publications: 'The great leaders of India have over the last 2000 years only been discussing whether to drink water from the left or the right hand....'".

"Has not Mahatma Ghandi said the same ? Ghandi, of course, will have to be counted among India's modern reformers".

"Yes, there is also Mahatma Ghandi. But I do not think that Ghandiji's ideas will in future be given the same weight as they were granted in his lifetime or until recently. He has wasted his and the people's time and energy with petty things and with persuing childish symbols like collecting tax-free salt or weaving one's own cotton threads into the homespun kadi cloth".

"I am sorry to hear this. What other reforming trends could you mention ? "

"There are plenty more. There is for instance the Neo-Vedantism movement which preaches and practices the cognition, that the true message of all religions is identical, that the goal of all religions is the same - and that it is only the approach which differs. Modern Hinduism does not see an incompatibility between its own religious views and those of others".

"It would be a pity to give up all traditions...", I remarked.

"This is not the case. Neo-Hinduism, the so-called "Indian Renaissance", tries to give ancient traditions and scriptures a new meaning and interpretation. It is true, since our Independence in 1948 many changes have been introduced; but you will today also find an active interest in, and the keen cultivation of our intellectual and religious past. Many institutions have been established with the single purpose to enquire into our past history and to review our ancient literature".

"Are these true reforms or only adaptions to modern concepts and discoveries,to modern philosophies and modern ideas ? "

"It may be as you say. True reform does not mean the reformers have to revolutionize the basics of the religion, to totally eradicate the old. In my opinion reform should mean doing away with antiquated concepts and adapting the fundamentals to the modern age. Over the last generations we had many promising reform movements which tried to do just this, to adapt Hindu concepts to the facts of modern life.

In general terms I would define thus the aims they have in common:

1. to make religion a personal matter.
2. To establish general ethical principles suited to all possible situations, and to make these principles binding for all and everybody.
3. To abolish the caste system.
4. To abolish, or at least to neutralize, the ubiquitous superstitions.
5. To curtail the power of the Brahmins.
6. To free the people from their irrational food tabus, from idol worship and from polytheism in general".

I was very impressed by what I had heard; for I had often on my own pondered the changes the Indian society required.

"It would have a tremendous impact on India's intellectual and social developments", I told the Secretary of State who had granted me the interview, "should these reforms become effective".

I discussed the program and impact of the reform movements with various other intellectuals.

"In my opinion the value of the reforms was greatest, and the efforts spent on introducing them worth their while", a leading politician told me, "when the people could see that in the wake of these reforms there came about an amelioration in their and their family's living conditions. These people had until then been educated to accept the rule that nothing in their life, fate and future could ever be changed - independent of whether what happened to them was right or wrong, whether it was just or unjust. It was this attitude to their fate which the reformers tried to change in the people. They taught them that certain long-established and so far as inviolable stamped doctrines - as for instance the 'unchangeable and unalterable facts' of the karma-principle - were unfounded, baseless and fundamentally wrong. As a logical conclusion following from the uprooting of the deeply ingrained beliefs in the ancient ideology of the caste system, the people were authoritatively told among other things, that whoever wanted to change his occupation and adopt a career according to his qualifications, capabilities and liking, had every right to do so irrespective of the limitations imposed by the caste system. The reformers told the people also, that the concept of the soul's trans-migration - even if one continued to believe that this is indeed our soul's fate - should and could not interfere in one's ambitions. In short: people were told that everybody of us has the right to chose and to arrange his life according to his wishes and preferences - as long as his efforts to this effect remained within the limits of law and ethics".

"Are these reforms legally accepted, and are the changes and the newly framed rights based on the reformers' work legally

protected ? And furthermore: are the reformers and the reform-minded suitably organized ?"

"You must not apply western standards to us. Hinduism is a most tolerant religion; it does not interfere with other religions. Everybody is responsible for his own path to salvation. Many of the reforms came into being in the course of the last century. Many of the reform movements and reformed religious societies continue to exist among us. They continue to flourish to this day, and hardly ever does any of them encounter resistance from official bodies".

"Which Reform Organizations have you in mind?"

"The leading reform societies are the **Brahmo Samaj** and the **Arya Samad.** The former was founded by Ram Mohan Roy. It calls itself 'The Society of Believers in One-Self-Existing Deity'. It has accepted and incorporated much of the Qu'ran's and the Bible's theology into its own form of Hinduism. Among the original followers of the Brahmo Samaj were leading intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore, Ghandi, Nehru and many others. Regretfully some discord grew up among the members of the Samaj when readings from various non-hindu scriptures, which had been introduced into the religious service, were increased in number and began to make up an integral part of the regular prayer service".

I nodded my head. I had heard about this problem.

"Then there is the Arya Samad", he continued. "It was founded by Dayanand Sarasurti. He took a totally different approach. He preaches the return to the pure religious concepts of the Upanishads. Arya Samad demands that every Hindu - and not only the upper three castes - should be permitted to study the holy scriptures. They fight also against the caste system, against idolatry and against the prominent position of the Brahmins".

"It must have greatly contributed to a change in the attitude and the outlook of the Hindu, that leading intellectual and political figures of India are actively involved in these reform movements".

"This is true. Men like Tagore who incorporated many western ideas into his philosophy, and Nehru who placed nationalism above religious power, and many others like them have started a kind of renaissance movement in India. They fought against the rigidified traditions, in the preservation of which they saw no sense as their only effect was to restrict human freedom and mankind's normal development. What Nehru once day will most likely impress you as much as it did so many of us: 'The very gods of India are manufactured in the workshops of England and Japan !' He demanded that India spends less of her energy on religion, and applies instead her genius and talent to the pursuit of science. 'The day to day religion of

the orthodox Hindu', he wrote on another occasion, 'is more concerned with what to eat, who to eat with and from what to keep away, then with spiritual values'".

"As far as I can make out", I commented, "these men, especially men like Nehru and Tagore, no less than other leading spirits of this and the last century, did register a considerable success in their campaign for modernization and secularization".

"Yes and no", was the cautious reply I received. "The Indian of today may be largely westernized, his ideas may appear modern to you and his views liberal, but deep within himself he continues to strugglie with the ideas and views still permeating from the past. He may have received a western education,; he may brand about modern ideas, he may bring up his children according to modern pedagogic concepts - but he will still continue to consult a Brahmin before he sets out on a journey. Even the scientist in the university laboratory, and the parliamentarian thundering his protests against the slightest infringement of his democratic rights, will consult an astrologer before they fix the date for the wedding of their children. They will have their home purified after it had been 'polluted' by the presence of a member of a lower caste - and this includes every kind of european visitor".

I was familiar with this unpleasant - and when evident very offensive - attitude of the orthodox Hindu to visitors who belong to a lower caste than he, even though he may like and respect them.

Let me give you an example of such an instance. It may prove to be also otherwise of interest to you.

One morning, while we were seated on a straw mat in the corner of a temple courtyard, an elderly man, dressed in a long white shirt and dhoti, approached us in a very respectful way and addressed us with the words:

"Would you two holy men grant me the very great honour to grace my house with your presence at a meal ? I pray I may be granted your consent. My house, my family and I will be blessed by your presence".

This was not an unusual experience. We were often invited to a meal in the bungalow of citizens of every social standing; also the language in which the invitation was worded rarely differed from that of this man dressed in a long shirt and a dhoti with the colour stripes on his forehead and the sacred thread visible underneath

his shirt.

The words had been addressed to me, but Gobinder expressed in appropriate polite words his and my thanks; and after he had by looking at me asked and received my consent - as had become the habit in such a situation - he graciouly accepted the invitation.

The gentleman requested us to be at five in the afternoon at the very same place in which were sitting just then, when his servant would appear to bring us to his house.

At the appointed time a servant appeared. He begged us to follow him to the mortorcar which he had parked outside the temple. We were driven to a palatial house standing in a well-cared-for garden. We were taken to a large room which could have served for a far greater number of guests than represented by us the six men he had invited in addition to us. These men were presented to us as friends of the master of the house. Some of them were government officials, others well-to-do landlords.

The meal, though plain, was well prepaired; it presented for us a welcome change from the fare we usually consumed. I must confess, we could not resist the temptation, and against our habit and without our usual restraint, we ate more than we were accustomed to. The ensuing conversation and discussion was also quite interesting and on a respectable level. We learned that our host, a Kashmir Brahmin - a sub-group which other Brahmins like to disdain as of less sublime standing than their own - was a highly regarded Provincial High Court Judge. The Government had offered him only two days before an important ambassadorship. Our presence was meant to bring him blessings in his new appointment.

After we had been transported back to the temple where we were going to spend the night, Gobinder appeared more than usual amused, as I could conclude from his occasional chuckle. After a suitable delay - he knew I would not ask him about the cause of his merriment - he told me what he had learned.

"I learned from one of the priests of this temple that our host of this evening had consulted the Head Priest about our caste status; and he had asked his advice whether it would be proper to admit us to the family diningroom. He worried that caste rules might prescribe that he cannot have us sit in his private diningroom, nor that he could eat in the presence of non-Brahmins like us notwithstanding your special status in the hierarchy of things. The priest assured

the Judge that the usual restrictions do not apply to us, and in particular not to you; that he himself had no objection to consider you on the same level as he occupies himself in the caste rank. As you may have noticed, this latter assurance of the priest had not entirely removed the Judge's apprehension: he appeared to suffer from a lack of appetite, which has under these specific circumstances to be taken as an indication that he must still have entertained some residual reluctance to eat in our company. And take also note not to be surprised, that our host has made such unusual progress in his career; for from what I have told you just now he must be a very careful man. He appears not to have risked even the faintest hint of a possible danger to his and his family's karman. As you may have noticed, he has entertained the small number of us guests
of the evening in the 'official' diningroom where as a rule the social events take place to which guests of all kinds - foreigners, members of lower castes, and even his colleagues of the Scheduled Caste - are invited. You may have further noticed the strict precautions he has taken that the remaining part of the house has remained out of bonds for us. Things would have been different had any of the temple priests come along with us, but this our host could somehow not arrange. One or two of these priests will have to go to our host's villa now - for all I know they may have already left in the car which has brought us back - to perform, with the help of cow dung and cow's urine, the necessary purification rites of the room in which we sat, and also of our host himself because he had touched some of the food on the table, though without eating any".

"With such a complex of precautions against 'caste contamination' he will hardly be able to function in a proper way when he lives as an ambassador abroad".

"It will not be difficult for him to suitably organize a solution for this problem. Wherever he is going to be posted as an ambassador, he will have in the part of the Embassy which is reserved for official functions, a reception room and a dining room open to all comers, while the private section of the Embassy will remain reserved for himself and his family. When eating out he will be offered only vegetarian food which he will mostly only pretend to eat. And when he returns to India after the completion of his tour of duty, he will go through a very thorough purification ceremony".

"I must say, Gobinder, this is an extraordinarily complicated business and a very stupid system; it will make life very difficult for this man". I could talk to Gobinder in this way about such matters, as in the course of the months and years we had been together he had adopted, without my having made the slightest effort in this direction

- and although he was himself a member of a high ranking Brahmin caste - a negative attitude against the rules and laws of the caste system.

"The Judge will be able to manage, I am sure", he assured me. "You have no idea how much better off he is in these days than he would have been only a few years ago, notwithstanding all the problems you can think of. Things have changed greatly for the better in recent years. Two or three generations ago you would hardly ever have met a Hindu abroad, at least not one belonging to a high caste. Anyone who had risked traveling abroad would inevitably have been excluded and ostracised by his caste council. Even Mahatma Ghandi, who belonged to the rather low-ranking merchants' caste, had in his early years been excluded from his caste by his peers because he had gone abroad for his studies.

In this context let me mention that I had often occasion to wonder about all the possible conflicts which Indians with a western education and a liberal mind pattern have to face, when in stressful situations they are reminded of their traditional ways and beliefs.

Into these reflections would fit the tale which we heard from a well-known anglo-indian lawyer in Northern India - that is a man of 'mixed race' - from whom in the course of a few hours we learned very much about the mentality of the modern Hindu.

We had been talking about the difficulty so many of the western educated persons have to free themselves from traditional and other old-time conceptions and ideas.

"You will find men in the universities, in ministries, in the research laboratories and so on, of whom you would normally expect a sophisticated, progressive, modern point of view. And indeed, when you come into conversation with them, you will be impressed by their liberal, at times even atheistic outlook on religion. But whenever these very same persons are exposed to stress and strain, you may see their sophistication totally diappear and their superstitions of old come to the surface. It is as if they had changed within seconds from a tuxedo into a dhoti".

"Please give us an example", I requested the advocate.

"I can tell you an experience I personally had not so very long ago", was his reply.

"One late evening my bearer came into my study to tell me that two Indian Sahibs wanted to talk to me about an urgent matter. He had tried to persuade them to call on me the next day in my office in town,

but they insisted that what had brought them to my bungalow that evening was urgent and could not wait till next day.

"I told the servant to bring the men into my study.

"I discovered that one of the visitors was a well-known scientist who had made a name for himself in the field of nuclear research; and that the other, his brother, was the Director-General of one of the ministries of our Central Government. They had come to me with a strange request: one of my two chowkidars - that is night- watchmen - I learned from them, had the reputation of being a very successful faith healer. The two brothers would be grateful, they told me, if I could 'loan' them my chowkidar for a few days. They wanted to take him a town some 400 miles away to the bedside of their seriously ill father. All medical help had proved without effect on the old man, and the healing gift of my servant was the only hope left to them. I later learned from my head servant, that the therapeutic method which my chowkidar applied, consisted of a magic mantra-like formula he silently whispered to himself. Nobody knew what the words of the mantra were as nobody present in the room ever could hear them; and while mouthing the silent incantations he circulates around the patient who has been placed on a mattress on the floor; and after each step he takes, and with each mantra he silently swallows, he spits into the face of the patient - the spittle having supposedly been impregnated now with some sacred substance. This therapy has to be applied for one hour every morning and evening for a week.

"I could hardly refuse my visitors their request. How could I tell them what I thought about this superstitious nonsense - and about them too ? I made, however, the condition that the chowkidar had to return not later than after ten days.

"Allow me to add some remarks for you further education. I could not do without the services of the chowkidar. You have to realize that a chowkidar is by no means engaged for his proven prowess in watching the house and garden day and night. He sleeps peacefully through most of the night and in chasing away any possible thieves. On occasion one or both my chowkidars complained they could not sleep at night and requested that I supply them with sleeping tablets along with their salary. The value and importance of my nightwatchmen lay in the agreement they have with the band of thieves who 'own' that part of the town in which my bungalow and my offices are located. They pay these thieves a certain share of their salaries, and thereby they seal the agreement that henceforth thieves, chowkidar and bungalow owner can sleep peacefully at night. But when a chowkidar is 'on leave' this arrangement does not always work, and a robbery may be arranged to prove the value of the vigilant chowkidar when he is on duty. This will make

you understand, that a chowkidar is a valuable institution and has to be catered for with diplomatic skill.

"To cut the story short: I learned that the old father preferred to die than to sustain for more than one therapeutic session the indignity to which he was exposed by my chowkidar. My servant returned only after three weeks, after he had gone on a spree to Calcutta. There he succeeded in spending all the money he had earned for his excursion into therapy. On his return the servants of the house, no less than I myself, were repulsed by his newly acquired impertinent and overbearing behaviour. Some of my servants threatened to leave. I had to dismiss the fellow".

19.

...but some have difficulties.

I have had occasions to observe that along with the tradition-bound Hinduism with which I am so much in contact, there exists also in the India of today a strong trend to secularization", I told once a group of Indian journalists who had tried - without success, however - to induce Gobinder and myself to permit them interview us.

"This is indeed so", one of them told me over a cup of tea. "Until not long ago - I may say 2-3 generations ago - India had been the most religious-minded, I may even say religion-centred nation in the world. Since then a strong current of secularization has become manifest mainly in intellectual circles. The trend was to turn areligious, at times even anti-religious. It has tended to take on the form which the German philosopher Feuerbach described in his own country and environment as 'the replacement of the godhead with humanity, of religion with learning, of the hereafter with with mankind's historic future'. Also in this respect has Jaharwal Nehru taken the leadership upon himself. 'I am interested in this world', he wrote once, 'and not in any other world nor in any future life. I do not care at all if there is something like a soul or a life after death'".

"Will in your opinion this wave of secularization bring with it a fundamental change in the religious make-up of India and therewith also in her social features ?"

"I do not think this will be necessarily the case", another journalist, a light-skinned young man with a permanent scowl on his face, answered my question. "People need religion - here in India more than anywhere else. To compense for their misery they need to have something to look forward to, something to hope for - and this they can picture is available to them in their next

incarnation. For this and many another reason tradition will always remain strong a strong feature of our country. Its power will never be broken. Why should it ? Does Hinduism not contain so many truths and so many directives to the road leading to inner peace, that neither secularization nor any of the new religions or cults - like Marxism for instance - will ever make a permanent inroad. A certain degree of liberalization, that is a process of losening the religious restrictions, has already since a long time become a fact of life here. In general one can say these changes have been slowly though staedily been accepted by the majority of India's intellectual world. In saying this I have Bhakhti Hinduism in mind, as you will have realized. And let me tell you further: I am a very liberal and modern thinking man, but I am convinced that because in Bhakhti the traditional concepts of dharma and moksa have been preserved by and within this otherwise liberal faith system, they have proved very effective factors to keep our people within the limits of morality - certainly to a no less degree than orthodox Hinduism - without allowing the latter's restricting pessimism and deadening resignation to paralyze hope and action, initiative and thinking".

I had to agree with what the young man had told us in a rather forceful manner. On our pilgrimage we had many an experience which confirmed what he had said; and we could witness many a case of the inner conflict - and often also of the confusion - which afflict the modern Hindu.

Let me tell you the following instructive story.

Walking one day through the narrow bazar street of a Himalayan summer resort, we were - as it had become a common experience to us - followed by a large crowd of men, women and children. On that particular occasion I noticed that also a middle-aged couple, their skin colour and dress indicating they were Europeans, had followed us for some time and had been eyeing us with great interest. Finally the man took courage, made his way through the throng and addressed us in a rather old-fashioned style.

"You will kindly excuse us, gentlemen, that I am so bold as to exhibit such blatant and ill-mannered evidence of our curiosity. You will hopefully have already understood that my wife and I - intrigued by the attention you have aroused here, and by the fact that you speak proper English to the locals who do not understand Hindi - would like to know more of you and about you. You must

be European Sadhus", he turned to me. "Am I right ?"

I only smiled and nodded my confirmation.

"My brother is indeed a European - or better said an American - on his way to gain the Truth", replied Gobinder on my behalf.

There was no irony in the way the man bowed in appreciation of what he had heard. He extended to us the invitation to have a cup of tea with him and his wife. And as it had been a hot afternoon, and as the evening was approaching and with it the hour when we used to take our second meal of the day, we accepted the kind invitation.

It turned out that our hosts were physicians couple - both of them Americans - in charge of the small local mission hospital.

We met the other two doctors and the nurses - all Indians - who staffed the hospital. We had a pleasant meal in their company. I appreciated that after a few questions about our personal background they abstained from probing any further. Our conversation revolved mainly around questions I put to the doctors about the attitude of the local population to the influx of modern ideas and western conceptions.

"In a recent discussion we had with a group of journalists", I mentioned to Dr. Harris, "we were told, that even the most modern, educated and westernized people here will reveal - especially under conditions of stress - that they still retain many of their past religious attitudes, their superstitious beliefs and their antiquated ideas".

"That journalist's judgement is correct", the Doctor replied. "Even when to all appearances an individual is behaving like a European, he may still show that he is as much a Hindu as he ever was. Not only does he really feel at ease only when he is home in the evening and can replace his western clothes with a kameez and dhoti, but he will turn into a traditional Hindu whenever he is exposed to stress and calamity. Of course, there are exceptions. In the nearby District Town lives a Hindu lawyer. He is married to an Irish woman whom he had met and married at the time he studied law in England. I am ready to state that he is most likely the most successful lawyer wide and far. Here, among the Indians and the informal and easy going foreigners, he has continued the lifestyle of what is in his opinion demanded of an english gentleman. I would not exclude the possibility that deep within himself he really thinks he is one. For instance wife and husband will dress up every evening in long dress and tuxedo, and will slip their

'prescribed whiskey and soda' even when they are by themselves, and also when they stay for a weekend here in this hillstation".

"He must be an unhappy man", I ventured.

"He is. Both are. They have lost contact with reality. They live in a world which they cannot accept - and in a world which does not accept them. This couple makes every effort to remain British. Of course, the more they are ridiculed the more will they ostentatiously persist".

"But you will agree that you cannot generalize, that this couple is an exception to the general rule".

"They are. But the opposite situation, the Hindu whose westernized facade has to hide his unchanged orthodox views, is far more common. I am going to describe to you one such case", the Doctor offered.

He waited with telling story until a servant had refilled our teacups and had offered us the replenished plate with cucumber and salad sandwiches.

"One of the very rich landlords in this part of the country", the Doctor began, "a man of about 35 years with a Oxford degree in history and philosophy, comes regularly every year with his wife to our hospital for what he calls 'a thorough check-up'. We very much welcome such a prophylactic measure. Last month the couple came again, but this time they brought their first child along, a baby of about ten months. We examined the three, took specimen for lab tests, made x-ray films and ECGs of the parents, checked over the baby's physical and other vital signs.

"At the end I told the father: We are very satisfied with our findings so far, but you will have to come back after a week's time. I shall then have the lab results and shall be able to give you the final verdict".

"After a week they returned, father, mother and baby. I informed them that we had found all of them in perfect health except for some excessive weight which all of them carried. I advised them of the changes they would have to introduce in their diet.

"But", I continued, "the one who is really sick, who really needs treatment and medical supervision is this woman", and I pointed to the Ayah - the Nanny - who had on this occasion also come into the office carrying the baby on her hip. She was a pale thin girl of less than twenty years with the figure of a child of twelve.

Her shining eyes, looking out from underneath the overhanging fringe of a plain cotton saree, had been watching every one of my movements and words. Every minute or so she shifted the baby from one hip to the other when her otherwise expressionless face indicated that the weight had become excessively heavy.

"You take the baby home and we shall, without having her come back again, perform now all the necessary examinations of the Ayah".

"It became at once clear to me that the father did not very much like my offer. He looked at his wife, at the Ayah; he hesitated for a few seconds, and then brusquely agreed.

"O.K. Do what you think is necessary".

"Thank you", I politely replied, "but for your information I want to add, that I shall not charge you for this additional examination".

"The man's expression showed his growing anger, but fortunately he kept himself under control. He took the baby from the Ayah and handed it to his wife. He told the girl to make her way home by herself as best as he could, because he could not wait 'until the doctor sahib has satisfied his whim'. Then he marched off followed by his wife carrying the baby on her hip.

"The girl was very shy. On and off she cried into the lose end of her saree. She was very much intimidated, and it was nearly impossible to make her tell us her complaints and symptoms.

"We examined her thoroughly, took a series of x-ray tests, took blood and other specimen for laboratory tests; and when we had finished I gave her a note in which I requested her employer to see me at the end of the week.

"He turned up at the appointed time. He came alone. He refused to sit down. His anger had apparently not abated.

"What have you to tell me ?". His voice was unfriendly and harsh.

"'I have no good news for you'", I began. "'This girl is very sick. She is underweight. She is anemic. And in addition she suffers from abdominal tuberculosis. She may be a source of infection for all of you. She needs complete rest for a long time to come, along with a carefully balanced diet and a prolonged course of treatment. I have written out all the necessary instructions on this sheet of paper, and here are the medicines for the coming thirty days. All this is free of cost. I want to see the girl

at least once a month for the near future'".

"The man looked at me. He looked down on the sheet of paper I had placed in front of him. He looked at the boxes of tablets and the bottles of liquids which I had arraigned on the desk. He look again at me, and then, suddenly, he burst out.

"'You Americans have still not learned. You continue the mischief your British predecessors did not bother to avoid. You too think you must interfere in the life and destiny of people who are not yours to interfere with. Do you know what you have done now ? No ? Let me tell you what you have done ! You have ruinded this girl. You have interfered with her fate for generations to come. I am going to tell you why and how'. He indicated with both his hands and a shake of his head that he did not want me to interrupt him. 'This woman was once the wife of my younger brother. He died just four years ago - a week after he had married her. She was eleven years then and he seventeen. Under what we consider normal circumstances' - he emphasized these words with a sneer - 'she should have been placed with him on the funeral pyre, but the British had in their time forbidden the cremation of widows along with the body of their husbands, and our Government has slavishly taken over and legalized this ordinance. This woman was well informed about this and refused to be cremated with my dead brother, her young husband. But I may confide in you that though in this case we were faced with an insuperable difficulty, we often find occasion to show that we do not care for the orders which emanate from New Delhi', he added his face showing his grim satisfaction.

"'Now this woman is to all appearances alive", he continued, "but in reality she is dead. She is dead for all practical purposes. She is dead to us at least. But out of the goodness of our hearts we have given her employment, so that she has a shelter and can earn her dhal and rice and what else she needs for her maintenance. She has at least a place to sleep, on the veranda outside the baby's bedroom, because not even the lowest among our servants would agree to have her live next to him and his family. She leads the life of a dog, it is true, for a dog she is to us in her unredeemed widowhood. What she suffers now is only a recompense for the wrongs she has committed in her former incarnations. By offering her treatment, and possibly a cure - and by making it impossible for me, in view of my own karman, to refuse to allow her to take your treatment - you have ruined her. You have deprived her of the chance

to redeem by her actual suffering her karman of the evil she has done in her former existences. Do you realize how contemptuously you have interfered with her karman ? Had you not interfered with her karman, she would by her actual suffering have equalized the sins she has loaded upon herself in her previous series of existence'.

"Again he stressed the gravity of my crime by waving his right index finger at me. 'She might have had a chance to come back to life in her next rebirth in a better status. But you have utterly ruined that chance. Now she will have to be reborn for renewed suffering'.

"He looked at me with hatred. He glanced at the medicines on my desk. Then he shrugged his shoulders, turned on his heels and marched out without a greeting and without taking the papers and the medicines with him.

"We made enquiries about the girl", the doctor continued. "We decided to keep her with us in the hospital for as long as the treatment of her condition required. We could not find her. She had been sent back to the home of her parents who live in a distant village. I sent a doctor and a nurse to that village. Her parents denied any knowledge of her. They maintained she had never arrived. Wherever and whenever we made enquiries we encountered a wall. Of course, we could have asked for the help of the police, but this would have been hopeless - and suicidal for our hospital".

The doctor's voice trailed off. We sat there in silence. I felt Gobinder watching me. My personal status as 'honorary Hindu - of which by chance Gobinder had not told the doctor - was not affected by what the doctor had told us, I was going to tell Gobinder. The doctor's indignation could be excused, but not that of the landlord, for it had been both their karmans to be presented with, and to be tested by, the fate, the disease, and the treatment of that poor girl.

Night had since long fallen. We thanked the kind people for their hospitality and left for the small temple situated in the outskirts of the townlet where we had found accomodation.

Baksheesh - the grant of the gods.

Nothing one tells or writes about India can claim to have embraced more than a fraction of its manifold facets, without one's adding also a few words at least about the corruption which hurts even the lowest of the citizens, and by which the foreigner hardly ever remains one way or other unaffected.

Even though a chapter dealing with this social ailment, which is quite well known also elsewhere in the world, might not fit into the projection from which I intend to present India to you; and although corruption is viewed in the East with less distaste, and is far less rejected as unacceptable, than is the custom and the attitude in the West, a few remarks about this to a civilized individual eo ipso objectionable trait in an individual or a nation should not be out of place in the tale you are recording, Moshe Chaim, as this issue reflects also on the outlook the Indian has on his fate and his suffering.

Already on board the ship which had carried me to Bombay, that is to say even before I had set foot on Indian soil, I had been told - and warned - of the corruptive practices which pervade every sphere of public life; and thereafter, whenever we had ourselves occasion to observe evidence of this state of affairs, I heard Gobinder reminisce on the many instances of which he had been a witness if not a victim.

On our pilgrimage we had many opportunities to witness the kind of corruption of public morals, which though it may not be unknown in its many variations and variegations in the United States and I am sure neither in Europe, - they are certainly never accepted

there with such a degree of impassivity and indifference as in the East. I gained a great degree of insight in this matter as I had learned to watch, to listen and never to criticize - or even to express an opinion.

Nothing is easier than to cite some examples.

One afternoon we were passing through the busy streets of Nagpur when Gobinder drew my attention to a boy of perhaps eight years, who sat on a curbstone and was crying bitterly.

We squatted down on both sides of the child, and Gobinder could induce him to tell us the cause of his sorrow.

As usual the boy had that morning been sitting near the bus depot with a basketful of mangoes - the best sucking kind, he proudly added - selling one or two of the fruit at a time to thirsty passersby, when a policeman stopped in front of him and demanded to see his 'vendor's licence'. Of course the boy had no such permit, had never been asked for one, had never been told that he needed one, although he had been selling fruit at the depot since two years already.

"Ah, you have no vendor's licence ? And still you sit here and dare to sell fruit ? I place you herewith under arrest. Get up and follow me !".

The boy, carrying his still nearly full basket on his head, followed the policeman to the police station nearby, where the four policemen 'on duty' ate up all his mangoes and then sent him away with the warning never again to commit the felony of selling mangoes without a proper permit.

Now the little boy sat there opposite the police station with tears running down his cheeks. The empty basked was at his feet. He was the only breadwinner for his widowed mother and his two small sisters, and had expected to buy food for his family with the income from that morning's mango sale.

There was little we could do to help. This was one of the very few occasions when I regretted that we could not carry money with us. We wisely refrained from entering the police station, there to face the policemen or to to complain to their superior, for in due course they would certainly have taken their revenge on the poor child.

In the meantime a small crowd had collected around us, curious to see why two Sadhus were sitting besides a crying boy. I rose from the curbstone on which I had squatted, took the empty basket of the boy and passed with it among the onlookers, requesting from them a small donation for the desperate boy who had lost all his ware. I am glad to say I could collect quite a tidy sum and send the child away smiling and no more crying.

Among the onlookers was a young man who had watched us with more than usual interest, and whom I had in particular noticed because he had added a 5-rupee bill to the coins in the basket.

When we went on our way again, after having sent the the small boy home, the young man came to my side with the intention to involve us in a conversation. It turned out that we had so many things to talk about, that we accepted with pleasure his invitation to 'have a bite to eat' in his house.

He was a young physician. He belonged to a wellknown wealthy family but, he told us with a proud smile, he had been able to develop a 'really good practice' on his own merits.

We discussed, of course, the event of that morning, and we talked about the corruption which prevailed among government officials no less than among policemen.

"You should not condemn the policemen's depravity too much", the doctor advised us; "the guilt lies with our Government which encourages this kind of dishonesty. A policeman's salary is so low that he can impossibly live on it; and he can certainly not feed a large family for which more or less everyone of the policemen you see in the streets is responsible. The policemen are given to understand - the officers by their Minister, and the rank and file by their officers - that they will have to find their own ways to augment their income, that they have to procure for themselves what they need by any means they may chose - as long as they 'do not overdo it'. The higher the rank of a police official the greater is the range of possibilities available to him to 'procure' an additional income".

"Can you give me an example ?"

"Every day provides more examples than one could ever wish for. Let me tell you about a case which has proved to me that notwithstanding my general sophistication and the fact that I was born and bred here, I could still be surprised.

"About half a year ago I saw a Sub-Inspector of Police among

the patients in my waitingroom. I knew the man well. He had been my classmate in High School. He indicated that he had come on a 'personal business' and could wait until I had seen all the patients.

"When I was at last free and could talk to him, he told me the 'problem' which had brought him to me.

"More than a year before he had been disciplined because he had been 'caught in an irregularity' - I suppose he had demanded a bigger bribe than his rank permitted, or had tried to blackmail a person with superior connections, or had used 'undue means' in approaching his victims - and was taken off his regular duty which embraced the supervision of the street traffic in town. He was assigned to guard, along with a contingent of 'other ranks', the residence of a foreign diplomat in New Delhi.

"'You can imagine', the Sub-Inspector complained, 'that in such a job it is impossible to 'make anything on the side', and I do not know how I am going to feed my family. You told me once that you are well acquainted with the Inspector-General of Police, that he is an old friend of your family and a patient of yours. Please persuade the I.-G. Sahib that I have been punished enough already, that I am willing to promise him on oath never to misbehave again, and that he should return me to traffic duty'.

"I do not know what induced me to do so", the young doctor continued. "but I spoke to the I.-G. when he next came to see me. And in due course the Sargent was returned to traffic duty.

"A few months later - that is about a month or two ago - my Police Sub-Inspector turned up again in my waitingroom. He was a changed man, happy, radiant and exuberant. He had come to thank me for having intervened on his behalf - and to give me six gold bangles for my wife as a token of his gratitude. When I hesitated, he assured me that 'it was allright', that he had given a short while ago twelve such bangles to the wife of the Inspector-General of Police".

"'How could you earn so much money in such a short time ?', I asked the man. 'You must have earned quite a lot of money to be able to take on such an expense'.

"The Sargent explained how it had been made possible for him to do so.

"'When I was at last transferred from my job at the gate of the embassy, I was posted to the North to supervise the traffic

leading to and from the frontier. I was put in charge of a posse of a srageant and four police constables. These five men no less than I made every effort to fulfill our duty. We stopped more or less every lorry which passed on the highways. We asked the drivers for their licence, and even in case we found it in order, we thought it best for their education to inform them either that they had been driving on the wrong side of the road or had been driving too fast or had been driving without lights - I assure you we always found something to fix on them - and we told them that they had to appear the following month before a judge in the Traffic Court of Jullunder. At times we even confiscated their licence. In short: we kept strict order on the highways.

"'As a rule everyone of the drivers behaved as was to be foressen. He cried and whined and begged us to forgive him and not to condemn his children to starvation - and he would press us to accept a gift of twenty rupees - some time even more when his documents or his vehicle were really not in order - and to 'let them go off this time'. I am by nature a soft-hearted man leaning far too often to leniency, and I forgave them their trespass. This is all', the soft-hearted Police Officer concluded his explanation. 'I could at last put my family budget again on a decent footing, could also help my constables feed and clothe their families better - and I can now show due gratitude to my friends and benefactors'".

This is the story the doctor told us. He did not mention - and we did not ask - whether he had accepted the six gold bangles for his wife. And if so - why. And if not - why not.

21.

Some belated words about Sadhus, Gurus and Brahmins.

I have already mentioned somewhere, that at the beginning of my pilgrimage I had felt uneasy traveling through India dressed as a Sadhu, that is to say under the pretension that I was a "Holy Man". I somehow felt my having agreed to be made up as a migratory saintly man might be judged as a fraudulent collusion from my side. I knew - and thus also I argued with myself - that I did nobody any harm by agreeing to play the role which the Old Head Priest's horoscope - that is to say my horoscope as read by the Head Priest - had assigned to me.

My fears and objections were, however, laid to rest by the venerable Guru to whom we paid a visit in Surat. Only much later did I find out, that the Head Priest in Bombay had arranged this visit beforehand, that he had instructed Gobinder to take me to this Guru whom he appears to have requested to disperse the apprehensions which he expected me to to have developed by then. I think I owe it to that Old Guru - who lived in a small hut adjoining the shrine of the village god, and whom we found seated on a low bench inside the small temple, dressed only in a loincloth - that henceforth I did not anymore feel the former apprehension nor any inhibition with respect to my appearance in the safran-coloured cloth of a Sadhu.

"Do not worry about what others may think or say, may son", the Guru told me without my having even confided in him my worry and unease. "Everyone whom you are going to encounter in future will at once be aware that you are a Brahmin soul vested in a true Sadhu. I see, I feel, I know this. Nobody will doubt you. You are under the protection of a Higher Power. Thus it is written on your forehead. I perceive it as decreed, that in your search

for the truth, in your quest for the knowledge leading to **the** Truth, you will have to spend months or even years on the roads, in the temples and in the public places of Mother India, in the company of, in conversation with, and instructed by the representatives of the various intellectual strata and economic levels of our population. You are a unique person, Your Highness, and all and everybody will immediately and instinctively sense that this is the case. You have come to see me, to talk to me, to learn something from me. But in truth, and unbeknownst to you, you are burdened with a worry. You want to know what the robe you wear implies, what you represent thus dressed, what you are going to mean to the Indian world in your robe of a Sadhu"

"Yes, respected Guruji, this is indeed the case. Please tell me, please teach me".

"We have an abundance of 'holy men' in India - hermits, monks, ascetics, faqirs, yogins and so on. Do not think their multitude deprives them of worthiness. Do not look down on them. They all are important to us Hindus, to Hinduism in general, to the spiritual welfare of the country and to the safety of the world from disasters. I shall give you a description of the various categories of men - and at times women - who aspire to the title of sainthood. It will be a short description because in the coming days and months you are liable to learn far more on your own.

"The **Samyasin** who is popularly called a 'Sadhu', is a monk in a safran robe. He is a holy man. He plays an important role in Hinduism. Like you he has his hair cut off except for the whisp on the vertex of your skull. This is not an absolute indication of their status, however. There are Samyasins who let their hair grow - but they are true sadhus notwithstanding this.

"Yes, you are a true Sadhu, Your Highness. A Sadhu is a man who has abandoned the pleasures and attractions of life. He wanders through the towns and villages, and he is treated everywhere with great respect. It depends on the vow he has taken whether he eats one or two meals a day. You can be certain that your begging bowl will always be filled, for kind people consider it an honour and a merit to do so. I see you do not carry an oghi; most sadhus do. It is a fly whisp from which sadhus are never separated. You must already have met them carrying oghis.

(For your information, Moshe Chaim, the oghi is made up of a piece of cloth affixed to a stick about one foot in length. With this whisp the sadhu sweeps the ground on which he sits or walks.)

"The Holy High Priest in Bombay", the Guru continued, "has dispensed you both from carrying such an implement - for it is

nothing more than evidence of somee superstitious belief or other. A true Sadhu is supposed to be in direct contact with the Divine. This is quite evidently the case with you, whether you wear the safran garment and an oghi or not. You, my Prince, are already far beyond and above that which even the holiest of the Sadhus may ever hope to achieve. You are, therefore, not bound by the rules which are imposed on the average sadhu. And it is decreed that Gobinder Nath, fortunate and blessed in your companionship, shares in all your dispensations and honours".

To my sorrow I have to confess, that I would have enjoyed a feeling of thrill, or welcomed a deeper emotion on hearing these words of the Guru - but I did not have such luck. Instead I asked him in a matter-of-fact voice to tell me more about the group of saintly people he had mentioned.

"I am willingly going to tell you about the men - and there are also women - who claim to be holy or to whom people attribute holiness. It is quite understandable, my Prince, that in your actual incarnation you are ignorant of even the basics of Hinduism. Please view what I am going to tell you now as a first lesson of my introductory course into the vast realm of Hinduism. And it is only appropriate that we begin with the status of the Sadhus, the position of the Gurus and the hierarchy of the Brahmins.

"First of all let me make you aware that, regretfully, sainthood is easily claimed by those who have no claim, and bestowed by those who have no right to bestow. I am going to list those among the many who make such a claim.

1. In every village you will find a **Bhagat,** a pious and devoted person - who can be either male or female - who is supposed to be particularly blessed. The Bhagat exerts great influence on whatever goes on in the village; for the people there will never get involved in an undertaking of even minor importance or value without asking for the Bhagat's advice and blessing. He or she may indeed be a saintly person - but the truth is that no less often he or she is nothing but a clever magician.

2. On the roads and in the streets, in the temples and in the ashrams you will always meet monks and sadhus; often they are monk-sadhus. It is important that you learn to distinguish those who belong to a monks' order from others who are unattached.

3. And then there is the **Yogin,** the man who practices Yoga, the man who by means of mystic practices seeks to achieve union with the Godhead. Many among them are, unfortunately fakes.

4. And last not least there is the **Guru.**

"With your help, Your Holiness, I would like to learn more about the latter category", I interrupted my teacher. "In the States I met once an Indian who called himself a Guru. He appeared to me anything but a holy man. I must even confess that I felt repulsed by him from the first moment I talked to him - and I have thereafter avoided every further contact with the man".

"My Prince ! You must not judge nor measure a guru by that man you have seen or heard in the US. These types of emigrés call themselves gurus - and at times they usurp for themselves even higher titles. These men have well understood the mentality and culture of the Americans who are easily impressed by exotic titles, by fancy cults and by pseudo-mysticisms - and have made it their profitable business to satisfy this American foible. Some of these gurus make even the claim that they can perform miracles and that they can assist suitably generous contributors to help their souls gain their ultimate salvation. Whatever successes they may achieve by such dishonest methods, these are in effect due to the ease with which the Americans can be made to become victims of their auto-suggestion and gullibility".

"I am glad to hear you say this and to have my own judgement confirmed by you. But there are - of course and at least here in India - true and worthy gurus...."

"Of course there are. Of course there true and worthy gurus here among us. What would India be without them ? Let me make it clear to you, that the Guru is a very important person. He occupies a highly respected place in Hinduism. He is the spiritual guide for the seriously engaged Hindu. He is a teacher. He guides, teaches and directs the limited number of disciples he is ready to accept. He has great spiritual power: he can weaken the influence of the karman of his truly dedicated disciples. The Guru's main object and duty is to make people realize, that it is possible for man to gain moksa - that is salvation - by turning to God, and by addressing the Deity directly. Such an effect is possible even if one places one's hope in the eventual achievement of salvation. However, it is the Guru's most important task of all to make the people he has under his tutelage understand, that salvation is ultimately only achievable through one's own efforts.

"This, in short, is where the Guru is of real help: he can point out the possible approaches to gain salvation, and he can show the direct way to salvation. The Guru is irreplacable in Hinduism; nobody can take over his role. And thereby the rule has

been established, that every 'searcher after the truth' has to attach himself to a guru. Once the serious seeker has found the right guru, has been accepted by him as his disciple, he has to love and respect his guru, has to follow his advice as if he were his true father. I go even further and state, that one has to venerate one's Guru as if he were God. **Manu,** to whom we look up as the greatest Guru ever, has decreed that whoever does not respect his guru as is expected of him, will be reborn as a dog or as a worm".

"What makes a man into a Guru ? What special qualities has a Guru to have ? And what makes him a great Guru ?"

"There are no special characteristics which differentiate a great Guru from other less great Gurus; every true Guru is a good and great Guru. A man becomes a true Guru when he knows he has found the truth and has experienced the realization of Brahman. Nobody can be a guru who is not a true guru. The true guru is to his disciples the intermediary to God; and to those individuals and families who have become his followers, he is not only adviser and guide, but also an active interlocutor with the deity. When the time comes for a follower to leave this world, the Guru will be of valuable assistance to him, as he can be instrumental that the soul will after death meet with a better fate in its next reincarnation. And finally, the great value and strength of the Guru is shown in his capability to guide his disciples through a life devoid sins and faults".

"Have the Gurus a role to play in Bhakhti Hinduism ?"

"Very much so. To the followers of the Vishnaite sect of Bhakhti the Guru can become identified with Vishnu - and by entrusting his devotee-disciples with a powerful mantra, and instructing them how and when to use their personal mantra, he may even transfer onto his devotee-disciple the power to cite the appearance of God into his presence".

These and many other introductions which I received from my temporary teacher, the Guru of Surat, were of great help to me in the early months of my pilgrimage. In the course of time I was to learn from other knowledgeable and wise men details, facts and factors, which saved me from committing gaffes or even offences which would otherwise have been unavoidable.

We came one day into conversation with a young man who turned out to be a member of the Brahmo Samad Reform Movement. He was a graduate of the Jaharwal Nehru University of Delhi. He had just completed his doctoral thesis. Its subject was 'The Position of

the Guru in modern Indian Society'. He felt the need of a prolonged vacation to rerst and relax from the stress of the months of concentrated study. He had decided to find this relaxation and rest by living these months as a sadhu. His scalp and face were clean-shaven, and from the vertex of his skull a long tuft of hair emerged. On his forehead were painted two white and one green vertical stripes, and a red mark had been placed over the root of his nose. His torso was naked axcept for the sacred thread.

"I am surprised to see you dressed as an orthodox Hindu though you confess to be a member of the liberal Brahmo Samad", I could not help remarking.

"One does not exclude the other", was his reply. "To a man in search of the truth the knowledge of the path leading thereto can be found everywhere".

The learned young man - his name was Ranjit Ram Dharwal - showed great patience not only in the way he answered my questions on the day we first met, but also during the weeks he accompanied us on our travel and acted as our mentor. He appeared to have accepted and believed - and to have been impressed by - the informations Gobinder had given him about my person. Before we three agreed to continue together on our pilgrimage, I felt duty-bound to explain to our potential companion in sufficient detail, that I was mentally normal, a student from America, a Jew. He indicated by the movements of his head and the expression on his face, that he understood what I had been telling him - but his behaviour throughout the time we were together showed, that he had accepted as true and significant the picture Gobinder had painted of me and not what I had told him.

At our request Ranjit agreed to make us meet his Guru who was reputed to be a very wise and holy man, as Gobinder had learned. Ranjit made an appointment for us to be received by his Guru.

We came to a simple building surrounded by garden; the latter was in a relatively well-cared-for condition. We remained waiting in the garden at the foot of the steps leading into the house. After a few minutes a young man appeared in the doorway. He was dressed in a thin white muslin shirt and a dhoti. He too had the red mark on his forehead, the sacred thread over his chest and open sandals on his feet. With a gesture of his head he invited us to follow him into the house. He took us to a room at the back of the house which was bare of furniture except for a chair standing on a slightly elevated platform. A colourful rose-patterned carped covered the entire floor of the room.

On the chair sat a dignified-looking, white-bearded, light-skinned man of about seventy years. He was clad only in a dhoti. His legs were folded underneath him.

The young man advanced to the platform, knelt down, touched his forehead to the ground, rose again and stepped aside to join two other young man who were standing to the left of the Guru's chair. Ranjit and Gobinder greeted the Guru with the same sign of reverence I had seen the young man perform. I did not feel inclined to copy their act. I only folded my hands in greeting and bowed my head.

The old man looked at me. He looked at me for quite a while. I held his glance and studied him in return. I felt respect and admiration grow in me - sensations I had not expected to experience when I entered the house.

"Thank you for coming". The Guru had spoken at last. He spoke in a very slow, quiet, quasi monotonous voice. "Thank you for coming, you who has turned up in the incarnation of an American and prefers to appear in the clothing of a sadhu. Welcome. Do you think you have any questions to ask ? If so, I shall be happy to answer".

"I have the question every man has to ask, Venerable Father and Teacher. My question is: What is the Truth ? Have you found the Truth ? If so, please share your knowledge with me. If you are not willing to do so, at least advise me where and how I too can find the truth".

Without pondering my question he replied in his soft voice.

"You search for the truth, my Prince, even though you have already deep knowledge of the truth. You carry the truth already within yourself. You do not have to search elsewhere for the truth - you have only to uncover it within yourself. You are one of the few among the blessed who know and possess all the truth. You will only have to reveal the truth to yourself - and you will do so when you yourself think the time is propitiate".

He closed his eyes. He did not utter any further word. After a time, while I remained standing in the same place and posture in expectation that some further revelation might emanate from the lips of the Old Guru, the young man who had guided us into the house, stepped forward. It is possible that he had been given a sign by his Master. With a gesture of his head and right arm he invited us to leave. We greeted the Guru and he replied with an inclination of his head. His eyes had remained closed since he had finished talking to me.

When we left the garden I turned and looked back. The three young men were standing at the head of the stairs. When they saw us turn, they saluted with a deep bow.

"The three young men you saw just now in the company of the Guru are his disciples, his **Shishayas**", explained Ranjit, our companion and guide. "To them the Guru is father, mother and god. Their personality is steadily remodelled and their character newly formed by the Guru. This intimate relationship places on him for ever the responsibility for his disciples' moral behaviour; and all the sins they henceforth commit will be charged to his karman. These disciples, as do the disciples of all the gurus everywhere, strive to become clones of their Master, their guide and teacher. For the Guru knows the right path. But you must not presume that the path the Guru walks is also the right path for each of his disciples. The truth is that each Shishaya is taught to find his own direction to walk, and that ultimately each will have to find his own path to follow. Where and what his personal path is, and which the direction he has to take, is individualfor every Shishaya and he will have to discover these for himself, by his own efforts, through his own searching. The Guru is, of course, of great help in guiding every one of his disciples individually onto his own path. He does so mainly by providing each of the disciples with a suitable mantra on which to meditate, and which to chant throughout the hours of the day, and whenever sleep avoids him at night".

"This is interesting. Do gurus also travel through the land as sadhus do ? And if they do so, are they accompanied by their disciples ? "

"Some do, but he majority prefers a residential life in a village or a town. Never overlook the fact, that most of them are not primitives but serious and learned men. By the way, most are also gifted psychologists. This often proves valuable when their followers ask for advice or guidance. A number of families have selected a guru to be their truested spiritual guide. The gurus are in constant contact with these families; they advise them in all matters, and the children in these families receive from the guru their religious education".

"Have I to conclude that everybody among the Hindus has his personal guru ? "

"More or less this is the case. Those who are favoured by some spontaneous enlightenment and do not need the guidance of a guru, are the exceptions; they are those who have reached the zenith of knowledge and have only to be made conscious of being thus

favoured. Of course, we have also to exempt those among the Indians who are agnostics or atheists, those who boast that no form of religion or religiosity has any influence on their lives. Otherwise everybody should and does have his guru, so that he may learn how to reach for the truth. However, let me underline in this context what you must have heard mentioned so often: ultimately everybody has to discover the truth by himself and for himself. You, my Prince, are one of the few fortunate ones among men; you have only to make yourself become conscious of the fact that you have since long known and uncovered the truth".

As had become my habit, I did not react to such statements refering to my person.

"How does a guru proceed to direct a man who asks for his help in his searching ? ", I asked instead.

"The Guru outlines to his disciple in the minutest detail the way leading to God. For a guru cannot do anything directly for the seaker and petitioner; he is in every respect only the middleman. Neither does one's own conscious effort and determination, nor one's prayers, confessions, repentance by themselves suffice to gain the prayed-for salvation".

"What is the difference between the spiritual help granted by a Guru and that offered by a Brahmin priests actively employed in the temple service ?"

"The Brahmin is a professional; that is to say he is the member of a profession. He is a functionary. A Guru feels called, feels selected to take this duty upon himself. The Brahmin is born into his caste, into his sacerdotal work and duty. He demands payment for his services; this a Guru never does. There is also the further difference that a Brahmin priest has hardly any contact with the general population in the way the Guru has. The Guru has a set of constantly attached disciples under his tuition and tutelage, whom he guides and teaches. The Guru has a sometimes very large following among the people who regularly approach him for his advice, guidance and blessing. It is a common spectacle to see men and women of good education, and those highly placed in society - ministers, physicians, judges, lawyers - sit alongside farmers and servants at the feet of a guru, to hear his sermon, his homilies, his admonitions".

"From what does a guru and his family live if he is not paid for his services or engagements ? "

"The Guru has no family. He is not married. Neither does he own or care for worldly possessions. His followers provide for his and his disciples' simple needs".

"And what about the Brahmin priest ? Does he not also have such a following next to a regular income from his work ?"

"As I mentioned already, the Brahmin is individually paid for every service he renders. Whenever he is specifically requested, he prays to and intervenes with the godhead for the benefit of the State, of the community and of the individual. No Brahmin priest has as a rule ever to worry about his needs; mostly he is attached to a temple and enjoys a congregation of devoted followers who regularly bring gifts to the temple. There are also many temples which are generously endowed by businessmen and landowners. And finally I have to mention, that you can find now and then Brahmin priest who functions also as a guru to a group of fortunate men and women. In my view this is the best and the most successful combination".

We traveled for a few weeks in the company of Ranjit, and greatly enjoyed the company of this intelligent and well-read young 'temporary' sadhu. He was able to greatly enrich our general knowledge and understanding by explaining to us India's contemporary philosophies and doctrines, habits and customs. I think that much of this knowledge would otherwise have evaded us.

We did not like New Delhi, the capital of India. There was still too much left there of the past influence and history of the British Raj. In our opinion far too little effort was made to remove their residual impact. And there was another factor which disturbed me greatly: whenever we wanted to probe the thoughts of the people in the streets, on the university campus, in the temples and so on, invariably our conversation became within a short time, and quasi automatically, deviated into national and international politics.

In Delhi we stayed for two weeks in the Lakhshmi-Narayan Temple. The imposing but functional building had been erected in 1938 by Seth Raja Baldev Birla, a leading industrialist, 'for the benefit of all branches of orthodox Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and the Arya Samad'. Also Harijans, that is the Untouchables, were admitted, as were 'visitors from Europe and America provided they are of Aryan origin'. These racist conditions were enumerated in clear terms on a board at the entrance to the temple, along with the chauvinistic brandishment '....here we follow the Arya Dharma, the Hinduism, the pooling of all that is best in religious thought all over the world'.

In the courtyards, to a great part effectively sheltered from the sun, visitors from all over the world could find accomodation for a few nights; and they were also assured of a meal in the morning.

We were intrigued by the ever changing cosmopolitan variety of individuals we could see sitting or moving around in the precincts of the temple. There were also Indians among them, and of these not few were learned and educated men. Some of these Indians were no less intrigued than I to watch the foreign visitors and to enquire from them their views on religious matters in general and on Hinduism in particular. To Gobinder and myself the back-pack-carrying foreign visitors were far less an attraction than the ease with which we could in that environment come into contact with Indian scholars and students.

Of special interest, and as a welcome source of information and instruction, proved to us a young educated Sadhu, who was on a pilgrimage to the holy places in Kashmir. Much of what you have learned so far about Hinduism and all its deeper aspects, I owe to this pleasant - and very sophisticated - Sadhu.

"I see only very rarely an overcrowded temple", I remarked to him one day. "Where does the multitude of Hindus pray ?"

"Prayers are offered not only in temples and shrines but also inside the private homes. I would say, that a Hindu will as a rule prefer to perform his worship in his own house where he has reserved a separate room, or only a corner of one the rooms, for his domestic worship. Pictures and figurines in which the gods are supposed to reside, decorate the praying area in the house. Every Hindu, you will find, exhibits his **Ishta Devata**, the figure of the divinity for which he feels, and with whom he maintains, a special devotional relationship. In some of the households whose members are devotees of Shiva, you will see also the lingam displayed".

"How and in what form does a Hindu pray ?"

"The prayers consist of the singing of mantras, that is to say of the singing of sacred sentences in which the name of the godhead is repeated innumerable times".

"What makes worship in a temple less or more valuable ? "

"The prayers in the smallest and most primitive prayer corner inside a private house is in no way less effective than those performed in a temple. These domestic prayer arrangements on the other hand do in no way diminish the value and importance of the

temple, of which an enormous number has been erected all over the country. The Hindu temple may occupy a simple small house or it may be made up of a large complex of buildings surrounded by a wall".

"The temples and shrines are sacred places, I suppose".

"The Hindu views the temple as the residence of the god or gods. The gods are treated in these their residences like royalty - some of our royalty would often be happy if they too were given so much honour and adoration. According to the status which the gods are granted in the hierarchy of the gods or in the hearts of the devotees, great attention is given to their statues; they are daily washed, fed, clothed. They are also entertained - not only with music but also by prostitutes".

"But I have never observed a congregational divine service in any of the orthodox temples we have visited !"

"Because there is none. If you look for a congregational form of worship, there is only the one arranged for and by the Bhakhshi devotees who regularly assemble in their temples for the communal singing of hymns".

"Hymn singing is a common feature of Hindu worship, I see".

"Yes, hymn singing is given an important function in the religious worship of whatever the type of Hindu religious worship. Originally, that is in the distant past, these hymns were thought by the all-domineering Brahmins far too sacred to be written down, as this would have made them available to the uninitiated and to the lower castes. However, there came the time when the hymns had to be written down for the guidance of the Brahmins themselves, whose memory had not proved sufficient to retain the exact wording and the prescribed sequences of the hymns and their many additions".

"During the service the priest sings the hymnns without the congregation taking part ? "

"The Brahmin priest performs the daily services by himself. For he has to address the deity by means of a correct formula, accompanied by certain sacrifices; and it is only by the exactly performed rites that the godhead is compelled to grant whatever is demanded of it. It is, therefore, imperative that the priests follow the wording of the hymns and the execution of the accompanying ritual to the minutest detail; any change in the ritual, or the omission of even a single word will not only render the incantations ineffective but may also endanger the entire community".

"Let me ask you again what part the congregation takes in the ritual ? "

"None. A congregation may be present during such a service performed by a Brahmin inside a temple - but only as onlookers and

not as partecipants. They take even less part in this ceremony than I have seen the Catholics do when their priest performs the mass - they at least bend their knees, cross themselves from time to time and mumble an occasional 'amen'. Here the people will mostly stand or squat in the courtyard outside the templeroom - without saying or doing anything. In general people do not go for the performance of a devotional act to the temple or the shrine of the god or gods to which they are attached - except for one or two festive days a year, or in case they require the intervention of the resident Brahmin priest with the deity on their behalf. This is the main function of the priest - and the source of his income".

"I saw some place here and there looking like temples, where profane-appearing individuals - they were certainly not priests - spent their entire day in study and prayer".

"You must have the **Ashram** in mind. The Ashram is not a temple. It is a higher institution of learning. Some give them even the name 'Schools of Wisdom'. They are academies frequented by men who have been selected from among a large number of applicants purely on the basis of their intellectual suitability. Teaching and larning proceed there mainly in form of spiritual meditation and austere discipline".

"There is another question you could answer me: I have read and heard about the basic theologic and philosophic factors of Hinduism. They seem to me very profoundly structured. In my opinion they presuppose at least a certain minimal education and a high degree of literacy. I cannot imagine that the general public, the masses of India, can have that minimum of understanding of the precepts of their religion which would allow them to benefit from the message contained in Hinduism".

"The primitive Indian, especially the one living in villages, is superstitious. His religion is polytheistic and therefore easier understood by him. All misfortunes - the lack of rain, death among his cattle, sickness in the family and so on - have been sent by the gods. The simple men and women do not need any special education or knowledge. They only have to know that the gods have to be propitiated by sacrifices, vows, gifts, prayers, rites. They knew well enough that only a Brahmin can offer these sacrifices and other ritual performances which would be acceptable to the gods. Another reason why our system works well is, that although it may be said that most Hindus believe in some form of a personal god, they cannot imagine there might be a link between the godhead and mankind.
As you see", our friend concluded with a grin, "a believer, a religious individual, does not require a grounding in philosophy

and theology. His faith makes only few demands on him".

"Would this system, along with the doctrine of karman and dharma not ultimately bring about a negative attitude to life ? ", I asked.

As you will have noticed already, I often threw this question into the discussion with individuals from whom I did expect to be answered with a well-reasoned argument and not in clichés.

"Is this surprising ? ", the learned Sadhu answered. "You must not overlook the fact that these people are tired, weary, underfed. It is mostly this state of affairs which induces them to develop a negative attitude to life - and towards the world in general. But on the other hand it brings also about in them the search for wish-fulfilling images - and it is by these that myths are created, that magic is invented, that mysticism is born, that superstition is introduced".

"Hinduism preaches that all the world is nothing but an illusion. I find such a conception very surprising. Does this not turn all the escapes into wish-fulfilling, into negativism and so on ? Is all this not an exercise in futility ?"

"It is a misconception that Hinduism as such regards the world as **Maya**, as an illusion ! Only certain philosophical schools of Hinduism do so. I must concede, however, that to a certain degree pessimism is indeed a characteristic of the average Hindu. This pessimism has become ingrained in the theology which underlies the rituals practiced by the priests. There is nowadays, fortunately, a trend in modern India to get rid of the superstitions which are spread by the religions, and to be in no less a degree also freed from the burden imposed by the caste system".

"Do you expect that this process of modernization is also going to influence, or better said to correct, the doctrine that a good Hindu has to forego all pleasures and to deny all profits ? "

"You are wrong. Such an attitude would contravene Hinduism's ethical precepts. These have at all costs to be preserved. They should not be interfered with. The four aims or **Purushaetas** a Hindu has to pursue if he wants to fulfill his duty, are: virtue, a good profit in business, satisfying his personal wishes and striving for his spiritual salvation. It is for this that he prays. To this he declares his devotion - and for this purpose he engages the priest that he performs his rites".

"You said nothing about his having to avoid evil, of his having to be a good person".

"My friend ! To be wise is more important than to be good,

because good and evil are only illusions from which one is freed by wisdom", was the Sadhus surprising but apparently honestly minded reply.

Sikhism and the Sikhs.

From Delhi we traveled by foot, oxcart, bus and train northwards in the direction of Kashmir and the Pakistan border. The milder temperatures, the vastness of the green fields, the plentyful flowers and ubiquitous fruit trees were a welcome change.

In the Indian half of the Punjab Province - the other half had remained under Pakistan's control when the Indian subcontinent was partitioned - we came into the country of the Sikhs. Most of of our visit to the Punjab we spent in Amritsar, the main centre of the Sikhs and of Sikhism. We stayed for hours every day in the Golden Temple, the holiest place of the Sikhs.

Sikhism, the religion of the Sikhs, is a syncretic religion made up of elements taken from both Hinduism and Islam. It originated some 500 years ago in Lahore, the former capital of undivided Punjab. It was not a spontaneous creation, however, as for some time already here and there movements had been afoot to combine the best of Hinduism and Islam - the two main religions represented in the North-East of the Indian sub-continent. For instance also Akbar, the great Moghul Emperor of India, had been active in contemplating such a reform without, possibly, having been aware that the very same idea had already been floated among the Moslems of Benares by a man called Kabir.

Stimulated by these rather vague and until then unconsolidated trends, a Punjabi Hindu - **Nanak** was his name - felt inspired to translate them into reality: he founded the religion of the Sikhs.

Sikhism is the youngest among the major world religions. It embraces the Hindu concept of the 'Wheel of Rebirths' and that of man's aspiration to be absorbed into Nirvana. To this is added

Islam's strict monotheism.

One can concentrate Sikhism's main teaching in the formula, that man has unreservedly to submit to the will of **Hari**, as the one and only God is called by the Sikhs.

In the last generation or two, we were told, a subtle but definite distantiation from those conceptions of Sikhism, which are due the Islamic admixture, has become noticeable among the Sikhs. The resulting changes consist mostly of the adoption of a number of certain established Hindu ideologies and customs which the original founders of the Sikh religion had specifically judged as unsuitable and had rejected as unacceptable. For instance: the worship of the cow has been re-introduced; the observation of most of the Hindu festivals has become a fact of life; and after the cremation of the dead his ashes are immersed into a holy river. However, the Sikh continues to consume the meat of slaughtered animals - the consumption of the meat of all animals, except that of bovines, is permitted - provided the animal has been decapitated by one single stroke.

I learned with great interest that the Sikhs have retained Hinduism's concept of karman. They believe in the transmigration of the soul from one existence into the other until it is finally again merged with God. The soul, according to the teaching of the Sikh religion, does not from the onset of its creation reside in a human body. Only after having been passed through uncountable life cycles of animal existences, it may be finally permitted to enter a human existence. Having at last reached this final stage in the series of transmigrations, the human bearer of the soul can now, after s further, often indefinite number of rebirths and deaths, concentrate on achieving its salvation.

Although I was familiar with much of what are Sikhism's specific characteristics, I preferred - as had become my practice whenever I was offered the opportunity to dig deeper into a new source of information and knowledge - to start my conversations with asking for basic information.

"When was Sikhism founded", I asked a Sikh school teacher.

"Ten Gurus have founded the Sikh's religion. The first of these Founders was Guru Nanak; he was born in 1469. The last of the Founder Gurus was Govinder Singh; he died in 1708. The Grant Sahib, our Holy Scripture, was compounded in 1604 by the Fifth Guru, Arjun was his name".

I was also interested to hear an intelligent definition of the Sikh religion.

"How would you describe a Sikh and his faith to an unitiated foreigner", I asked a Sikh lawyer we met in Amritsar.

"The definition is very simple: A Sikh is he who believes in the Ten Gurus and the Grant Sahib. His faith, that is the Sikh religion, is an electic faith combining the teachings of Bhakhti Hinduism and of Sufi Islam".

"So far I have not noticed any great influence of Sufi Islam on your faith. I know of Sufism that, like other mysticisms, it conveys through the disclosure of secret rites or objects or words certain knowledge and power unknown to the uninitiated; that it believes in the mystic union with God by the adherence to ascetic discipline, through the chanting of litanies and through a contained religious pursuance of its doctrines under the guidance of a teacher, a Pir. Is there anything of this in Sikhism ?"

"Our religion has no such mystic characteristics. You are fully justified to object to my rather simplicistic explanation. A better explanation you will find in Guru Arjun's prayer, which I am going to recite to you:

I do not keep the Hindu fast nor the Moslem Ramadan
I serve the One Master who is also Allah
I have broken with the Hindus and the Moslems
We are neither Hindus nor Moslems.

You are right to say that the features of Hinduism are mostly apparent in our religion; and that the islamic influence is mainly noticeable in our concept of monotheism, in the rejection of idol worship and in the refutal of the caste system".

"Would you confirm my observation, that in the course of the years there has been a further steady re-approachment to hinduistic practices or at least to the principles of Hinduism's ideology ?", I asked a Sikh teacher who had taken us along a stretch of road in his car.

"I have to agree with you. There have been changes in this direction. The process of re-absorbing a number of the precepts of Hinduism, of certain parts of its theology and of a number of its customs has reached such dimensions, that one can say - with some exaggeration, I concede - that the only difference which still exists between a Hindu and a Sikh is the latter's outer appearance, namely his uncut hair and beard as well as the shape of his turban".

During the rule of the first five Gurus, I learned, the males of the community, after having passed what may with justification be called an appropriate initiation, were permitted to affix the word **'Singh'**- which means 'Lion' - to their names; and the females, who too have to go through a ceremony of initiation, were made to add **'Kaur'** - which means 'Princess' - to their personal name. Henceforth these affixes continue to be used by all Sikhs. "They are among other things meant to indicate that all Sikhs, male or female, belong to one single family", was one of the commentaries I heard.

Some more of the Sikhs' history will most probably be of interest to you. Nanak the Guru, the founder of Sikhism, was followed by nine more Gurus, as I have already mentioned. Govinder Singh, the tenth and last Guru, who lived from 1675 till 173 , converted the community of the Sikhs - this word means 'disciple or learner' - into a military fraternity, the **Khalsa,** which means 'the Pure'. The Khalsa established among many other rules also the one that a Sikh will take it upon himself never to have sexual relations with a Moslem woman.

Govinder Singh decreed further, that five insignia should distinguish a Sikh from the rest of the world: that he never cuts the hair growing on his head, face and body; that he always carries a comb on his scalp; that he always wears knee-length trousers; that he wears a steel bangle on his right wrist; and that he always carries a weapon - be it a sword, or a dagger, or a spear.
To this day a Sikh male continues to exhibit these distinguishing insignia, except for the weapon, which is symbolically indicated by a tiny toy knife on his key or watch chain.

A Sikh is supposed to spend many hours in daily prayer. One of the prayers the Sikh has to utter every morning, is 'O wonderful God ! Sustain us to maintain our faith in Sikhism, with unshorn hair, till our last breath'. Otherwise the prayers of the Sikhs consist mostly of the recitation of hymns and an endless repetition of God's name. **Kirtas,** that is the listening to professional singers of hymns, is also counted as a personal prayer performance.

Boys and girls, as I have already mentioned, are initiated into the community as soon as they reach the age of puberty. In contrast to initiation customs elsewhere, the Sikhs' ceremony of initiation is not veiled in secrecy. We had occasion to witness one such ceremony in the companu of many other onlookers. The initiation ritual resembles the one which the Tenth Guru had

introduced in 1699 for the induction of the first five warriors into the first Khalsa fraternity which he had formed. Once he is initiated, the newly created Sikh is allowed to enter the innermost section of the Golden Temple in Amritsar - and also to contemplate marriage.

The Sikh religion categorically states, and in the prayers and hymns constantly repeats, that there is only One God. 'There is One God. He is the Supreme Truth', is part of the Sikh's morning prayer. God is defined as 'The Absolute Principle of Truth'. No anthropomorphic attributes of any kind are given to God - that is to say, he is nowhere depicted in human form nor with human functions.

Sikhism includes also the belief in an eschatology - in the doctrine of judgement after death, of the existence of a heaven and of a hell. They believe in a saviour, in providence, in transmigration. They believe in the efficacy of prayers.

The Sikhs are monogamous. Other rules imposed on them is the belief, that hard physical labour is important, that work represents a form of divine worship, that idleness has to be condemned - and that alcohol and tobacco have to be strictly avoided.

But I have to add that among the Sikhs many are addicted to alcohol; and that I have personally known Sikhs who regular 'retire to some safe place for a quick smoke'.

From what I could observe, and from what I have in past years learned and seen elsewhere, I am inclined to say, that nowhere is the veneration shown for the sacred Scriptures of a religion greater, deeper and more all-excluding than that shown by the Sikhs for their Holy Book, the **'Grant Sahib'**.

We felt at home among the Sikhs, their faith and their customs. I can say without the fear of exaggeration, that we were everywhere and by everybody made to feel welcome. We admired and adopted the very impressive ways in which the Sikhs greet each other. A Sikh male we politely addressed as 'Sardar Sahib'; and in case we talked to a woman, as 'Sadarni Sahiba'. Like the Sikhs do, we greeted them with folded hands and the formula we found especially impressive, viz: 'Sat Sri Akal', which means 'God is Truth'.

"I was told on more than one occasion, that except for their external appearance there is not much difference between a Sikh and a Hindu", I mentioned to a lawyer, by whose sharp mind we had been impressed on another occasion, "but I find that there are in

fact great differences between the religious beliefs of the Hindus and the Sikhs. Let me give you an instance: you Sikhs believe in one single Godhead. This, I may say, is certainly an unusual feature among the religions of India".

"Sikhism is indeed special, unusual and unique insofar as it is a strict monotheism. But this does in no way make us think that our religious faith is superior to that of others. The absence of a caste system among Sikhs is in my opinion the really important difference between us and the Hindus. And furthermore: you will not find racial prejudices among us. We believe that everything comes from God and that everything belongs to God. We believe that man can do his duty to God, can please God, can finally reach God by following the divine commands, and by living a righteous life. However, you will only be able to gain the right understanding of Sikhism as soon as you realize, that ours is not only a religion but also a Weltanschauung. And apart from what I have told you, there are other specifics still. We have no saints. We do not think the Ten Gurus have been divine beings - nor have we appointed them such. We do not worship them. They are replaced by, and have been incorporated in the Grant Sahib. This should be taken to mean, that the ethical principles and doctrines of our religion have to find ripercussion in every aspect of our daily life and no less also in the practice of political principles. This concept we have of our duties and obligations is the reason, why we Sikhs like to see ourselves as **'Saint Sipas'** - as saints as well as soldiers"

On another occasion I was given a further, very impressive explanation of what Sikhism stands for. A Sikh priest explained to me that "...we Sikhs speak of our possessing a spiritual trinity and a temporal trinity. The first trinity consists of the Guru, the preceptor; the Grant, the Holy Book; and the Panth, the community. The temporal trinity is made up of Kort Karni, the earning of an honest living through hard work; the Wand Charna, the help given to the needy; and the Nam Japna, the meditation about God".

"I learned the other day from a lawyer that you have abolished the caste system", I went on challenging the priest, "and then I heard the next day a Moslem remark, that this is not anymore the case in these days. What is the truth?"

"Our religion has indeed in principle and in total absoluteness abolished the caste system. It has also abolished the Untouchability of a certain class of human beings. 'We recognize all humanity as our brothers', has been stipulated by Guru Govinder Singh. And

this great Guru has added the final statement that 'our otherness from belonging to a caste is over'. However, having said this I must also confess, that certain caste differences and prejudices have survived among us to this day although, fortunately, not to any excessive or dangerous degree".

On our wanderings through the Punjab we entered many a village. The majority of the Sikhs are farmers who live in villages or hamlets surrounded by their fields. We could confirm what we had been told by nearly every Sikh with whom we had spoken: that the villages are kept very clean, that the Sikhs are good farmers, that they are excellent technicians, that their economic conditions are far better than those of any other ethnic group in India. We could also discover that their nation has a greater percentage of literates than any other in India. We had no doubt, that the Sikhs excelled also as sportsmen, as soldiers and as engineers, as we were told at every opportunity.

In every village we stayed overnight we found accomodation in the local **Gurdhwara**, as the Sikh temple is called. Even when not spending the night in a temple, we never missed an opportunity to enter every one of those we saw - be it only for a few minutes.

A gurdhwara is a low building easily recognized as such by the high pole erected in its front, carrying a triangular flag depicting a dagger and two swords.

On our first visits to a gurdhwara we were in the company of Sardar Dalip Singh who was to be our invaluable guide and mentor for about a week. Most of the knowledge about the Sikhs we have collected, we owe to this imposing looking, pleasantly tempered, intelligent man. Among other things he instructed us, how we had to behave when entering the temple so as not to hurt the sensitivity of those present therein. 'Of course, you enter a gurdhwara barefoot as you do all other temples in India', he advised us; "but here you should wash your feet first. On entering take some some of the holy dust left by the pilgrims' feet on the threshold, and place it on your forehead. Then you enter and proceed to the centre of the room. There you will see the Grant Sahib deposited. You are, of course, exempted from offering money, but you may instead place a flower - which you can pluck somehwere beforehand - on the cloth which is placed next to the Grant Sahib. Then you kneel down, and after having touched the ground with your forehead, you rise - and

walking backwards - you join the congregation'.

Each time we performed this act of respect, we were rewarded by the appreciative nods and glances of the men and women seated in front of the Grant Sahib.

"The prayers of the Sikhs", we were told, in reply to a request of mine for information, by the priest of the first Gurdhwara we visited on our own, "are unusual insofar as they contain the history and description of the Sikh religion and nation, of the Gurus and the martyrs, of their struggles and sufferings, of the holy shrines and the sanctified places".

While in Amritsar we visited every day the only temple in town, the famous Golden Temple. Each time we spent many hours within its precincts; for in that place most holy to the Sikhs; and in that environment embodying the history of Sikhism, we could sense the spiritual world of this people, and could watch the impressive proud and self- assured comportment of the men and women of this ethnic entity which never ceases to aspire, against all odds, to an independent nationhood.

We were always received with friendliness and treated with respect. On every one of our visits to the Temple we found the place full of life and activity. Busily men and women were rushing along from one spot to the other. Others were seated in groups, or were engaged in talks, or were immersed in prayers, or were taking a ritual bath in the holy tank.

The Golden Temple - so called for its golden cupola - is a very imposing complex of buildings, terraces and ponds. It is in every way and sense the centre of Sikhism. Within this temple complex stands its most holy place, the **Akal Thakht** - the 'Throne of God'. Two hundred years ago Guru Govinder Singh had preached in that building, and today all important announcement affecting the Sikh nation, are made in that very same place.

On our first visit - and thereafter observed this impressive spectacle repeated every morning we spent in the Golden Temple - we witnessed a procession, made up of about a dozen mostly very old men with long white beards, emerge through the door of the inner temple. They were clad in white robes. Some wore white, some dark-blue turbans. All were barefoot. In the centre of this group marched a very old man, bent by age - most likely the senior most among them - who carried on a brocade cushion, enveloped in a coloured silk shawl, what I knew was the Holy Book, the Grant Sahib.

In briskly proceeding procession, and singing in low pleasant voices, they marched to a smnall elevated platform covered with a cotton carpet. They placed the cushion with the book onto the platform, removed the silk shawl and spread it at the side of the Book. All twelve priests kneeled before the Book and kissed it reverently. Then the Book was opened by one of the priests, and another of them began to read from it in a melodious sing-song voice, while all the men and women who had by then congregated listened in complete silence. One of the priests had the duty to constantly wave a fly-whisk - I was later told it was made of yak hair - over the holy volume in order to keep the flies and other insects away.

"This is your Holy Book, the Grant Sahib, of which I have heard already ? ", I whispered to a bespectacled young man sitting next to me.

"Yes, this is the Grant Sahib, our Holy Book. It is treated by us with far greater respect than any holy book is by any other religion in existence. You can find a copy of the Grant Sahib in every temple, of course, but also in most well-to-do households".

"What does the Book contain ?"

"It is composed of hymns written by the Founder of our religion and the other nine Gurus. It is written in **Gurmuk**, which literally means 'the language of the Gurus'. You will be surprised to learn that the Gurmuk, the script in which the Grant Sahib is written, had in ancient times been used in their business dealings by the moneylenders of Northern India. Don't ask me for more information, please ! I cannot tell you what kind of association existed some 3-400 years ago between the Sikhs and the moneylenders and I do not think anybody else can. Let me mention further, that our Grant Sahib contains also the writings of people who had no connection whatsoever with Sikhism. This is an unusual, a unique feature in a book of such unusual holiness, don't you agree ? "

"I agree. This is a very unusual feature of a Holy Scripture - and also a very liberal one. No wonder the Grant Sahib looks such a voluminous book".

"It is indeed quite voluminous. It contains about 60 000 verses. Every day a different portion is recited. On certain occasions the entire content of the Grant Sahib is read out in one go - and it takes about two days to complete this holy task".

The more one learns.....

When I realized that I had hitched my fate to that of Gobinder, and that I was going the stay on in India for an indefinite time, I realized also that I was entering new phase of my life; that I could not continue to carry with me the value-measures - nor the kind of prejudices - I had so far applied in and to my life and my environment; that there were many things I had to learn, to relearn, to discrad and to get accustomed to. Initially I thought it right to draw comparisons with the morals and customs in other parts of the world - only to discover very soon, that this is a very primitive and inadequate method by which to make one's way through the maze of problems any new part of the world, anywhere in the world, must present to the newcomer. This conclusion was greatly facilitated by my awareness, that when the points are counted and the balance is drawn, the vaunted so-called western cultures and civilizations have since long forefeited any claim to a moral superiority.

The learning and compairing, the weighing and the judging I felt circumstances, environment and my sense of obligation to fairness and honesty were placing upon me, made it in the early weeks and even months very difficult for me to keep myself intellectually and spiritually on an even keel. This changed dramatically - without my being able to point to any spectacular event or to any sudden inner revelatory light, when in the course of a sleepless night I came to the above outlined conclusion. From that moment onwards I felt myself relieved from an oppressive, and in part also decision-paralyzing and perception-numbing incubus. I matured, I may say, from the moment I let things present themselves to me without my feeling the need to check again and again, point

by point whether my judgement had not been interfered with by some subconscious hostility and aversion; that is, from moment I did not think myself obliged to weigh my objectivity and to check on my fairness at every step, and before giving even a simple reply.

My greatest difficulties at forming a cool detachment resulted from my observing - and being deeply affected by - the widespread lack of social responsibility in Indian man for his Indian neighbour. Nobody who knows from personal experience and observation what social conditions prevail in that vast sub-continent, will accuse me of exaggeration when I say, that sentiments of humane considerations for the next man, that social obligations for one's fellowman are only very rarely met with. It was painful to observe - and I have never been able to forgive, to agree with, to adapt to - the lack of concern, the supercilious not-being-involvedness with which a Hindu overlooks the beggar woman with the fly-covered purulent eyes; nor the murderous fury with which during a severe draught a caste Hindu chases away the caste-less man, woman or child from the only well in the village which still produces some water. I lost the fight with myself - and have to this day not overcome the shame it caused me - when I weighed whether I should take an open stand against the evil-doers or whether I better restrain this impulse and dedicate my energy to help the victimized sufferers with the only contribution I could make in my actual situation, that is with my tears of compassion and my rage of frustration. It was possibly Gobinder's sage warning - 'you have been sent on this pilgrimage to learn and not to interfere in the prevailing social conditions except by your meek example' - which prevented me in the first stage of our pilgrimage from actions I would surely have regretted soon afterwards.

No wonder, I have still not forgotten - and certainly never shall - the following terrifying experience we had in Bangla Desh, and the utter helplessness to which we were condemned in the midst of extreme human misery and callousness.

During our stay in Calcutta we learned that a hurricane had caused great damage in neighbouring Bangla Desh and had exposed her inhabitants to great suffering. National and international relief work was at once set in motion - but it had soon become evident that it was by far not enough to help the millions of people who, as international statisticians and United Nations' observers like to point out, belong to the poorest nation on this earth.

We decided to travel northwards to Bangla Desh, hoping that we might be be of some help there. We had no difficulty to pass the borders - I cannot say whether this was due to our robes or to the chaotic confusion which prevailed in the region. When we reached Dacca, the capital of Bangla Desh, we were told we could under no circumstance proceed into the inner of the country. All roads had been washed away; travel by motorboats was restricted to officials and medical personnel; and only aeroplanes could bring - that is drop - supplies to the groups of people who were restricted to the hundreds, or possibly thousands, of small islands which had been formed in the stagnating floodwaterss. The tales we heard from the men and women engaged in the relief work - Americans, Indians and others - were frightening and depressing and could not be explained away by the unleashed instinct of self-preservation; nor could they be consoled away by anything like the intricacies of karman's retaliatory power.

I shall give you only a limited description of the nighmares we heard again and again described.

The major part of the relief supplies sent from abroad - tents, blankets, stoves, medical supplies and food - never reached Bangla Desh. They were, instead, offered for sale in the markets of Calcutta and Karachi.

When the floodwaters rushing in from the sea covered the lowlands of Bangla Desh, innumerable thousands lost their lives by drowning; some statistics talked of 100 000 dead. The ever present threat of a cholera epidemy made it vitally important to bury the bodies floating in the waters as soon as they had been washed ashore on the small islands which had offered small zones of dry land to the survivors in the huge masses of waters. The Government had offered two rupees - the equivalent of 2o cents american - for every body recovered and buried.

On every one of the tiny arteficial islands some of the most ruthless among the people had formed into gangs who ruled with an iron hand over the other inhabitants. They ruled for their own benefit and for that of their immediate families and friends. Of course, they took over the 'burial business'. When the bodies lined up on the shore had been counted by, had been paid for, and had been buried under the supervision of the government official who traveled for this purpose from island to island - these same bodies were excavated in the course of the night and were lined up again, along with those freshly washed ashore, for another count and another

payment. This procedure, dependant on the condition of the bodies, was repeated whenever possible two or three times more.

This same group of perhaps half a dozen men on every one of the islands harrassed their conationals in every imaginable - and to an even minimmally decent person unimaginable way. The bags of rice and dried vegetables, of tea and fruit, of fuel and blankets which were at intervals of a few days dropped by helicopters or planes onto the islands, were grabbed by these gangs -'confiscated' or 'organized' they called it - who refused to share the supplies equally with the other inhabitants of the islands. They were, however, willingly sold who ever could pay for them in cash - also to people on nearby islands - and to the businessmen who arrived in motorboats from often distant towns and villages. It was reported that on some islands people literally died of starvation, while the elite group not only stayed alive and fit, not only always had a surplus of food, but succeeded also in acquiring a hoard of cash and valuables from their 'enterprising business spirit'.

There was not even that sometimes faintly effective chance to descend on the evil-doers with a harangue about karman and dharma and so on - because without exception these criminal people as well as their miserable victims on those flood-born islands were Moslems.

Should you ever ask me for an instance when we were not welcomed or where we did not feel comfortable, I can only think of a village in the Punjab inhabited by families converted by, and under the protection of, the Salvation Army. The people of that well-organized clean village with a church-like structure in its centre, were mostly farmers who cultivated large tracts of cotton fields. These people were directed - one may say bossed - by a resident officer of the Salvation Army. Also the village teacher, the agricultural expert and the staff of the medical infirmary were low-ranking, mostly locally recruited, officers of the Salvation Army.

The villagers were outspokenly hostile to us. We learned from the Chief of the Salvation Army, a New Zealander with the rank of Brigadier, whom we visited in his headquarters in a neighbouring town, that the people of that village - and in general of such villages everywhere - mistrusted outsiders, more than others even every Hindu, not only because the villagers had without exception once upon a time belonged to the class of Untouchables, but because they were still considered such by the Hindus in the neighbouring

villages. In addition - and perhaps mainly for this reason - they were constantly harrassed and humilated by Hindu Tax Inspectors, Hindu Health Inspectors, Hindu policemen and so on. No wonder, therefore, that they a priori mistrusted us and our safran robes.

In Vizegapatam we enjoyed a prolonged stay in a temple dedicated to Vishnu. Whenever possible we preferred to stay in this type of temples. The adherents of the Vishnu cult, the **Vishnuites,** who can be easily recognized by the sign of a trident painted on their foreheads, exert great influence in South India.

In Madras we stayed in an Ashram in which a number of young Hindus pursued their studies. We very much enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere which prevailed there. We were, unfortunately, handicaped by our inability to follow their lively discussions, as most of these were conducted in the local idiom. I think it was more an indication of the local current of nationalism, than of a true ignorance which made the people of that region pretend they do not speak and understand Hindi. However, many of the teachers and students spoke a good English so that we could establish profitable and pleasant contacts.

We had been more than two years on our pilgrimage when we found ourselves in the south-eastern part of India. More than anywhere else in this vast sub-continent we met here conservative and primitive Hinduism exist side by side. But we were also fortunate to meet an unusual man.

He was a Benedictine monk, and Englishman, who had organized his own monastic ashram in the Tamil Nada State. He had been attracted by the work of two french priests who had tried to incorporate Indian practices and symbols into the catholic service. The Benedictine too tried to find ways, means and methods, as he explained to us in his Oxford accented english, to find a bridge to bind together in India Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism into common form of faith-expression. We watched with interest the barefoot priest with long hair, dressed in shawl and dhoti like a Shamyasin, perform his daily mass to which he added Hindu gestures and symbols; and heard him mix into his sermon Vedic recitations along those from the psalms.

We had another experience with a catholic priest - though of a different stature.

South of Madras, slowly making our way in the direction of Trichonopoly, we passed through a village which was nearly in its entirety inhabited by adherents to the Catholic faith. They were poor people, primitive people, superstitious people. In marked contrast to their mediocricity stood the priest of the village church, an Anglo-Indian, that is to say a man of 'mixed race'.

We sat in the back of the church during the afternoon service, and watched the priest perform his duties in what seemed to me a rather perfunctory manner. I watched him address his flock in what - notwithstanding our inability to understand what he was saying - seemed to me a paternal, derogatory and hurried manner. After the service had come to an end and the congregation had dispersed, we came into a converation with the priest.

It was a hot day. We had been sitting in the cool church on a hard narrow bench. However it was not the uncomfortable seat but the personality of the fascinating man which had kept me awake and interested. He proved to be a sophisticated, cynical - and also very learned man. He explained his stay in the village, his stagnation in that exile-like backwater of a village, with the fact that his simple primitive people of his parish were 'better Christians by far than the learned, corrupt, ambitious, politically involved priests, bishops and other prelates and dignitaries of all the christian denominations, faiths and sects anywhere in India'. I had, however, the impression that he was an alcoholic whom his Superiors wished to stay hidden away and made harmless in that obscure corner of the country.

"I have the impression, Father, that you may be the right man to answer a few questions, which so far I did not have the chance, possibly also not the courage, to address to a representative of a christian church in India".

"I shall do my best to help you, my dear fellow Sophocles. But we better start our expedition into the realm of heresy over a glass of wine in my studio. I assure you that this invitation is not an excuse to justify my making use of the mass wine. The wine I use for mass and which I have to share with my parishoners, is simply undrinkable. I saw to it that this is so. The Lord has forgiven me my strategy, I am certain. I was forced to do so; for whenever I put the goblet with wine to the lips of a communicant, he would invariably tilt my hand upwards, so that he could get a bigger swallow than the Holy Church and my budget permit. But it is in my hand now, certainly guided and directed by the Holy Spirit, to measure the quantity of the wine allotted for saving the souls

of my thirsty communicants, so that the largest amount of it runs into the throat of the biggest sinners".

Gobinder and I spent a long and delightful evening in the house of the Priest. The rather primitive meal of bread and cheese did not in the slightest detract from our enjoyment. Contrary to our habit we did also drink a glass of diluted wine - and went away without thinking that we had contravened any vow or law.

I do not know exactly how long our conversation with this - I would not hesitate to call him extraordinary - man had lasted; but I know that to my admiration for his brillant intellect and his searing cynicism was soon greatly added the pity I felt for him and his suppressed feeling of defeatism and hopelessness. But during those hours we spent with that Anglo-Indian Priest, and for many days thereafter, my vaguely outlined concept of man's life being a closed span in which he is tested; of being a process by which he has to prove himself; of being a chance to cleanse himself of unethical stains in his past life; of finding himself in a laboratory in which he is tested according to strict ethical standards, took on sharper configuration.

If ever a man was made to undergo a test and a trial of his worthiness - it was this catholic Priest. I would have liked to hear what the High Priest in Bombay would have found in his catholic colleague's horoscope; and I can well imagine how the many Hindu professors and theologians I had met on my pilgrimage would without any great intellectual effort have explained away this man's sad and devastated life as a karmatic process.

Most of what we discussed or argued about between us during those hours is surely of little interest to you - except for some of the answers I received on my - I confess rather provocative - questions. And this is the part of our conversation with the Priest which I am going to mention now.

"How do you explain the politicization of religion in general and that of your Church in particular ?", I asked him. "WWhat is going on now in Rome, in Europe in general, in the USA and so on, is not a recent nor an exceptional phenomen. It has been like this since the earliest days of your Church's existence. This may not be of any great importance in India, but elsewhere in the world it undeniably was and still is".

"You are wrong, venerable Swami. The interference of politics

and politicians in purely religious matters is an important factor here in India too. Of course this does not affect me, a miserable and lowly representative of Mother Church here in this god-forsaken place. But elsewhere !? In the large cities and centres !? You cannot imagine how much our religion has been abused by inside and outside politicians whatever their power base may be. They can afford to do so, because there is nobody here to check on their activities; and because the populace does not see anything wrong in something which ultimately amounts to nothing more than an abuse of God himself".

I changed the subject to prevent him from starting on what interested us least, namely a jeremiade of complaints against his superiors and their politics, or on a litany about the difficulties his local adversaries enjoy placing in his way.

"Tell me, Father", I started on a topic which was no less a minefield for a 'Hindu' like me - for as one such he had to see me - to enter, but, after having passed this danger without harm, I expected to emerge a better informed man, "is it really necessary for a religious faith and its representatives to communicate its concepts of truth, to outline its values of ethics, and to offer its guidance to salvation with the help of magic tricks ? For how else would you define religious myths and revelations, and how else could you describe religious rituals ? In other words: do we need revelations and rituals ? Do we need myth and magic to make us accept that which is - as even the most uneducated laymen capable of straight reasoning, has to recognize as being against the laws of nature ? Or to phrase my question differently: is it commensurate with respect for human dignity to make use of magic, myths and miracles to persuade us to accept what is within the laws and the power of what nature can do ? Do we need myths and miracles, threats and curses to make us do good and avoid evil deeds ? Do we not instinctively know the difference between right and wrong, between good and evil ? If we are in agreement so far, let me ask you whether we need the Divinity to tell us from high above what are the principles of justice ? If there is a purpose in your and my and all the other peoples' life, if we are placed here on earth to prove our worth, for our moral fibre to be tested, have we not prove ourselves and pass these tests by virtue of our own inner qualities, by our own nature-given personality without being whipped into goodness and frightened into decency by threats, by punishments which morally degrade us all no less than the theologians too ?"

"Your argument would be justified, if you could definitely

and unequivocally establish that nature is indeed just, is indeed an ethical institution. I would be ready to agree with you that we do not need directions from above, if there were not ample proof that there were and are people and peoples, individuals and nations who have for long periods - or maybe only at times - benefitted from what can only be described as an unjust nature".

"Do your words make nature stand in for fate, destiny - and God ?"

"It sure does".

"Does your Church's system of solving puzzles with the help of dogmas not offer a simpler way and an easier passable bridge into faith ?"

"...and any healthy criticism into oblivion".

"What happens to a reasoning man - or let me say how does a man with a certain sense of critical judgement like you - react when dogma, or let us say religious belief in general, is in conflict with scientific facts ?"

"There is no conflict as long as such a man has absolute faith and trust in his Mother Church. Have faith and trust in Mother Church; she always finds a way out. Also with regard to your question she has found a - I must concede not very subtle - way out of a possible dilemma: when convenient - or should I not better say whenever it is inconvenient ? - she has suppressed whatever results of scientific research she dislikes. Think of Gallileo Gallilei and Giordano Bruno ! Even to this day you will find that in certain parts of the US - and for that matter also in other more cultured countries - Darwin is an anathema. A few centuries ago the teaching of science was discouraged - and in certain parts of the world which were dominated by the Church it was outright forbidden".

"What happens in such a case ?"

"What happens in such a case ? How do intellectuals react to this ? Most of them try to accept their own definitions of facts and attempt to fit these as best as they can into their personal philosophic picture of a world for which they claim they are not responsible. Others have resorted to a deistic view, which though fundamentally religious contraveenes christian belief because it has abandoned the anthropomorphic view of God along with the belief in miracles. Have you heard about the 'New Christianity' of Henry de Saint-Simon ? No ? Try to get acquainted with it. It is christian religion based solely on the sayings of Jesus - cutting away the Old Testament, the Saints, the Pope, the never ceasing proliferation of theologians as nothing but secondary,

superstitious worthless, insignificant additions. As far as I know there are also other, similarly motivated and similar constructed movements which do not take the Scriptures literally but try to give them an allegoric or metaphysical meaning. Such 'renovations' you see in most all the old-established religions in the world which exhibit signs of progressing calcification".

I thought I could be even more daring with my questions, and I asked him:

"Let us leave the past and face our actual time. How do you and other Christians who do not blindly accept what is offered on the oficial faith-menue, face the facts as they are established by today's scientific discoveries, and by scientific advances in general ?"

"Fundamentally what you ask is the same as the question how one is to view modern man's moral duty, his civil ethics, his social obligations. For the true believers no such or any other problems present themselves; for in their belief-system everything the Church says originates from God. This is the meaning religion has for such lucky people; for to them such a kind of strong and firm faith opens the door to redemption. There are other Christians who are religious, because their faith supports the social order actually in existence as well as the ideal one to which they are instructed they should aspire to. This group will accept without diffidence what progressive science produces, and will identify with the interpretation their faith has to offer, namely to pretend without scruples that the discoveries of science are granted by God and are congruous with what their religion represents. And finally, of course, there are those Christians who think, that religion is all wrong, useless and even amoral. They may even actively fight against religion, its representatives and its institutions. Above all they will do their utmost to abolish everything which smells of religious instruction".

"How does in your view Marxism fit in here ? Many categorize this political doctrine as a religious one".

"I see Marxism as a movement which presents a pseudo-rationalist substitutional religion-like doctrine. In certain western, but rarely in eastern, marxist circles you may still find some degree of tolerance, but the dedicated communist is by definition a committed unrelenting moralist who has forgotten the meaning of moral principles; however, he knows well how to control the teaming masses by treating them as stupid, unintelligent, sheep-like, malleable creatures".

"I am sure, Father, you will not mind my asking you a question

which has bothered me since some time: why has the omnipotent Creator not built into mankind an incompatibility, a barrier, against sinning ? He could easily have done so and thereby saved himself and us great sorrow and pain".

"Could you image life worth living without your being able to apply your intelligence, your inner strength, your willpower, your determination ? How can you best apply these talents if not by checking them against evil and sin ? Don't measure what I said just now with me as the object; do not take me as an example om which to apply this axiom. I am failure in this respect. But on the other hand, do I not in my person prove, that what I have been telling you just now is the fundamental truth ?"

Suddenly the priest sounded and looked morose, mournful; but within seconds he took up his bantering tone again.

"Don't you think, Swamiji, that absence of evil, sin, crime and all other negative human activities would make all and every divine intention - or even intervention for the sake of evolving, improving, progressing humanity to reach Redemption - at any time or in any form an impossibility ? How else would it be possible to distinguish between those who have advanced mankind in its development, and those who have halted mankind's progress ?"

"In other words: life would be too monotonous for me and you to bother about ?"

"That's it, my friend !"

Of course, we soon came also to talk about the Jews.

"Nobody has given us the right to claim God's authorization to inflict all the pain we have inflicted upon the Jews in the course of the last twenty centuries", said the Priest when I asked him to explain the Church's responsibility for the suffering of the Jews.

"Why don't you enlarge your verdict to 'all the evil' in general and in every one of its manifestations ?"

"Yes, you are right. I should have said that all the untold evil things my Church did to mankind throughout her history, could certainly not have been sanctioned by God".

"I have learned from reading the history of the Church, that all this evil started with the Gospels, that is to say i was from the beginning an essential part of your Church's program. All this has certainly never been preached nor practiced by Jesus".

"This is true".

"Do you mind my saying that the historical Jesus is acceptable but Jesus' Gospels are not ? "

"There is little to argue here. The divinity of Jesus' origin, his activities on earth and his ascension, are the proof that all you said, and also all which is otherwise said in this connection and is used as such an argument, is not to be judged in human terms".

"Do you truly believe this ?"

"My dear friend ! It is not fair to ask me such a question".

"But you will concede the fact, that Jesus preached to Jews as a Jew with a pharisean background".

"Undoubtedly. But this does not make him less divine. He preached to his contemporaries in a language and with a technique appropriate to his time and to his surroundings; using words, images and metaphors which were easily comprehensible to his followers - and also to his adversaries among the Jews".

"You agree that Christianity's change into a non-Jewish theology began under the impact of Paul ?"

"You may say so".

"But how do you explain the fact that neither Jesus nor Paul show that minimal degree of tolerance for their fellowmen - the Jews of their time - as the christian theology had already demanded at least in theory, in the days they lived and preached ?"

"Would you not agree that tolerance would have been an alien concept to the people of those times ?"

Another encounter with my Jewish Brethren.

On our journey through the northern and central provinces of India we never met Jews, nor even heard of any from the people with whom we conversed, even though I never omitted to tell them, whenever they enquired, that I am a Jew. Once in a while we heard of a Jewish official in a minor position in government administration, police, railway and so on, but I never felt the urge to contact the person. Gobinder occasionally pointed out that the name displayed over a shop indicated that the owner was a Jew, but I never again entered a Jewish shop with the intention of engaging the owner in conversation, after the experience we had on our first such attempt when the surprised, suspicious owner treated us in not too friendly a manner.

After we had left Madras and reached the further South, we heard here and there of Jewish farmers in one or the other of the villages. On two or three occasions we visited such a family but apart from the language difficulty we could also otherwise not come into contact with these primitive people who looked at us askance and turned away without a word, not even answering our greetings.

I had hoped to find a better, a more cordial rssponse in Cochin where, as I had learned once upon a time large numbers of Jews had lived since many a century - but was still more disapponted there, as many of the Cochin Jews spoke english and did not hesitate to show their suspicion and mistrust - which was understandable; for it had to appear suspicious to them to see two sadhus trying to question them about their religious life, to enquire about their economic conditions, and to probe whether they had any complaints about the treatment they received from their neighbours and from Government. Whenever they did not see in us agents provocatuer, they must have suspected us as confidence tricksters

or at best as hippies dressed up as sadhus. But I must express my admiration for their hospitality, for we always had our food bowls filled, and found always a willing farmer to allow space to sleep in his barn.

We had, however, a break. We met a young man, an Israeli of Indian origin - his family had emigrated from Cochin to Israel in the late 'fifties - who had come on a visit to his family's place of origin to look out for a bride to marry and to take back to Israel. (When we got better acquainted he confessed that he hoped his future wife would bring along a 'good dowry' which would make it possible for the couple to settle in the US).

The young man soon found it more adequate to divest himself in our presence of the brashness with which he apparently sought to impress the local people; this made the braggart - he was a clever fellow; he had after completing his military service, studied economy at the Tel Aviv University, and in addition he spoke good english - easier to get along with. And although he too could not properly place me, he did soon conclude that our curiosity was harmless and not offensive. This conclusion induced him to introduce us to a distant relative, a teacher in alocal elementary school. And this schoolteacher was fortunately willing to answer our questions.

I shall not detail here our questions and his answers, shall instead summarise what we learned.

The teacher corrected the information I had once upon a time received in Bombay. He categorized the Jews of India into three totally separated groups - the Cochin Jews, the Beni Israel and the Bhagdadi Jews - "each of a different cultural standard and historical background, between whom there is hardly any social contacts, and certainly no inter-marriage", as he did not fail to underline and enlarge upon. His voice and gestures indicated more pride than sorrow when he told us of this inter-jewish division.

"We Cochin Jews are derived from the traders who arrived in southwest India during the reign of King Solomon. There are, however, historians who date our settlement in India only after the destruction of the Second Temple, that is in the 1st century CE.

"The Beni Israel continue also today to form the largest group of Indian Jews. Their tradition reports that their ancestors arrived in India from Palestine in the year 175 BCE in their endeavour to escape from the persecutions at the hand of Antiochus Epiphanes.

"The third group are the Bhagdadi or Babylonian Jews. Most of them arrived in India in the 19th century when they escaped the pogroms in

Iraq instigated by Daud Pasha".

Of the former large Jewish population - I could not get exact numbers - only some 6-3 000 Jews are today left in India. The majority of the Indian Jews, also of the Cochin Jews, who have not assimilated, have emigrated.

"....most of them to Israel, where they have sarisfactorily and successfully settled", I learned. "There is, fortunately, no antisemitisms in India, but the social standing of the Jews continues not to be good. Under British rule they were treated as a "scheduled class", that is they were counted among the casteless people and treated accordingly with disrespect; and even today they continue to be treated as such. The Bagdadi Jews who enjoyed a privileged position under the British Raj, for most of them had a British education; they were Iraqi citizen and Iraq was part of the British Empire. The Bagdadi Jews still occupy a better social position - let us say a slightly better social position than other Jews because they are mostly well-to-do businessmen. This appears to give them the impression that they have to distantiate themselves from the other Jews in India - and as far as I hear those of them who have settled in Israel, continue to do so to this day."

"The zionist fervour continues to be strong among the young people of Cochin", the teacher explained. "All of them will sooner or later emigrate to Israel and can predict that our ancient community and culture will soon disappear from Cochin. I hear that you intend to visit Israel when opportune. You will see there many Indian Jews - but you will also see that they have started to shed their inheritance, that they assimilate more and more to the general areligious Israel society", the teacher complained - while Solomon laughed, loudly but not wisely. "We here in Cochin are very religious; we have our own customs which to some degree differ from the orthodox ways of the western or even sephardi Jews. When the first Zionist emissaries arrived from Israel we were shocked to see them smoke on a Shabbath, and even drive their cars on that holy day".

(I did indeed meet some Indian Jews here in Israel. I hope I shall not forget to tell you later on about my experiences and impressions. But let me mention already now, Moshe Chaim, that I was impressed by what I saw and learned here in Israel.

Knowing the background of the Indian Jews, I greatly admire the strength and endurance they showed when they faced the culture shock Israel and its people must have caused them on arrival here. I came

to admire them here in Israel more than I ever had a cause to do in India. The senior people, men and women, behave with great dignity. Their family life continues to be well preserved. They are generally respected. The young people are restrained, well behaved, keen on advancing in the army, in their studies and in their occupations.

The extraordinary mixture of Jewish and Indian genes; their and their culture's survival in a society where they had for many centuries been treated as inferiors; their endeavour to maintain a superior intellectual level where their environment prevented them from partecipation in the process of cultural maturation; their generally good health in face of the threat of inbreeding; have come them in good stead on their ewntry into the Israeli society with its unlimited opportunities. All this promises to develop in these Indian Jews qualities which will bring them to a higher social and cultural status because these qualities are original and also born from ancient material. However, it is my impression, that their character and their appearance among the other Jews will for some time - at least for the next 2-3 generations - face difficulty and stress because their wish, and fear, to merge into their new environment and society show a twist caused by their apprehension that they are not fully accepted and respected by the other, the 'white' Jews. This apprehension is maintained, if not reinforced, by the continued incivil and disrespectful attitude towards them of the Bagdadi Jews who have not changed the supercilious attitude they have acquired in India.)

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Hermann M. SELZER bell - V. The pilgrimage

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And finally an introduction to Buddhism.

Already in New York I had developed a great interest in Buddhism. It had taken up a significant part of my study of oriental religions. Like so many other students of the philosophy and history of religion I was fascinated by the personality and the wisdom of its founder. I had read a number of books and had attended an occasional lecture dealing with the person and the teaching of this ancient sage. My interest never abated; if anything it was on my arrival in India increased by what I perceived - erroneously as I was to find out - was going to be the possibility to observe and study Buddhism as it is practiced and lived.

I instinctively knew that if I wanted to study the complex of Indian religions; if I wanted to know the religious mind of the Indian; if I wanted to penetrate into the very heart of Indian religiosity - and for that matter of Asian religiosity in general - I would never succeed without acquiring also a thorough knowledge of Buddhism - and that I could not succeed in this without coming into direct personal contact with Buddhists. All through our pilgrimage we made conscious efforts to learn about Buddhism, to come to associate with exponents of Buddhism, to meet Buddhists and to learn from Buddhists.

Looking back now I can state, that on setting out on my pilgrimage through India one of my prime aims, perhaps my main aspiration and hope, had been to acquire a true knowledge, to gain the right impression, to acquire the needed understanding of Buddhism; that is to say to osmotically absorb the quintessence of the wisdom which the Buddha has given to the world. I did not want to learn about Buddhism from Hindus or Sikhs, from their professors or priests, from books or lectures. I wanted to experience Buddhism as it is known, felt and lived by its dedicated

aherents. I was sincerely disappointed when we were told - and I could personally confirm that this was indeed a fact - that there are not many Buddhists left in India since the time they had been more or less forced to leave India. Most of my informants told me, that this had been due to the machinations of the Moslem invaders, consequent on the establishment of islamic rule in India which began about one thousand years ago.

We learned that pockets of Buddhists were to be found in Bengal, Ladakh and in Nepal - and that Tibetan buddhist refugees from Chinese ocupation had settled in Himachal Pradesh and in Bangalore. On our passage through India we did occasionally meet also here and there a few Buddhists; and once we visited a kind of buddhist monastry in Calcutta. Later on we discovered a group of buddhist families in South India - but I did not sense among them - and while with them - that atmosphere which I expected would emanate from a living buddhist community; nor did I find among them individuals with that kind of intellect and that degree of education, who might have filled in the large lacunae which learning from books had left.

We traveled to Kapilavasth, a place about 150 km from Benares, and stood in the Lumbini Park in front of the pillar which marked the place where the Buddha was born as Prince **Siddharta Gautama.** I must confess that neither the places, nor the history of the places associated with the founder of Buddhism, did affect us, did cause us to vibrate inside.

We learned that Dharamsala is nowadays the home of the **Dalai Lama** and of thousands of other Tibetan refugees. They had fled their homeland when it was invaded and occupied by the Chinese in 1959. They had been welcomed by India and offered asylum. In their new place of settlement they have tried to re-establish their old home. They have established there their schools, their institute of learning and a library; the have also built their own hospital.

Dharamsala with its ancient graveyards and own burning grounds, is now the largest centre of Tibetan Buddhism in the world, and its Nyamgil Monastery - a complex of temples, study rooms, prayer halls, dormitories and offices - has replaced the Potala one in Tibet.

Dharmsala welcomed us with the mournful sounds of their horns. On the roads we met elderly men and women with prayer wheels in one hand and prayer beads in the other, while murmuring and humming their mantars. They were on their way to the monastery

On arrival we were informed that the Dalai Lama was at that moment vacationing in Darjeeling. We made our way to that famous

summer resort high in the Himalayas. We were fortunate to be received by the spiritual leader of the Tibetan buddhist nation. He had, along with many thousands of his followers, since 1959 been in voluntary exile from the time the Chinese ended the sovereignty which Tibet had enjoyed since 1912.

We were favourably impressed by the Dalai Lama, a gentle and friendly man. We found that also most of the Tibetans we met in the new tibetan-buddhist enclave, were friendly and attractive people. Thus we became acquainted with a very interesting - but we were told not a characteristic - type of Buddhists. It was explained to us that according to the various interpreters of Buddha's teaching there are many interpretations of Buddhism. In Tibet Buddhism has been shaped by the surrounding culture - as has been the case with Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Japan and China.

The life of the Tibetan Buddhists is totally dominated by their religion. The temples which we saw were filled - in what appeared to me in excess - with images of Buddhas, Bhodisattvas, gods and demons. To the simple Tibetan all and everything in the temple, all the stones and figures, is imbued with sacredness. But I was assured by a very learned Lama, that is by one of their priests, that to the initiated, namely to the priests and monks, these figures are only images 'by which the viewer is rendered conscious of his own weaknesses and problems'.

From our talks with the Tibetan intellectuals in exile it seemed appeared to us that they do not face reality. They appear to indulge in strangely misrepresented conceptions of the true facts of life. I am still not sure whether this is due to their physical - voluntary or factual - isolation, or whether this is due to the impact of their faith. What I heard and observed of their superstitious interpretation of the goings-on in the world, does not augur well for their chance to regain their independence any time in the near future - if ever in fact. All the same I felt compelled to wish and to pray, that they be preserved from the schemes and intrigues of the european and asian political trends and theories crowding in on them.

The Tibetan Buddhist is a deeply religious individual. Or would it be more exact to call him a superstition-bound one ? For instance, we were told that for him - be he a simple man or an educated lama - nothing is of greater importance than the fulfillment of his wish to make pilgrimage to the **Jokhang Temple** in Tibet proper, there to throw himself down in front of the holy figure of the **Jo-Bo-Buddha**, to touch it, to adore it. For, a Tibetan believes,

whoever has visited the Jokhang even only will from then on only be reborn in human shape; and whoever has in person adored the Jo-Bo-Buddha on three occasions, has come very near to the achievement of Nirvana.

What we heard, saw - and more so what we sensed - in our regrettably too short encounter with the exiled Tibetans, made us all the more feel the urge to live for some time among the Tibetans and also among other communities of Buddhists. I somehow got the impression, that in the community formed by those in the entourage of the Dalai Lama, the right atmosphere had not been created; that the true essence of the religiosity of these exiles had gone astray when they lost their original home in the Himalayas. Once we were under this impression - whether justified or not - I ceased to believe that they could represent a suitable source of information for us. They might under other circumstances - that is to say had their fortunes been different and had they been living in their true environment - have served as suitable intermediaries with whose help we could have acquired the desired knowledge of, the deeper penetration into, the true values of Buddhism.

The Tibetans, we learned then and again later on from other Buddhists, are not considered representatives of clasical Buddhism. Since about the 6th-7th century the Tibetans' Buddhism has, by merging with the original local shamanistic-archaic religion, acquired magic overtones, and has been turned into an esoteric form of Buddhism - which, due to the importance it gives to the **Tantras**, their Scriptures, has been given the designation **'Tantricism'**. The same process took place also in Japan. The Tantras describe magic formulas, spells and rites. The Buddhism practiced in Tibet teaches, that Nirvana is achievable with the help of the ritualistic approach of the Tantras, which consists of sacred speech (the Mantras), of sacred gestures (the Mudras) and of sacred envisoning (the Mandalas). The ritual outlined in the Tantras implies to the esoteric Buddhist of Tibet, that his own speech, action and thought become the concrete expressions of the Enlightenment of the cosmic Buddha himself.

I was interested to learn, that around the very same time the esoteric changes were introduced into Buddhism, a similar trend made its appearance also in Hinduism.

Knowledge of the Tantras, of the ritual performance, is only entrusted to inititates. There are two branches of Tantric Buddhism: that of the 'Right Hand', which has gained great influence in Japan

and China, and that of the 'Left Hand', the **Vatryana**, which enjoys its predominance in Tibet. It is more or less impossible to acquire on one's own the secrets of Vatryana, we were told on asking for details; for this one requires the help of a Guru. However, we could conclude from our observing the procedings in a temple, that the endless repetition of the mystic mantra 'Om Mani Padme Hum', is a chief feature of the Vatryana ritual. This formula has been translated to us as meaning 'Ah, the Jewel is indeed in the Lotus'. By the constant repetition of the formula 'Om Mani Padme Hum', the devotee is assured he will be helped to evade further rebirths and will be led straight into Paradise. Is it, therefore, to be wondered about that a large part of the population is willing to spend its entire life in nothing but prayers, rites and ceremonies in order to avoid what they are told will otherwise await them after death.

Another rather significant feature of Tibetan Lamaism is its perception of salvation as a purely spiritual matter. That means to say, that salvation - and with this nirvana - is the liberation from a life of illusion.

We decided to extend our journey into Tibet, there to gain a better insight and a deeper knowledge. We traveled up to Ladakh, India's northermost province, which appeared to us as an arid expanse with only a narrow stripe of green along the Indus River. The people, evidently of Tibetan stock - were friendly and welcoming. They strongly advised us not to continue our journey, as the Chinese in occupation of Tibet were unlikely to make us feel welcome. This made us not only forego a visit to the fortress-palace of Potala at Lhasa - but also to miss living a purely buddhist life in a distinctely buddhist environment. Our disappointment was no less strong than the one we experienced when we we were told, that the time was not right for a visit to Pakistan, where we had hoped to live for some time in a nearly exclusively Indian-Moslem surrounding.

But still ! We have learned very much on and from this visit to Darjeeling. Later on I shall tell you more about the basics of Buddhism. However, this 'more' should not mean that I can give you anything but a glimpse into the vast and intriguing chapter of the Buddhist faith and its philosophy.

At this stage only a few more words about the Tibetan form of Buddhism of which we learned by talking with some of the lamas in Darjeeling. It greatly differs from what I had learned, read or heard so far about Buddhism. It is - in addition to its magic admixture wich I have superficially described already - a mystic interpretation and an esoteric presentation of the teachings of

Buddha, organized as a hierarchical system with political character. Let this suffice. If you want to know more, read up the amply available literature, especially that dealing with the Tibetans' monastic organization and initiation rites. I shall only add here, because of its uniqueness, a description of the manner in which the Dalai Lama - 'Lama' means 'spiritual guide' in the same sense 'guru' does for Hindus - the spiritual and worldly leader of Tibet, has been elected.

The **Dalai Lama** - his name means 'Ocean of Wisdom' - is the temporal, monarch-like sovereign of Tibet. He is the 'monk-king', the avatar - that is the reincarnation - of the last Dalai Lama. He can, therefore, never abdicate nor made to abdicate, nor can he be replaced. As the Dalai Lama is considered the incarnation of Buddha, it is important that the best-suited man is elected Dalai Lama - and it is evident that the reincarnation of the last Dalai Lama represents the man best qualified for this important office.

The **Panchen Lama** - this title implies a philosopher-lama - also a living Buddha, is the seond-highest reincarnation. (We did not meet the actual Panchen Lama; he had accepted the Chinese overlordship and had stayed on in Tibet).

The Dalai Lama is appointed on the basis of a vision. In 1935, - two years after Chenreze, the 13th Dalai Lama had passed away - the Regent of Tibet, while sojourning on the shore of the sacred Lake Lhamo Lhatso, had a vision. In the vision he saw the picture of a place in the country where, it was communicated to him in the vision, the 'Buddha of Compassion' was next going to reincarnate.

The content of the vision was kept secret, but a committee of high-grade lamas and of leading dignitaries was entrusted with the content of the vision. They traveled thoughout the country in search of a place which would fit the one the Regent had seen in his vision. In the eastern part of Tibet they discovered a house which in every detail corresponded to the one of the vision.

It was the house of 4-years-old **Tenzin Gyatso.** One of the dignitaries was wearing the rosary of the late Dalai Lama - and little boy Tenzin demanded he be given the rosary. The dignitary was willing to hand over the rosary, provided the child knew to whom it had belonged. The young boy knew the right answer. The mysterious knowledge the child possessed, as well as other specific tests he was made to undergo and which he passed satisfactorily, persuaded the delegation that they had all the proof they needed, and that they had discovered the 14th Dalai Lama, the incarnation of Buddha Chenreze. Three years later the new Dalai Lama was enthroned in due form.

I mentioned already that in whatever place we found ourselves we never failed, stimulated by what I would like to call a conscious intellectual curiosity, to enquire about Buddhist communities, about Buddhist temples and monasteries. In the North we met here and there an occasional Buddhist monk walking along the high roads, usually on a pilgrimage to the holy places in Tibet or in Kashmir. Somehow I was never satisfied with what we heard, saw and learned from these monks; none of them appeared to have more than an average knowledge of his religion and culture. I knew all the time, that in order to acquire the kind of knowledge I wished for, I had to live for some weeks or months among Buddhists and become part of their community life. I looked, therefore, for an opportunity to come into a deep-foraging contact, into an intimate form of communication with lived Buddhism.

We had the good fortune to discover and to befriend a Buddhist monk whose learning and intelligence ranged far above those of the other monks we had until then encountered. We met him in the Ashram of Trichinopoly, an imposing town in the southern most part of India. He tried - and succeeded - to make us see that the realization of our wishes were less problematic than we thought.

"If you really want to get a good idea about Buddhism and Buddhists - and you certainly should - Sri Lanka is the right place. As you may have learned already, Sri Lanka - the island had until recently the name Ceylon - has always been, and continues to this day to be, an important centre of Buddhism; and the majority of its inhabitants are Buddhists. It is the best place near and far where you can find the right sources from which to draw all the knowledge you aspire to imbibe; and there you can also find all the right personal contacts you told me you wish for. There is only one way - and a most simple one too - to solve your problem: go there. Travel to Ceylon, that is to Sri Lanka. It is the right place for the two of you to spend all the time you have available in the study of Buddhism".

"It will not be as simple as you think, my brother", was my reply. "A visit to Sri Lanka would mean a journey abroad, does it not ? We would require travel documents, visas and all the paraphernalia nowadays necessary for a journey abroad. We have no passports nor do we carry any other documents with us. Without a series of preparations it will, therefore, be impossible for us to cross the border into Sri Lanka".

"Why do you worry about documents", the monk wondered. "Why pay attention to what is only an illusion. Are not papers - you call them documents - anything but an illusion ? And are not all

the borders and frontiers, all that gammuth evidence of bureaucratic power anything but an illusion ? Do not worry, my brothers !
If it is your wish, your destiny and your duty to extend your search for the truth also among the Buddhists of Ceylon, there cannot any questions be asked, nor can any obstacles be placed in your way.
Go down to Point Calmere and take there the next boat which leaves for Ceylon. All will be well, I assure you".

We followed the monk's advice. The following day we found ourselves in the port of Point Calmere. There we enquired from an official about a 'passage to the other side' and were told, that there was a daily ferry service to Colombo in Sri Lanka; and that there was also a regular traffic of cargo boats to Sri Lanka, most of which carried also passengers.

Less than three hours passed before we found ourselves on board the ferry. Without any hindrance we had been allowed to pass through the harbour gate and the passport control barrier. The officer at Passport Control saluted us matter-of-factly and waved us through without asking for our papers.

When we stepped on board the large ferryboat, we faced at the head of the gangway the ship's Officer-on-duty.

"May I see your papers, please", he asked. This was unexpected, as he too had greeted us in such a friendly and respectful way.

Before I could answer, Gobinder intervened.

"We have no tickets, Sir".

"I did not mean you tickets but your traveling documents".

"We have neither", Gobinder told him.

"Am I right to presume you are going to Sri Lanka only on a visit ? That you will be returning again shortly to India ? "

When we confirmed that we intended to stay only a short time in Ceylon, he admonished us, waving his right index finger.

"You should have asked for a 'Laissez-Passer' from the Passport Office; such a document will save you a lot of possible problems on your return. We of Sri Lanka are by far not as strict in this respect, especially not in the case of Sadhus and Monks, but the Indians can sometimes be rather sticky. Go down now and see the Passport Officer - he will give you the necessary paper without making any fuss".

We descended again from the ship and presented ourselves in the harbour's Passport Office. There I asked for and received, without having had to undergo any questioning or other formalities,

the required temporary travel documents for Gobinder and myself.

Thus we traveled to Sri Lanka without having to bother about the inconveniences we would have encountered had we crossed any other international border.

The hustle and unrest of the morning, the rush and noise in the harbour - and possibly some nervous tension added to all this, had somewhat tired me; and once settled on board the ship I felt the need of solitude. I sat down in the bow of the ship and tried to relax. I enjoyed the refreshing breeze. The sight and sound of the waves raised by the passage of the ship through the water made me enter into a welcome state of trance-like relaxation. Gobinder spent most of the passage walking around, talking to the passengers and seamen - and I suppose acting out what he continued to perceive as his duty, namely, to describe the miracle of my appearance in his life as had been predicted in the hour of his birth. I have throughout our pilgrimage again and again tried, but have never succeeded - or at the most for a short time only - to have him heed my request that he be discreet, that he do not act as my public relations' officer. Also on that morning, each time he brought me a glass of tea or a cup of milk, I severely instructed him to be reserved at least on this specific day. I was to discover, however, from the way the passengers looked at me, from the way the ship's officers, and later the harbour officials in Sri Lanka treated me, that he had also that morning not obeyed my instructions.

On landing in Colombo the passport officer proved himnelf a very inquisitive man. Or let us say a more conscientious one - which, I must say, made me appreciate and respect this man. When I showed him the 'Laissez-Passers' he asked us in Tamil and then in Singhalese and finally in Hindi, whether we were Ceylonese citizens. When we told him we were not, he enquired whether we were on a pilgrimage. This we confirmed. He asked us how long we intended to stay in Sri Lanka - to which Gobinder replied that this depended on the progress in our search for enlightenment, but I intervened to say that we did not intend to stay longer than one month at the most. The official waves us on with the words 'May you find what is to be found'.

We stayed longer than one month in Sri Lanka. It is as beautiful an island as we were told to expect. The descriptions

we had been repeatedly given were certainly not exaggerated. We were also otherwise not to be disappointed: AT last I had ample opportunity there to come into contact with the world of Buddhists and Buddhism.

The Ceylonese, the Tamils as well as the Singhalese, impressed us a tolerant, clean and diligent people. The clothes of the women we saw working in road repair gangs, were as clean and white as if they had been working in their own kitchens. We were invited into the houses of workers and farmers, and found even the poorest of them hospitable and kind. We visited temples and monasteries and felt happy and welcome among the priests and monks. What impressed me as an indiction of the tolerance which had been described to me as a specific feature of Buddhism, was seeing in some of the towns a buddhist temple, a mosque and a church standing side by side on the same plaza.

Buddhism, we were told, has taken roots in Ceylon more than 2000 years ago. We were shown in Anuradhpura a tree which had grown from a branch of the original Bo-Tree under which Buddha had preached, and which had been brought to Ceylon at around the time the first Buddhist monks appeared on the island.

The 'Sacred Tooth Relic', which is supposed to have been the left eye tooth of Buddha, was brought to Ceylon in the year 34 CE. Enshrined in a series of gold caskets it is preserved in the 'Temple of the Tooth'. This Buddhist cult centre in Kandy is a large and imposing building. It was unusually clean and well kept - more so than any other temple or shrine we had seen in India. The temple with its most sacred reliquia is all through the year the object prilgrimages. Offerings are brought every day. Once a year, inn August, festivities take place in which the the 'Holy Tooth' is carried by an elephant in procession through the town.

I could not refrain from asking the monk who guided us through the temple and had made us adore the Holy Tooth and admire the impressive series or rare, beautiful, miracle-producing statues of Buddha - many of them made from rare metals or sculptured from precious stones, and most of them donated by kings and potentates of the East - whether the rumour was true which I had from diverse sides was true, namely that ".....the original tooth of the Buddha had been destroyed by the early Dutch conquerors and colonizers, and that the temple officials had replaced it with an elephant tooth".

"This may be so or it may not be so. I do not know if the story is true or not." The monk looked at me with an amused smile. "But does it really matter whether it is true or not ? Is it really of any significance what, if anything at all, this many-layered golden casket may contain ?"

He was right. Was he not ? I was ashamed to have asked.

Like India and other countries in the East, Sri Lanka has been victim of european colonizers. In 1505 the Portuguese arrived on a goodwill and trading mission. Soon they had occupied the entire island and had fortresses built to assure their power. They severely perecuted the island's Buddhists. The occupiers were joined by a horde of Franciscans who, by organizing and maintaining a catholic school system succeeded in spreading their Christianity. In 1602 Dutch colonizers occupied part of Ceylon - and in 1650 they helped the local rulers to expel the Portuguese. The protestant form of Christianity the Dutch preached was less aggressive - but also less enduring. In 1796 the Dutch were in turn expelled by the British. They were more tolerant towards Buddhism; that is to say, the British Authorities kept the zealous missionaries under some control. In 1) 48 Ceylon became independent, became Sri Lanka - and the British had to leave.

While Christianity continued to maintain a foothold in Sri Lanka, a renaissance of Buddhism occurred in the last century and led in the first half of this century to its steady increase. There were at the time of our visit about 650 Buddhist monasteries occupied by 15000 monks.

Before I set out to give you a short survey of the teachings of the Buddha, Moshe Chaim, I would like to add, what I may have already mentioned on a previous occasion: I take up in my narrative not rarely an item which I had already discussed before with one or the other expert. But - call it a technique, call it a ruse - in this way I can bring home to you, how different are at times the interpretations of some fundamental issues, - e.g. Karman, Man, Soul, the Concept of God and so on - when expounded by men who have fundamentally the same perception of their faith.

Please, do not therefore mind, if here and there I bring forth certain discussions which at first appear to be repetitions.

"'**Buddha**' is the title given to Gautama, the founder; it is not his name", was one of the first lessons - and corrections -

we recveived from a Professor of Religion of the Colombo University. "We do not consider or venerate Buddha as a god; nor are the many manifestations of Buddha in the world considered gods. Buddha's life story, and that of Buddhism, are singularly free of legendary admixtures or embellishments. Buddhism is entirely based on what the Buddha said and is said to have said. There are manyfold sects and schools and philosophies; all these are based on some re-interpretation or other of Buddha's sayings. It is interesting to point to the difference with Christianity, where Jesus' life is of central importance. This makes the introduction of reforms or changes or renovations only possible by a re-interpretation of what he did or was done to him.

"However", the profesor added, "a footnote may be indicated. Although Buddha, "The Enlightened One" has to be seen as a historical character, mythology - like for instance the story of Mara who tried to distract him by every means, first by force and later by a number of allurements, and to turn him away from his purpose - has made him into a 'divine man' like the 'perfect man Thevoi Andreos of the Greek, like Jesus, like Manu etc.

"The Buddhist faith, movement, religion, cult - call it whatever you like - dates back some 2500 years ago", the Professor lectured us. "It originated in the North of India, in what is today Bihar, a province situated in the middle reaches of the Ganges. It is based on the life story of Prince Gautama who lived around 640 BCE (other historians give 450 BCE as the true date).

"Prince Gautama turned into an ascetic and became the Buddha when he achieved his **Bhodi** - his awakening, his enlightenment - at the age of thirty-nine. He provided a religiously inspiring, simple message. Truth became his guideline. He perceived that truth is inherent in the reality of the world. This reality is made up of mankind's suffering. 'Everything is suffering', he preached. All existence is suffering, and man's only and highest aim should be to free himself from the chains binding him to a con tinued existence. Suffering originates from desire, and 'suppression of desire brings suppression of suffering'. This made the Buddha preach the abrogation of human suffering as the central obligation of the faith he had created".

"Buddhism started as a mainly monastic system and organization. It was started in protest against the materialistic practices of the at that time politically predominant of the Brahmin caste", we heard many a time explained. "It was a spiritual revolt. By intellectual means and not by military force did it succeed in

reducing the power of the Brahmins. In return, the changes which Buddha had introduced, benefitted no less also Hinduism, as these changes contributed to an enrichement of Hinduism's culture and a deeper appreciation of its ethics.

"You must realize that Buddhism started as a sectarian movement, and was changed into one with an outspoken religious aspect by King Asoka, who reigned in the 3rd century BCE and by whose conquests the Indian Empire was consolidated. In his reign and under his influence the simple teachings of Buddhism were transformed into a religion with a sophisticated high culture. Asoka had first been a faithful follower of Brahminism; but when he became an admirer of Buddhism, he took it upon himself to spread Buddha's teaching throughout his empire. He is said to have erected 14000 stupas. He is said to be responsible for the change in the original Buddhist concept of Dharma.

"Buddhism began to transcend local boundaries and politics. For about a 1000 years Buddhism turned from a pan-Indian into a pan-Asian civilization".

We loved meeting many intelligent and devoted men and women; we gladly accepted the offer of students, teachers, monks - and once even of a high-ranking police officer - to act as our guides and mentors; and we enjoyed the chance to rest and read for many hours every day in the library of the University of Colombo. I have given you already a general outline, but I learned very much more from my conversations - call them 'interrogations' - I had with the many experts who with unusual eagerness acted as my mentors. There were also uncertainties I tried to have cleared up by direct questioning and probing wherever and whenever possible. Of course, as I mentioned already, if you feel the urge to get a more than superficial knowledge of what the Buddha preached and what Buddhism represents, you will have to study on your own at least some books about this interesting theological and historical field. I shall tell you what I asked them, and shall also repeat the answers I received here and there to my questions. But let me repeat, Moshe Chaim ! It would please me very much indeed, should you feel the urge to study this matter on your own.

"Please give me a short, simple but comprehensive definition of Buddhism", I requested one of the first Buddhist intellectuals we met.

"Buddhism is a religion, a philosophy, a civilization", the man told me. "It is a religion of Redemption with a minimal degree

of rituals and rules, without any metaphysical speculations, within a strict confessional frame. It demands of its adherents a high degree of spiritual maturity and and an all encompassing ethical appreciation. It is concerned with a final salvation of what is the human essence. And it preaches non-violence".

"You mention non-violence as the buddhis ideal, but how can you explain that there has not been a generation in the history of the last 2500 years, where Buddhism-dominated or -ruled nations have not waged war".

"In all you perceive of Buddhism, and for that matter of everything else too, you must learn to take into account the imperfections of man and the illusions resulting therefrom".

Although I had not grasped the meaning of this apparently to him sufficient explanation, I did not persist.

"What place has Enlightenment, that is salvation, in buddhistic theology ?", I asked him instead. "What is Enlightenment in the Buddhist view ? How can it be achieved ? "

"Enlightenment is the most important factor in human existence. Enlightenment is the wish, the aspiration and the need of everyone of us. Enlightenment, however, cannot be found through the pleasures of worldly life, nor by excessive ascetic self-deprivation. One has to find the middle way which is the right way. The middle way, the right way, is shown by the Four Noble Truths. Enlightenment comes to pass from the moment the individual succeeds in freeing himself from the Wheel of Existence. However, man can achieve Enlightenment only by his own effort. You do not need a guru for this. Above all you must have faith in the Buddha. It is the belief and trust in his laws which make the enlightened one what he is".

Another learned Buddhist, a school teacher present, added to the program a seeker for enlightenment and salvation has to pursue.

"You must know the Five Hindrances which Buddhism teaches the pilgrim must overcome if he wants to climb the mountain of reality and lose himself in the shining vision of the summit:

- You must put away the hankering after the world;
- You must see all material things as unworthy of attention;
- You must banish the corruption of the will to injure;
- You must conquer ill-temper, free yourself from malevolence;
- You must free yourself of sloth, purify your mind of doubt".

"Doe this not remind you of the Veda ? Is there anything else the Buddha took over from the Veda ?"

"The Buddha applied logic and reasoning in his search for truth. He denied that mysticism and metaphysics had any value in forming man's expression of devotion. He decried such practices as ethically sterile, as practically useless and as intellectually uncertain. According to Buddhist conception it is not possible to explain life in pholosophical terms, nor with the help of mysteries; neither is this possible through religious rites or in ceremonial worship. The human spirit, he preached, should be concerned only with the direct and practical meaning of things, that is to say only with things for which evidence can be produced. The outcome of this realization will be the comprehension, that there cannot be real joy in life, because in truth life is nothing but suffering".

"The Buddha saw it as his mission to enlighten people about the reason for, and the origin of, sorrow's predominance in man's life", another teacher continued. "And with his enlightened knowledge, his compassion and his wisdom he strove to eliminate mankind's sorrows. To a Buddhist life is made up either of happiness or of sorrow - one or the other coming about by cause and effect. All forms of life are important. Within all life **Metta,** the universal benevolence or active goodwill, represents an important virtue. By his teaching, and by himself serving as the example, he showed the way how it is possible to achieve the cessation of all sorrow and pain".

"The Buddha taught", a third man took the word, "that all our life and all our existence are a state of suffering; that man has to strive to be released from this suffering; but that release from this suffering cannot be gained by kind actions or benevolent activities, nor by achieving any kind of success or triumph in life. On the contrary: by searching for successes, by thirsting for pleasures, by striving for triumphs, suffering will only be still further increased. Man should instead strive to drastically suppress all his desires; to renounce all human longings - and to restrict his will to live. In all this one has to rely on oneself only, the Buddha again and again insists as is written: 'Therefore, Ananda, be a camp and a refuge for yourself', the Buddha said. 'Seek no other refuge. Let the truth be your camp and refuge. Seek no other refuge elsewhere'".

"How does one go about to live accordingly ?"

"The right situation and the favourable environment, which provide the condition under which release can be hoped for, are first of all created by abstaining from the pleasures of life, by the physical withdrawal from human society".

"Suffering is the fate of man, as I understood you to say", I remarked to one of the teachers who had invited us to his room in his College.

"Yes, man's life is nothing but suffering. 'Dukka', suffering, is always with us", he explained. "It starts from the moment of our birth. It encompasses all which binds us to the world. Our desires, our instincts, our disappointments, our thoughts, our ideologies, what we think of ourselves, our state of consciousness - even though all these may be only temporary and passing events - are part of our suffering. In short: all and everything in life is suffering. To the enlightened individual suffering is the centre of knowledge of his Bodhi, of his state of enlightenment. But as soon as suffering is eliminated, there is salvation, there is nirvana".

"What is, in view of such a philosophy of life, your reaction when you see one of your neighbours suffer ?"

"I react with compassion. You should know that compassion is a great blessing and merit. Nothing is of greater value than compassion. It is the great gift we have received from Buddha. It is that all encompassing, deeply rooted feeling which one has for a fellowman; it the selfless help we give him so that he too may overcome his suffering; it is our main contribution to have him gain salvation. Out of this compassion love for the next man is born, and it grows into love for all mankind. It results in our supporting with our alms whomever is in need. Almsgiving, all charitable acts in general, bring great merits. Whoever gives much gains a good karman. Whoever gives few alms acquires a poor karman".

"How do you explain the great interest the western world shows nowadays for Buddhism ?", I once asked a buddhish scholar.

"In my opinion it is so because Buddhism is the most rational of all religions. I see in this fact the reason why the West - disappointed in the traditional religious concepts with which it has been fed so far - has shown so much interest. Buddhism is a religion which gives you joy, which gives you peace. A religious person should not find it difficult to identify with Buddhism, as like all other religions it centres on the Absolute, the Eternal, the One Beyond Time and Space".

"You confuse me, Professor. Is Buddhism not an atheistic religion ? Could you kindly elucidate this point ?"

"I concede that the Buddha has not expressed himself with sufficient clarity on this point. In our faith it is not important whether Buddha has denied God or refuted immortality, while it is

very clear indeed, that its main interest has been to help man free himself of his passions. For man's passions are the cause of all of his suffering.".

"Explain to me, please, in clear and precise terms: can Buddhism be called a religion in view of its denying the existence of a Supreme Being ?", I asked also on this occasion as I had done on other occasions when I faced an unusually intelligent person.

"There is no doubt at all that Buddhism is a religion. You start from a wrong preamble: it is not necessary for Buddhism to appoint a God as the ruler of the Universe in order to be ranked as a religion. Buddhism is a religion because it has its own rites and because it has created a set of definite sacred principles. I must, however, add that in many a country in the East, ranging from Tibet to Japan, the Buddha is venerated as the Saviour. At times he is even considered God".

"But the mainstream of Buddhism does not incorporate the institution of a Godhead. By general consent a religion is thought incomplete without the acknowledgement that a Godhead reigns supreme.

"What you describe as basic does not apply to Buddhism, which enjoys a special standing in this respect. Although the Buddha did not directly and specifically comment on the Absolute, his sermons do show irrefutably how much he has been concerned with human existence, with human suffering, with human sorrow. He very clearly instructed his disciples in the ways they should in their actual existence strive towards a future betterment. Is this not the essence of what a religion stands for ? Sure, I agree, Buddhism has not adopted the Atman principle, and is skeptic about the existence of a God - but it is still a religion".

"You mentioned just now that Buddha has not directly, or at least unambiguously, committed himself to the question of the Absolute's supremacy. What about the **Theravada** line of Buddhism which explicitely denies the existence of a God or of gods in any form or manifestation ? "

"If we define religion as the belief in a God or in gods as representing the Ultimate Reality, you are justified to call the Theravada direction as a form of Buddhism which cannot be called a religion. However, considering that even Theravada believes in something transcendental - though not in form of a personal God, a Creator or a Redeemer - and whereas it has doctrines with some kind of a mystical aspect, you will have to classify it as a religion".

"How and how far would it for you personally be possible to visualize man's relationship with God, the Absolute ?"

"It is impossible for me to accept that there is a relationship between a Godhead and man. There cannot be a relationship between God and man, between what is eternal peace and what is an unending display of discord among men. There cannot be a personal God who is responsible for - or even tolerant of - what goes on in the world. However, I would be able to find an explanation for all which is wrong in our world, by attributing it to **Mara**, the Destroyer, the Evil who represents **Samsara**, the cycle of births and deaths. Mara was the enemy of Buddha. In plain words: Mara is the Devil. The Mara Principle represents the fulfillment of desires, the thirst for existence, the search for pleasures, and the urge for power".

"Would it not be better to call Buddhism a cult ?".

I did not want to enter into an argument on what he had said. I preferred to have him take up the discussion I had initiated.

"How could such a label fit Buddhism ? A cult is a system of festivals, rites and ceremonies, which are periodically performed in fulfillment of the need to unite the individual or the society to the sacred things or beings to which he or it pays obedience. No ! I would not define Buddhism as a cult".

"Would you then define it as a church ?"

"How do you define a church ? "

"I would define it as a society which has the same concepts of what is sacred and of what belongs to the profane world. The church translates these common beliefs into unified, by all accepted, practices".

"In this case no religion is without a church".

"Thus in your opinion the only definition which fits Buddhism is that of a religion ?"

"Indeed".

"Buddha must have had an enormous impact on his immediate world at the time he preached his sermons". In the presence of a group of scholars I expressed in words what I had often reflected upon in my deliberations. "He created many new ideas, formed totally new aspects of life, presented a far easier understood interpretation of man's duties. Has there been in the beginning, or in the course of the centuries, also a similar, a noticeable influence of Buddhism on the throughout all the ensuing centuries dominant Hinduistic thoughts and practices ?"

"Buddhism must already from the outset - and one can say also automatically - have had an impact on Hinduism by virtue of its

having derived from Hinduism, of having come into existence as a rebellion against the overpowering position the Brahmins had in the society of their time. Just by existing, by direct or indirect contacts, by mere symbiosis, the teaching of Buddha had unavoidably to have an influence on Hinduism which is, after all, a syncretic religion and open to such outside influences. It greatly contributed furthermore, that whatever the influence may have been which Buddhism exerted on Hinduism, the process it set in motion was facilitated by the Hindus' perception of Buddha as an **Avator,** as a reincarnation of their God Vishnu. To some degree you might also be justified, were your question to mean whether a Buddhist influence might be responsible for the world-negating attitude and the pessimistic outlook of the Hindus. Buddhism's evolvement is also responsible for another change in Hinduism. It cannot be doubted that it was in all likelihood in reaction to the principles of Buddhism, that the Caste System of Hinduism became invigorated, stricter, more uncompromising in the wake of Buddhism's appearance in its midst. The Hindus felt it suddenly necessary to further restrict the already pityful and inhuman status of the Untouchables - and to improve in compensation at the same time the social status of the Vaishyas, who had until then been a lowly caste of despised farmers. They were now elevated into the more respectable caste of merchants and tradesmen".

"Can you define to us how in principle Buddhism perceives man, the individual ? "

"Man is an individual. Every human being is a personality sui generis. Not all men are equal, however. One man is different from next man. Each has his own personality as he has his own karman. Our personality is also our dharma. That which we notice and that of which we become aware and which makes up our experience, is transmitted from rebirth to rebirth along with our karman".

" What is left of man after he dies ? What is transmitted, what reincarnated ? "

"In Buddhis there is no separate individual Self. Buddhism denies not only an Eternal Being but also an eternal being, all kind of persisting substance, all continued individual existence. Hinduism teaches that souls have existed and transmigrated from the beginning, that there is a self-existing soul, an Ego. We categorically state that a soul, interpreted by many of the non-Buddhist schools in India to be Atman, does not exist. Central Buddhist teaching is that there is no immortal soul, because notjhing is stationary or unchanging. Everything changes, appears and

disappears. There cannot be, therefore, any permanency oif the human entity by favour if an undestructable element it contains. There is no such substance, neither any substance, only the appearance of what we call substance or things"

"How can I understand that your philosophers maintain that there is a series of rebirths, but they deny that this process is supported by some substance like a soul ? Let me, therefore, ask again: What is reborn ? What transmigrates into a new being ? What at the end of all suffering enters nirvana ? "

"Not an immortal soul, but the changing combinations of dharma and karman. Its is not a substance, something tanglible. It is like a flame transmitted from one source to the other. The second flame is in itself a true flame, but neither different from nor identical with its source. Many of our Buddhis philosophers say also, that what is otherwise called a soul is to be defined as the composition of a series of thoughts, sensations, volitions and material elements. This series has no beginning - and karman prevents this series from ending".

"Is it possible that a man's personality re-appears unchanged in that of his next or any other incarnation ? "

"This is possible. But understand me well ! What I have just now said does not imply the survival in man of anything like what you call a soul, nor that he has a soul at all. Neither do my words refer to his immortality".

"I see ! The soul-like something, the personality or the karman will enter a body again and again in every new incarnation, until it is 'blown out' in Nirvana. Yes, I understand now why you reason that that what I call the soul cannot be immortal; that its last stage, its final fate, its disappearance imply that the soul as such is not immortal. But let us leave this issue now and come back to the caste system: has it been totally abolished in Buddhist society ? "

"Absolutely ! Whoever became a follower of Buddha ceased to belong to a caste. He was no more subordinate to the restrictions and dictates of a caste. Buddha has in addition raised the status of the women in society and he has also abolished all forms of slavery. There is for and among Buddists today no difference in the status of people based on race or creed. All human beings are equal. All suffer equally. All and everybody is in need of salvation".

"Do such ideas not contradict the essence of karman ?"

"Not necessarily. All actions, good or bad, have their proper effect. One's current situation in the world is the fruit of seeds

planted by one's behaviour and disposition in a past existence; and all our present actions and thoughts are the seeds from which will grow what we shall suffer in the coming existences. In other words: a person is born into a world which he has made for himself. All we do is sure to have consequences. This is individually and generallly the effect of karman. It governs not only the life and destiny of an individual, it has also an impact on the order of the physical world in general".

"What you say, it seems to me, is not much different from the karman concept of the Hindus".

"Not insofar as the karman conception is meant to preserve moral values"

"What then is different ?"

"Karman is the Indian way of explaining the cause of suffering and the variations in humna fate. Early Buddhism followed the Upanishads which had been in circulation long before Buddha's birth. The karman doctrine as accepted at that stage meant that man's fate, happiness and unhappiness are determined by the gods. 'Karman' was the name given to these 'mental actions' which determine man's fate. Buddha emphasized the retribution or 'fruit' resulting from man's actions or intentions: the more good karman a man accumulates the happier he will become and the better the recompense he will receive. The same applies in reverse to his bad karman".

"How do you go about acquiring a good karman ?"

"By becoming aware of the abundance of good moral values; by avoiding the taking of life in any form; by not taking what is not given; by refraining from social misconduct; by refraining from lying, slandering, gossiping; by not using bad language; by not nursing ill will; by generally maintaining healthy views".

"What, within all these principle, does karman in practice mean to a Buddhist ?"

"To us Buddhists karman says, that the deeds of man will have to be paid for in any of the future reincarnations. As man acts so will he be reborn. Man is made up of greed, of **Kama.** Kama and karman are one. It is the Buddhist's duty to avoid creating a bad karman. He has to create a good karman. He has also to eliminate the karman which he has produced in previous existences - for this bad part of his karman remains present in latent form in his actual existence - so that it will not have an adverse effect on future existences. In principle it can be said, that whoever follows the way of conduct laid out by Buddha, may hope that the inherent negative powers of his karman will be broken. You may say that our conception of karman is similar to that of the Veda - but with

the exception that Buddha denies the Atman. Karman is in our view not influenced by anything from outside. Not by Atman, not by magic. It functions automatically, according to cause and effect; for man is the slave of his existence. Let me underline again: the karman of one's actual existence is the consequence of that of one's former existence, and that it will determine the status into which one is going to be reborn in a future existence. All actions, good or bad, have their proper effect. They have also their proper consequences. And let me again point out that all this does not apply to the individual and to his society only; it applies no less also to the world in which he lives. That is to say, that Karman governs not only the life and destiny of the individual, but has also an impact on the order of the physical world".

"Why then don't you conclude, that an individual's karman, that karman in general, is under the direction, under the guidance and the predestination of a divine power ?"

"Your words confirm that it is difficult for an outsider to understand the philosophy of karman. Let me again explain to you this philosophy ! Man develops greed and desire. For these he is not responsible. He has not created them. They are predestined, let us say preset, in his karman. There is no 'Self', no soul which acts as the carrier, as the executor and executee of this preset destiny".

"Can in this preset karman happiness, understanding and goodness replace the bad qualities - that is the bad qualities which man carries eo ipso and ab origine ?"

"Should this be possible, this would contradict the fundamental concept of 'Dukka', of suffering. You would not go wrong to maintain that the influence of more or less every one of the philosophical schools in Hinduism can in some form or other be detected in Buddhism - but with one exception: I mean the occasional Hindu philosophical system which teaches that karman is under the influence and control of a Superior Power. This concept is nowhere reflected in Buddhism. Here the laws of karman are in every aspect autochton, that is, they are independent of all outside factors - and by virtue of their own impetus they are continuous. Ultimately this has to mean, that they work and act independently of the will of any God".

"How do does this philosophy explain the creation of the Universe in the absence of a God-Creator ?"

"Also the origin, the creation, and even the orderly decourse of the world can - according to Buddhist teaching - be explained by the laws of karman without the added superposition of a God".

"What do liberation and salvation - the moksa of the Hindu - mean to a Buddhist ?", I asked once a learned professor.

"You must never overlook, and again and again make yourself realize", he answered, "that man is made up of sensations, of intellect and desires. His personality should not be considered a compact totality. Salvation means the extinction of all formerly present, and of all the newly added desires. Once salvation has been achieved, there is no need anymore of rebirth and death - there is now the mergence into a timeless state of being. This state is one of deliverance where there is no more a desire for personal existence. An occasional individual may enjoy some of such bliss already in his lifetime, when that which makes him an individual becomes something which is totally apersonal. To understand this condition the whole complex of salvation has to be approached with reason and not with emotions. It is a matter of philsophy. It is a matter of equanimity. It is a personal, an individual matter. It means salvation, liberation from the world and not of the world. The real, the true, the final salvation, however, is only possible after the actual lifespan has ended. In some way, and with such a view in mind, you may consider salvation a factual transmigration of the soul".

"I have learned that in contrast to Hinduism Buddhism denies a transmigration of the souls"

"Yes, transmigration of the soul is not accepted in Buddhis. It is only a collection of passing, constantly renewed elements. But the principlke of transmigration is pivotal in Hinduism, although it is not mentioned in the Veda. This concept may have been absorbed from the ideology of the original inhabitants of India after the Arians invaded the sub-continent".

"What you said about salvation just now presents a theoretical, or let us say a doctrinal approach. In which practical way, by which regular means available to the average mortal, can a person gain salvation according to Buddhist teaching ? "

"He has to follow the path of the Buddha. He has to accept the Buddha's words. He has to emulate the Bhodisattvas, and he has to follow the straight path which the Buddha's precepts outline for us. In all spheres of life - present and future - Buddha is our teacher. By his clearly formulated instructions and by his personal example he has shown the people the path to salvation. Salvation is essentially based on three supreme disciplines: contemplation, morality and wisdom. Pursue these and you will find yourself on the right path which, by eliminating all suffering, will bring you to your nirvana, your ultimate extinction. If you

succeed on this path you become an **Arhat,** a person who has found salvation already in his lifetime. Having reached such a state you are justified to say to yourself: 'There is no further existence ahead of me'".

"This means, you may already in your lifetime, in your actual existence, not only anticipate but also enjoy the bliss you are assured is awaiting you on reaching nirvana ?"

"Yes, this is what I wanted to convey".

"Is this also known in Hinduism ? That is to say, is there any great difference between the Buddhist and the Hindu concept and image of Nirvana ?"

"Yes and no, as you might have deducted from my explanations. Nirvana is the extinction of all desires, the end of all hating, the cessation of all being and becoming - in short the ceasing of all states of consciousness. You would be very wrong, should you interpret this as something negative. Nirvana is not a not-being, not a self-destruction. Nirvana is the place, the atmosphere, the state wherein and whenever that which is the personal self of the former existences disappears. For us Buddhists - let me say it in very clear words - nirvana is not the total disappearance, the 'total blow-out', the total vanishing, as it is visualized by the Hindus. It is not a complete extinction of existence. Mostly it means to a Buddhist, that he will not have to be reborn again. I must, however, point out that not every Buddhist will agree with what I have told you just now. The interpretation of the state of nirvana differs from school to school, because the Buddha himself has not left us a definite explanation of how he visualized nirvana. But one thing is certain and accepted by all denominations of Buddhism: nirvana is not a final and total disappearance. Neither is it a state of total inaction".

"How does this affect the fortunate one who has gained nirvana while still alive ? "

"Whoever has in his lifetime achieved nirvana by withdrawing his attention and interests from outside affairs, and by his concentrating on the reasoned evaluation and contemplation of the truth, should not isolate himself, should not withdraw from life in expectation of his early and ultimate grant of bliss. According to the Mahayana School of Buddhism the fortunate individual who has become a pure and higher being, who has gained enlightenment and has reached nirvana already in his lifetime, has become a saintly person, the source of unusual knowledge. It is expected that he shares with others all through his lfe the wisdom he has acquired. It is furthermore his duty that he works for mankind's moral uplift.

(While the professor, with whom we were having tea in his room in the University, spoke these words in a more solemn tone that the one in which he liked to lecture us, Gobinder had turned to me with an expression which I can best describe as one of worship. And for a considerable time thereafter he continued to shake his head and to smile to himself, as if to express his complete agreement with whatever thoughts were passing through his mind. I experienced at that moment - more even than at the beginning of our travels - an acute and unpleasdant sense of embarrassment.)

"When and how did in your view all which we see around us, all which is called the Universe, have its beginning ?" This was oe of questions I often asked in such a company. "In other words: when and how was this world created according to Buddhist creed and belief ?"

"Such a question is irrelevant to a Buddhist, especially if it is conceived in an existential context, in that of the problem of being. The belief in a 'Creator' or a 'Directing God' is not acceptable to us. The 'Mimanisa' - an interpretative text of the Veda dating from the 1st century of our era - teaches that 'every cognition is right and does not require any further gratification'; that the world as well as the gods are regulated in accordance with an impersonal law. In contrast to this teaching the Vedanta has later accepted the existence of an infinite substance - Brahman - as the original world substance. This led, under the influence of Buddha, to the concept of Maya, which says that the world has been created by lack of knowledge and is only an illusion, a deceptive image, behind which the individual who has achieved a higher state of cognition will find the hidden, truly existing Brahman".

"How would you circumscribe today's views of Buddhism about this complex of issues ?"

"It depends whom you have in mind. From the time Buddhism became a popular religion, it had to adopt an animistic content. It had to be conceded, that in order to make it easier for the general mass of the people to comprehend the Buddhist theology, the latter had to be presented also in deistic and ritualistic terms. However, this does not mean that we have developed also a cosmological system like that of the Bible, for instance. I can assert that there has never been a conflict of and within Buddhism when faced with newly introduced scientific developments, as has been a frequent occurrence in other religions. Now with regard to your question: for us Buddhists it is a fact of philosophical

truth and a matter of faith, that the Universe is not static, that it is exposed to continued changes. These changes are the very causes which in due time will have their effect. Likewise everything which we believe exists - be it social or spiritual, physiological or intellectual in nature - goes through a never ending process of deaths and rebirths, of growths and decays. Everything changes. There is no static, no unchanging existence, no finity and no immortality".

"Who and what and ultimately regulates this eternal process of changing, and who or what controls the consequences ?"

"For everything there is a cause and an effect. There is a cause for everything that happens, there is a reason for everything that goes on. All this is the effect of everything that is and happens, because in turn it is the cause of that which is going to be or to happen thereafter. When our actual world comes to an end - as it is bound to happen one day - it will be the culmination of the effect of the other worlds which have existed before; and this event in turn will be the cause for worlds to come into existence in the future".

"Does this not lead to the conclusion, that once upon a time there must have been a beginning, a start, a first world ? And am I, therefore, not entitled to conclude, that there has been a Creator, a God, who initiated it all ?"

"The Hindus believe there has been a beginning - we don't. In our philosophy the world goes through periods of evolution and of decline. Even if there were some kind of god or gods, some type of a creator or creators, they would have been without an influence in and on the cosmic process".

"What then is the explanation Buddhism gives about the way this world has come into being ?"

"Buddhism has from its beginning never taken a stand, has never expressed itself about the way the universe has been created. Even the more complex forms of Buddhist thought, which in the course of later philosophical developments and evolutions have come to the surface, have never cared to provide a clear definition and a definite explanation in this respect. I could possibly explain this by the fact, that the spiritual character of Buddhism, no less than that of Hinduism, accepts the final annihilation - be it in a positive, be it in a negative way - of the individual's existence.

"In this context, my dear Prince, let me return to your previous question and mention, that Buddhism does not differentiate between God and the Universe. In our perception that which you call the human soul - that is to say whatever is left after the individual's

death - does not return to a divine source, as is taught by your religions in the West, but it returns to a state of existence and of life of the kind it had known before".

"Professor Surayat ! I am intellectually incapable to conceive of a philosophy which does not perceive of a permanency - which has not a concept with a solid logic base", I protested. "If there is no soul, there should at least be an all-overshadowing concept of an Absolute Being".

"I understand your objection. This very problem has agitated the followers of Buddha from the time our religion was established. Buddha denied the existence of both an individual and an universal soul - in clear contrast to the Brahminical doctrine of redemption. Let me express myself more clearly: the Buddha has not acknowledged an individual soul as a metaphysical entity. He was not interested in an individual Self in relation to any other, any all-embracing, greater Self. For him - and thus for us - there is no 'Self'. A Self would be something permanent, eternal, unchangeable. But everything changes. We and everything else are made up of parts and particles which constantly change. We do not recognize a 'Self' which is something which survives for ever - I mean anything like a Being which is above all beings, with its own rules of existence and survival. All things in existence are without a Self, without a soul. For nothing is substantial. All is impermanent. All is only an accumulation of parts. There is no 'I'. The 'I', the personality, the Self, are illusions".

"What then, if not a soul, is left of an individual to be born again into a new incarnation ?"

"It is our karman which survives and is reincarnated. The spiritual and intellectual qualities of man reincarnated into a new existence are predetermined by the karman of his previous existence. He has no chance to change this by his own will and determination. And nobody can help him in this matter. From the onset Buddhism contradicted the ancient beliefs that sacrifices and repentance can compensate for sins. Man can only free himself from this eternal bondage by following the **Path** outlined by Buddha".

"Can you give me a clear definition of the evidently so overwhelming power of the karman principle ?"

"In Buddhism karman refers to specific activities and values. Karman is indestructable, and also unchangeable by outer influences. As you will know, karman results from acts or deeds; but it results also from the intentions behind those deeds. It represents the 'fruits' which have grown from those thoughts, intentions and deeds. Basic to everything is the doctrine that man has to avoid all selfish

deeds and thoughts, that any act performed for one's advantage only binds the individual still further to the Wheel of Existence. On the other hand, however, we are told that unselfish acts are without any effect in shortening one's Samsara. Every single deed or thought produces an addition, may be a good one or an evil one, to one's karman. According to the quality of the karman a man carried over from his past, he will undergo repeated rebirths as a living being. And he will in each of the rebirths assume a different form. There are five states of existences into which the karman can emerge, that means in which a karman can be reincarnated: there are the two good states of deity and humanity; and there are the three evil states of reincarnation: into an animal, into that of a hungry ghost and into that of a denizen of hell. Though not the absolutely highest stage, the rebirth as a human is the most desirable one, because only a human can achieve salvation and nirvana - never is this possible for the karman which has entered one of the other four states. But most difficult of all the incarnations to achieve is that into the human state. Whatever the outcome, all the five modes of existence have in common the individual karman which is sporned on by cravings for power, for material wealth, for sensual pleasures, and by a continued urge to perform deeds which generate karman. We are heirs to our previous existence, harbouring all the potentialities of our long past. But we are also the creators of our own future. It is within our power to develop good intentions leading us to good deeds, which in turn will lead to our being reborn into a good state of existence. We are also given the choice and opportunity to follow the religious principles of the Buddha by which we may break once for all the bondage of rebirths".

"Let us spend some of our time with you helping me to gain a true understanding of the ways a Buddhist searches to gain his **Nirvana".**

"I shall try to make you see the Buddhist's way to salvation, my friend. Nirvana is a mainly Buddhist concept, the ultimate,the unconditioned reality whose inward realization is the supreme goal of the Buddhist's spiritual request. Buddha described Nirvana as an 'unborn, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded state..... where there is no wavering....no coming and going...no falling from one state into the other..... where there is no here, no beyond, no there, no yonder'. Nirvana is the end of all woes. It is the ceasing of becoming".

"How can you or I reach this goal ?"

"According to the early Buddhist view Nirvana can be achieved by 'Bodhi', which is a kind of awakening to 'non-substantive reality

of one's self', as somebody has defined this state. This would free the aspirant from the pangs of insatiable craving and from the suffering which result thereform. It is a cessation, a detachment, an absence of cravings, a freedom from delusions. It leads to a state of bliss, happiness, peace".

"This original view of Nirvana has changed over the years, has it not ?"

"There were changes indeed. In later Buddhist ideology Nirvana is described as a state of 'light', of 'calm' - but these are only vague words and descriptions. Nirvana is, as it is clearly stated, beyond description, beyond words, beyond conception. Nirvana can be gained by adhering zealously to a regime of moral conduct, mental discipline and intuitive wisdom. Such an effort, such an endeavour, is not a easily undertaken nor completed. It may stretch over a long series of rebirths. The basic demand is, that an individual strives to eradicate his cravings; for it is these which create the evil load on man's karman and make his further rebirths a necessity. Once an individual has realized what his goal should be, he will achieve emancipation from all desires and cravings - and this is nirvana".

"This means he will be extinguished, will disappear ?"

"You can translate nirvana as extinguishing, as blowing out, as covering up - but it is not like extinguishing a lamp, like blowing out a candle or like covering up a fire. Certainly not. Fire is a useful metaphor in this context. In his 'Fire Sermon' Buddha said ' the whole world is inflamed by the fire of lust, of hatred and of delusion; and only in Nirvana can these fires be extinguished'. Nirvana is absolute, unconditioned reality. It is unlimited in time, space, psychological moods or mental traits. The 'blowing out' which seems to impress western readers so much, is not annihilation but the extinction of attachments and desires and of the individual separate selfhood. In nirvana all suffering is extinguished; for suffering is caused by desire - and desire is absent in Nirvana".

"But I learned that the Buddha refused to describe a nirvana without a residue left after the karman or Self or whatever is extinguished. Only our all our cravings and our lust, all our hatreds and our delusions, as well as all our false ideas of ourselves, will be eradicated, will be extinguished, will be blown away. Therefore something must be left in Nirvana".

"What will be left is a state of peace and serenity, a perfect tranquility, a lack of passions, an unstained purity, a supreme bliss and a total happiness".

"You will forgive me if I say, that something prevents me from fully comprehending the Nirvana concept. For instance: a Buddhist deeply involved in his religion must be greatly handicaped; that is to say, in his legitimate desire to reach enlightenment and salvation he is liable to neglect his duties to himself, to his family, to the society. He will withdraw and care only for his own interest. Imagine this situation multipled by everyone of the Buddhists here in Sri Lanka or elsewhere in the East !"

"Such a state would, of course, be intolerable. Don't worry, such a situation cannot arise. We Buddnists stand with both our legs in life, in normal life, where we pursue our legitimate tasks and fulfill our expected duties to family and society. What you described just now is the way of life the monks and nuns have cnosen. We others, the modern thinking and better educated - and we make up the major part of the Buddnist community here - follow the advice of the well-known singhalese Buddnist philosopher Wijewardena, who wrote: 'Buddhists should should not pursue their Nirvana secluded in the cells of their monasteries, but a Nirvana which can be achieved here and now by a life of self-forgetful activity.....and live in closer touch with humanity....and better understand, and sympathise with, human difficulties'".

"All in all you painted a beautiful picture of Nirvana, Professor. But on what ideological, on what intellectual canvas is it painted ? In what specific philosophical frame will you present me your painting of Nirvana ? I have asked many a wise man for their definition of **Nirvana,** and have seen through their personal spectacles glimpses of the many shapes of the end-future for which they saymankind craves. You are a man of scientific thinking; you should be without the commonly encountered illusions, I expect. Can you describe to me what I could accept as an 'authoritative' definition, one which I could share with you ?"

"There is no single authorized Buddhist view of Nirvana. For your sake I shall try to outline the various directions I perceive - from an intellectual viewpoint and as a liberal- and modern-minded man - the concept of Nirvana can take when freed from metaphysical pervasion and legendary packing:

(What follows is a conglomerate of the definitions the very learned Buddhist gave me; I could not remember his exact wording, but I found them in part repeated in one of books I studied in the Library of the Hebrew University. I shall describe here what I extracted.)

1. It is the release from ignorance about the character of the world. We live, therefore, either in a state of outright suffering or in a state of disharmony. Nirvana views living and dying as expressions of the truths this world has to offer; this

means from this point of view Nirvana is this-worldly.

2. Knowledge achieved by contemplating the concept of Nirvana is not merely intellectual or spiritual. Nirvana can be achieved by removing or reverting ego-centred forms of thinking and behaving. Nirvana can be achieved through and with the physical man, through his body - and not despite his body.

3. Man can achieve Nirvana not only by his own dedication to studies and to learning, but also through that of others, especially through the compassion others show for him.

4. Nirvana entails the recognition of the inherent harmony and equality of things.

5. Nirvana has an inherently moral aspect. By eliminating all egocentric thoughts, ideas and actions, an enlightened person will approach others either with equanimity or compassion - the latter being the mainstay of Nirvana.

6. Nirvana is a radical change in attitude by which one is no more under the influence of egocentric thinking.

7. Nirvana is - ontologically speaking - the affirmation of the inherent goodness of the world - and even of the humans therein".

"You will excuse my frankness, Sir", I could not refrain from saying, "when I tell you that I am very much disappointed to hear you outline such an important doctrine of Buddhism in these vague and indistinct, though reformed sounding, but philosophically shaky sentences".

"I well realize this. The philosophical view of Nirvana has agitated Buddhism since it was formulated. Inevitably every one of the various schools and directions of Buddhism came to fomulate its own concept of Nirvana. To give you only a few instances:

"In the Abidharma tradition, a person who dedicates himself to live in accordance with the 'Path' Buddha has outlined, and after he has achieved many improvements in the living conditions in the course of his following rebirths, will finally reache a stage in which cravings, and the efforts to satisfy these, will be no more there, will no more be generated. This is 'Nirvana with Remainders', a state of bliss which is not complete because residues, remainders of negative karmans from previous existences continue to burden his actual karman. Once these residues, these remainders from the past existences, are cleared away in in the course of the rebirths, this person will after his death achieve the perfect 'Nirvana without Remainders'.

"Then there is Mahayana Buddhism, which teaches that there is no opposition between Nirvana and Samsara; that is to say, Nirvana is not an escape from the world of suffering, but is Enlightenment, the knowledge to live a wise and compassionate life in the world.

"A derivation of Mahayana, The Yogacara School, denies this doctrine. It asserts that Nirvana and Samsara have a common ground, namely the activity of the mind. The mind alone creates both, either delusion - which is Samsara - and Enlightenment - which is Nirvana. From this doctrine follows their view, that in every individual

a core of Buddhahood exist in a still delusional fixation; and the practice of these Buddhists is directed at acquiring the technique by which to clarify and to make manifest the Buddha mind and the Buddha nature contained in every individual.

"In the other no less important interpretation of Buddhist doctrine, the Hinayana School which we follow here, Nirvana is interpreted as 'awakening' and as 'realization'. Nirvana is seen as a state of harmony, when he world has become intrinsically harmonious and there is no more suffering. And those who have achieved nirvana, will harmoniously vibrate with the world.

"By the way: also Confucianism has a similar concept of Nirvana as we have, while in Zen Buddhism, which favours a direct 'transmission of mind' from Master to Disciple, Enlightenment is achieved as an inter-personal experience".

All you have heard so far, Moshe Chaim, is by far not all I want to tell you about Buddha and the religion he set in motion. You will have by now have gained an inkling of the many-facetted concepts every one of the aspects of Buddhism presents. There is still more to be mentioned, especially what I learned about the basic principles of Buddhism and its various schools during my pilgrimage - especially during my stay in Sri Lanka - and no less also from my consequent study of the literature. If all this is of little interest to you, Moshe Chaim, please erase it from the tape.

During the years of our pilgrimage, in our conversations with learned people and whenever we spent time in University libraries, I had dedicated much of my time to learn about the various directions Buddhist thought had taken. Before arriving in Sri Lanka I had already gained much insight into the greatly differing aspects of the philosophy and theology of the various currents this creed. Through my talks with lamas, monks and teachers in various parts of India, but mainly in Calcutta and Darjeeling, I had learned much about the thinking process of its adherents.

No study of Buddhism is complete without a clear knowledge and understanding of the directions its various schools and philosophies have taken. I hope you will not mind, Moshe Chaim, if I make a short excursion in this direction.

I was especially interested in learning of the doctrines of the Hinayan - or the Theravada as it is also called - direction

of Buddhism. Somehow their ideology had not only greatly attracted me, but had also intrigued me since I had first learned about them. As Theravada is the form of Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka, I was offered all the opportunities to increase my knowledge and my understanding of this very impressive religion with the help of kind, learned and very willing guides and mentors. Among these I am greatly obliged to a very wise and relaxed Ceylonese historian who had retired to a monastery outside Colombo in Sri Lanka.

"Very early already", he began his lecture, when I had requested him to tell us, Gobinder and myself, about the divergence of the various schools of thought from the main current of Buddhism, "about two hundred years after the death of the Buddha, two major schools developed, namely that of **Hinayana** or **Theravada** Buddhism, and that of **Mahayana** Buddhism. The former is called **'The Lesser Vehicle'** or **'The Doctrine of the Elders'**; and the latter **'The Greater Vehicle'**. We here in Sri Lanka adhere to the Theravada doctrine, which has hardly changed since its inception about 200 BCE, that is to say since the last twenty-two centuries. It has developed a large literature. An enormous canon of scripture is preserved here in Sri Lanka. The Mahayana form of Buddhism has become established mainly in Tibet, China and Japan. It is not possible to explain to you here and now the differences between these two schools, nor the finer points of their teaching. You will have to study these two schools - in addition to the others which exist today - for you cannot simply generalize and apply the doctrines and the theology of one of them to all the others. Not even the original teachings of the Buddha are interpreted in the same way by all these schools".

I had already some knowledge of the Mahayana School. 'All is momentary. All is suffering. All is individual. All is empty. are the complaints of this current of Buddhism. Man should endevaour to improve, to forego his defects, so that he can become a Buddha, a Bhodisattva, so that he can contribute to the salvation of mankind. The world is without any persisting substance; it is the product of fleeting phenomena without any individuality. The world, the thinking, the associations, the redemption are denied as is all that is 'considered finite'. Only the emptiness, whether non-existent or existent, is the Absolute. Also Nirvana is only one aspect of this emptiness; here all conceptions of having lived prove to have been an illusion.

"The **Mahayana** School claims to represent the final set of doctrines which the Buddha had exclusively revealed to his spiritually most advanced disciples", I was told by one of the learned professors we met in Calcutta. "Mahayana is the belief in a loving and compassionate Buddha who had not restricted the benefits of his meritorious karman to his own advantage, but had transferred them on all mankind. This creed differs from that of Theravada Buddhism, which stresses self-reliance and self-emancipation as the means with which to achieve salvation.

"The Mahayana School is most likely the truest exponent of the Buddfha's own doctrines and beliefs", he told us on another occasion. "Philosophically and in theory it has always remained loyal to the principles - deistic and agnostic - which Buddha is said to have commanded and enforced".

"There have been changes since...."

"Definitely so. Buddhism was originally a rather primitive faith system, until it was made to undergo reforms - and also complications. This was especially the case when the Hinayana and Mahayana interpretations made their appearances".

"What are the characteristics of Mahayana ?"

"Some believe that Mahayana started as a revolutionary movement through which the restless laity managed to overcome the oppressive conservative monastic establishment. This may beresponsible for the identity of Mahayana. It involves lay people to a greater degree than the other schools. I may say it is more speculative than other schools - and more ambitious. It is more mythological in its conception of Buddhahood. It stresses altruistic behaviour, aspires to the universal enlightenment of all beings. All these clear-cut and strictly circumscribed distinguishing features of Mahayana are added by a metaphysical extension: it worships a heavenly Buddha and reveres the Bodhisattvahs. The Buddha is at times even seen as something akin to God. I must confess, however, that it is rather difficult for me to envisage Buddha as a divine being, as after his entry into nirvana he is supposed to have completely ceased to exist - and this you cannot suppose to happen to a God. On a higher level it is taught, that the historical Buddha, who lived and died in the fifth century BCE, was actually only an earthly manifestation of an Eternal Buddha, that he was an Avatar manifesting himself as a Bhodisattvah. This doctrine has created the veritable pantheon of Buddhas and **Bhodisattvahs** you see filling the Buddha temples and shrines".

"What precisely is the function of these living Buddhas and

of the Bhodisattvahs ?"

"The Buddhas were human beings who have been deified by virtue of their having been successful, selfless and inspired teachers while they were alive. They are remunerated and distinguished for having won for themselves, thanks to their blessed insight and great efforts, an abiding place in the highest heaven - a higher one even that the original Buddha occupies. Devotees offer vows to them, address prayers to them".

"Higher than Buddha himself, you say !? They occupy a higher place than the Gautama Buddha ?"

"In the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism the Buddha does not enter Nirvana. Like the founders of all the other religions he was a great teacher and leader, and as such we perceive him another corporealization of the Eternal Buddha. The Buddhas I mentioned as being eternalized in sculptures everywhere in temples and shrines, represent exalted human beings who had been great teachers and who live in heavenly realms. They support us human beings on earth; and in various ways they interact with us. They are embodiments of compassion. They feel lovingly bound to us; they feel responsible for us; they do not want to abandon all those human beings who have not yet achieved, or even approached salvation, and are still exposed to an ongoing suffering".

"What differentiates the Buddhas from the Bhodisattvahs ?"

"A Bhodisattvah belongs into a different category of enlightened individuals than that of the Buddha. Gautama Buddha's sojourn among his contemporaries as a Bhodisattva has led to the idealization of the Bhodisattvah. The Bhodisattvah among us occupies the place, plays the role, takes up the functions which the Buddha himself had when he himself was a Bhodisattvah. The life of the Bhodisattvah spans the period from his enlightenment until he reaches the status of a Buddha and therewith the final deliverance from suffering. In a deeper philosophical context this means that he has become a true and real human being. He is not a 'nearly enlightened one' as I have heard this type of saint described, but a truly enlightened individual, who could have entered nirvana but delays his final entry into the existence of bliss, because he has taken upon himself the duty to remain actively involved in alleviating the suffering of others, and to save as many individuals as possible from their world of misery. The Bhodisattvah and his karman are endowed with a vast store of merits; and these he transfers to less fortunate individuals so that they may share his merits. He remains with us here on earth until he has carried out his vow in full".

"With what qualities is a Bhodisattvah endowed ?"

"Before a Buddha reaches his wisdom-filled state of enlightenment he will become a Bhodisattvah. A Bhodisattvah is a man blessed with perfect wisdom. His all-embracing self-sacrifice is clear evidence, and also a visual manifestation, of this wisdom. It is the accepted belief that each of the Bhodisattvahs alive in our midst is the personification of one particular trait of the Buddha".

"From what you said just now, Professor, I presume that the Mahayana School believes in a God".

"Let me explain the place of God in Buddhism. Though the Mahayana is basically atheistic in accordance with the extremely atheistic teaching of Gautama Buddha, it had also manifested certain theistic characteristics. In conformity with the Sankaya philosophy in vogue in India at the time of his teaching, Buddha explained everything in terms of soul and matter which do not require the intervention of a divine power. There is some justification in saying that iniially Mahayana adopted to some degree the Vedantic concept of the gods who are concrete and anthropomorphic beings, who have to be satisfied and vowed by concrete acts like sacrifices and rituals. Neither did Mahayana deny the deities of other faiths, but it always subordinated them to one single Head Deity".

"What did Buddha say about the principle of a Deity, of the soul's transmigration and all what is connected therewith ?"

"Buddha refused to give his disciples a definition of the 'other world'. Although they repeatedly requested him to enlighten them about this matter, and although they begged him that he teaches them on the subject of the supernatural, he every time refused to answer their wishes. Instead he implied that the disciples had to rely on their own efforts to gain salvation, that the question whether a God existed or not was of no importance for their efforts. On the contrary, he warned them, any speculation on the question of a God would only lead to the destruction of their self-reliance. And it has become our creed that it is most desirable, and becomes the greatest achievement, to reach salvation by our own efforts and without requisitioning help from outside".

"Does this mean that those who accept the existence of a Godhead do so in contravention to Buddha's teaching ?"

"I realize how difficult it is for you to understand our conception of God. Mahayana accepts it as a fact that there is an absolute and permanent Godhead; but in our view God is the manifestation of wisdom, of consciousness and of unlimited love and not something like a living being. At the same time our

philosophy postulates, that God neither exists - nor does he non-exist. But, says Mahayana, as it is possible to make everything exist by addressing prayers to a saint or a deity, God does exist. This leads to the interesting situation that very often - for instance in the case of Indian Buddhists - also the gods of their Hindu environment are approached in the buddhist worship".

I learned more about this fascinating chapter from a devoted Buddhist we met in a Delhi ashram.

"The Mahayana form of Buddhism as it is practiced by us, is the more liberated form of Buddhism", he told me. "It is a most selfless and compassionate kind of Buddhism. It teaches, for instance, that the final enlightenment is not to be sought for one's own salvation sake, but in order to enable one to administer to the moral needs of others. And, furthermore, a conscientious, modern thinking, responsible Buddhist of our generation does not try to escape from the realities of the world; he does not retire into a monastery to live as a monk, or hides himself in the forest to exist as a hermit; instead he searches to acquire the knowledge with which he can help his fellow beings. He is not planning his life and activities with his own advantages or successes in mind, because he knows that all is momentary, that all is passing, that all is suffering, that all is empty. Mahayana Buddhism teaches that mankind has incessantly to strive for salvation. Once we are near to salvation, we should aspire to become a Buddha and to turn into a Bhodisattvah, so that we may contribute to the salvation of all other people too. And indeed it is so. Everyone of us does in fact aspire to become a Buddha - not for selfish reasons, that is for our own benefit - but so that it may be granted to us to be of service to mankind. I cannot but agree, should you point out, that the concept I have just now outlined in these few words, has a somewhat theistic content. Indeed, a Bhodisattvah was originally thought to be the incarnation of the Buddha himself".

"How do you recognize a Bhodisattvah ? How does he manifest himself among the mortals ? "

"You are at liberty - like everybody else, ourselves included - to form your own image and interpretation of a Bhodisattvah. You may call him a saint, you may see in him an avator, a manifestation of one of a succession of states of incarnation of the cosmic Buddha-Spirit. If you want, you may see in him also a kind of divine Saviour. But whatever name he is given or by whatever designation he is called, he will become recognized by his striving to bring salvation to mankind. He will be recognized by his being an example

of all the moral and humane principles which those near and around him are made to imitate. He will be recognized because he is full of wisdom and rich in compassion. A Bhodisattvah is not born one; he is not a person specifically and originally created for such a position in life, for such a duty and task; every good and decent person carries in himself the potentiality to become a Bhodisattvah. I realize, my dear Prince, how unbelievable it is to those who do not share our knowledge of truth, to accept that a person who could have entered nirvana has postponed the enjoyment of this state of unlimited bliss due to him in order to help mankind reach its salvation too. As you know - or are going to find out - our teaching contrasts with that of the Theravada Buddhists who say that nobody can influence anybody else's karman, that everybody has to work out his own salvation. The Theravadan doctrine denies its people the right to be helped along to salvation by outsiders. We Mahayanas aspire to become Buddhas for our own enlightenment, it is true, but also in order that me may the better help others to gain enlightenment too. It is also true, that only very rarely can one of us ever succeed in his lifetime to reach the state of Buddhahood - but this realization has not kept any of us from concentrating all his energies and efforts on this goal".

"Can you explain to us the status of a Buddhist monk ?", I asked an advocate we had come to know in Kandy, in Sri Lanka.

"I may sound cynical", he laughed, "but in my opinion men and women have become monks and nuns because this frees them from the burden of daily chores and problems. These monks and nuns in their yellow robes have no worries, no troubles; everything is provided for them. But is is a fact that there are few joys in their lives. They live in monasteries, called Sanghras, under strict disciplinary rules, which you can find outlined in their 'Vinaya Pitaka', their Book of Discipline. Hewre on earth the best they can look forward to is to become 'Theras', that is Elders, after ten years of monkhood and 'Mahatheras', that is Great Elders, after another ten years".

"Do many join the Order of Monks ? Is it difficult to join a monastery ? "

"We have many monks and nuns here. It is easy to turn into a monk or nun. They join the Order in a public ceremony during which they have to recite the 'Threefold Refuge:

I go to the Buddha for refuge.

I go to the Dharma for refuge.

I go to the Sanghra for refuge.

"Can a monk leave his Order, that is break his vows ?"

"He can leave the Order any time he wishes - but this happens only rarely. Among those who do are the Siddhas, wandering saints, who have left the monastery. They are supposed to possess 'magic power' and, I am told, the medicines they distribute are said to be very effective. Others who leave a monastery after some time were only temporary members; for it is a custom among us for young people, before they enter their professional life, to live for some time, a few months or even a year, as monks".

"What does a monk expect to achieve by his strict life, by his having entered such a difficult path to enlghtenment ?"

"The monk has as his special interest and main duty the goal to achieve his salvation, his enlightenment. He spends all his time on this. Nothing is allowed to detract him. In order not to be detracted from their meditation and their prayers, the monks are not even allowed to do any manual work, even when they stay in their monasteries. They are taught that ethical comportment is a precondition for the start on the way to salvation, to nirvana. An explicitely moral behaviour is, therefore, a priori demanded from every monk; and they are thus guided by moral laws in all they do. This guideline provides the monk with a thorough knowledge of what is good and what is evil. Of course, these rules apply to every Buddhist, to every ethical human being, but it is very difficult for the average citizen to adopt such a way of life. This has been recognized as an undeniable and proven fact; and this has led to the recognition, that only by leaving the profane world, by entering a monastery and by becoming a monk, can a person conduct himself in this strict and disciplined manner".

"You mentioned 'Dharma' a short while ago", I asked the advbocate at the conclusion of our conversation. "Can you, please tell me about Buddhism's view of Dharma".

"Dharma - the Divine Rule Dharmakaya - is an ancient Indian concept of blind impersonal force. In Buddhism, however, it is a personal one which repesents a higher degree of intelligence, one which harbours love. In Mahayana it signifies both the imminent and the transcental reality of all beings and appearances. And this includes the nature of the Buddhas. Dharma denotes truth, morality and duty. It is the way to know the state and the function of the world, how to eliminate evil tendencies and how to acquire the truth about the spiritual potentialitis of the Universe. Awareness of Dharma leads to freedom from the bonds of phenomenal existence. Whoever knows the meaning of dharma, cannot but follow its rules. Dharma in combination with the Buddha and with Samsara constitute the Threefold Jewel to which one has to prostrate oneself

in devotion".

"The life of a monk is everywhere in the world usually strict and severe", I mentioned once to a Buddhist monk we met in an Ashram, "but I have the impression that this is more so in the case of the Buddhist monk. What makes so many of the young people enter such a "career' ?"

"Our monks live with the knowledge, that the strict rules and standards of ethics have been imposed on mankind by a Higher Power and are not the creation of man. In other words: the incorruptible karman which reacts to man's good or evil deeds, is beyond death and incarnation".

The professor of a theological college in Colombo provided me with further explantions about the 'nirvana compllex', the meaning and sense of which I wanted to have very clear established in my mind. The meaning and sense of nirvana has somhow to this day never ceased to exert a great fascination on me,

"Allow me to make an introductory remark", he started. "Your way of reasoning is, that whatever happens in nature is governed by laws; and that, therefore, whatever happens which is contrary to these laws must of necessity be against nature, must be unnatural, must be unreal, must ultimately be unacceptable. We Buddhists say that nothing whatsoever is real. All is unreal. We do not know of anything which is naturally determined. Your determinations of natural events and facts result from scientific discoveries, and at the most you will accept the supernatural as something miraculous. We are no newcomers; our sciences date from a very long time ago - and we do not see anything unusual in a miracle.

"And now to your question: For us Mahayana Buddhists the final aim is not nirvana but the identification with Buddha. We wish to discover and to develop the Buddha nature which everyone of us harbours - and this means the potentiality to acquire eternal wisdom and be blessed with unexhaustible compassion. The aspiration to become a Buddha in order to serve mankind so that it can improve its fate and attain salvation, is uppermost in our minds. Mahayana has all the characteristics of a religious faith suited to the lay public. The ambition of our religion is to create Bhodisattvahs, that is saints, who have postponed their entry into nirvana in order to serve mankind, to help them gain salvation too. It is our greatest wish that all mankind may gain salvation".

"I am going to ask you a question, Professor, which I have

asked others many times before: if you define Buddhism as a religion - as you have just now done - do you do so because of its high ethical standards ? "

"Yes, for this reason, and also because of its prayers. Have you realized that Buddhism is a religion of prayers ? Do you know that the canon of Mahayana Buddhism is made up of about a hundred volumes ! The formulations and variations of our prayers are manifold".

"To whom do you pray ? Don't you pray to the statues, the images and so on ? "

"It is true. Buddhist prayers approach the Hindus' practices. People pray to the statues, bathe the sacred images, carry the idols in procession, offer them clothing, food, perfume, music and so on. We know that these statues are stone, lifeless cold stones, but we pray to what they represent. I think that praying in general, and in particular this form of devotion of our followers, is very exaggerated and overdone. You will agree that the same can be said of the prayer services of most all other religions. I mean with this criticism in particular the prayer-wheels and prayer-flags which in Tibet turn out a form of mass-production of prayers".

"This would indicate that the individual whirling the prayer wheel or waving the prayer flag relies on a fixed prayer, let us say, that he man who prays does not formulate any personal or private prayers. What do you yourself try to express in your prayers ? Do you ask for special favours ? Do you confess your sins ? Do you regret your wrong-doings ? "

"When praying we do not burden our minds with such things. We pray for the knowledge of truth. We pray for the strength to free ourselves from unwanted desires. We address our prayers to a saint or to a deity. Even to deities of other religions as is the custom in Tibet. In our prayers we do not try to escape the realities of this world, but pray for the knowledge and the strength which will enable us to help others. Of course, this can lead also to a confession of our sins. Whatever we might gain from these prayers we always consider a personal achievement and never a gift from somewhere or an unmerited favour. But by our prayers we are also made to have our conscience undergo a daily examination".

Occasionally, when I had been telling you about the experiences we gained at the various stages of our pilgrimage, I have made mention of Buddhism, of certain differences between that religious creed and Hinduism; and I have certainly in that context also mentioned Theravada, the atheist interpretation of Buddha's teaching. We had the opportunity to study the Theravada - also called Hinayana - form of Buddhism in great detail during our stay in with the Tibetans and other Buddhists in North India, among whom this school of Buddhism nearly exclusively prevails. In Sri Lanka we could study in depth also the Mahayana system which originated at about the same time as Hinayana-Theravada but developed in a totally different direction. The language these latter Buddhists use is Pali, an ancient Indian idiom. With the help of willing helpers we could overcome the language problem, as only few of the Buddhist spoke Hindi or English.

The Mahayana consider themselves the major, the truest stream of Buddhism. They look down on the Hinayana, whom they call 'the 'Minor Vehicle', while designing themselves 'the Major Vehicle'. I heard once one of the latter call the Theravada 'a wretched and poor system by which to reach salvation'. They accuse the Hinayans of selfishly pursuing their own personal salvation, whereas they, the Mahayanas, themselves see their most important task and duty in bringing about the liberation of all living beings, and in pursuance of this program they have vowed to postpone their own deliverance until the end of times. To the Hinayanans the Holy Arhat's was the ideal life, to be taken as a model and example: by his works and deeds and prayers this Saint has attained nirvana. To the Mahayanas the Bhodisatta is the ideal to be copied; he concentrates all his life on 'satta', the acquisition of enlightenment; on 'bhodi', the knowledge of the four noble truths; he has postponed becoming a Buddha, if necessary for ever, in order to dedicate his innumerable lives to save all kinds of living beings.

Most of the specifics of Theravada Buddhism which are to this day observed and referred to, were elaborated by Buddhaghosa, who lived and interpreted the teaching of Buddha in the 5th century of our era, and who is counted as one of the most important Buddhist commentators. His followers of the Hinayan-Theravada School claim that they represent the truest and purest exponent of Gautama's teaching.

Hinayana preaches a gradual process of individual salvation. It is essentially a monastic tradition. Alongside the original ideology of Buddha, it took over the essentials of the Hindu concept

of karman and rebirth. It maintains the original form of Buddhist ideology which teaches that the world we perceive is made up of many dharmas which exist only as long as they have an immediate effect. 'They last only a moment', is the basic law taught. It logically follows that whereas nothing persists, also the individual is nothing but a complex of fleeting portions of existence. Nirvana means in this context to be freed from the illusion that this world of fleeting appearance truly exists, that it is a reality. By achieving salvation we get away from this unpleasant kind of existence - call it pseudo-existence if you like - but we cannot expect some outside power or an outside person to help us gain our salvation. Every individual has to seek his enlightenment for himself and by himself.

"You would not be wrong to see in the Theravada form of Buddhism a kind of agnostic positivism which does not invite a metaphysical approach", explained the Abbot of a Monastery situated near Calcutta where we spend a few days of rest. And he added, as if to complicate his explanation still further: "One may call it also a monistic religion without theism".

The Theravada devotee prays for his extinction. Indifference to the world is the ideal mental state he wants to achieve. There is none of that interest in helping others which is so marked in Mahayana Buddhism. Man is the sole agent for his salvation, the Theravadian is taught; he has to care only for himself and his own fate. Not knowledge but devotion - and to some degree possibly also good deeds, that is a good karman - will assure a rebirth into a favourable status.

For the Mahayanas the main approach to the goal of salvation is through meditation. It was conceded by some, that in their belief also charity and morality can bring rewards, more at times even than meditation. But nothing replaces meditation. It is advisable - and it is thought also feasible - that everybody meditates at least for one hour every day. In Sri Lanka we saw everywhere so-called 'Meditation Centres', where individuals of every social standing and of every degree of education could spend an hour or so of the day in meditation.

"If you take upon you all these efforts so far enumerated", we were told, "you may get an inkling, a vague outline of the path leading to the goal, but it will hardly ever bring you to the goal. A true success, an assured success - that is to say arriving at the aspired goal - is only possible if you dedicate your entire life to such an effort, to such searching".

"But how can a person involved in the affairs of daily life ever find the time and the leisure for such a pursuance ?"

"In practice this means, therefore, that such a dedicated person would have to join a Monastery, a **Sangla.** In other words he would have to become a monk".

In Sri Lanka we had ample occasion to learn details about the monastic organization for which Buddhism is famous - and which was in existence long before it was practiced in Christendom. One of the monks we met one day on a bus and who stayed with us for a day, told us particulars which had not heard from other monks. He mentioned among other things that "we took over the rules and customs of the early monk communities among the Hindus - among them were often very rich Brahmins - whose members were sent out to beg for food. They had to approach in total silence the door of a house and present their begging bowl. We do the same today too. We are not permitted to utter a word of thanks when we receive a gift of food. People understand and accept our behaviour. No monk outside the monastery has ever had to starve. We are in the truest sense of the word 'wandering mendicants'. On joining the Order - this can be done from the age of 15 onwards - we have to shave off all our hair, have to put on the saffran robe and at our initiation ceremony have to pay homage homage to the elder monks, and squatting before them with hands raised and palms together we have to recite the **Tishrana,** the 'Three Refuges', namely 'I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the Dharma. I take refuge in the Sangra'. Nowadays the monasteries in which we live, are under the supervision of Abbotts. Our Order is very democratic; every decision requires the approval of a majority of the monks. We have a common meal once a day at noon. Our meal is usually made up of bread, rice and vegetables. The consumption of meat is not explicitely forbidden. We can eat meat as long as we ourselves have not killed the animal - and we can get any amount supplied by christian or moslem butchers. However, we very rarely do eat meat".

"What form do your prayers take ?", I asked him.

"Our schedule of devotions is made up of meditations, of the recitation of holy texts, of sermons and of discourses on the doctrine".

Indeed we observed, that to these buddhist monks - as a rule they are not very educated persons - nothing is as important as their daily 'exercises', that is to say their meditation, their citation of holy texts, their performance of certain cultic rites.

"First of all we had to learn how to detach ourselves from

that which represents the daily problems, issues and activities of the lay people, and how not to be conscious of what goes on around us", the monk explained. "Another of our basic 'exercises' is to learn to comprehend, to deny and to believe that all we perceive, that whatsoever may bring about a physical sensation in us, is only an illusion, that it is not something real. The merits we gain with the help of these 'exercises' will help us to be granted our release, our freedom from samsara".

"Since ancient time the Superior of a monastry was regarded as the unquestionable master of the monks under his tutelage", we were told by an Abbott. "He is to guide and teach the monks, to make them know their importance in the scheme of things. With justification and pride we can point out, that we are the guardians of our own dharma. We know we contribute to the wellbeing of the world. We have not to take orders or commands from anybody. We think our lives are very valuable, more even than that of a king, for the king, though he may be indispensable in the social order over which he has to rule and govern, was and is at all times subordinate to a number of lay restrictions. We monks, on the other hand, are free of all the restrictions in this world ".

"You monks enjoy indeed a life free of worries, labour and suppression", I remarked, "but I learned that notwithstanding this not all the monks spend all their lives in this way".

"Yes, there are exceptions; very few exceptions. Nearly all of us monks while wearing these yellow-robed - and this applies also to the women who are admitted as nuns to the monastic system - with our shaved heads and our begging bowls never resign from the monastic order and never cease to spend all our life as monks in prayers and contemplation. However, you should not take this to mean that we are bound for life to the existence as monks, for we do not have to take a vow to this effect. We can leave the monastery whenever we like. But as long as we are monks, we are under a very strict discipline. We have to obey no less than 227 rules"

"What is the percentage, or let me say the number of the Buddhists of Sri Lanka who enter a monastic Order ? "

"The adherents to the Buddhist faith in Sri Lanka can be divided into four groups. These are the monks, the **Bikhus;** the nuns, the **Bhikhinin;** the laymen, the **Upasaka,** and the lay women, the **Upasika.** We have many thousands of monks and nuns who live in hundreds of monasteries. You must realize that the monastic system is very attractive to a dedicated Buddhist. Monks who have withdrawn from

worldly life have a far better chance to reach the ultimate goal of salvation than the laity who follow their businesses and continue their other worldly activities. However, those lay people among the Buddhists, who are ready and willing to give up whatever they possess, are by far better qualified - and more successful - than anybody else to reach final salvation".

"Does this mean that only monks and nuns, and nobody else,that is to say the lay people who continue the pursuit of their profane life and work, can aspire to salvation ?

"Not necessarily. Even if a person does not take the logical and final steps which brings him into a monastery, but prefers to persist in his lay status, he can still nourish the hope that he may be lucky; there are occasionally cases among the lay people who achieve holiness too. The difference in the approach is not only the difficulty of the **Path**, but the intensity of the cognition - and the elimination - of all what the Self means and of all that causes Suffering".

"The life of a monk appears to me not to be too harsh, all considered", I remarked.

"Don't forget that for the majority of people it is not easy to give up the pleasures and interests which are offered in life - and do not forget that the life of a monk is not an easy one. The monk has not only to follow all the rules laid down for the layman, but he is in addition forbidden sexual relations; and he is not allowed to consume food in any form after twelve noon".

"What do you hope to achieve as a monk ? What is the truth you strive to find". This I asked once a monk in Darjeeling, and this ia a question I frequently addressed to other monks we met.

The answers I received had usually the same content - it was only formulated according to the standard of education of the individual monk.

"Truth you ask ?", was the reply I was given by this monk. "All the Truth you mean ? Only the Buddha is believed to have found all the Truth. Whoever has faith in him and his teaching, has taken the first step on the path leading to the Truth. But faith is not enough to succeed in this quest. One has to make the search for the truth part of oneself. The way to achieve this is by constant meditation and by never ending contemplation. However, we must accept it as a certainty, that it is not given to us to establish any fact as being beyond all doubt. For instance, nirvana is called the 'signless one' because it cannot be recognized as such. Only by faith, by mystical intuition, by trance and by the power of

transcendental wisdom can the Truth be recognized".

"But in practice this is only possible if you select the life of a priest or a monk - that is to say if you give up all active and productive work and dedicate all your time and energy to such a pursuit !"

"Would this be such a difficult step to take once you have realized that life is in any case nothing but an illusion ? As soon as you become aware of this fundamental fact, of this eternal truth, you will also realize that it is the Great Self, the Highest of All, who has to be searched for; and that it is relevant for your spiritual being to dedicate all your time to strengthen, to complete this awareness. But take note that there is in all this one all-excluding reservation to be observed: you will have to search by yourself, on your own. Nobody can help you to search. Listen to what the Buddha said: 'Do not believe out of blind faith. Do not believe what the Scriptures say. Do not believe what comes out of tradition. Do not believe me because it is I who spoke. But when you have seen, examined and experienced yourself, then believe'. And he said also: 'Be a light to yourself....love, kindness and charity should motivate you. Man should feel in himself the need to act these out'. Does this answer your question ? "

"Possibly. But let me make sure. You say that whoever has recognized and realized all this can be assured of salvation ? "

"Yes, whoever has realized this and has understood the **Four Noble Truths,** is freed from the laws of samsara, of the eternal cycle of rebirths. He has already entered the transcendence, even if his body is still in this karman-dominated world".

"I have learned of the Four Noble Truths".

"You should ponder them day in day out. They teach us that we must live in such an intensive way that we become conscious of the values which are contained in life. This is meant by the search of the Four Noble Truths:

"The **First Truth** states that human life is made up of suffering and frustration; of old age, sorrow, despair, discomfort and many other unpleasant sensations.

The **Second Truth** is that there is a cause for our suffering: it is the will to become, to be born. It is our cravings which lead us astray. In the end and in truth all and every suffering is due to ignorance. In other words: the cause of all man's negative experiences are his desires, his wrongly directed search for empty pleasures.

The **Third Truth** makes man realize that his sufferings can be overcome.

The **Fourth Truth** outlines the means by which this can be achieved, namely **The Eightfold Noble Path.**

"This Eightfold Noble Path which Buddha has followed, is not the prerogative of the monks; it is also open for laymen to persue. By following this Path everybody is able to gain freedom from all the human misery which grips us. You are sure to know these eight stations, but permit me to outline them in the context of what I want to convey to you:

1. Right views about Self and the world. These views are obtainable through the Four Noble Truths which I have already described.
2. Right Resolve - to reform life in the light of truth.
3. Right Speech - no lies, no slander, no unkind words.
4. Right Conduct - to root out all evil thoughts, to fill one's mind with pure thoughts.
5. Right Livelihood - to always renounce dishonesty. To do honest work.
6. Right effort.
7. Right-mindfulness - to always control one's mind. To remember what one has learned. To control one's body.
7. Right Concentration - of which there are four stages:
   a. to reason and to investigate the truths; to meditate the pure thoughts.
   b. to concentrate on peace and joy.
   c. to detach oneself even from joy and tranquility.
   d. to detach all conscious awareness from one's body - and this is Nirvana".

"These guidelines sound marvellous; I have admired them since I first heard of them", I told the monk - and I really meant it. "Do you apply all of them also in your personal every day life ?"

"With regard to my personal life I see in the Eightfold Path the guide to lead me to that degree of discipline and self-knowledge by which I can become a new and better person - and thereby come to the realization of the Noble Truths. I have learned and understood that man's education can proceed in two directions: the one to make him eradicate his greeds, his egotism, his hatreds and his delusions; the other to make him cultivate compassion, kindness, wisdom and insight. When man acquires complete goodness and a perfect inner balance, he will also have gained relief from suffering - and this will mean nirvana for him"

"These are two great principles indeed. We human beings would find ourselves in an ideal world - even should any other religion

or any other philosophy be in the dominant position - were mankind to live, act and think in accordance with the priniples you have just now outlined".

"I agree. Our world would be good to live in if only people would be good. But how can we ever reach this stage ? Education and legislation are not enough to change man who is a slave of his instincts and urges. It is this accomplishment, this task, this program which Buddhist teaching is about".

"On which part of man would you want this teaching to act, to concentrate ? On ı is intellect ? On ı is soul ? On any other imperishable factor he harbours ? "

"Everything changes, as I have already expounded. Also man changes as does everything else, be it animated life, be it inanimate matter. Nothing is permanent. There can, therefore, be no Atman, no soul in man on which to act. Buddha has denied anything of the kind in man. He refused to accept the existence of something which by nature would be imperishable. But he accepted that there is a succession of states of which life is made up".

"Have there not been changes in Buddhist thinking over the centuries ?", I turned our talk into a different direction.

"There have indeed been re-organizations and new directions in Buddhist thinking. But, understandably, no true or fundamental changes of the Buddha's teaching have taken place. Yes, there have been certain changes in the 16th century due to the interference of foreign missionaries and traders who by means of conversion and instruction, with their schools, printing presses, bibles and catechisms - followed by the brutal pressure of invading colonial powers - have tried to suppress Buddhism. Buddhism was forced to adapt as best as possible to the changed circumstances. Buddhism has also had to change under the impact of Communism and of Capitalism. But the main effect has not so much been whether to prefer adaption or isolation - but the discussion whether to enter the political stream".

"Were these changes difficult ? After all, from its creation Buddhism has been a religion of change..."

"Yes, once this had been the case. It was when Buddha preached; when it was necessary to bring about a fundamental change, when the change had been brought on by the need to abrogate, to undercut the dominance of the Brahmins. You will know that Buddha proclaimed

Birth maketh no man an outcast,
Birth maketh no man a Brahmin;
Action maketh a man an outcast,
Action maketh a man a Brahmin.

"This fundamental statement transfers on man and his actions,

on his knowledge and his aims, the ultimate responsibility and the need to perceive the perspectives of all his actions".

"Let me confess, that I have difficulty to envisage such a process, such a development, such an attitude without man having a soul in which all this reflects, nay reverberates. Let me ask you what I have asked so many others: what conception have you, a Buddhist, of your soul ? And in this context let me ask you also: how do you personally perceive God ?"

"The entire complex of Godhood is most difficult. Did not St. Francis say 'God is not what you imagine or what you think you understand. If you understand, you have failed" ? A priori the idea of a god or of a spiritual being is absent in Buddhism, in contrast to Brahminism which knows of a moral system with gods and or spirits. Buddha has never used a concrete term which would correspond to God. Considering that Buddha taught there is no soul or God one might be justified to see Buddhism as an agnostic religion - and it would not be wrong. Likewise we perceive life without the need to introduce a soul to activate it. We see life as a series of states of consciousness - and this is in my view after all the Absolute."

"Does rebirth not mean the transmigration, that is the return or the transfer of something like a soul into a new body - or if you do not accept the concept of a 'soul', than let it be anything else transmissible or transferable ? "

"We do not need the soul to explain our connection with past existences. Listen to what Gautama Buddha said: 'I, brethren, when I desire can call to mind my various states of birth...one birth.... two, a hundred thousand births....in all their specific details.... my previous states on existence'. In this respect permit me to point to an important difference in the conception of Buddhism and that of Hinduism. Yes, to the Hindus transmigration means the return, the transfer of the soul into a new body. Buddhism has no such doctrine. We see in rebirth the causation of the next life by the present one. There is the additional difference that in place of the 'concept of a soul' Buddha has presented that of an unbroken stream of consciousness, as I have already explained".

"This reminds me somehow of the philosophy of William James. But tell me, please, how do you view a living man's existence, his life's decourse and purpose, and his approach to the truth ?"

"Buddha has clearly defined that only those who spend their lives in the right way can come to be aware of the important experience which is life - and not those who study ardently the scriptures or unceasingly recite holy verses, that is the mantras

and the hymns. Many think that these are the proper vehicles on which they can travel to salvation. I do not deny the value of mantras, but they serve only a useful purpose provided they are are made to serve as guides on the path to spiritual culture, and as long as they can bring forth the right mood of faith, of trust and of humility in the devotee. Without these prerequisitions, and only by themselves, they have no sense and no meaning whatsoever".

"Please allow me to ask you also, directly and in plain words, what place God occupies in your personal faith system".

(I put this question, because - as I have once before mentioned to you already - that I never missed an opportunity to have a clearly outlined definition of this issue by men whose personal intellectual and cultural superiority I respected; who represented various philosophical backgrounds; who represented a clearly circumscribed and thought-out theological perspective.

"In the faith system of a Buddhist the place of God is taken by the universal laws of karman and dharma", was the thoughtful reply I received. "It is these which govern the Universe in such a comprehensive manner, that not the slightest action is lost. Let me in all honesty tell you, that within the frame of my personal Buddhist faith system I would not know into which place I could systematize, which right and task I could assign to a God or a Destiny which would judge man's past and determine his future. Remember the basic belief which is surely also the basic fact, that every individual has got the mind, the body, the place and position in life which he deserves on the basis of his deeds in his past existences. The only hope for us to break out of this cycle and to gain our liberation from samsara is by following Buddha's Noble Path. Nobody has an exclusive right to his liberation. Everybody can reach this goal. But nobody, no God nor angel nor spirit can help man to reach this goal - he has to reach it by his own efforts".

"Does what you have just now said not indicate that Buddhism knows also some form of the principle of immortality?"

"Let me again point out that for us nothing is static, that there is no static or permanent state or entity. We do not even know of anything like the Atman, as he or it would indicate something which is permanent and immortal. Instead there is a force which is karman. It is the individual karman which persists, which remains unchanged by and after death. But also our karman does not exist for ever. It may and can disappear one day into nirvana - which

shows you that even man's karman is not immortal. No, we do not know of anything which would correspond to what is called in western religions an 'everlasting life'. There is also the other factor you must consider: as you must have learned already, man and his life are not single compacted units; they are compounded things - and compounded things cannot be eternal. Had there been something like 'Immortality' it would have indicated that a compact something continues to exist after death. We Buddhists do not accept this. Again and again, after life comes to an an end, man and all other living things dissolve into their constituent parts; and they are then reborn into newly and differently compounded forms. You may argue that the doctrine of rebirth may be taken to indicates that 'a something in various shapes and forms' continues to exist after an individual's death. If you want to call this 'immortality', you are welcome. You are also entitled to say that karman is in reality identical with man's soul, his personality, his character - and that the survival of a man's karman is after all nothing else than the immortality of some part of the individual".

I changed the topic, as he had repeated only what seems the accepted - I refuse to say 'standard' - views of the orthodox Buddhist. I wanted to hear if he had a different than usual explanation and definition of certain nuances in the **dharma** principle.

"As far as I have understood, Sir, there is no difference in the way Hinduism and Buddhism perceive of Dharma. Is this indeed the case ?"

"To the Hindus dharma is a blind brute force against which man cannot fight. To us Buddhists dharma is distinctly man-directed; it is endowed with a high degree of intelligence and contains even an adjunction of love in its actions and reactions. To us more than to the Hindus dharma means also duty. To us it represents the universal order, the natural norm, the rigorous natural law according to which the Universe - represented by samsara - runs its course. Dharma embraces the eternal cosmic order as well the passing religious, civil and social order. Dharma is without beginning; it continues to evolve spontaneously. It always existed and always has acts. There is nobody who originated dharma nor is there anybody who maintains it on its course. Dharma does not depend on an inter-action with a Buddha - the latter's mission in this context is only to reveal this ongoing process. To live one's life in accordance with dharma is one of the prerequisites for the

attainment of nirvana. In Buddhist view dharma is the unrelenting duty to lead a moral life. It is symbolically expressed in the **Dharma Chakra,** the 'Wheel of Duty'. Due to its perfect circular shape and its incessant rolling movement, the wheel is the most abstract among the early buddhist symbols. It is an eternal symbol of mankind".

"What is the relation between the 'Wheel of Dharma' and the **'Wheel of Samsara'** ? "

"They stand in contrast to each other. The latter is the Wheel of Existence. I think it is an interesting phenomen that Independent India has adopted the 'Wheel of Dharma' as its national emblem, even though Buddhism has more or less disappeared from among the Indians".

"And what about Samsara ? Is it not important too ?"

"Of course, it is important. Samsara is the Wheel of Existence, it is the Wheel of Life, the Circuit of Life, the Cycle of Rebirths. It means the preservation and the eternal migration of what in man is undestructible, namely his karman. The turning of the wheel has started an eternity ago, and it will continue to turn in all eternity".

"Life, as represented by this cycle of transmigration, allows me to suppose, that our universe too has started an eternity ago and will continue in all eternity ?"

"Not in our view. To us Buddhists the world is **Maya,** it is non-existent. It is nothing but an illusion of the senses. And human existence is transitory. It is futile to pay too much attention to life and its appearances - to contemplate even such a question. All individual existence is ephemeral and unreal. The will to live, the desire to continue life, are indications of corruption".

"I have always felt depressed when faced here in India with these images of an apparently ineradicable pessimism".

"What I have told you sounds pessimistic indeed. But it cannot be denied that Buddhism contains a streak of pessimism and no less also of negativism. Buddha did not mind that this is so. This kind of aura did not bother him, because he compensated for it, neutralized it by his immense and deep-rooted compassion. He suffered greatly for others. And this is what we humans should emulate".

"I have been deeply impressed by most of what I have learned of Buddhism - and by nothing more than by its concentrating on the benefit it strives to provide for man's wellbeing here and in the beyond".

"You must not simplify, my friend ! Far more important is the basis, the source, the fountain-head of what has impressed you: the deeply felt sense of compassion which is so totally personified by Buddha ! Compassion, and its other face altruism, ask for their active employment in our endeavours to help others before we think of our own salvation".

My dear Moshe Chaim ! In the course of the last many hours I have given you an extended exposition of Buddhism by which you you have hopefully gained an understanding of its theology and philosophy. You have also been given the opportunity to compare the Buddhist ideology with that of Hinduism. I have furthermore tried to point out the often marked differences in the ideologies of the various schools which have in the course of the centuries sprung up among Buddhists. I have spent some time in describing the Mahayana and the Theravada Schools which are probably the most important directions into which Buddhism has divided during its early developmental stages. .

I hope you have realized that I have given you only a rather superficial survey. There are many more Buddhistic schools of thought, but to disgress on them would be outside the scope of my story - that is to say they would not have contributed to the conclusion and construction this 'story' is intended to reach - and also because I had not the occasion to study in person these other ideologies through direct contact with their followers who are concentrated outside India in the various countries of Asia. Neither was I interested in investing at this stage the necessary time and energy and proceed to China or Japan or Burma or Thailand for the sake of making this story into a kind of treatise on religions in Asia.

However, at your request I shall make an exception: You have asked me whether I have had any experience with **Zen Buddhism.** I suppose you put this question not only because it is actually 'en vogue' in the West, but also because you appear to have already in the shown genuine interest in this Buddhist school of thought.

I had the fortune to learn about the this branch of Buddhism from a person who can claim to be an expert.

One day a Japanese sat down next to us in the shadow of a tree

in the University Campus of Calcutta while we were resting during the noon hour. The man turned out to be a Professor of Philosophy of Religion at the Kobe University, He was spending his sabattical leave in a study of the religions of India. Of course, he was well versed in Zen Buddhism - he conceded at the end that he was himself an enthusiastic follower of this - call it philosophical, call it religious, call it ideological - direction given to Buddhism in Japan. He was willing to tell us about Zen Buddhism in exchange for us answering his questions about our experiences.

"I shall outline what we heard him explain about Zen. Most of what he told us I had already known from reading material I had erused and from lectures I had attended in College. Regretfully he did not expand his 'lecture' by including his own experiences; nor did he allude to the impact Zen had upon him personally.

"There are many schools of Buddhism", explained the professor whose name I do not remember, "but their number is quite large, and most of them are so unimportant, that they would only be a ballast on your mind. An exception, however, I must make for Zen Buddhism. Zen was in the year 520 introduced in China by an Indian sage with the name Bhodidharma. From there it was was brought to Japan around the 12th century; and while it had little chance to survive in China or elsewhere, it continues to this day to flourish among us in Japan. Zen, as you might know, means 'meditation'. Emphasis is laid on being in harmony with the cosmos, on achieving oneness with nature. It is anti-scholastic and anti-rational. Zen followers seek sudden intuitive insight with the help of an extreme physical discipline and mental concentration, rather than to gather wisdom through book learning or with the help of logical thinking. Zen leaders like to refer to - and in their teaching try to imitate - the so-called 'flower speech' of the Buddha, who raised his hand holding a lotus flower without uttering a word. Showing it in this manner to his disciples, he made them think about it, meditate upon it. In his training procedures the Zen Master might, for instance, pose a seemingly trivial or irrational problem. This problem is supposed to start a train of meditation which should result in a flash of cognition or a sudden enlightenment about the nature of Buddha, the essence of Buddhism, the oneness of the universe, or other problems eqwually profound.

"Basically Zen presents the doctrine of the void, of the emptiness of the phenomenal world. Nothing is real, it says. There is neither existence nor non-existence. There is only a single, unmeasurable, and also unperishable void. Zen, like the School

of Theravada states, that the Buddha was a historic personality only, and that he should not be seen nor venerated as a divinity. To us in Zen nature is the Buddha. He is everywhere.

"It may help your understanding if you visualize Zen as a mixture of the Hinayana form of Buddhism and the chinese Way of Taoism. Although Zen nourishes our hope to gain nirvana in the end, it rejects Mahayana's concept of an existence in a paradise-like ending; but it recognizes the fundamental principles of the Four Noble Truths.

"Zen insists, that one should not waste one's time with metaphysics; that one should enjoy the moment as it passes by. The true realities are contained in everyday things. Zen does not credit the human mind with creating reality - only with imposing illusions upon it. One's own body, however, is a reality. In one's comportment one has to be as natural as possible. Zen promises enlightenment - that is, an intuitive grasp of the truth - not at the end of the Path but already here and now while on the Path. Specially prescribed exercises will prove useful, and Zen prescribes these along with a system of postures, breathing and meditating which are similar to those of Yoga".

"Has Taoism had an influence on Zen Buddhism ? ", I asked.

"It certainly has. For instance by the insistence that life has to be lived in a natural way; that the world should be seen as it really is; that one should join the world and not withdraw from it".

"Has Buddhism, in particular the Zen expression, influenced cultural life in Japan ? "

"Very much so. You may say that the certainly well developed exquisite art expressions in Japan can only have been created under the influence of Buddhist teaching. You may have seen somewhere in the States the theatrical performance of a 'No drama'. It has developed from religious-cultic dances in the past and has been developed into art form by Buddhist monks in Japan. The performance is made up of songs chanted by a row of actors assisted by a chorus.

"And there are so many other specific japanese artforms. You must have seen the paintings of landscapes, birds, flowers, lakes and so in the typical japanese monochromatic style of painting. You must have seen photos of japanese gardens, of typical flower arrangements, of Japan's characteristic tree culture. You must have heard of the 'tea ceremony'....."

"Yes, Professor, I have heard and see pictures of this ceremony. What is its supposed to represent ?"

"It is a spiritual ritual. It is a Zen-influenced ceremony

which in its harmonious simplicity and by its spiritual content expresses our love for beauty. And finally it brings on in all partecipants a state of spiritual calm and inner fulfillment".

"Has Buddhism in any of its forms an association with 'Shinto', the other religious expression of Japan ? "

"Not at all. Shinto - which means 'The Way of the Gods' - is the official religion of Japan. It is a religion of ancestor worship and by this fact believes in the survival and reincarnation of man's soul. Shinto was originally a religion of nature worship which can still be noted in the continued admiration and even veneration of unusual nature formations like mountains, trees, rivers, birds and so on. Such places where man is made to feel awe and admiration for unusual phenomena or formations in nature are usually made into cult places and shrines".

I have no doubt, my dear Moshe Chaim, that what I have told and described you just now about Zen and Japan will by its paucity and superficiality most likely leave you no less dissatisfied as it has left me. I hope you will find yourself stimulated to study this entire complex in greater depth. I have formed for myself the plan to do so if I live long enough and have completed the program I have taken on in the last four years. I am in particular interested to discover in how far Buddhism - and possibly Shintoism - have formed the character of the Japanese,have been responsible for their former isolationist tendencies, have influenced their views of the morally permissible, their militancy and their economics.

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VII. MISSION COMPLETED.

Returning home.

We stayed on in Sri Lanka two weeks longer than the month we had originally planned. The main reason for the postponment of our return to India had been our wish to witness the yearly Buddhist festival in Kandy, when the 'holy' elephant Raja - carrying on his back in a golden casket the relics of the Buddha owned by the local temple - gave by his majestic appearance and his unhurried walk an unusual addition to the procession.

We returned from Kandy to Colombo, boarded in the evening a small boat which landed us early the following morning in Trivandrum in India. As we had been assured at the time of our departure six weeks before, we did not encounter difficulties from the side of the passport controls on either border.

From Trivandrum we made our way northwards again. What we had seen and heard in Sri Lanka had left a deep impression on both of us. Our conversations, not only between Gobinder and myself but also with a number of Buddhists we met in that part of India, revolved around the knowledge as well as the impressions we had collected during our stay in the world of Buddhism.

All through my narrative I have made an effort to exclude from my descriptions - and also from my memory - the at times unbelievable bombast with which even very learned and supposedly precise and exact thinking persons - theologians, scientists, philosophers alike - offered us their explanations, informations, expositions and lectures. I suppose, at least some of them must have believed they

could, by using a very sophisticated vocabulary and long-winded sentences, and by balancing along on the tightrope of highly literate sounding phrases, impress us with the depth of their learning and the elegance of their rhetoric. Not rarely did these complex word structures - intended, I suppose, to sound elegant - fail to convey neither to me nor to Gobinder any meaning at all; nor did at times the deliverers of contorted and convoluted sentences themselves appear to fare better, as they could not give me a plainer, clearer explanation and definition when on occasion I requested them to do so. I was told of 'thoughts suscitating a transfinite diversity of mental images', or of 'pilgrimages to the Absolute', or of 'searching for the transcendent experiences'. I was advised to 'try to stimulate my dominant intellect out of the lethargy to find the illumination from the flame of a higher intellect'. Once a distinguished scholar, whom we met in Calcutta, recited to us the conclusions of no less learned men of the 20th century, that 'for those who see the All it makes no difference whether life be realized, matter vitalized, spirit materialized - or whether again all is spiritualized'. In my talking to you, Moshe Chaim, that is in my telling you my story, I have on occasion fought with my sense of humour, not to indulge in the so often forced and incomprehensibly romanticized and idealized rhetoric with which adherents of things associated with Eastern philosophies and religions, psychology and art, try to persuade listeners or readers of the superiority of their personal, their faith's and their country's beliefs - if not of their fundamentally self-doubted intelligence.

In all I have told you so far, I have endeavoured to point out what I consider the specific, the unusual and the instructive elements in the religious philosophy of India - in the hope and on the assumption that you, and whoever may listen to the tapes you are recording, have already a general knowledge of these religions and philosophies, or will be induced to acquire some such knowledge. In no way did I intend to present you with a treatise, not even a compendium of these matters - only a stimulant to awaken your interest in topics which are of great intellectual, spiritual and human concern also to those whose spheres of interest are otherwise far different.

And above all I wanted to have prepaired the background against which I could test my slowly awakening ideas, and the soil in which I hope to see them grow - and possibly flower.

Looking back on these months and years, I am still greatly impressed by the privileges which granted me the acquisition of so much knowledge and spiritual enrichment by a never ending series of unusual experiences. I am also still very surprised - and no less also grateful - that I found everywhere so much respect and welcome, so much friendliness and readiness to satisfy my thirst for knowledge and to answer my often very personal questions. I have already pointed out the reasons which make me suspect that I owe much of these advantages to Gobinder's sustained propagandistic endeavours to convey to all with whom we came into contact the horoscope-based good tidings of the blessings associated with - and to all obtainable by - his and my karmatic uniqueness. But I somehow cannot avoid thinking that this could not have been the entire cause and reason, that we - poor and penniless like those untold numbers of other sadhus and monks on the roads and highways of India - were greeted and treated in such unexpectedly friendly manner.

I do not mind to confess to you that I have learned to believe in fate and destiny - and in karman.

We have met many people. We have talked to many people. We asked and were answered many questions. These answers we received - the often inherent wisdom with which they were saturated, and the unspoken sorrows they not rarely tried to hide - are worthy of a more detailed description and of a more elaborate reportage. But this is not the time nor the place. We learned what these people saw in themselves, what they hoped for, what they were afraid of, and what they wished for. We could identify with their speculations how they would have to go about to see their wishes fulfilled.

We talked with men and women of every culture and class. We talked with simple people and with sophisticated people. We talked with ignorant people and with learned people. We talked with officials and teachers, with officers and soldiers. We talked with rulers and with the ruled, with people who are feared and with people who live in fear. I put my questions to men and women who were seated by the side of the roads or in the fields when they rested for a few minutes from their strenuous work. I talked to people seated behind desks in their offices, or while they relaxed in the comforts of their homes or in public places. We put questions to the housewife who invited us into her home, and to the servant who brought us food and water. I put my questions to individuals or

to groups. We had simple replies from simple people, and profound replies from no less simple people. We heard complex argumentations, listened to interesting discourses; we were also exposed to heated philosophical disputes. Intially I had been handicaped by the language barrier, but soon this was removed, for within a few months I had perfected my knowledge of Hindi to a sufficient degree, so that I understood what was said, and people understood what I had to say.

You will have to accept, Moshe Chaim, that it is impossible to enlarge this material still further or to give you a wider or more detailed description of what I have just mentioned. There are also so many other very interesting, important and revealing points which might merit a few pages, but this would go beyond the scope of what I want to communicate.

For months and years Gobinder had been at my side, had lived with me. It is no exaggeration to say that he had become a part of me. There was no social gulf between us, of course. He was my brother. If there still remained a certain gulf - or better said a barrier - between the two of us, it must have been of my own doing, because I never revealed to him all my thoughts - or at least not my thoughts in their entirety. I was restrained by the knowledge that - as he had never divested himself of the tendency to identify with everything I said and did - he would also take as irrefutable truth all my views of things we saw and heard. This would only have created a situation in which his newly gained self-confidence and steadily strengthened inner happiness might have suffered. Such a predicament would most likely have had a negative effect on his karman.

Mind you ! In all these years we were together on pilgrimage, the fateful 'horoscope', the entire metaphysical background of what had brought us together, was not referred to, was not mentioned even once. When we were somehere by ourselves during the day, and in particular at night or in the early morning hours after our sleep and our ablutions, we talked very much and at length about many a topic. There was always so much to talk about. It took me not very long to find out that Gobinder was a very learned and highly intelligent man; that, once he had overcome his long nourished state of anxiety, he revealed a great store of knowledge and a sharply reasoning mind. But during the hours we spent on the roads or in

the company of others, he remained silent as a rule. In public he was wont to walk a step or two behind me; and whenever possible, when we were sitting side by side, he tried also to sit slightly behind me. How often had I to beg him not to embarrass me in this way ! But it was to no avail. Stubbornly he continued in these habits. I do not think he behaved thus for the sake of any onlookers. He must have done so to express his own intellectually and ideologically reached evaluation of our relationship. I was happy to note, that this reticence of his did disappear in in the evenings and in the early morning hours.

From time to time he could be very energetic and active; not only whenever he thought I was in need of protection, but also whenever he tried to convey to me the ideas he had formed about one topic or the other; or when he wanted to tell me what he had learned about certain persons or about certain problems; or when he wanted to confide his interpretation of a fact or an event as he had perceived them. But even during these hours and on such occasions, also when we were alone and unobserved, did he maintain the same attitude of respect and reverence which he had begun to evolve since our first encounter, or to be precise, since our first interview with his Guru, the Head Priest of the Temple in Bombay. To me this situation was anything but pleasant. I would have preferred a companion with whom I could have shared my thoughts without the need of restraints; and with whom it would have been possible to review the day's impression as an equal - but I realize that this would have shaken the equilibrium Gobinder had at last found for himself.

I am glad, however, I can say that Gobinder had become a happy man, a fulfilled man. He knew within himself - and this, I am certain, without any doubt whatsoever - that he had achieved a very great betterment in his chances for a very early liberation from the miseries of an unendsingly renewed life on earth. He knew himself blessed by the recognition, that he was the object of a predestined role for which he had been ordained since long ago by the Powers Above. This inner awareness was indeed an extraordinary blessing !

As I have already mentioned, Gobinder had proved himself a good friend and a reliable companion. This man, whom one may with justification describe as a meek character - although he could at times become very outspoken in my defence and even overbearing when

he thought we were slighted - had in the last weeks and months turned more taciturn than ever. In the last few months - around the time we returned from Sri Lanka - he appeared to have more than ever withdrawn into himself. He hardly ever spoke when we were in the company of others, except when the meaning of a word escaped me in the course of a conversation. But he was all the time very alert. He listened with great attention and concentration to the conversations I had with people - but he would not interrupt or intervene, whatever the subject of the talk might be, by offering an opinion or possibly a contribution of his own as he had often done in the past.

There had also since a considerable time not been anymore the need to perform what he considered his duty - which never ceased to make me uncomfortable - namely to make people aware of my 'mystery-wrapped' background. Except when we came into 'unexplored', that is unfamiliar parts of the country, as for instance on our journey to Sri Lanka, he did no more feel obliged to scout ahead and to spread 'my fame'.

Allow me to enlarge on what I have just now said. Already at the end of the first year of our pilgrimage I had noticed a rather surprising phenomen: Gobinder had far less often to engage in his effort to have people know about me, to induce villagers and towns people to talk to me, to have kind hosts feed and bed us, to have the temple priests and the ashram teachers receive us with greater hospitality than was warranted as a rule. I cannot point to any specific event or to anything for which we ourselves could have been responsible. There was a sudden change, a definite and decisive turning point, when people began on their own initiative to throng around us wherever and whenever we rested in a shaded place or whenever we entered a hamlet or a village. People invited us to spend time in their company, to talk to them, to listen to them. I was greatly impressed - and never got insensitive to it all through our journey - that most of these people did not want to see us in order to complain or to lament; they wanted only to talk to me about their conceptions of the divine, of their views of the world, of the significance they saw in mankind's existence - as if they believed their karman could have thereby benefitted.

Journey's End.

After we had left Sri Lanka and were back on Indian soil, I became aware that the changes I had since some begun to notice in Gobinder were getting more marked. It appeared to me one day that he had grown old, all of a sudden and within a very short time. His face had shrunk, his posture was bent. I once heard one passerby tell another that Gobinder could be taken for a twin brother of Mahatma Ghandi. Gobinder bagan to tire easily; and although he never complained, and although he tried to hide his physical handicap - and lately also his breathlessness - I was well aware of these changes and could not overcome my apprehension.

Without discussing the point, we both knew somehow that the time had come for us to return to Bombay. But we did in no way think it necessary to hasten our return journey. We continued our leisurely progress as before, leaving to chancve and opportunity which road we took as long as it was northward; and which mode of transport we used, as long as it was voluntarily offered to us. We did not feel the need nor the urge to hurry. We declined the not rarely opportunity passing motorists offered us - private cars and lorries - to take us all the way to Bombay. We somehow felt within ourselves that we had to complete our circuit in the same unhurried and unplanned manner as we had done so far.

However, Gobinder agreed to certain, never formulated or insisted upon, concessions: we rested more frequently, stayed here and there for a few days longer than we would otherwise have done. And on one occasion Gobinder consented even to consult a kind medical practitioner, who did not discover any specific ailment, but provided

Gobinder with a few bottles of vitamins and tonics - which were soon thereafter handed over to a sick woman we met in the next village.

And finally the day arrived when our pilgrimage came to an end.

One day we found ourselves back in Bombay. We had not planned the day, neither the itinery. We had not thought about it. It happened. Not only did we not own watches, we never even knew the date, the day, the month, the year through which we lived. We had never planned the next day nor the next stage of our route with any relation to time. Without our being conscious of this, we had steadily moved undeviatingly in a northerly direction after we had returned from Sri Lanka and had landed in Trivandrum. But I think, had we felt the inclination to travel in any other direction, we would certainly have done so without any hesitation.

We arrived shortly before noon at the Bus Terminal in Bombay. It was a fine sunny day. A slight breeze, the well-remembered smells and the increasingly familiar streets and their noises welcomed us back.

On our return to Bombay we discovered we had been away exactly one thousand days.

It surprises me still, that this discovery did not evoke any surprise in us.

Slowly we walked along the streets in the direction of the Royal Hotel. With every street corner we passed we felt the pleasurable realization grow in us, that we were coming home.

It would take too long to describe our own feelings and also that revealed in the moving welcome which we received in the hotel and from all those who had known us in the past.

The Debriefing.

Early the following morning we presented ourselves before the Head Priest and his colleagues. I realized the moment I faced them, that the small temple had become for me a spiritual home; that here I had first become aware of myself; that here had been the starting point of my becoming.

We had been expected.

The scene which unfolded before me, and the experience through which I was going to live now, were a near repetition of those in which I had taken part some three years before. Again the crowd - made up of a large number of men and women most of whose faces and voices I remembered, who had at that early morning collected in front of the hotel and had accompanied us to the temple - had remained in the outer courtyard. Again Gobinder and I approached in slow steps the group of priests seated on the strawmats covering the ground. Again the six priests were engaged in singing their morning hymns. Again one of the priests invited us with a gesture of his hand to sit opposite him and his fellow priests. Again Gobinder was seated next to me on my right side. Again the aroma of the flowers in the copper vase on the woollen carpet between the priests and us, and that of the incense burning somewhere nearby, combined to fill the room with a symphony of pleasant smells. As at the time I had first been in the temple, scrolls and books were arraigned in front of the priests.

The singing ended and a long silence ensued. The still-life-like tableau and my relaxed mood were only occasinally put out of focus by a movement of a hand here or the turning of a head there.

This time it was I who broke the silence. I somehow knew it was for me to find the appropriate moment when to speak.

"Holy Father", I began, "here we are again at your feet. We have returned. I have returned a wiser man. It may well be that I am now also a better man. I am back because I consider my mission completed, and because I have to tell you what I have seen and heard in the course of all these many days on pilgrimage; that is to say all which I have experienced in the company of my brother Gobinder Nath during the months we have been away from here; and all I have learned during the years we have lived the life of beggar monks. With your fatherly permission I am also speaking in the name of Gobinder Nath, because he and I, by the cement of our common fate, experience and expectation, have grown into one person".

For what must have been nearly three hours and in considerable detail I told the priests how we had spent our days, weeks and months. I described to them, how above all we had been searching in the order of things we were made to confront; in the sufferings and hopes of the people we met; and in the inhuman neglect and the moral degradation which embittered the life of the lower social strata of the nation, for the truth of things in general and that which might explain the existence of man and the purpose of his existence in this world in particular. I told them how we had enquired from the simple and the wise, from the educated and the primitive what they think is the truth - and that we had explored how far the truth we glimpsed might be identified with hope. We had also sought for the truth as it is perceived by the rich and the powerful; we had wanted to find out what these hope for themselves and what hope they are ready to grant to the poor and the oppressed. We had sought to discover whether there is a common denominator - and if there is one, what this denominator is.

I told the priests how greatly we had identified with the men and women we had encountered, and how we had probed their hearts and their minds; and I described our endeavours to find out how far their hopes and their wishes harmonized with our own - and to what extent we could, with any degree of justification, sympathise with theirs.

"Above all, Holy Father", I continued, "although we might not have come back with a complete answer, and although we can at best believe that we have perceived the outline of what is the truth,

I am certain that by our contacts, by our interest and by our sympathy we have lifted - even though possibly for a short time only - the minds of the people with whom we spoke about their unceasing and all-excluding immersion in their daily problems, difficulties and worries. I believe that we brought these masses of people the consolation of which they were in need. We gave them hope where we saw there had been none before.

"Already early in our pilgrimage I sensed that this was a very instructive way for us to learn a certain truth - and the acqusition of such kind of knowledge was after all the purpose which you must have had in mind for our pilgrimage. I saw in this experience the purpose you had implied, nay distinctly defined, as the aim and task of the pilgrimage which we had to undertake through the villages and towns of this immensely large country. But I came to perceive in our activities - in the easing of the burning, hurting,destructive pain which is perennially lodged in the hearts of the people - also a reflection of the purpose of our own existence".

While I sat there during those early morning hours, while I described in carefuly chosen words and in an unusually slow monologue my experiences, my ideas, my thoughts, the sun had risen and its rays appeared through the archway bathing the Head Priest in a halo of light. At that moment, under the impact of the shadowed image of the Old Guru - outlined within the frame of the gate - made by the stream of sunlight flowing from above his head, I knew that I had successfully completed my mission. I did - if not exactly for the first time, certainly now in all lucidity - understand what I had learned in the course of the last 1000 days. I felt that, after completion of what I had defined to myself at the onset of our meeting as my 'debriefing', I was henceforth to be freed from all the ties I had with the world of the Guru; that I could move out of his shadow; that I could - as if standing on a hill looking down into a valley - analyze now my experiences from my personal angle.

What had I learned ?, I asked myself - and you too have put this question to me on my arrival.

What I had learned has many aspects, has multiple facets.

I had learned to understand that it is religion which binds the unwielding patchwork India into an only apparently compact unit. It is above all the Hindu religion. It is in particular the fateful interpretation of karman as a doctrine of predestination which is an essential part of the belief system of nearly all the Indians.

The belief in predestination governs the life of 800 of India's 900 million human beings. It is the principle of transmigration, of rebirth, of karman which enslaves the people, which saps their will, which makes them docile and manageable. There is, however, also a welcome aspect of this doctrine; it is primitively expressed in the idea that those who concentrate on charity, piety and austerity can count to be reborn into an existence of wellbeing; and that, on the other hand, those who do not follow the above precepts will be reborn in misery, possibly even as dogs or worms.

Imperceptibly I saw now reality where romance had until now coloured my views: I adjusted my former far too uncritical belief in the superiority of the Indian religions, in which I had seen the prototype of a true message for mankind. I realized now, that although Hinduism seeks the truth by profitting from the actual facts which life itself offers, it seeks also to accomplish this no less ardently - and autocratically - through speculations which are not based on any abstract knowledge.

The notion grew in me, while I was pondering these thoughts, that the religion of the Guru and his priests seated opposite me had at the time of its formulation been purposely and selfishly manipulated; that an underlying, basically ethical ideology and philosophy had been manipulated to keep the privileged in power and comfort, and the masses subdued and powerless. But I had no doubt that most of the custodians and performers of the religions in our actual time - like the Old Guru and his priests and most of the other priests I had encountered so far - were sincere in their beliefs and honest in their teaching.

I sensed from the many moral, deeply moving elements in Hinduism and all the other religions I had studied from nearby, that what is practiced today as religion must have evolved out of a less self-centred faith system; that once upon a time mankind must have been blessed with a pure form of religon, a true religion; and that for certain reasons - selfish ones ? political ones ? strategic ones ? psychological ones ? - this true original ethical religion had been manipulated, had been emasculated to fit a Weltanschauung which was tailored to the supposedly political or economic needs of their time or to the selfish needs of power-thirsty elements in the nation. And these products of a changed, manipulated, violated original religious system were again and again rebuilt and reshaped by self-appointed or circumstances-born reformers in

the name of the welfare of the people, of the nation or of the progressing times.

And with a shock the realization came to me, that these very same conclusions - and accusations - fitted also all active and boisterous religions of today, including Judaism - and of course its daughter religions Chriastianity and Islam.

I asked myself now, whether the truth I was looking for could really have been contained in what I had learned of, and thought I had found in, Hinduism and the three religions it had born - Buddhism and Jainism and Sikhism - and if so what kind of truth I think I had found. I suddenly doubted, whether truth can at all be found not only by following Hinduism's precepts but also in the actual shape of any of the religions which have emerged, have flourished and have perished in the past; or in those which flourish today and are worldwide established and in power.

I was recalled from my meditative musing when, after a renewed, long lasting silence the Old Guru took the word.

"My Holy Prince ! You have set out to help those who asked for your help, for your guidance, and who hoped for a share in the merits you have accumulated in such abundance. You have set out to discover by these efforts and through these contacts the truth of life. You have set out to experience in the course of your mission what is the truth and in which shape, form and sensations it manifests itself. What you have told us, described to us, explained to us are only the stations on the way to the truth, are only the light beacons illuminating the long road to the truth. I ask you now: have you found the truth ? If so, what is the truth you have found ? "

I realized with surprise that this question, which I sensed harboured also a hint of criticism, was justified; that I had deep inside me expected it. Until that very moment I had believed that what I had concluded from our observations during the years of our pilgrimage had been the truth, had been the building stones of the truth I had been looking for.

I realized now that I had been mistaken, that the truth lay beyond what I had described to the Old Guru as my having seen, heard and learned. I knew also at that moment, that I was ready with my reply.

"Holy Father ! Only now, only this very moment, have I come to realize that I have indeed found what to me at least sounds like the Truth".

I sensed something like an electric current pass through me from the vertex of my skull into my toes. It caused me to feel that my perception had become clear and sarpened as if from inside illuminated. I felt as if I had undergone a sudden change in my personality. These indefinite and undefinable perceptions became manifest in the knowledge flooding in, that I was approaching if not the truth at least the true interpretation of the knowledge I had accumulated.

But I did not enlarge on what I said just now - I did not say anything further. I needed solitude in which to give my thoughts their right alignment. And there was something more ! I noticed with surprise that I was reluctant to share with the Head Priest the thoughts and sensations which were forming inside me; that I did not feel inclined to respond to the words of the High Priest with the full verbalization of the thoughts which had begun to flood into my mind.

Instead I withdrew into myself. I adopted the lotus position.

Before I allowed my thoughts to roam through the treasure store of experiences I had collected, I saw that also the priests opposite me had adopted the lotus posture.

(Let me explain to you, Moshe Chaim, what went on. In the past year or so I had acquired the faculty to relax into an immediate, deep, all-excluding state of meditation whenever I wanted to fully understand the meaning of something I had heard or seen, or whenever I wanted to define a problem for myself, or whenever a situation asked for a careful exploration or analysis.

This was one of such situations. Let me describe to you the lotus position: I placed my right foot onto my left thigh and my left foot onto my right thigh. I placed my right hand, palm upwards, on the left foot and my left hand, also palm upwards, upon my right palm with the tips of my thumbs touching each other. I kept my body erect, leaning neither to the right nor the left, nor to the back nor to the front. I pulled my chin downwards. I placed the tip of my tongue against the root of my mouth and kept my teeth and lips closed. I left my eyes open in the way I had learned to do long ago from a Zen Master.)

I do not know for how long we sat there in the ensuing silence - it may have been hours, it may have been far less - while I tried to engage in what I considered an 'inner rendering of account'. Whatever time it lasted, it was certainly sufficient to put my thoughts in order, and to outline for my own information and in a clear form what I had learned.

What I am telling you now, Moshe Chaim, is what I perceived that morning in the temple in Bombay for the first time and quite unequivocally as the truth I had absorbed under the impact of my life among the Indians. However, sitting there facing the Hindu priests, I did not feel inclined - due to some indefinite inner reluctance - to follow up in full the deductions I should already then have drawn from my experiences. I should have attempted already then to weave them into a perception of my own of the Truth.

And I should have communicated my thoughts and conclusion to the Guru. But my reluctance to communicate them to the Guru must have made me suppress the further analysis and the results of the analysis. Only later, when I had left India, did I realize this in full, did I allow myself to know what is the truth - or better said what I think I came to know as the truth.

You may find it surprising when I say, that since I had set out on our pilgrimage some three years before, it was only on that morning, and for the first time, that I noticed the desire, the need - I can now say the freedom - to draw the final conclusions, to make up a balance sheet of my experiences and observations.

That was the first time that I undertook to clearly survey my mind with respect to what I had so far never asked myself before, namely what I had learned, achieved, acquired. It sounds strange even to me that I had never before felt the urge to analyse my thinking and feeling. Until then I had thought that I had been sent out with a definite program, and that I had to report to the Guru that I had faithfully fulfilled my duty and honestly executed my task. Suddenly I realized I had been wrong. Something greater and more significant had sent me on this tour of study and experience - the Guru had only been the gate throiugh which I had to pass, the catalyst of my developmental process, the tool of my fate.

By watching and observing, by asking and querrying I accumulated a store of knowledge - but I had never before analyzed what I had absorbed. I had stored all my observations and experiences without editing them further. Now I perceived that time had come to do

so. Another reason why I suddenly felt the need for an unrestrained - and as far as was in my power unbiased - survey of my present and past life and status in life, and to analyse my actual and past sensations and reactions, was my surprise when I noticed grow up in me an unmistakable and strong aversion against the religious philosophy as it is practiced by Hinduism, Buddhism Jainism and Sikhism.

What I perceived as the basis for this sudden aversion against these religious monoliths is their theology dressed up as philosophy, and defended by clever and unbreakable barriers of apparently irrefutable 'proof' - should anybody dare to ask for a proof - which have succeeded to make the people of India believe that an unsurmountable difference exists between the worth and the rights of one man and that of the next, between the rights of one woman and that of the next.

A truly ethical religion could never have created such a deep scission between one human and the other, could not have preached such a graduation in the human values of a part of mankind.

I thought of the bitterness which in one form or the other had been communicated to me - mostly without the use of words - by the hope-deprived downtrodden individuals who have to live in a cruel and selfish world dominated by a religion which did not promise a better future for their descendants either.

I thought of the millions who have to spend their lives as outcasts, as untouchables, who are forced not to think what the coming day will bring - but still do not focus on the present; who do not resent the abusive authoritanism which make them believe that their shadow even was contaminatingly unclean; who inculcate an existence of pessimism and oppressed by antisocial attitudes as their due.

I thought of the millions whose social status makes them take a zerosum view of their present and future.

I thought with pain of the uncountable billions who in the past had to suffer under and from such a cruel system not only approved but also blessed by religious laws, which were accepted as sanctified by age if not by divine ordinance, and which were rigorously enforced by one generation after generation of their executors.

I thought of those who had to pass deprived, degraded and despised through life only because they had been categorized by

a selfish human order as inferior, as worthless human beings whose sub-human existence was due to sins and crimes supposedly committed in some prior life. I had reluctantly to concede within myself, that the creators of this social order had shown great psychological insight along with what amounts to criminal self-centredness.

In the dream-like state I had entered, I vividly imagined myself in the place of a person who was born with such a set of unremovable handicaps; who during every minute of his life was made aware of his inferiority to other humans; who had to live with the knowledge, that he could at no time in his lifetime ever improve his fate nor his status; who knew that as long as he lives he is enslaved by an inescapable series of sins he is supposed to have committed in a supposedly former existence.

The image I created in my mind of myself in such a position made me despair of humanity - and of the religious institutions claiming to cater for humanity's ethical needs and mental balance.

For a moment I was overome by a wave of nausea. It made me ill to think that all this was supposed to have been ordered and done in the name of religion ! But I immediately recovered. It was impossible for me to accept that this could be the true sense a religion, of any religion whatsoever, at least of any true religion. For a true religion teaches morality as the essence of life and preaches the equal rights of all men and women in a society.

And at that moment during those morning hours I began to feel, vaguely at first, that all of this social structure, this religious ideology, this economic arrangement and this psychological torture were the outcome of a purposeful falsification by ruthless interested groups of a set of pre-existing basic, necessarily ethical, rules and laws; that these basically and principally ethic and humane rules and laws must have been the guidelines of an original human society when it began to think and feel, to fear and to dread, to reason and to ask - and when it organized their questions and answers, their fears and their consolations into the first felt and sensed concept of a religion.

Insidiously now the thought infiltrated that this very same development may - no, most likely did - also take place in Judaism and certainly also in Christianity and Islam.

Willfully and forcefully I broke the thread of these thoughts.

I did not want to elaborate any further the hypothesis I was about to construct in my mind. I did not know then why I did this, why I decided to brake this train of thoughts - but today I think I did so not only because I did not deviate from what was my 'program' that morning, but also because I would have been under the spell to communicate my thoughts to the Old Guru. Or was it possibly the fear that the Old Guru could read my thoughts ?

I figuratively speaking folded up my thoughts and packed them away into a niche of my memory bank for a future detailed working up.

I am going to add one more point, please ! Although, after what I have just now said, this is no more the proper place, let me in conclusion add still the remark, that after my a prolonged contact with, and my intensive study of the Indian religious systems' philosophies and ideologies, I claim the right to express my indignation not only about the degeneration of an once certainly well balanced philosophical system; about the abolition of an once certainly aesthetically finely tuned theology; about the ruination of an once certainly highly ethical religious system created and inspired once upon a time by men of superior mental and moral stature - but mainly also about the unfeeling, the callous application in practical life of the profoundly altered and deformed, selsfishly perceived and ruthlessly applied changes in the ethics of that original superior faith system on those condemned thereby to suffer a life of degradation and humiliation.

Please, do not misunderstand me, Moshe Chaim ! Do not consider me conceited for having been thinking along this lines ! Neither, please, call me intolerant. It may be difficult for you to even imagine how awful I feel that I am forced to judge what in their moral preaching and in their historic-mythological background are considered and accepted as divinely inspired rightfully and justly anchored religions in human society. I would be the first to agree that we have no right to weigh the intrinsic values of a religion with our own scales. And we certainly have no such justification to consider another religion inferior to any other - including to our own or any other in existence - only because it has a different form of expression, claims a different background and uses a different symbolism and mythology. I apply to myself the warning implied in what Claude Levi-Strauss once wrote somewhere: that there does not exist a society however primitive and under- privileged, which does not think itself endowed with supreme human values, and

which does not feel itself entitled to despise every other human species.

I am the first to agree that we have not the right to appoint ourselves judges over others; that as educated and civilized human beings we should learn to take a distantiated view of other peoples' or individuals' honest opinions; that we should never usurp for ourselves the right to condemn any other civilization or culture. But at the same time we should also have the courage to see the true face of all these other civilizations, cultures and religions - and to learn our lessons.

I know that in our materialistic world - and the world of India has always fundamentally been a materialistic one - we should not be surprised when in compensation of the misery he sees in his life and in his world, man searches for a life on higher, moral and selfless levels with due appreciation of the supernatural and within the realm of the metaphysical. It appears, however, that in India such a search has led to a deviation into a repressive system. This system, once upon a time created and since long, and until this day, administered and dominated by the top layer of its egotistically organized society, is - from its own point of view understandably - adverse to changes which might reduce its own purportedly divinely granted standing and meritoriously acquired advantages. This upper layer of the Indian society has effectively destroyed the hopes of those who are underprivileged; and has successfully eliminated the intuition and the initiative of every stratum of the Indian society.

The religions of the western world see their main task and vocation in the strife for the soul of the sinner, in fighting the power and influence of the ever threatening evil, and in prepairing the individual for that which might expect him at and after his death. Yes, I agree, the aim and object are worthy, the system and its application are praiseworthy - but only as long as the guidance of the individual along this path is made to be used by all strata of society and is started at an early age; and provided it is done along logical and intelligent guidelines. You may counter, that it is wrong to blame the Indian religions only, that their program and their aim do not appreciably differ from those of the western religions. For some time I thought so too - at least that this was in part true; but instead of continuing to wrestle with this argument within myself, I have given in to the more

realistic comprehension, that it is a mistake, that it is illogical to compare the Indian religions with those prevalent in the West, and to weigh their ethical content against that of the monotheistic religions in general. The reason I came to this conclusion was that - although I have no great respect nor admiration for the professionals who teach and sprad, who organize and administer the religions predominant in the western world - I found the men and women involved in these systems far less corrupt and less self-interested; and that they are also in many another way better qualified and suited for their tasks, than their counterparts in India. I do not have to argue, that though the ethical kernel of a religion is always valuable and true, this kernel - in the hope to make it easier understood and better appreciated by the common man and woman of whose intelligence, decency and honesty none of the theologians and religious adminstrators appears to have a good opinion - is in most if not all instances enveloped in many mythological, symbolic and ritual layers which distort the true content and disfigure the real meaning of the religion; and in the end make what the religious system tries to convey appear only partially true. Neither do I have to discuss the axiomatic fact, that - contrary to what Hinduism represents - no religion can survive for long unless it offers a distinctly hopeful and positive message.

I hope you will not interpret what I have just now said as meaning that there exist religions which are based on fundamentally defective reasoning - I exclude those with a well reasoned basis which was once scientifically factual and may have later turned out to be erroneous - or which dispense purposefully falsified intellectual and spiritual dogmas. But you cannot deny that there are religions which do not sufficiently take care of man's need to find the right and only aim in life, that of perfecting himself as much as it is possible for man to do, so that he may life a happy and fulfilled life on earth and can hope for admission to a paradise he thinks he may have earned.

I realized that during my meditation I had again slipped into a region and had been engaged by a material which demand further unhurried thinking and more complex reasoning.

And I realized also - and decided to postpone for a while the realization - that I found myself in addition on the verge of changing drastically the scales and standards by which I had so far valued and esteemed the religions of which I had knowledge.

At this moment in my meditation, seated on the floor opposite the temple priests, the complex of thoughts I had tried to postpone before, made their appearance again. I allowed them some access so as not to disturb my meditation. I perceived now with greater clarity than before even, that the original content of the Indian religions had since long been altered; that the true spirit of the Indian religiosity had since long taken a different direction than that original one; that the basic ethical doctrines originally inherent in these religions - Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism - had been changed into philosophies of legalized cruelty; that by the deprivation of its hope, by the violation of its religions' inherent original truth, the Indian people is kept in bondage for the benefit of a line of privileged classes.

The strongest weapon these privileged classes possess, by which they can maintain their predominance, is the deprived classes' lack of hope. No greater cruelty can be inflicted on a person than that of depriving him of hope. Nothing is more painful, more paralysing than to preach to an individual - and this by virtue of a supposedly divinely inspired truth - that in his lifetimew there will not be, there cannot be a better tomorrow for him. Nothing more cruel can be inflicted on an individual than to have him believe, that whatever good, noble, brave deeds he may do, he cannot expect to receive his reward in his lifetime; but that he may, if he is lucky - and careful - get his reward in form of a more elevated status when he is reborn into a future existence. And there cannot be a greater flaunting of injustic and callousness than to permit those, who are capable of providing assistance and protection for the downtrodden, who have the means to help and support to the poor and the miserable part of the society, to escape their humane duty with the lame excuse, that thereby they would interfere with the cleansing of the karman of the afflicted.

On and on went my thoughts and the chain of thought associations although I realized that they appeared on the surface because I was subconsciously in the process of severing my bondage to the Guru and his priests seated opposite me.

All this which was appearing in my mind then is not only a gross injustice, but also one compounded by the cynical blinding of the in other societies only blindfolding justification of all the many forms of injustice which man has shown himself capable of inflicting on his fellowmen. All these excesses, all the possible forms of cruelties and injustices are in fact more excessively

applied in India - which has since ever boasted more boisterously of its cultural past and present than any other civilized country - cannot be excused with the explanation that they are necessary to 'educate' the uneducated masses, to keep the populace on the 'straight path', to control the people's 'inborn trend to criminality'. In truth it does nothing of the kind; it only keeps these masses, this vast populace subdued, cowed and miserable.

As if in a flash I found now the explanation for the deep-seated anxiety which I had met everywhere on our wanderings. With this came to me the understanding also for the tendency I had noticed in most people to compensate, to neutralize, to quieten away whatever anxiety they may have felt about their own selfish, often cruel, behaviour to their fellowmen. It seems to me that whatever the extent of such a misdemeanour may have been, it was usually treated as a small misstep at best, something not worth talking about.

You will be surprised to hear me say, that while I was sitting that morning in front of the Head Priest, I began to perceive what I had learned, seen and experienced in the preceding nearly three years with a different understanding, in a totally new perspective - and in a negative light. I realized then with surprise that throughout the past three years I had uncritically taken in whatever I saw, learned and heard, with the mind of a partecipant. I had reacted like one who belongs to that world, who is part of that society. But on that morning, as I sat on that straw mat in the temple, when I knew that my task had been completed, I was a changed man. I felt as if my being's connecting lines with Hinduism had been severed, that my association with the world of the Guru had ended. I feel like saying that my education had been completed.

Everything was changed. Now I saw everything from a different angle, with a different perception. It was as if the Guru seated opposite me had released me from his tutelage, from his warrant, from his bond. On that morning, when I was about 'to return my mandate', I became again the Westerner, the American, the Jew, the objective observer, the intellectual, the researcher.

That morning, after I felt I had been released from my mission, my judgement may have been influenced by my having become aware of my cultural background, as otherwise I might not have labeled so much of the above described behaviour as criminal deeds. I caught myself in time from judging with the same scale the acts of true

friendliness, of real selflessness we two begging Samyasins were shown by more or less all the people we met; that is to say I shamefully pushed away the thought that these acts had only been motivated by the selfish wish to gain thereby merit points for the next existence. No, it was a more pronounced, a definite proof that the poor go out of their way to help other poor people; that most poor people are deep inside decent and good people.

I experienced it now as a tragedy, that all the negative things I have mentioned to you - and to myself - throughout the last half hour; that all the cruelty and all the hatred, all the animosity and all the envy of which I have told you, were created, done, performed - or at least made acceptable to the perpetrators - in the name of religion. You should, however, not conclude from the statement I have just now made, that I agree with certain political parties and philosophical schools who preach that all religious systems should be abolished, that religion is unnecessary. It is my firm conviction that religion is necessary, that it is essential, that it is important for the people. But I want also to state, that I can accept a religion as justified, as entitled to function in a society whatsoever only as long as it realizes, that its true purpose as a religion lies in helping mankind overcome its inherent, often threatening and paralyzing anxiety - and that this purpose can only be fulfilled if man's innate goodness, his capacity to selflessness, his inborn readiness to behave decently, are given the opportunity to develop.

I came to realize that morning to what extent the people with whom I had associated, whose trust I had gained and whose friendship I had won, had been deprived of their self-confidence and their hope - some even of their honour - by the religious tennets which had been presented to them as undeniable, undentable and impeccable truths. How can a man gain inner peace from a religion which teaches that one's actions and failings during life here on earth can only be individualistically consequential for another life into which he is inevitably going to be reborn after his death ? How can a person live a full, normal, happy life if his religion prevents him from thinking about his actual life with all its possibilities and all its advantages ? With what kind of a existence has a man to contend if it forces him to engage himself all through his life exclusively with the preparation for a future life into which he will be born again ? I am fully aware that also our western religions view a man's stay on earth as being shaped according to

a similar program; but there is at least hope, purpose and value in the actually lived life. It was painful to me to see how much the minds and the energies of all those who could be of satisfactory service to each other, of moral support to their families, of immense value to their society, of importance to mankind's process, are occupied with, at times even paralyzed by, matters relating to vague, obscure and threatening life conditions predicted in a shadowy-theoretical new existence.

That not all instincts are fortunately negatively controlled or abrogated I concluded from observing the deep love parents have for their children even though according to their religious belief the children carry nothing of their parents' genes, or inherited intellectual and spiritual qualities in themselves, in their karman, in the essential element, the soul, which animates them; for the Hindu and Buddhist creeds tell the parents that they do not transmit to their offspring anything of their own essential substance; that the soul in their children may have been that of some estraneous being, possibly one who had resided last in a worm. It is true that a son is necessary to carry on the name of the family and to attend to the parents at the time of their death and funeral; but can this the only reason and cause for a sense of affection ? And why is the birth of a daughter considered a misfortune even in a rich family ? And why is the mother considered unclean for a longer periord after she has born a girl ?

I have never been able to get a clear answer to my questions.

When I had reached this conclusion, the resulting revelations came to me as a shock. I told you already that I believe in the philosophy of a karman. I hope to explain it to you at a later stage. But I realized that the theological complex of karman was - and has always been - unscrupulously abused by the governments, by the politicians, by the Brahmins, by the powerful, by the rich. For by their enthusiastic perusal of the theological-philosophical institution of karman as a divinely established law, they feel empowered to abdicate their duties towards the underprivileged and the poor. By flaunting karman as the eternal, unalterable force which keeps the universe in order, the upper social crust had made sure that they cannot be envied, blamed and threatened; that the poor and underprivileged were passively and without protest submitting to their fate.

To me who has always allowed religion - all forms and systems of religion - an honoured place ion my philosophical concept of

life, this revelation made the abuses in the name of religion appear in their true light: as an unbelievable cruelty to human beings, as an unacceptable offence to what is divine in man.

And then I asked myself: was I really justified to feel this bitter ? Can I allow myself the luxury of a slowly crystallizing aversion against the institution of religion in general - and not only against the escapism into pseudo-humanism practiced to an often all exclusive extent by most of the principles of religions ? Was my formerly so strongly perceived conviction that the religious ideologies and practices, that the impressive ethic programs formulated in the framework of religion were indeed indispensable for the pursuit of mankind's destiny in life ? Have the promises based on, and evolving from, these programs - those which made the latter appear real and attractive - still retained their original value notwithstanding the extent to which they are violated; notwithstanding what I had been told, and have seen myself done, in the name and on behalf of religion in India; notwithstanding all the evil I have heard and read is done in the name of religion all over the world; notwithstanding all the curelties and crimes which I have learned from my studies of history have been done to people and people during the many many centuries past ? Did the institution which I had seen presented, the morals it pretended to teach, the deeds and done in the name of religion really and truly merit to be called by the name 'religion' ? Should all the wrong doers and harm producerss given shelter under the umbrella of religion ? Should the misdeeds, the rules and laws which are incessantly tried to be fitted into the social order with a religious shoehorn really be respected and preserved ? Were my indignation about, my disappointment in, the practical effects of religion on man and society really uncalled for, because true religion by any name is a blessed institution and only its interpreters and executors, its theologians and priests, are to be pointed at as the culprits ?

It was as if a veil had been lifted. I felt as if a blindfold had been removed from my eyes. I knew all of a sudden that all which I had observed in India of the practical application of religious ideologies and theories, did not belong to that kind of essentially pure-minded religious practices which I could accept as unequivocally moral and exclusively inspired by truth. I knew now, that what I had witnessed was a deadly abuse of man and his soul in the name of religion. And I knew now, that this abuse is

compounded by an added responsibility-denying distortion of facts into an illogical belief structure, arranged into a to the masses acceptable, but to an intelligent person unacceptable, frame of metaphysics.

At this point in my meditative process I noticed a tension-like anxiety trying of take hold of me. I realized at once that it was due to the notion which had again intruded into my thought process, but this time with greater insistency: does all I have thought, reasoned, rejected and incriminated apply only to India and its various religions ? Do all these objections and accusations not also apply to Christianity and Islam, and above all to Judaism too ? My psyche could return to an even keel when also this time it agreed that I would delve into this question at a more opportune time.

While these thoughts, these associations came flooding into my meditations during those hours in the temple - high noon had long since come and gone - they carried along also another question of which I had apparently so far not been consciously aware: has my awakening to the considerations which I have just now mentioned a deeper relationship with what I am, with my developmental process within my family circle and with what I had lived through the years since I left the States ? I mean to say: what connection, if any, is there between my having formed such a philosophical view-point as well as my actual negative judgement, and my having decided to come to India as well as my wandering for nearly three years through the length and width of this subcontinent ? Was there behind all this development and program really a metaphysically inspired purpose as my alleged horoscope had purportedly revealed ? Had I really been led by a mysterious predeterminated scheme as my association with Gobinder Nath suggested ? Had I really been entrusted with some kind of a mission, as the Head Priest had made me believe ? Had I been shown a light to follow, or given one with which I was to illuminate what had until now been shadowed over in my mind ? Had I really been made to pass through this series of distinctly consecutive stages of development in order that I get hold of the opportunity to sort out my ideas, to clarify my attitudes and to remove that which had obscured my view of the definite goal I have to aim at ?

I was fighting within me - and have not ceased to do so even

now - against seeing my encounters with Gobinder Nath, with the Guru, with my horoscope the implications I have just read into them. I was fighting within me, and do so still, to interpret the treasure-load of experiences I have acquired, and my maturing and growing up, as anything more than a series of coincidences. Yes, I have been fighting hard against my inclination to accept all which has happened to me not only in India but more or less also throughout my life, as something for which only a metaphysically explanation is possible.

And there and then I was presented with the urgent necessity to find a fitting key for the mechanism of the recent events in the hope to open the doors of my subconscious, to give my faith access to an understanding of what had happened to me. Somehow was hopefully aware that what I had discovered, concluded and come to believe; that what had originally appeared to be only an implied promise; might turn out to be the light to guide me onto the path leading to the truth - to **the** truth.

What have I discovered during the morning hours I faced the Old Guru ?, you ask. I have not even in the interval between that fateful day in the temple in Bombay and this actual hour I am spending in your company, come to a full and definite conclusion regarding what I have discovered. I may better say I have not yet sorted out all I have discovered. However, I can share with you the idea which I have been breeding in me since some time: that if there had to be a purpose in all through which I have lived so far, I might see one such in the revelation which came to me, that I am in every respect a deeply religious man; that my resistance against the belief in God, and associated with this my negative attitude towards Judaism, had been a childish reaction borns from certain traumas in my childhood and adolescence.

In my College days I laughed about the Aristotelian God who was described as absolutely good, as being transcendentalk and also at time imminent. I mocked the ancient philosopher's advice that man the earth being a sphere of evil and wickedness, man should flee the world of ideas and thus become like God. I ridiculed Descartes' efforts to prove the existence of God beyond mathematics. I argued the inacceptable conclusion of this French philosopher that man would not exist unless he realizes the existence of God. I argued with rabbis that according to the Bible and the prayer books the God of Israel is one of many gods and that only the rabbinic and kabbalistic approach led to the exclusiveness of God - and away from Spinoza.

But in these thousand days in India I have gained the certainty that there is a God; that God created and rules the Universe; that there is a special relationship between God and man; that a special relationsship exists between God and the Jewish people; that God has solemnly promised to protect the Jewish people; and that God has never forgotten his promise nor ever abolished his special relationship with Israel.

And there is something more I have experienced since that day in the Hindu temple in Bombay: I have felt strengthened in me something of which I had been only vaguely aware even until that day, something which I am still reluctant to call a certainty. I hope you will not accuse me of blasphemy, Moshe Chaim, if I give you a hint that the 'vague certainty' which filled me with awe and which I will not allow to give way to one of joy, was a fall-out from the feeling that a special relationship exists also between God and me, David the Jew.

If this realization, this still unformed and unformulated realization was the outcome of what I have lived and learned so far; if this was what I have gained from my prolonged immersion into the life of the East and its various faith systems - then the efforts I have made and the time I have spent had been worth their while.

I must confess, however, I was considerably confused by what arose from my thoughts, from my recalls, from my thought associations and from my I-directed conclusions on that day I faced the Guru. To a certain degree I am still confused. But I have come to realize that my confusion stems from an inner resistance to accept, to believe, to trust what I had just now referred to; and this resistance I have to this day not been able to overcome.

In the many hours we have been sitting in front of your tape-recorder, my friend, I have been able to describe to you at least some of my experiences. I have told you about the great religions of India. I have mentioned in greater detail certain of their specific ideological concepts. But there is more to it. There is much more to tell. It is unbelievable, how deep-going and complicated - and contorted and abused - are the thoughts and ideas which make these religions what they are. Let this suffice for today, Moshe Chaim. I can impossibly tell you more at this moment about my reaction to these thought-complexes. I am on the verge

of deciding whether I should take a further step and talk to you about what I will call my newly developing, or possibly already fully developed, philosophy of my own existence, and about the philosophy of all mankind's existence in general, which is slowly crystallizing in my mind.

Have patience. Give me time to evolve my thoughts later on in your company, for I can best formulate abstract thoughts into an exact shape when I air them in the presence and against the possible resistance of a listener.

Allow me to continue now with my tale; but I must hedge also in this respect, as it is not yet possible that I tell you at this moment the final resume of all I have learned - what I think I have learned - during the years which I have spent in India, and the final conclusions I have reached.

I shall continue now with my story.

It is quite possible that thoughts like those which I have described, had been forming in my mind since many a month already, that is to say since long before that morning; but if so, I had not been conscious of them. I had acted, thought and reasoned as an incarnated Hindu, like a Brahmin would whose karman, while he was on an exploratory mission in search of the truth through the ideational world of India, was destined to carry Gobinder Nath to his liberation; and who had also to interact with the karman of all those he came into contact with. Without taking notes or keeping a diary, I catalogized and stored what I saw and heard. I dispensed consolation and gave advice. My currency was goodwill and my coinage hope. I was not anymore David Prince. I was not even in a state of schizophrenic being. I was totally a sadhu with a begging bowl who, should he have been asked, could not even give his actual name. Coming to think about it: I was never asked to give my name. I was addressed as 'Ji', as 'Swamiji', as 'Sadhuji', as 'Sriji'. That is all I was called. Even on the laissez-passer which allowed me into Sri Lanka I was called 'Nameless Swamiji'.

However, at the time I sat in front of the Old Guru, the thoughts I have described in detail, passed in concrete form into my regained consciousness.

The ideas and associations which I have just now outlined - the results of my growing doubts - had apparently until that moment been kept back behind the barrier of my perception of myself as

a sadhu. I have every reason to be grateful for man's capability to create such effective control barriers, as otherwise I would have been greatly handicaped in my contact with people. Even more: I would otherwise have felt a fraud. I do not know to whom I owe this blessing, the ease with which I adjusted to my new being. I certainly did not owe this to my own wisdom or any superior psychological adaptability to which, in all honesty, I cannot lay claim.

In those hours in the temple through the cognition of myself I became still more conscious of the deeper layers of the psyche of the Indians I had come to know; I got a specially deep insight into the mind - and I say unashamedly also into the heart - of those I had come to know particularly well. Now I realized that it had been resignation, and in no way a sign of wisdom, which I had thought I could detect in the voices and attitudes of those whose confidence I had won.

While my thoughs were emerging in this direction, I recalled - and for the first time rightly interpreted - how sad had been the expression on their faces, how hopeless the look of their eyes, how resigned the arguments they used when they talked to me. This applies in most cases also to the sages and teachers, the educated and successful from I had the fortune to learn so much. I still stronger realized now, that the voices of these people contained something which conveyed not only their fears, but unmistakenly also some vague hope - a timid challenge to a crude fate to grant at least the faintest of hopes. I know that this revelation which I received at that moment, will for ever remain the essence of all I had experienced.

These and all the other revelations I have mentioned so far, erupted into my mind with overwhelming force, as if the floodgates of my subconsciousness had been suddenly pulled open.

While I sat there, on the floor inside the temple in Bombay, I recognized all at once - and without difficulty identified with - the helplessness, the desperation, the anxiety with which all the lower strata of Indian society had to live, and which somehow - quite unconsciously, I am certain - they had tried to make known to me.

Easily and automatically I projected this knowledge, this reaction, this resentment on the vast masses in Africa and South America of whose status in society and standard of living I had

learned from newsmedia and literature. Until that moment these experiences had made me react with sympathy and empathy. Now, however, my mind was flooded with sorrow and anger.

However - I nearly said 'of course' - I did not mention anything of this to the Head Priest seated opposite me.

Each of us sitting around that carpet had to all appearances withdrawn into himself, had transposed himself into meditation. We sat there for a long time. I really do not know how long we sat there, how much time did pass. Time had not yet regained its former dimension for me.

My dear Moshe Chaim ! I have just had a thought and have come to a decision. Contrary to what I had first decided, that is what I hinted at a short while ago, I am going to reveal to you what has conglomerated from all I have learned and experienced so far into a deep faith and has formed my sincere belief. I had until this very moment not had the intention to share with you, nor with anybody else my - though still vague but in its resonance to me almost holy - insight; but something you said when we first met on my return, has made me sense in you a soul which will understand and accept what my own soul does know. I shall at a later date take up this issue again.

I am alluding to a total change in my view of, a metamorphosis of my attitude to the socio-religious views I had so far nursed within me. Suddenly, facing the erect sitting and shallow breathing priests, I knew - though still in a vague outline only - that all I had learned and observed of the social and economic and social conditions in India, and the way I had reacted to these, were of no importance now, had turned totally irrelevant now. I knew that what the Head Priest believed to be my place in the wheels of destiny of all concerned with and involved in my pilgrimage; and what he thought had been the purpose and aim of my mission, were only ingredients to, were building material for, a to my mind far greater and deeper exploration; for a far more important mission; for a more advanced process of maturation; which were, if not ordained for me, at least effectively woven into my destiny. My certainty that this was indeed the case, was forcefully fermenting within me. I confess, I was very strongly aware of this process.

This realization was the main reason why I did not communicate also this complex of thoughts to the priests. I do not think my

decision can be called dishonest or unwarranted; my respect for and gratitude to the High Priest were as great as ever before - they had, if possible, even grown. But to prevent my thoughts from going off at a tangent, and in order to prevent the possibility that by vocalizing my negative thoughts about Hinduisnm in general and Brahminism in particular - and above all because I could not exclude the possibility that the Head Priest had been able to read what had been going on in my mind - I finally broke the silence.

"Your Holiness", I began, "in conclusion let me say that here I am again, happy to be back in your presence, my Guru and Father. I am no more the same person whom you have sent off on a pilgrimage. I have returned as a new man. I am a reborn person. I am different from the man who about 33 months ago had started on his journey from this very spot to which I have returned. I hope you will permit me to think that during all those months which Gobinder Nath and I have spent on our wandering, we have never been without your benevolent protection.

"We, Gobinder and I have learned that life of man is a constant struggle, that it is an ongoing fight. We have gained the knowledge that the fight in man's life is directed to liberate him from fear and anxiety, from anger and hatred. We have realized that the life of man is one of testing and proving; that it is a state of existence when his moral strength is being tested; that it is a time when he has to prove his willingness and his ability to overcome malice, evil, hatred and selfishness. I have discovered that this is the true meaning of the enlightenment, of the liberation, of the salvation to which we aspire. To gain his moksa man has to fill his heart with unending compassion; he has to learn how he can serve his fellowmen; how he can bring help and support, and whenever needed consolation, to his fellow creatures. When man has matured to this high level of existence, the final step to nirvana is made up of altruistic love enveloped in compassion. This is the service we are created to perform. These are the most fundamental obligations and responsibilities we owe to our soul.

"This is one of the achievements I am privileged I can register.

"These are the lessons I have learned, Holy Father; and to spread this knowledge far and wide I saw as the aim of our mission. I know I am not yet on that level of consciousness where ethics and faith, goodness and selflessness can unrestrictedly reign within and over me, can guide and dominate me to the exclusion of everything else; but I believe that by having become aware of my duty and my goal I have completed my mission.

"I do not know, whether in your estimate I have also otherwise succeeded in my mission. I am certain, that Gobinder has no less benefitted than I, though he had a different, possibly even greater task to fulfill. You have sent me out to find the truth. I have told you already that we have found much of what we believe is the truth. Above all we have confirmed that he truth is indeed within us. I know that it is within me as it is in everybody else. I knew this the moment I knew that truth is identical with the Self within us, with that which is divine within us, with that which is eternal in us. I realized that this truth is part of the soul of and in all mankind.

"I could on my own, Holy Father, confirm that which is the truth as it is taught by wise and holy man, and as it is accepted by all who believe in the holiness of what is eternal and immortal in us human beings.

"But for myself this knowledge of truth is not enough; it is too limited. I know it is only a part of the truth. I know that beyond this truth there is a still greater truth. So far I have not been able to see in all its clarity this truth which is beyond and behind that which for us here is the truth. It is the real and final truth which in future I intend to approach, to discover, to explore, to understand - and to finally make my own. This will be the goal I hope to reach, to aim at in all the life which is yet to be mine, in all the time which is still left to me here in this actual earthly existence. I know fully well I have still a very long and arduous road ahead of me. I know also that I have the energy, the determination and the patience to proceed to my goal. I have the inner certainty that I shall in the end if not reach at least come near to my goal, for I know the direction, and I know the pitfalls I shall have to avoid on the path. I have in my possession also the tools with the help of which I can hope to open the gates to the whole and final truth - if the time and health needed are granted to me. I hope it will be granted to me, that I shall also be able to have others share this knowledge - and the benefit deriving thereform - once I have acquired them myself.

"But I must be honest and confess, that I do not know at this stage, whether at all and if so how much also mankind will benefit from the truth I may acquire. I shall certainly do my selfless best".

I was very surprised to hear me say what I said. It seemed to me that while I spoke, it was not I but something which spoke in me.

All the while I had given verbal expression to what I was thinking, the Old Priest had been looking at me with a friendly and understanding smile, while something like awe was reflected in the faces of the other priests. Now and then the Guru nodded his head as if in confirmation.

After I had finished talking, he remained silent for a minute or so. A faraway look had come into his eyes, and it remained there while he addressed me.

"Do not think you have failed, my son. On the contrary ! I know fully well - and I know that inside yourself you share my knowledge - that you have succeeded. You have achieved that which you have been sent out to achieve. I am happy to hear - and still more so to sense - that you have been so very honest with yourself. You have been able to recognize where the truth begins, and you will, with your growing wisdom and your increasing inner strength, in time and with a sustained effort, acquire ever more of the truth, until with your absorption in the Great Absolute you will realize the entirety of the Truth.

"Your wisdom tells you that you have found truth, but that it is not yet the whole truth, the exact truth. You will have to go on with your searching and exploring, so that you may rediscover the extent of the truth which was yours already a thousand years ago. It is still the same truth, unchanged since and unchangeable also in future. At this stage in your actual incarnation you are prevented from knowing the full truth because you have not yet completed all of your mission; and because, while still searching, you will complete also that part of your mission which is to help, to lead, to advance many a man and woman along the path to salvation. Like the bee in its search for food pollinates the flowers and fruit trees and brings blessings by its work, so your searching will be a blessing for a great many people. You may consider yourself an avater, and see your task in what you set out to do. I cannot go wrong if I call you a Bhodisatta. Yes, you are the incarnation of a Great Soul who has volunteered the postponment of his moksa. You cannot in your actual state, stage and form know the full truth; for should you know it, you could no longer stay with us, could not continue with your blessing-bringing searching. You must, therefore, until the time you return to your blessed endstage, go on with your search".

He stopped talking. He breathed deeply. He looked at his

hands which he had placed palms upward on each other. After a minute or so he looked up again, fixed his eyes into mine and continued.

"You were wrong to expect that you would return fully matured and readied fom your pilgrimage. Your horoscope did not foretell this. Your pilgrimage was meant for you to recoup your former knowledge and therewith consolidate your former status and its inherent privilges. To assure this you had to learn, to know, to recognize the abstract truth. In addition you have also learned to apply the truth to yourself, that very truth which in reality was already yours to apply. You are right: life is one continued test. Your pilgrimage was such an extended test. I can now disclose to you, my Prince, that you have so far passed all the tests. But there are still many more tests which you will have to pass. Many of them are still ahead of you, will have to be passed by you before you reach your goal.

"However, as you know, your liberation, your moksa, is assured. Your final bliss is a certainty. You have to face these tests so that you may learn from them and apply what you learn to the way you teach others. Although you are in a certain, but blessed, sense an avatar, the outcome of your further searching will decide whether your final salvation, your definite liberation will happen now, will be granted now after this cycle of existence or after a later one. You know, that notwithstanding what I said just now, you can at any moment claim your moksa, that you can demand it whenever you want. But I know fully well that there is not the incination in you to do so, for you feel within yourself that you have still many a great duty to perform, namely that of bringing happiness to the men and women who are fortunate to be made to cross your path, whose karman is in this and possibly many another respect locked into yours. You will assist these fortunate ones to see the light; you will assist them to gain knowledge of themselves; you will instruct them to become conscious of the values and the potentialities they carry in themselves.

"Go in peace, my son. The task allotted to you here in India has been completed. Your inner gyroscope will also in future lead you into the direction where you can fulfill your karman. Know then, that these years you have been among us have proved to the fullest extent how unerringly your perfect soul approaches the completion of its destiny".

I kept my eyes locked into those of the Guru. While his words kept reverberating in my head the comprehension came to me, that the thoughts in which I had been engaged that morning did in no

way disagree with the picture which the Old Priest had painted of my future duty.

I heard now the Guru address Gobinder seated at my right.

"And you, my son Gobinder Nath, you have been blessed in having been in the company of this soul so beautiful in its completeness, which has reincarnated to be your help in the cleansing of your past sins. Your karman has been finally cleared and greatly cleansed. Enjoy in full the happiness such a certainty has to convey, as well as the assurance, that you are going to benefit from the blessings which arise therefrom".

All the time, all through the many long hours, Gobinder had been sitting in complete silence at my side. It was usual for him to remain silent in such circumstances; but now there was no more that tension that rigidity which I had earlier noticed in him. I turned sidewards and looked at him. There was nothing left of the former sadness and tension. I could see how greatly he had been moved by the words of his Guru. I too was deeply moved, and also very happy for his sake. A smile, a beautiful smile came now over Gobinder's tear-stained face. Deep he bowed to the group of priests with his hands folded in front of his forehead.

At that moment I had the final confirmation that I had completed my mission.

With surprise I noticed that the sun was about to set. We had been sitting there in the temple for ten hours or more without changing position, without food and drink !

I declined the offer of a glass of milk - I did not want to end this important day in my life in that environment and in the presence of the Holy Man with such a profane act.

I was ready to leave.

There and then I made up my mind to leave India.

Leaving.....

My friends did not try to persuade me from leaving India. In their view my decision was the logical outcome and conclusion of what they perceived the completion of my mission. They knew - or thought they knew - that there was no further task left for me to perform in India, and that whatever my karman may demand, and whatever the future duty imposed on me may be, I had to search for them and to face them elsewhere in the world.

Neither was I perturbed by the thought that I was leaving my friends perhaps for ever; nor did I feel saddened because I was departing from a country in which I had experienced much happiness, though of a rather unusual kind; and where I had reached a degree of maturation which could certainly not have been granted to me me anywhere else.

I accepted it as a fact, that a stage in my life - and in addition a very significant one - had come to an end, and that I was about to start a new one. At that moment I did not feel inclined to look too far ahead.

Somehow I was not surprised, that in the frame of all these reflections, I did not entertain the idea I might one day return to Bombay.

Only the thought that Gobinder was staying behind caused me great hurt. But I successfully reasoned with myself to accept the inevitable fact, that he was no more part of my life, that our ways were destined to separate at this stage. Even though these reflections to a degree succeeded to ease the pain, they could not fail to overshadow my departure with much sadness. Gobinder had

been part of my karman. He had been a very good friend and a most pleasant companion.

I have already mentioned that Gobinder had greatly aged in recent weeks. I had become still more aware of these changes in him since we had returned to Bombay. This process of sliding into a state of incapacitating old age continued at an increased pace now. His mental condition had not suffered, but physically he had slowed down considerably. He had also become more and more withdrawn - but this did, apparently, not interfere with his inner contentment. I could see that he was a very happy man. I watched him pass his days in a mood of relaxed satisfaction which reflected, as he explained on my concerned enquiry, only his inner certainty, that all which had been predicted in his infancy had come to pass; that the task allotted to his karman had been completed; and that he could look forward to a blessed future - whatever and wherever his future might be. I knew quite well that I could leave Bombay without having to worry about his mental equilibrium, and without having to be apprehensive about his physical comfort. He had great spiritual support in his Guru and the other priests of the temple. He enjoyed the utmost respect of the neighbourhood. To Seth Gopal and his family he was a holy man or at least a superior personality sanctified by the evident special attention granted to him by the Superior Power. Seth Gopal assured me, that Gobinder would enjoy all possible comfort. I had, of course, full trust and confidence in his assurance, for it was a great privilege for the family and the house to be allowed to look after the comfort and the needs of Gobinder Nath.

I dislike delays once I have come to a decision. I dislike farewells no less. Therefore, once I had made up my mind, I acted with all speed. There were in any case not many preparations for me to make. I retrieved my documents and my money from the Bank. I turned into a 'normally dressed' American, that is to say I went around now in western-style clothing. With the help of one of Seth Gopal's lawyer friends the problems arising from my having overstayed the time granted by my visa, was settled within minutes.

A few letters of yours, Moshe Chaim, had been awaiting my arrival. In each you enquired about my wellbeing. They had been opened by Seth Gopal, as I had requested him to do, and to each

he had replied that I was in good health. In a letter you wrote about a year after I had gone on my pilgrimage and which reached me only now on my return, you had informed me that Bobbele Sore had passed away. I deeply grieved during the day I learned the sad news - but helped by my knowing of man's inevitability to interfere with fate, I could find my equilibrium again. However, I gave up my plan to travel first of all to the US to see my Grandmother, and decided to continue as I had planned before: to pay my long delayed visit to Israel.

During the week before my departure I hardly ever left the hotel. I spent my days with writing letters to my relatives and friends. I informed you, Moshe Chaim, of my expected arrival. I had no debts to settle. I succeeded only with great difficulty to make Seth Gopal accept a sum of money with which I could make sure that all possible needs of Gobinder would be met. I provided the temple with an appropriate monetary gift. I asked Seth Gopal to arrange at my expense a festive meal for my friends, known and unknown, in neighbourhood - but only after I had left the country.

One week after my visit to the temple I sat in a plane leaving India.

VIII. THE NEXT STAGE.

Collecting my Thoughts.

There was no direct flight connection between India and Israel. Neither was there one from any country directly en route except for Egypt. However, the idea of finding myself again in Egypt did not attract me, although for a moment I felt challenged by the thought that on this visit I might react with less hostility.

I decided to take a plane to Cyprus instead, and to proceed from there to Israel.

As if to absolve me from the promise I had made to myself in the course of the day I faced the Old Guru and his priests in Bombay while I was surveying the experiences and conclusions resulting from my thousand days' pilgrimage - namely that I would dedicate the first available uncluttered time to collect and recollect, to explore annd to analyze these thoughts and the reactions which had emerged, and which I had placed for the time being 'into cold storage' - I spent almost all the hours I had to wait in the airport of Bombay, and those of the entire flight to Cyprus, with recalling and collecting, with reviewing and dissecting my feelings and sensations. In a rapid, film-like recapitulation I let the days and months of my voyage through India pass before my eyes. I repeated to myself what I had told the Head Priest, and reassembled the toughts which I had wilfully suppressed while I was seated opposite him.

I am going to let you take part in what I thought and in what I concluded. However, I have to warn you: there will be much repetition in what you are going to hear now and also in what I am going to tell you of my ideas at a later stage - but I am sure you will understand and forgive.

To my surprise it came to me as a relief that I was leaving the world of India, its religions and its people. This sense of relief was bolstered further by the curiosity which the anticipation of the forthcoming new stage in my life awakened in me. But mixed into all this was also a certain degree of undefined dissatisfaction which I attributed to the gnawing thpought lurking in the back-ground, that on drawing up a balance sheet I had no reason to be proud about and satisfied with what I had at first thought I could register as a huge gainful and profitable outcome.

I thought I had reason to know - and I confess I was intrigued by this knowledge - that my experiences were unusual in every aspect and from whatever angle one looked at them. Did this grant me the right to conclude - as the High Priest had said and what I had so willingly accepted - that they had been imposed, directed and controlled by a mystic 'something' beyond my own control ? Was this 'directing instance' made to appear one such only as a reflection in the pool of my belief system ? Was all this only indicative of my subconscious effort to search for some kind of an identification ? Or was all which had made me construct that flattering image of myself within the world I seen only an illusion, nothing but what one may call a concatenation of circumstances ? And even though I was now free to form, with the help of what I had seen and heard and experienced, a personal, a complex, a comprehensive philosophical system within a budding faith structure of my own - I was hard put to answer the question whether there was the need for me to introduce metaphysical factors and supra-natural forces to give it an esoteric patina ? And if this was indeed so, what could have induced me to do this ? Perhaps the hope that my faith would be further strengthened, and might be made to grow within me the satisfying knowledge how best I can exist, and how truly I can live ?

And even though, after having completed that deeply furrowing stage in my life, I was about to start on a new one; and even though I knew well that it was left to me entirely how to define my goals and how to find my way to them - I was aware, that I had not yet discovered what I had formulated as my task and endeavour, namely the full, the for such a new program indispensable answer and satisfactory explanation for my, for your, for all humanity's purpose in life.

Arrived at this conclusion I found to my disappointment and surprise that, as the gainful outcome of my prolonged stay in India, I could not point to anything which could make me believe entitled, with any satisfying certainty, to the claim that I have been fortunate to acquire, to have even neared, or at least only seen from a distance, the knowledge of an all-encompassing, deeply rooted truth.

However, my old self-confidence soon reasserted itself and it succeeded in conquering this unwarranted inrush of pessimism.

Allow me, Moshe Chaim, to say a few words about my views on religion in general.

I am not going to enlarge on the plethora of theories which form the starting point of every analysis of the essence of religion, and the preamble to all discussions about the origin of man's looking for a refuge in religion. I am going to put in my share by a short sketch of the generally accepted view.

Original man lived in fear and trepidation: naked survival was his main interest in life, and so were his endeavours to protect himself from the onslaughts of a hostile nature. With the growth of his mental capabilities and the development of his reasoning qualities, the search for an explanation of these nature phenomena was added.

I can only explain the phenomen religion, the hold it had over man from the first stage of his development into a reasoning being - I venture to say that homo erectus would not have evolved into homo sensibilis and would not have developed further ito homo sapiens without the support and protection of a religion cut to measure - by the deduction that early man had been guided by a simple, solid and pure religion; that there must have been a pre-existing religious system different from what we call religion today. I maintain that archaeological indications of this original basic religion are still recognizable in all the religions of the past and of the present, although their ideology, theology, sociology had been again and again violated, altered, changed by self-interests, by reforms and by mis-interpretations.

I have no doubt that this original religious system could only have been a pure, logical, moral religion which in simple terms had been entrusted if not to what we call the "original man" who appeared on our planet only some 60 000 years ago, then to a mankind of times long past by divine command or by a divinely-inspired superior-minded ethically pure human leadership.

I picture that early in this developmental process leaders, men and women, arose who knew how to soothe their contemporaries' fears and anxieties; who could with their interpretations and predictions ease the impact of what unprotected and uneducated mankind had to suffer. These first soothsayers and shamans, these primitive priests and prophets, may have been the first founders of a constitutionalized religion. The first astronomer may also have reasoned his observations into a religious cult. The first shaman who observed a nature phenomen may have turned into the first theologian - and searching for an explanation may have become the first scientist.

I figure it did not take long and the shaman, the alchemist, the magician, the astronomer discovered that knowledge meant power. Trying on the one side to make sense of their knowledge, and on the other to maintain the influence, the domination and the power this knowledge gave them over the people, this evolutionary process may have been the first instance when the basic, the original, the true religion was changed, manipulated - and ultimately may have created a suffering population to accept the overlordship of a parasitic religious elite, along with a ruling lay class supporting this religious elite of priests and prophets, which in return demanded and received the religious elite's readiness to prove the ruling lay class' divine right to rule.

"You say there had been an original religion very early in mankind's existence ?", you asked in surprise. "In your hypothesis a primary principle of religion had been in existence in which people were made conscious of their goal, which is to be readied for an ethically - and, along with this as compensation, an in every sense more comfortable, more advanced and more fulfilling life ?"

"This original religion I visualize was a nothing more than set of instructions and of plain guidelines - framed in and illustrated by rites and myths - which directed the people to lead a guileless life. That must have been all. It was a set of simple, easily understood instructions, regulations and rules which made man conscious of the meaning of good and evil. Even originally

man was made to know that a Superior Power watched his deeds, that by his actions he was tested, that by his reactions he was probed. In the course of later developments this point was more and more stressed".

"This means that you see - referring to your early description - in the purpose of religion, from its introduction already, more than a narcotic to still man's fears and worries; and more also than a medium to transfer power to certain classes ? You imply that it was the recognition of the Supreme Being and proving oneself worthy of his attention. If there was such a goal, there must have also been directions how to reach this goal, and also a mechanism with which to gain the goal".

"You share with me the belief in a Supreme Being, Moshe Chaim. You can, therefore, follow my thread of reasoning: God, the Supreme Being with an intellect to me incomprehensible in its immensensity, will not create a universe and populate one its planets with living beings who are born and die, who defecate and procreate, kill each other and so on as the one and only scope and purpose wgy they exist. To think even that such is the scope and purpose is deeply offensive to human intelligence. The same applies also to the theory that man is the result of a coincidental development. This does not mean that I reject that he is the result of an evolution. Of course he is; it is a fact, a logical fact. Likewise, to an intelligent person at least, is the idea incomprehensible that that mankind has been created to populate same kind of heaven and hell".

"What in your opinion.....? "

"In my opinion mankind has been selected from other living species to become the manifestation of and a witness to the Divine Will and Purpose. All the other living beings - I include plants among these - are, as the Bible says, at the disposal of mankind. And one or the other of these species may be the source from which another species will be elected and developed to replace man should he fail - like man has most likely replaced a species which has failed and had to perish".

"This implies that there have been other worlds before, that man has replaced one or the other of these species ? "

"This is what I think and believe. The human species is very young; it started to evolve some four million years ago at the most. The universe and with it our eath planet are very old. The enormous oil deposits are evidence that on our earth has lived once upon

a time a huge population which has totally disappeared without leaving any trace apart from the oil underground".

"You mean the world of the dinosaurs ? What you postulated just now fits these enormous animals not as a hypothesis but as a scientifically proved fact".

"Not quite. It is true that the dinosaurs lived about 160 million years ago on our earth; and that they have, for reasons our scientists have not yet established, totally disappeared, leaving most probably large oil deposits here or there. But not here where you live, Moshe Chaim. It is a scientifically proven fact that dinosaurs have not existed in what is today the Middle East - but it is also a fact that the largest oil deposits are here in the Middle East. Can you explain these riches the Arab sheikhs enjoy today otherwise than as residues of a world which has perished before even the dinosaurs lived in the regions which are now South America, Africa, the North Sea and so on, died there and turned into oil ? But there is still the querry to be answered, whether there had ever been such enormous numbers of these animals - that is if the earth could have supported such enormous numbers - as to produce such enormous quantities of oil".

"What then, after all you have said, do you see in religion as the purpose of man's existence, as the aim of his life ?"

"To make of man an ethical being, Moshe Chaim. To make him into a good and honest person. That is all. But it has never come about".

"And then ?"

"Only few succeed in this. Let me explain my philosophy in a few sentences. I visualize an original, simple, generalized religion from which all other religions ever in existence have derived. Plainly and simply man is taught that he has to develop into an ethical being. Man is told what is good and evil. He is shown how to avoid evil. Man is given every chance to prove that he has at least made every effort to avoid evil. He is constantly tested whether he succeeds to overcome evil and give victory to the good he harbours in himself. If he passes these tests, even if he has only sincerely tried - that is to say if he has shown that he is a worthy individual - he is given the chance to start on a new life again and again so that he may correct the failings which have come to the foreground in previous testings".

"You mean to say that animals have no soul; that man is again and again reborn so that he can correct his defects ?"

"In my hypothesis rebirth has a definite place. All living individuals, that is to say all the humans alive, have reached their stage of existence to be further tested, or better to be given a further chance to eliminate what had not been ethically acceptable in their former existence".

"All of us are have been found worthy to be reborn and to be tested. Many have succeeded and many have failed ? "

"More or less this is my thinking. Among the masses of mankind only few succeed, if not in this life than on their return to life here on this earth".

"What happens to those he have not passed, to use a popular expression, who have botched their chances ? "

"You ask what happens if they have finally proved that they are not worthy of representing mankind's ethic image ? To answer your question: I cannot answer your question. Nobody can answer this question. I would go further and say, fortunately nobody has the answer to this question. But I can have my mind look for a possible answer in order to neutralize the question which has engaged me very much. Why, I asked myself, should it be difficult to find a place for the souls or the spirits or whatever is eternal in us and remains after we die ? Has the soul not come from God ? Should it not return to God ? Or if this is unacceptable to the doubters, or otherwise for many reasons I could bring forth, there is that immense reservoir of animal beings, from viruses to insects to lions, in which the souls of millions of generations of humans would find ample space".

"And what happens to the others, those who turn at last into perfect, or near-perfect human beings ? "

"I do not know the answer, but in this case too I am not prevented from imagining the answer I can give you: they will be added to an elite of men and women who have been chosen to live an ideal life in the proper environment".

"Where is this place ? Where will they be housed, where will they henceforth live ? "

"I do not know. Perhaps there is a superworld on some other planet. There are billions of them..."

"Perhaps ! ?

"Yes, perhaps - but in all honesty let me tell you that also in this respect I do not want to know the where and how and why. It suffices that I know within me that somehow this must be the truth...."

"Does all this not fit into the hindu-buddhist concept of karman and nirvana ?".

"It does. I will go further and confess that I owe this direction of my thinking to what I learned in India. Basically Hinduism reflects this chain of thoughts. Or better said, it must originally have done so and the principles of karman and dharma continue to this day to reflect this original philosophy. But, as I have pointed out, Hinduism has again and again been modified; and in this process, to make the principles of dharma and karman better understood and psychologically easier accepted, they were flattened and diluted into rites and into sacrifices - and into the caste system. What had been secondary in importance was made overbearingly into strict and inviolable guidelines.

"Buddhism and Jainism, and much later Sikhism, were born in protest against this process - but in turn they too were diluted and their original truths dressed into new clothing by ever newly arising reformers and interpreters who thought they knew better. But even though the original explanations and theologies have been given a new dressing; end even though mythologies and rituals have been added, and have changed and reformed Hinduism and Buddhism in the course of time - these two main religions have fundamentally remained the same. At least one can see the original high ethical principles shine through the thicket of superstitions and the crust of impositions. Also the rights and privileges which the early organizers have granted themselves and to those they favour or fear, have remained the same. The changes were maintained and propagated thereafter, in the course of many generations, by other, as a rule well-meaning but in the pursuance of their self-interests misguided parties".

"Do the general terms and the specific conclusions with which you depicted your hypothesis with Hinduism as the catalyst, also apply to Judaism ?"

"They certainly do".

"Are that which we see in Hinduism and Judaism traces, or better said rudiments, of that primordial religion which is reflected in the story of Noah ?"

"This is my interpretation indeed. Reforms and innovations had in the course of time become necessary, when the system did not anymore work, because the people had become corrupted by the advancing civilization"

"This happened also elsewhere..."

"Everywhere. The former simple, straight-laced religious system went off the rail when a self-centred, power-hungry hierarchy emerged; when a thin top layer of powerful elements appointed themselves superior in quality and higher in qualifications - and therefore believed themselves entitled to greater privileges. They believed themselves justified to regulate the people's comportment by rules and instructions suitable in their opinion for a populace without much culture and poor in intelligence. This, of course, created an atmosphere in which the rest of the population was deprived of their primary rights".

"Does the picture you painted of this development of Hinduism apply to Judaism too ? That is to say, were illogical measures made into law, were fanciful mythologies and historic fables invented - you hinted that you view the 'Oral Law' as such - and were these made in themselves into a purpose, a goal, while the original purpose and goal were forgotten ? "

"Yes, you can accept that, similarly to what has happened in Hinduism, also in Judaism again and again the priests made sure that sacrifices became the accepted and only way to approach God; that only the perfect performances by nobody and nowhere but by priests in the Temple of Jerusalem were valid, that an imperfect performance of a sacrifice could endanger the donor and nation. The priests raised themselves by these means to a dominant position. After the temple was destroyed the time of the rabbis dawned. They became the power in Judaism. The weapon they carried, and the competition they waged against the priests, were entirely spiritual; they solved the impasse the competition with the priests created, by coming to a mutually beneficial arrangement: the priests - the Cohanim - retained their prominence in ritual and ceremony, and the rabbis took over the spiritual leadership. A positive outcome of this pact in the turmoil of their time, was that the internecine fight among the priests under the Macabees and on other occasions did not damage either the position nor the influence of the priestly class".

Please, allow me to complete what I had started to outline as the value religion had and has for mankind.

In the past and today, whenever in difficulties, and whenever

exposed to stress, man has looked for support - and for an explanation of his difficulties and stress - in an interpretation of his life on a higher spiritual level.

In the Antique, but more so in modern times in the Western world, he has never ceased to satisfy his needs by looking for ever new religions, and to cushion them with a range of ever new cults. He has eagerly followed, at least for a certain time, whatever prophet offered him guidance out of his distress, and a way out of his confusion. He has submitted to whatever new theology which appears on the horizon - often vested in some metaphysical garb or in some party-political doctrine - and makes that craved for guidance more palatable by throwing in the promise of redemption as a sweetening and legitimizing ingredient. There has not been a generation in the history of mankind - at least in the recent centuries with whose history I am familiar - which does not provide examples along this line of religious evolution. Don't hold this my lack of knowledge against me ! I could find out that my ignorance in how far my sweeping statistic applies also to the Antique, is shared by many a learned historians.

But as and because none of these prophets and cults has ever played a decisive, an all-comprehensive, a redeeming, an all-problems-once-for-ever-solving role in the fate of mankind; that is to say because they did not fulfill what they promised even in their own person, in the way they conducted their life, whatever initial value they and their creed may have had in the eyes of the public evaporated whenever the promisary notes were presented.

All these alterations and these deformations could at last be turned into a creed, an ideology and a religion in their own rights, unless some form of legalizing of the reforms were introduced after mythologization had obscured the true message and meaning; of unless threats penetrating from the realm of the metaphysical succeeded in making these changes acceptable to the community of the faithfuls.

It should, therefore, not come as a surprise to us that notwithstanding the failures and the failings of the prophets and redeemers to make their offers of a 'solution' for man's deep unease and hopelessness come true, they are still venerated and their religions and myths are still branded about. In other words, notwithstanding all their failings and failures these religions still survive in some form or other, in some organized form here, in some reformed issue there.

The explanation ? The survival of the founders of religious

movements did not happen because no better ones have emerged to replace them, but because they offer the populace the consolation it needs without its having to think and reason.

The religions of India have not been spared a sustained series of developments and changes; but, this has to be underlined, these took place without upheavals and bloodshed accompanying them. The basic ingredient of Hinduism and the religions deriving from it - mainly Buddhism - is pessimism flowering into negativism. This makes it unimportant in which form of expression the religion is vocalized, by which ritual it is performed - as long as it does not shake the social fundaments which the dominant class of refomers of old had reserved for its own benefit.

The original religion or religions of ancient India have not survived in their original form - and also the successor religions have in due course been made to undergo profound changes; these were as a rule brought on by some occasional reformatory current here and some assimilatory trends there.

However, at most their outer form and their presentation have been altered; and in these changes they have successfully offered an alibi to the increasingly forward pressing atheism which is affecting the younger generation of Indians. In truth no real nor any appreciable change has occurred in the fundamentally asocial conceptions and the negativistic perceptions of any of the religions of India.

Please think the few remarks I just now made as introductory for your understanding of my way of thinking and of the conclusions I have reached; for I think it is relevant that I give you - as far as I can do so in the short time available to me without the danger of disrupting my narrative - an idea and an outline of the fundamental truth I did find contained in and granted by Hinduism. I am sure you will discover thatthe same or similar precepts are also professed, presented and propagated by most other religions in the world.

I start from the presupposition that there is a common denominator in all the religions I know of, that is in all the religions which have been able to build up and to maintain a kind of church-like structure - without this having to mean also a church-like organization - whether they have been able to survive in the same form as they originally occupied, or in a reformed, adjusted and modernized configuration. All of them are true religions insofar as they care for the spiritual wellbeing of man. All of them have

started from the same premise or with the same idea and program - but each has chosen its own approach, its own system, its own methods. All of them want to make man into an ethical being, strive to make him morally strong, want to teach him - and warn him - how to pass the testing to which life and its problems expose him. The main difference between all these religions is the degree of respect they have for your intelligence and the extent of trust they have in your character.

Although it is claimed by many a religion that it is not an essential feature of a religion that there is the Great Absolute - called simply God - everywhere and in everything, all the great and dominant theologies, religions and cults make it a point to reveal to us, and thereafter continue to confirm that the Universe and our own world could not have been created anc could not continue to exist without the will of God. Strange as it may sound in this context, many of the philosophers of religion apply the title of religion also to the agnostic, and even the atheistic belief and faith versions religions with the explanation, that they represent a definite belief system with rites and prayers and are carried forard and mantained by the religiosity of their believers.

The higher developed religions, those who to a certain degree trust your integrity and your intelligence, direct you to find out that in truth God is within man. That in man God meets man. That God is man's Self. It is well formulated by Hinduism as 'the Self which is one with Atman' - and that man has to realize he harbours the divine within himself. This 'Truth' Hinduism states as an undisputable fact, as an axiom. Only the individual, we are told, who is fortunate to know with absolute inner certainty that God is within him, can truly know him, can really approach him. The Hindu, without further exploring this dictum, without caring to indulge in any form of criticism or argument, accepts this creed. Hinduism's religious philosophy has successfully bridged the problem of incorporating the super-personal conception of the Godhead in harmony with the underlying deistic, and even with the atheistic viewpoints elaborated by some of its schools. Without feeling the need to change their theology, these monotheistic ideologies permit a Supreme God or a clutch of gods to be represented in often extreme polytheistic. preferably also anthropomorphic form. Perhaps with some forebearing we may take this as confirming the deep truth that God is what we think he is.

As I have just pointed out, I maintain there is and was one fundamental truth common to all religions, viz:- that we humans

have the duty and task to prove ourselves ethical beings. This, I maintain, is the principal, the one and only condition according to which man has to act and and think and live. Everything else follows from this and is commentary or obfuscation. With respect to our endeavour to face our task and duty we are constantly tested. We are constantly tested whether we are cognizant of this our duty or not.

Hinduism and its daughter religions have originally been well aware of this fundamental truth - but they have deteriorated into selfishness. Cleverly veiling their preference for an egocentric style of life, they have made their flocks believe that only ascetics, monks and nuns possess the key to salvation; that lay people have to live with the brurden that the struggle for their salvation has no great chance to succeed. Christianity had less confidence in the intelligence of its followers. It sent 'God's only begotten son' down to the earth to suffer for mankind's sake and to serve as mediator to salvation. Catholicism's view is not far from that of Hinduism's or Buddhism's: life is in any case a state full of dangers, is nothing but a prison; suffering and pain are beneficial for man's soul, and earthly pleasures should be as far as possible be avoided.

Judaism's laws and their enforcement, which had originally been formulated for a people made up of primitive labourers and shepherds, were taken over and reformulated by the better educated priestly class; it rewrote - or at least added to - the Scriptures not only according to their ideological light, but also out of care to enhance their prestige and out of the need to look after their own economic interest - as far and as long as the Prophets allowed them such liberty. And when with the destruction of the Second Temple also the priestly power structure collapsed, the Rabbis of the talmudic era took over.

The Rabbis - the word 'rabbi' means 'my teacher'- came into power only in the first century of our era, after the destruction of the Second Temple. The Rabbis took over the leadership of the Jewish people and the safeguarding of God's rights in Judaism. The era of Rabbinic Judaism lasted until the seventh century, that is until the Moslem era began. During that period they wrote the two versions of the Talmud in which they sanctified their own decisions, dicta, rules, laws - basing themselves on their own interpretations of the law in the light of the exigencies as well as the morals and legal and social and hygienic perceptions of their time - by calling this complex the 'Oral Law'. They issued the

surprising statement, that the Oral Law was not a new invention or discovery, that it had been confided to Moses orally at Sinai along with the Written Law, the Torah. The rabbis of today, who teach the 'Whole Torah' - written and oral - have added further sets of rules, regulations, restrictions and inhibitions; they have in their turn safeguarded these - and their own position and influence too - in the iron-clad codex of the 'Halacha'.

"Is there with respect to this kind of changes, corrections additions and reforms - and there are so many of them - any difference between the 'modernized and adjusted form' Hinduism and Buddhism, and the form Judaism and Christianity and Islam and so many other religious have taken on in the course of centuries ?", I asked myself.

It was while I was pondering this and many other questions during my flight to Cyprus it dawned on me, that the apparently original configuration of the teachings all these religious systems which we know from their scriptures or from archaeological findings or from their traditions, it dawned on me what I have in detail already exposed to you, namely what I saw and learned of the actual religions may not have been their original forms; that their apparently original form had in reality represented a reform, a change, and adaption.

Let me go again into details, even though I may have to repeat what I have already mentioned.

In view of the similarity of their ethical contents, their mythology and so on - in College I had eagerly attended the courses and studied many a volume of 'Comparative Religion' - the conclusion should not be far off, that the religions transmitted to us from old and which are still alive, have one single origin, came from the same fountain, derived from the same source.

That original religion must have been a simply formulated, plainly ethical, divinely inspired religion; and even though it had in the course of humankind's evolution been changed and altered, added to and mythologized to a great degree, its true nucleus is today often recognizable only with difficulty if at all.

These reflections moved me to line up in my mind the specific and relevant differences which exist between the religious views of the Jews and those of the people of India. I reasoned that such similarities - or even contrasts - would possibly indicate a common source.

I mention a few such instances - I am sure an expert like you,

Moshe Chaim. would be able to multiply the list.

The Jewish God wants man to lead a happy and ideal life. This does not mean that man's life should also be free of worries and remain without interference from his instincts. Also Hinduism has such a program, with the difference, however, that the life of the Hindu - and this applies also to the Buddhist, the Sikh and the Jain - is exposed to constant fear. The Jew is not asked to resign himself helplessly to his fate as the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist have to do. Specifically he is taught, that his way of living and of behaving should lead to - and justify - the appointment of his people to holiness.

Judaism's God says all mankind is equally entitled to his blessings. God cares for man, says Judaism, and that is the reason why he punishes him from time to time. The Jewish God wants to perfect man in order to bring about perfect harmony in a perfect world. God has shown man the way to achieve this goal. He has provided him with the appropriate directives. He has outlined for man the adequate punishment in order to prevent mankind from deviating from this goal.

Nothing of this is of concern to Hinduism.

Add to this that the Brahmins believe themselves superior people, higher qualified beings, men of better quality, a divinely selected species. If you say, that a similar claim is raised also by the Jews - I would agree, though only on a national level.

There is also another feature Judaism has in common with Hinduism: it is the distinctly outlined belief I have already mentioned, viz:- that God is within ourselves. It says, that faith brings man near to God, and that God becomes manifest by man's prayers. Although I have heard this same concept mentioned in many a variegated form during my pilgrimage through India, it has by Hinduism's philosophers and theologians not been as clearly underlined, nor to such a degree appreciated by even the learned philosophers, as has been the case by the Rabbis in Judaism.

The Jew is warned to treat his fellowmen as he would like to be treated himself, because both he and the other harbour in themselves a divine element, a 'divine spark'.

Judaism, as interpreted by the Rabbis of the Talmud, has tried to find an explanation for man's creation, for the purpose of his existence; and has found the interesting formula that God has created man so that he may have somebody to meet, somebody to befriend, somebody to be busy with. Hindu's philosophers have formed a better sounding, but not a more effective, explanation: man will only know the truth if he knows that man is divine, and that man himself will

be divine as soon as he knows this fact.

Through my studies in the past, and still more so from what I have learned since I am here in Israel, I have become aware of the hard times through which the Jewish people had to live since it lost its independence some 2000 years ago; of the blood it had been made to shed and the calumnies it had to suffer; and also of the problems the State of Israel had to face since it gained its independence in 1948. It has greatly impressed me that this hunted, persecuted, humiliated people in the course of its long history never lost its hope nor its optimism. I am also inclined now, to count it as a positive factor that it has also not lost its tendency to grumble and to complain.

I have never heard of Rabbis of former times, nor of their colleagues of today who cater for the spiritual welfare of the Jewish people; nor have I read in the writings of all the Jewish historians and philosophers I have studied, who are always ready with an explanation for whatever misfortune affects the
Jews, tell the Jewish people that they should perceive all their misfortunes as tests by which their determination to be true to their fate and appointment is probed; as the lithmus by which they themselves can check whether they keep to the ethic path which justifies their survival; and whether they strive to be the light to all the other nations which legitimates their own survival and existence. Instead, the Rabbis of today like their predecessors of times past, offer at best and as adequate the explanation, that all is due to God not being anymore near his people; that God has distantiated himself from his people; that God does not anymore exclusively reside among his people. But these Rabbis with their supposedly undisputed knowledge know also to console us by saying, that the special relationship between God and Israel has not ceased to exist; that notwithstanding all the faults and defaults of the Jewish people God can still be approached; that God can still be evoked. It is remarkable - whether in a positive or negative sense depends on the viewpoint of the observer and analyst - that in our days, as was the case in times past, these rabbinical assurances, philosopical conclusions and historical deductions are effective as a balm, as a support to the faithful - and are also surprisingly eagerly taken hold of by the cynics and the secularists - even at times by the agnostics and atheists - whenever in a state of distress they are in need of God and the otherwise loudly despised rabbinical balm.

I am through my intellectual approach convinced of the truth which is instinctively known to the Jewish believer: that God has not departed from those who search for him; that God is present to those who search for him; that God is available to those who call for him. I firmly believe that this is so. I beleve it is so because in this way the Jews are reminded of their duties. And also, because to these believers, to these faithful, God is hope. To the Jewish people hope is their sustenance. What would have become of the Jewish people without such a hope, without such an assurance, I asked myself ?

And, I thought to myself, whereas all I have said about the Jewish people and the indivdual Jew applies eo ipso and in full to every other people in the world and to every individual anywhere, what would life mean to all mankind were it not nourished with some hope at least ? Would man have anything left to look for, to strive for, if he had no hope ? I doubt if anybody can contradict me.

Is this phenomen hope possibly the explanation for the survival of the Jewish people to this day ? Is it permitted to explain the creation of the State of Israel as resulting from the specific character of the Jews, from the Jews' undiminuishing hope; from the Jews' undestructable optimism; from the Jews' unrestricted belief in its destiny; from the Jews' claim of a special place in God's care for all mankind ?

I noticed with surprise, when these questions arose in me, that I had been placing what I learned of Hinduism in juxtaposition to what I know of Judaism. I did not have to look for an explanation of the direction my thoughts had taken. This association of thoughts could certainly not have only been induced by the fact that I was soon to be in Israel. But I prevented my reflections from continuing in this direction, because I knew only too well that any conclusion I might draw would be futile as my knowledge of Judaism was still very scanty; because what and how I had perceived of Judaism had been distorted by the bitter antagonism I harboured in me; and because I had most of my conscious life approached with hostility whatever the spheres of Judaism might have been with which I had come into contact in the past. In the best of circumstances I had approached and faced Judaism not as a Jew but as an object of impersonal study, as an intellectual study. The flattened and desanguinated Judaism my family circle paraded as their faith, had never been of a kind to evoke respect in me. In short: I had left

India for Israel with a superficial, a purely theoretical and a thoroughly prejudiced view and concept of Judaism.

From the long line of my associative evocations during my plane journey I became cognizant of the inevitability, that my future steps; that my absorption of the Jewish values I was going to meet in Israel; that the future direction of my life in general would be influenced by what I was going to see, hear and learn of an actively lived Judaism in Israel.

I had started my journey with an exactly formulated program of the studies I intended to pursue during my stay in Israel. Halfway to Europe I had come to the decision that I had to study Israel, the Israelis, the Jews and their problems, on my own and without the guidance of even the kindest of well-wishers, and without the interference of the undoubtedly firmly encased opinions of others.

At the same time I realized also of the vital necessity, that by and for myself, uninfluenced by your well-meant advice and your love-motivated directives, I had to form my own opinion, build up my own knowledge, iron out on my own my problems - and that I could impossibly achieve this once I had made contact with you, Moshe Chaim, your family and your circle of friends. All of you would inevitably - and understandably - try to influence me in the way you all perceive the problems of the country, see the character of its inhabitants, judge the hostility of the Arabs and so on. How could I avoid your pressing your already firmly rooted opinions on me ? Knowing myself - and, if you wish, I agree to say also my faults - your kindly meant offer of help would not but have made me feel constrained and handicaped.

I pictured for myself, how under such circumstances the initial stage of my stay in Israel was going to shape: I was sure it would not have been possible for me to pursue an honest study of the country and its people; it would not have facilitated my forming an unbiased opinion.

And, I added to my list of arguments, such a process, situation and development were clearly not in the interest of my karman.

Having reached the resolution arising from these conclusions, I relaxed with a pleasant sense of relief, because I had translated into a fact - or let us say into a decision - what had already been a subconscious sine qua non.

I could untighten now and my mind could continue with the review of my experiences in India and the scrutiny of my conclusions.

Comparing what I had learned of Hinduism's views of 'truth' and what I knew already of these in Judaism, I realized that the more personal, the more clearly I-directed, the immediately effective shape in which that which is truth is offered to the Jews, was far superior, more effective and vastly humane.

In the past I had made it a point to study the difference in the ways and methods by which the various religions factually apply what they teach and preach. I had continued to pursue this study also in India and shall do so here. It needs no special underlining that every religion everywhere prides itself of the spiritual depth of its theology and of the divinely inspired message it brings.

With regard to this concept - and conceit - Hinduism and the other religions of India are no exception. I had ample opportunity to observe what effect their messages had on the living. Although I fought hard with myself to avoid reaching such a conclusion, I had to deduce from what I had seen and heard, that every one of the religions represented in India tends in practice to distort what is supposed to be its divinely-ethical message. With these words I want to say, that in practice the true and real message is abused, that the inherent ethical principles are applied only insofar as they are advantageous to the privileged even if they weigh down on the helpless classes among the followers. Surprisingly, the outcome has at no stage been what one may have expected, namely, that the people have not revolted. They have not even objected. On the contrary, they have been rendered still more docile, even though they are to a still greater degree prevented from giving free rein to their natural genius.

The caste system is an example. It had originally been introduced to separate the native population of the country from the conquering aryan invaders penetrating from the North. In the course of the centuries the caste system has become the main feature of Hinduism, has turned into the chain which keeps the individual low-caste Indian from ever aspiring to a higher social status, from ever looking forward to a hopeful future.

All this in the name of religion !

Over the centuries until this day the situation has hardly changed. India's Constitution and legislation decree that the caste system is abolished - but in practice it still persists with all its disadvantages.

Also the various reform mmovements have hardly made a dent. They had certainly started with good intentions. Beginning with the poet Tulsi in the 17th century, who pronounced the Supremacy of a single God, and who declared that all men are equal without distinction of birth and position, the reform movements were from the onset intellectual movements; they never turned into popular movements.

The same can be said of the Arya Samad which propagates a monotheism as it is preached in the Vedas. Though it is greatly influenced by judaeo-christian thought, it is hostily to the relative doctrine. The Arya Samaj wants to restore the unblemished faith of Veda times. The other reform movement in the foreground of Hindu modernization is the equally monotheistic Brahma Samaj, in whose prayers and sermons next to the Vedas also the Bible and the Qu'ran are recited. However, both these reform movements have no social program worth mentioning.

I was surprised to come to the conclusion that fear - often a most irrational fear - is a dominant factor in the life of an Indian whatever his class and whatever his religious affiliation.

I gained the impression that fear is the main whip with which the religions in India keep their followers under control. Jainism is a stark example. It controls and limits the life of its adherents far more than even Hinduism. It sees in a living being nothing but a soul which has been planted into a material body frame. The soul can only be saved from the misfortune of having to be reborn, when it is allowed to become entirely separated from all such 'body matter'. But once it has been freed from this body matter, it can be cleansed and may aspire to eternal bliss. However, it is very difficult for the average Jain ever to meet this precondition, as well as the many additional oness which are heaped on his existence in life. He can only hope, expect and aspire to a happy ending for his series of rebirts, if he restricts his life to one of severe asceticism - and this is in practice only possible if he becomes a monk and retires from the regular stream of life.

And in addition the Jain is also threatened by the danger - one which a Buddhist has not to fear - that he may not be reborn

into a human body but in that of an animal or even of a tree or a stone - for in Jainism's belief more or less everything in nature harbours a soul and, accordingly, a tree, a stone and a flea may experience as much pain as a human being.

Sikhism, the religion of the Sikhs of North India, is made up of elements taken from Hinduism and Islam. It is in my opinion a superficial religion, one which is hardly likely to impress an outsider. It is not imbued with a deeply reasoned theology, but has instead developed its own set of anxieties and apprehensions. The religion is in a state of flux: the Sikhs are more and more easing out the elements they have taken over from Islam, while adopting more and more those of Hinduism' though without the latter's trend to submit to an unalterable, unbendable fate. This, as I could detect, does not prevent the Sikhs from harbouring a growing hatred for the Hindus in general. This hatred is further nourished by the Sikhs' nationalist aspirations in the direction of an independent state of their own.

About 11% of India's population are Moslems. These, more even than their correligionists in other parts of the world do in their host countries, the Sikhs refuse to submit to the disadvantages which are the usual fate of a minority population and religion. I learned that, encouraged in their demands by the growing financial and political strength of the Arab world, the Moslems of India have increasingly adopted a militant attitude - which, under the impact and incitement of neighbouring moslem Pakistan, is sooner or later bound to make them clash again with the Hindu population, and will most likely lead to tensions, riots and bloodshed.

Before I had an ampler occasion here in Israel, it was in India where I came first into contact with Islam as it is lived today. I was told that Islam has never properly fitted into the Hindu world. It is an inflexible religion which maintains its power over its followers unabated by threatening their political dissidents and their religious apostates with terrible punishments in the coming world - if not a premature despatch from this one. It surprised me, and also disappointed me, to learn that the islamic religion succeeds to create greater fear in the hearts of the Moslems than most other religions succeed in doing to their flocks. Islam teaches that the Moslem cannot expect to escape punishment - death in itself

is also a form of punishment - when he faces his judge in the coming world; he may somehow be able to ease, but never totally avoid, these terrible punishments, if throughout his lifetime he prays hard and long, and if he never misses an occasion to perform a good deed. One of the Indian Moslem I met had a good answer ready, when I asked him to explain why, in view of his refutal of the Hindu ideology of left-over, karman-bound sins,so many small innocent children too are dying, considering that according to his creed their death is a punishment for something or other they have committed: "It is Allah's benevolent and gracious way to save these small babies from the hell-fire which their inevitable sins, on growing up, would have made them to face".

What I learned of Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Parsees of India, gave me the impression, that it is a religion which has remained stuck in an developmental stage, and which still shows some unadultered primitiveness.

Let me mention first of all that I have great sympathy for the faith of the Parsees. For it preaches honesty in every sphere of life, and stresses the need to maintain harmony among humans and in nature. It preaches what I perceive as the true and real an original religion shining through the Parsee religion, though it is also here changed and altered in form, though it is dressed up in fancy gear and loaded with chains of fears and bracelets of anxiety. Their symbolism allows me a glimpse of what was once the mainstay of their original religion: in every household a fire is constantly maintained; it presents purity and indicates divine power.

Parsism is a quasi monotheistic faith. It believes in God Ahura Mazda - the Wise Lord - whose name is at times shortened to Ormuzd. He is the Supreme Lord of Creation. He is the Only One. There are in addition also subordinate divine figures like Mithras; or theological personifications like the "Seven Holy Immortals who provided mankind with a Good Mind, Order, Dominion, Devotion, Wholeness, Immortality and Holy Spirit", as their teaching goes.

Note well, that Parsism too has to use threats and intimidations to make its faithful tow the line. Parsism teaches that since the creation of the Universe unto our days and unto the final judgement, all which see going on in the world is a contest between the powers of Good and the powers of Evil. The faithful who choses the right path will not only be suitably rewarded after his death, but he will during his lifetime already be blessed with the knowledge that he has contributed a share to make Goodness triumph in the world.

Another cause for the Parsee's fear is the fate of his soul. For when the soul leaves the dead body it will have to cross the 'Bridge of the Separator' which widens to permit the passage of the righteous, but shrinks to a knife-edge for the wicked so that they fall into the 'Abyss of Torment' below.

Fear never leaves the Parsee. The faithful Parsee's life is under the constant threat of unmitigated suffererings and of a series of unmentionable torments which await him after death. This threat he can never abolish, but he can try to minimalize it by a sincere dedication to charitable work and to the upholding of human rights. I was deeply impressed by their ingrained sense of justice for all mankind, and the obligation they unabatedly feel towards the under-privileged. I could observe their many benevolent activities which, I found, are not only the outcome of their religious philosophy; which are not only their endeavour to accumulate merits with which to counter-balance whatever sins will have accrued on their account by the time they die; but they are also an example of the typical policy of a minority which is surrounded by envious and hostile elements, and which has to defend and protect itself.

By the way: Judaism has taken on a number of Zoroastrianism's features: it owes, for instance, to the influence of Zoroastrianism its belief in life after death, the notion of a sequence of world ages, the belief in a final judgement and the hope in redemption. Also the claim of the Parsees to have introduced into the generalized theological culture - including Judaism - the concept of hell, is based on sound facts.

The small, still surviving community is very vulnerable. This is not only so because it does not accept converts, and disallows inter-marriage with other religious or social groups - and therefore has to face the threat of accumulating degenerative health problems - but also because it considers itself of aryan decent and racially different from other Indians; and because it occupies economically and socially a higher level on which the admixture of any other Indian religion or culture would not be possible.

The Parsees are fortunate in their leadership which has succeeded to avoid all causes and occasions which could irritate the Indian mob - hindu and moslem - ever ready to stage a riot or a pogrom.

I have spent so much time on describing the status and the

demography of the Parsees, because they offer the lesson of a religion which has withstood assimilation and survives in its ancient form with its traditional rites and symbols intact; and because they have many similarities with the fate of the Jews, and have like these maintained their national character - during all the long centuries they were surrounded by a culture not theirs and not to their liking.

The Jews I met in India have been more fortunate than the Zoroastrians; they have been as strict as the Zoroastrians in keeping to the tennets of their religion. The few Jews - and the small number among them who have a basic knowledge of Judaism - I met in India, appeared to me the best adjusted ethnic and religious group - possibly because they had absorbed many of the customs, as well as ideas and fears, of their Hindu environment.

But they too live in fear. They do not doubt what Jewish theology predicts: that they are inevitably going to face punishment for whatever evil deeds they commit in life - but on the other hand, they can also expect reward for whatever good deeds they can accumulate. It was to me a bitter experience, that the Bhagdadi Jews of Bombay and Calcutta had not absorbed the lessons their own - and the past and present one of the Jewish people as a whole - should have taught them. I found among them large circles which tend to assimilate to their surroundings. The 'Bagdadi Jews' had only a few generations ago escaped the fate of a persecuted minority in what is today Iraq, had ben permitted to settle in British-India, and under the benevolent protection of the British Raj in India had been allowed to work themselves up to an economically and also socially elevated position in India. They have forgotten already, it seems, their past history. They think it their right and privilege to keep themselves separate from, and to look down with disdain upon, the Bnei Israel, the 'native Jews'.

The latter's economic and social position among the Indians is greatly disadvantaged; they are lucky wherever and whenever they are treated as 'of mixed race' and not as Untouchables. Their misfortune is compounded by the attitude of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel which refuses to recognize the Bnei Israel as 'true Jews', and denies them thereby their right to immigrate to Israel under the 'Law of Return' which grants considerable advantages to immigrating Jews.

In the northeastern states of Mizoram znd Manipur we met members of the Tchiang Tribe who claim to be descendants of the

Ten Lost Tribes. Most of them had been converted to Christianity about a hundred years ago, and only a handful had kept their ancient traditions which have many jewish characteristics. Dressed as a Sadhu I could not gain their confidence. I heard, however, that Israel is interested in reclaiming the tribe for Judaism.

We came across many Christians in India. They belonged to every possible denomination. We met indigenous Christians; and we met resident and non-resident foreign Christians. I learned that in the life of most of the foreign, the non-Indian Christians, - except for those engaged in educational duties or in ecclesiastic activities - religion plays a minor role; that the religious label, and less even the denominational one, has no influence whatsoever on the temporary residents, in particular not on those foreign christian ex-patriates who were engaged in the business world or in construction or other projects. Although missionary activities are by law forbidden since the British left and India achieved its independence, there are still many missionaries about who attempt to convince the Indians of the superiority of the christian faith.

I had the impression, that the christian Missionaries I encountered, have not the Indians' educational benefit in mind or their spiritual wellbeing at heart, but that their efforts are motivated by the belief, that the 'Second Coming' - and with it the Redemption - would come about not before the last of the 'heathens' has been been made to embrace the Cross. The same, I was told, can be said of missionaries everywhere in the world.

Over the last 2-3 centuries - and with great success under the tutelage of the British Raj - millions of Untouchables have become Christians in the vain hope, that they would thereby better their social and economic standing. This enthusiasm has vanished since long; in these our days far less of the under-privileged in India are seen to line up at the baptesimal font. This is not only due to the legal and political difficulties the missionaries encounter; many a time I was told by Indian Christians and Indian not-yet-christians Untouchables, that they were repulsed by the supercilious attitude and the offensive behaviour of the 'white Christians' - be they missionaries, priests, Salvationists, monks, nuns, residents or visitors. As a rule, I did not have the impression that these complaints were justified; but you must realize that the Indian people in general, the Intelligenzia among them in particular, are very touchy; and that the white people, whom they cannot avoid encountering in their daily life; are mostly not of the best educated stock; are not always of a sensitive kind; and have not yet freed themselves of many of their antiquated social

and racial prejudices.

My conclusion was, that he Indians of the lower social strata - that is all those belonging to no caste, who have become Christians in the hope of thereby bettering their social status - have lost the gamble: in the eyes of the Hindus, even those, or possibly especially those, of the lower castes, they are still Untouchables; they are still, by virtue of their karman, viewed and counted the lowest among human beings. Their fears and resentments, their anxieties and their rancour have not been soothed - and their new christian spiritual leaders have not been able to ease their worries, if at all they bother to do so. They not only take serious the threats of divine punishments in hell with which the priests try to keep their flocks docile and submissive, but I was not surprised to discover that a large part of these converts still live in fear that in a future rebirth they might be allotted a fate even worse than their actual one.

All in all I discovered that none of the religions, that religion in itself and as such, has ameliorated the living conditions of the people of India; that it has had a beneficial effect on their morals; that it has benefitted their psychological equilibrium;that it has led to their spiritual uplift. Religion, as interpreted in India for the Indians, has been of wide benefit to the upper strata in the religious hierarchy, and under their tutelage to the lay hierarchy; it has freed them from feeling guilty for neglecting their less fortunate fellowmen; it has secured their unrestricted enjoyment of what they thinks is their due.

All in all I concluded, that notwithstanding the grandiloquence of their cultural, political and religious leaders, Indians are not to be envied; they have not found a spiritual equilibrium; they have still to undergo many a change in what they think is the relationship between man and man, and between man and whatever God they look up to. They will have to unload many of the old customs and the antiquated conceptions which are incompatible with those of today's more and more morally oriented and directed world, before they can become a happy, a contented, a balanced people in a morally directed world of their own. In the same way as I find ridiculous Nehru's hypertrophic view of India's political role in the world, I see no justification for Ghandi's pompous definition, that 'Hinduism is the search for truth'. Neither is there room for the bombastic statements of Sir Aurobindo, that India has been

created to be 'in all ages a light to the world'; that she has an eternal universal mission; that she has been appointed the spiritual instructress of mankind. The statements of both these men may be seen as paradigms of man's tendency to self-dilusion.

With all their grandiloquent gospels I heard preached everywhere in India, I have I noticed among the Hindus - and for that matter neither among the Buddhists and Jains - an inclination to do away with murder and rape, with violence and war, although they never miss an occasion to vaunt their submission to the high principle of 'Ahimsa'.

It contributes to India's social rigidity, to its people's unhappiness, to its spiritual poverty, to the racial strife and the religious tensions, that according to the Hindu belief system only those who impose on themselves a life of severe self-denial and cruel asceticism - and thereby withhold still further whatever usefulness and responsibility they may have or have had to their country and society - can be assured of redemption. It is a cause of the Indian society's moral backwardness, that there is no room in its various faith systems for the belief, that redemption can also be hoped for by requesting God's forgiveness and mercy.

These and many other thoughts passed through my mind. I could not - and I still cannot - explain to myself, why my thoughts had been proceeding along these lines only since I had left India. As you see, with regard to the state of religion in India they are not only not flattering, they are even outright negative.

It has saddened me to reach the conclusion, that not only Hinduism and Buddhism, but also none of the other faith systems in whose study I have invested so much time so far, can provide the hope that with their help, by their spiritual values and through their moral strength mankind can live a peaceful and satisfactory life, can above all find the way to truth and to salvation.

I knew then that I stood at a crossroad. I knew then that my former views did not fit reality and had to be re-organized. I knew then also that I had to find a place for myself as a Jew in the scheme of the world I was forming for myself.

Weighing again and again what I had learned; and remembering

that I had to know more about Judaism before I could give in to despair, or before I could afford the luxury of hope, I realized that I could do so only by freeing myself of the ever recurring doubt I had regarding the conclusions I had reached about my own faith and fate. And finally I overcame my last hesitations. I decided to start my forthcoming stay in Israel in the way I had done before, that is to say with an exploratory, an 'incognito' period.

From the Airport Hotel in Cyprus I phoned you, Moshe Chaim to tell you that I had changed my plans; that I was going to continue my searching; that I would spend the coming 6-8 weeks - perhaps more, perhaps less - not far from you somewhere in Israel; that I would inform you when I was ready to see you.

I hope, Moshe Chaim, you were not too angry with me when, after assuring you that I was physically and mentally in perfect health, I disconnected the phone so that you could neither express your indignity nor possibly vent your anger.

The following day I took the plane for Israel.