

**TOWARDS A LIVING CULTURE—A NOTE ON K. C.
BHATTACHARYA'S "SVARAJ IN IDEAS"**

Invaders invade and conquer. But this conquest by force—this political conquest might be of a short duration unless an attempt is made to perpetuate it. There are many ways in which political conquest is perpetuated. Cultural invasion is one of them.

By cultural invasion the conquerors try to destroy the culture of the conquered people and by doing it they make an attempt to destroy the very identity of the people conquered. The culture of the conquerors is posed in such a manner that the conquered people would feel that it is a superior culture and the people a superior people. Pecuniary benefits are at the back of the propagation of such views and the invaded people fall a prey to such propaganda and in the end they find themselves castrated,—impotent to such an extent that they look at themselves through the eyes of the invaders. At such a point the internalization of the so-called superior culture and, consequently, the feeling of inferiority complex are complete in the colonized people. Thus, cultural invasion is more insidious than mere political invasion.

More or less the same thing happened to the Indian people during the British rule. The British colonialists tried to destroy the Indian culture and make the people impotent culturally and otherwise. Before the process came to a successful end, some of the thoughtful people of India became alive to the process itself and the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the beginning of the first attempt to throw off the British domination.

Krishnachandra Bhattacharya's attempt in his "Svaraj in Ideas" * is such an attempt to emancipate the minds of Indian people from the domination of Western culture and to inculcate in them a love for Indian culture and traditions. In the heyday of British colonialism and also of British oppression, KCB's call shows on his part a great amount of boldness and patriotism. In this regard Prof. Rajendra Prasad says, "[KCB's] entire approach in the paper may seem to be very patriotic, and perhaps its patriotic appearance is its main charm even to-day." ¹ And Prof. Dharmendra Goel says, "I fully uphold this principle of the dignity of the colonized and I am glad to see that an academic philosopher of British India had the vision and courage to voice it. His thought was articulated not out of any morbid dogmatism but as a self-conscious stance of a cultural critique which was capable of remaining unswayed by the prevailing disparagement of our enslaved people and their civilization." ² Historically the paper is quite valuable, but one has to see how far it is philosophically so.

We may distinguish between two varieties of patriotism—patriotism in colonial India and patriotism in free India. The patriotism that was needed to fight against an alien rule, and an alien culture as a tool for perpetuating an alien rule is no longer needed now. What is needed is the patriotism to fight against cultural injustice—indigenous or foreign, to free oneself from the bondage of an unjust culture. This needs even more courage than what was needed to fight foreign rule, for in our fight against the foreign rule our own people were at our side, but in our endeavour to free ourselves from the bondage of an unjust culture we may have to fight against our own people in the form of counterposing a just culture against an unjust one. However, the qualitative nature of the fight might be completely different here, for here the struggle would be at the level of

understanding, to understand the nature of a just culture—what I would like to call a *living culture*. So from the perspective of a living culture I would like to discuss KCB's "Svaraj in Ideas".

KCB's paper contains 26 paragraphs. No man with self-respect can deny the first paragraph. No Indian with self-respect can deny the second. On the basis of these two non-denials KCB exhorts us in the subsequent 24 paragraphs to issue a blank cheque. This was my impression on the first reading of KCB's paper. In the meantime my discussions with others and my re-reading of the paper have not helped me to change this first impression. This is because I perceive that the paper is basically weak on many counts. However, my objective is not to dwell upon these weak points, for three philosophers of India—Prof. Rajendra Prasad, Dharmendra Goel and Roop Rekha Verma³—have done the job in their respective ways one thousand and one times better than what I could have done with my poor abilities. So I shall confine myself to a more fundamental problem concerning the relation between culture and what we call knowledge.

Slogans rend the air : "We must preserve our culture", "We must keep our culture intact", "Our culture must remain pure", "We must honour our past", etc. When I hear such slogans even from academics I feel a sufficient amount of attention is not given to the thought behind such slogans. Let us take up a hypothetical example.

X hails from a culture in which religion occupies a central place. In almost all religions the theory of creation of the world and of man is there in one form or another. It is there in his religion too. But so far as his education is concerned he comes across the theory of evolution of the Solar system and the theory of the evolution of life and of man. So in his life two theories are

counterposed—the theory of creation and the theory of evolution. Which one is he to accept? If, on the one hand, he is told to hold fast to his culture, then he has every right to charge his parents that they spend a lot of their money and they kill a lot of his own time by sending him to an educational institution which imparts some falsehoods in the name of knowledge. If, on the other hand, he is told that he should uphold whatever he learns in the educational institution, then his culture receives a shocking blow and in order to withstand it there must be consequent changes in the culture itself. But this means that the culture cannot remain intact, pure, etc.

This controversy is a controversy between religion and science. In a religion God occupies the central place and any change is explained as an act emanating from the will of God. No such supernatural entity is entertained in scientific explanations.

A culture cannot keep itself free from the controversy between science and religion. It cannot keep its eyes closed. As a culture is claimed to be a system of ideas and also as a store-house of truths, it cannot have within itself two contending theories—such as the theory of creation and the theory of evolution—as truths. The tension that exists here between science and religion will cause tension in the cultural system.

But now the question is : Are we always alive to such cultural tensions? This question leads me to divide cultures into three kinds : (1) Dead Culture, (2) Living Culture and (3) Stupefied Culture. (1) A dead culture is a culture which was in practice sometime in the past. Now there are no people who claim its inheritance as a matter of cultural praxis. Here the paradigms would be the culture of Ancient Egypt and that of Mesopotamia. (2) A living culture is a culture which takes into account the latest developments in knowledge and makes

internal changes and necessary adjustments such that the cultural praxis of a people is in conformity with what the people claim to know. There is nothing dogmatic in what is claimed to be a living culture. Again, a living culture is a cultural praxis in which reflection and practice go hand in hand, such that reflection provides the truth-based rationality for a cultural practice and the latter on its part keeps reflection within the bounds of what we know and the values based on such knowledge. Thus, one helping the other, reflection and practice generate a cultural praxis which keeps the dead-wood out.—There is no place for dogmatism, superstition, etc., in a living culture. (3) A stupefied culture is a culture which does not, as a matter of necessity and rational activity, take into account the developments in knowledge. The culture is said to be inherited from the past and unchallenged reverence is demanded for it. It is said that the preservation of the sanctity of a culture is the duty of the people upholding the culture. We must hold fast to our culture. Any looseness in it is a danger to the culture itself. The men of the past who contributed to the culture we inherit now are unchallengeable. Thus, all that we inherit in the form of a culture contains a large number of unchallengeable statements of the pastmasters. As they are not rationally examined they are dogmatically accepted. Moreover, here the doors of the culture are closed to science and scientific developments. And this makes the culture the more dogmatic. It appears to say : Let science go its own way, but let our culture be pure. This insensitiveness to the developments in science makes a culture a stupefied culture. From this it appears that most of us live in stupefied cultures. It may be noted here of what KCB says of the Indian mind ; “ That Indian mind has simply lapsed in most cases for our educated men, and has subsided below the conscious level of culture. It operates still in the persisting routine of their family life and in some of their social and religious practices

which have no longer, however, any vital meaning for them. It neither welcomes nor resists the ideas received through the new education. It dares not exert itself in the cultural sphere."⁴ Here we are alive neither to culture nor to science. In our lives both the streams run without interacting with each other. Such a living is nothing but stupefied living.

But here one may raise a question: Why should a culture conform to the scientific developments when the propositions of science are themselves doubtful? KCB expresses such a view when he says, "... Even here there may be some doubt..."⁵ We can agree that the propositions of culture and those of science are doubted. But what we would like to distinguish is that how the doubts are met with. Whenever a scientific proposition is doubted, the scientist offers justifications for holding the proposition to be true and always such justifications are public in the sense that any scientist in any part of the world can verify the proposition. But whenever a proposition of a culture is doubted the person holding the proposition almost always refers to the authority of a pastmaster or says that it is a matter of belief or that the justification for such propositions is confined to the personal experiences of the pastmasters who enunciated the propositions or even exhorts us to believe that doubting the propositions of our culture is to doubt the veracity of our own ancestors and to defile the past in which they lived. Thus, we are urged upon to believe in the veracity of a culture and not to honour anything whatsoever that challenges the culture or puts it into doubt.

It is true that the propositions of science are not certain for there is no circle of certainty within which science moves. All the certainty science has is the certainty within the circle of probability i. e., the certainty depends on the fulfilment of certain conditions. Logically, empirical propositions of the general type

cannot be certain, for it demands the putting together of past, present and future into a single present which is impossible. Even if that is possible it is empirically impossible to verify a proposition like "All men are mortal". Suppose we can bring the past into the present by granting that there is not a single man who has overlived the normal span of life of a few generations, i. e. men who could be over, say, two hundred years are not there. They could live only the normal span of life and not beyond that. We can bring the future into the present by deciding that in order to enable me to verify the proposition "All men are mortal" we, the human beings, one and all, will die. Accordingly, human beings begin one after another (including my near and dear ones) to die, but so long as I am living the proposition is not verified and the moment I am dead there is no one to see whether it is verified or not. Thus, it may be empirically impossible to verify a proposition. Moreover, a hypothetical decision like the one to die cannot be taken in case of other general propositions.

The position of science that the certainty of science moves within the circle of probability makes science rational and keeps it out of the fold of dogmatism. Moreover, it makes science open-ended. It does not keep its doors closed. Science is a human activity and so long as humanity continues to live there will be development of science, growth of knowledge. There is no finality of human knowledge. The end of humanity is the end of knowledge, but not the finality of knowledge. The finality of human knowledge is an impossibility. Thus, in course of the development of scientific knowledge new facts may come to light and these new facts may necessitate the modification or rejection of some of the propositions so far held to be true. So in science nothing is sacrosanct and so a past howsoever glorious is not sacrosanct. Here lies the rationality of science. But so far as

culture is concerned the situation is not so. We have to revere the past, keep the culture chaste and sanctified. Thus, the dogmatic elements thrive in a culture. The call for a living culture is a call to throw off these dogmatic elements and in order to do so, science must play a pivotal role in building up a living culture.

But here the question is : How can a culture assimilate scientific knowledge into its fold, and change and modify itself if necessitated ? It is a question of assimilation. *Rk Veda* says, “*Āno bhadraṇi kratavo yantu viśvataḥ.*” (let the noble thoughts come to us from every side) Here the questions are : Can the noble thoughts of all cultures be assimilated into a single culture without any tension or inconsistency in the culture ?—i. e. can a culture assimilate all that is noble in other cultures without any tension or inconsistency ? Can something noble and something obler cause any tension or inconsistency in a culture ? If there is any such tension or inconsistency how is it to be re-solved ? Can KCB offer some answers to these questions ? KCB is not against the assimilation of an alien culture. He says, “Then assimilation need not be an evil; it may be positively necessary for healthy progress and in any case it does not mean a lapse of freedom.”⁶ We can assimilate a part or the whole of an alien culture only “after a full and open-eyed struggle had been allowed to develop”⁷ between it and our indigeneous culture. This is fair enough a position to be upheld by anyone who has an open-mind and firmly believes in : “Let the noble thoughts come to us from every side”. But KCB does not stop at that. He gradually introduces one condition after another such that slowly the eye-lids close—the doors of mind are closed. Let us note how. Whatever element of the alien culture is ‘assimilated’ into our culture “it has not generally been assimilated by us in an open-eyed way with our old-world Indian mind.”⁸ “There is room

indeed for an adjustment and synthesis, *within limits of different cultures and cultural ideals.*"⁹ The introduction or presence of limiting concepts in a culture may stand in the way of proper adjustment and synthesis. Moreover, KCB makes a distinction between secular life and spiritual life. So far as the secular life is concerned, it has to adjust itself to the times and so far as the spiritual life is concerned the times have to adjust to the spiritual life. He says, "Life means adaptation to varying times and to varying ideals. But we are not always clear about the method of this adaptation. As we have to live, we have to accept facts and *adapt our secular life and secular ideas to the times. We have to alter ourselves here to suit the situation.* In spiritual life, however, there is *no demand for compromising* our ideals in order to have a smooth sailing with the times. Here, if possible and so far as lies in our power, *the times have to be adapted to our life and not our life to the times.*"¹⁰ Can we rationally live through these two lives and be at peace? Life cannot be divided into two separate and water-tight compartments—secular and spiritual. Even if such a distinction can be made, definitely there will be interaction between secular and spiritual life and between secular and spiritual ideas. And in the process of this interaction a clash of ideas cannot be overruled. As he does not favour any compromise and by implication he holds that the spiritual life is of primary importance, how can the secular life be unaffected? It must adapt itself to the spiritual life. But KCB does not say so.

Even in case of assimilation of alien ideals he says, "What is universal is only the spirit, the loyalty to our own ideals and the openness to other ideals, the determination *not to reject them if they are found within our ideals and not to accept them till they are so found.* The only way to appraise a new ideal is *to view it through our actual ideal...*"¹¹ So the criterion of assimilation is not the nobility of the ideas but conforming to

our indigeneous framework. Further, he says, "A synthesis of our ideals with western ideals is not demanded in every case. Where it is demanded, *the foreign ideals is to be assimilated to our ideal and not the other way. There is no demand for the surrender of our individuality in any case : Svadharme nidhanam śreyah paradharmo bhayāvahah,*"¹² Though KCB talks of conflict proper in which there can be a fair comparison and competition of ideas (so that if the foreign idea is found to be nobler, it can be inducted or assimilated into the native culture), here only one way of adaptation i. e. conforming to our own cultural ideas, is permitted. So again the emphasis is on the primacy of the framework, not the nobility of the ideas. This is how the open-eyedness and open-mindedness vanish into thin air. Moreover, KCB's position does not enable us to get answers to the questions we raised after quoting the *Rk Vedic* statement : " Let the noble thoughts come to us from every side. " Nor does it enable us to answer the question : How can a culture assimilate scientific knowledge into its fold, and change and modify itself if necessitated ?

In order to answer these questions we have to understand how the concepts ' culture ', ' science ', ' truth ' and ' value ' are interrelated. Though culture is said to be a store-house of values—values might or might not be related to and based on truths. The question : " *Is value truth-based or not* " ? is an important question. For if we say it is, then we thrive in a living culture, but if we say it is not, then we live and sink in a stupefied culture. Suppose we have a cultural system in which values are based on truths and another in which they are not so based. Again, suppose in the latter system we have the theory of creation. God created the world. He created man in His own image. As man is the crown of His creation, God created the world for the benefit of man. With these notions how do we look at the world ? How do we behave with it ? Our attitude

towards the world is that it is there for the benefit of man. The more we exploit it the better the benefits for man. In case of any imbalance, that will be looked after by God, for He looks after His creation. In the worst case we shall say that we are only fulfilling the will of God. This is how we behave with the world at present. How would we look at and behave with the world in a cultural system in which values are related to and based on truths? If we have the theory of evolution as a basis of our cultural system, then the attitude that we shall have towards the world will be completely different. We will not look at the world as an object of exploitation for the benefit of man. We shall look at it as a place for the continuance of human race. Keeping the future of human race in mind we shall use the nature in a planned manner—not exploit it. Any kind of ecological imbalance will be considered a threat to the continuance of mankind. In this cultural system in case of any imbalance threatening mankind we shall not be saying that we are fulfilling the will of any God, but we shall hold ourselves responsible for the doom of mankind. And our behavior towards nature will be irresponsible and suicidal.

So we have to consider how values can be truth-based. Sometimes we misconceive that values are objective.—As objective as the facts that are there in the world. Such a view leads one to say and, in fact, KCB says, “The way to know facts is not the way to know values.”¹³ Is it on par with: The way to know facts is not the way to know mathematics? Values are not objects of knowledge, for they are not as objective as the facts are. Values are given and thus they are human creations. They are created by human interest to meet human needs. But sometimes the creation of such values are grounded in some kind of metaphysics.—Sometimes God is said to be the source of all values.

This latter position urges upon us to discuss the relationship between growth of knowledge and dependence on God. In general we can say that growth of knowledge and dependence on God are inversely related—the more we know the less dependent we are on God. Our forefathers knew less and depended on God more and we know more and depend on God less. In the case of breaking out of cholera and small-pox our ancestors went to the temples to appease the local goddesses, but we go to the doctors.

Our ancestors knew very little about the stars and planets. They found the stars to be relatively fixed, but observed the planets to have relatively free movement. This led them to believe that the planets had free will. As a result, they were personified and thought to be endowed with powers—powers to influence human fate. Consequently, the so-called science of Astrology developed. But now no astronomer believes in such personification and power. It appears that the relationship between growth of knowledge and dependence on God is such that one can say : The more we know the less we depend on God. The growth of knowledge influences and changes our attitude towards God.

All natural phenomena which were incomprehensible were also personified and were thought to be endowed with powers to produce the natural phenomena. These personified gods were appeased by men in times of crisis. This leads me to say that *God is nothing but the ignorance of man rationalized.*

Here one may ask : Can science explain all that happens in the world ? We may readily concede that at any point of time science may not be able to explain all that happens in the world. For we have already said that there is no finality of knowledge. Knowledge is a growing process till the end of humanity. The

end of humanity is the end of knowledge, not the finality of knowledge. This implies that so long as humanity continues at any point of time there will be something which at the moment science will be unable to explain.—There will be something that can be said to be unknown. But this does not mean that the scientist will take refuge in the so-called supernatural power in order to explain such phenomena. Being true to the scientific spirit he will say that at the present moment the phenomena are not explainable by science but at a future date science may be able to explain them.

The unknown phenomena may not cause any problem for the scientists. But for the common man they may cause some problems, for the unknown is awful. Let us take an example. Death is unknown. What is death? What happens after death? What is death and what happens after death can never be known. Though death occurs in human race, it never occurs in an individual's life, for death is the negation of life—the very negation of the knowing process. Death as an unknown phenomenon may cause some emotional imbalance in the man who thinks about it. He may feel insecure. Now suppose God (whatever He might be or not be) gives him courage to meet death and keeps him emotionally balanced. As a result, he feels secure in this “strange” world. Here God is a personal need. In such a case the thought will be in accordance with the personal need and the behaviour in accordance with the thought. That means there will be *no difference between saying and showing*.

The socialization of God kills God.—In the institution of religion God is lost.¹⁴ One may not have that personal need, still he participates in the religious practices as a matter of social life. A gulf is created between *saying* and *showing*. There

are people for whom religious behaviour is a part of social behaviour and there is no personal need; and there are others whose discourses are religious, but their intercourses with other people are irreligious. There are very few people in whose life God is a personal need and in whom word and deed coincide. In most cases the religious function is just a matter of course function—just a social function. We must not be surprised to see people who appear to be religious, but are engaged in the most exploitative and vicious activities.

We have said that God is nothing but the ignorance of man rationalized. If that is so, it implies a cultural system in which there is no God as the metaphysical ground of all cultural values. In that case one may raise a question : What will be the basis of our morality ? Or who will judge upon our activities to be moral or immoral ? Or who will reward or punish us for our activities ? We raise such questions because of our cultural bondage in that way. We cannot imagine moral values without tracing their source to God or any other supernatural power. But the values of human life must be grounded in the human life itself and that would be more effective than if it is grounded in some supernatural power, because in most cases the supernatural agency is used as a tool in the exploitation of other human beings—in the explanation of socio-economic disparities, human suffering, etc. The internalization of this God-oriented culture is so deep in us that it has blunted the sharp edges of reason and we are unable to see what is what. I know a man who strongly believes in the idea that whatever we do or whatever is done to us is done by God and we are merely the means through whom God fulfils his will. And combined with this idea are the ideas of rebirth and our past *karmas*. He is not prepared to give up such thoughts. His sons regularly misbehave with him. And when he complained to me about the misbehaviour of his sons, I told him that he need not feel sorry, for by such

behaviour God's will is being fulfilled. He is being punished for his past *karmas* and his sons are mere means in the fulfilment of God's will and are in no way responsible for their misbehaviour. He was mum but I could see the uneasiness in his eyes.

We have said that the values of human life must be grounded in human life itself. Human values arise because of the rationality of man, because of his memory, because of his apprehensiveness of the future. Man does not live in an ever present world, he has roots in the past and spreads branches into the future. Man must create values in relation to human life as living through past, present and future. Man must found human values in this fact, and such human values would be more effective than the values founded on supernatural or metaphysical entities. I am a human being and as such I have a relation to myself, I have a relation to my family, I have a relation to the human race and I have a relation to nature. Thus, a man has a four-fold relation to :

- (1) himself;
- (2) his family;
- (3) human race; and
- (4) nature.

And a man's morality should be founded on this four-fold relationship.

(1) A man has a responsibility towards himself in preserving his own life, in bringing about his own physical, moral and intellectual development.

(2) A man has responsibilities towards his family. Here the word ' family ' is used in an extended sense to include the parents. The parents are responsible for the very life a man has, they looked after him and imparted to him the rudimentary knowledge that was necessary in his early childhood. So a man

has moral obligations towards his parents. As a result of biological process and to meet the needs of the preservation of human race and to fulfil his emotional need, a man begets children. He has a responsibility towards them too. He has an obligation to contribute towards their physical, moral and intellectual development.

(3) Similarly, a man has responsibilities towards the entire race. Whatever a man claims to know, could not have known all by himself, nor could his parents have helped him to know all that. All the comforts he gets he could not have provided himself all by himself, nor could his parents have helped him in this matter. So his responsibility towards the human race lies in contributing his mite to its well-being—material as well as intellectual.

(4) We have a responsibility towards nature. Our interest in nature should not be from the point of view of purely *our* interest such that we can exploit it to *our* maximum benefit. *Our* interest in nature should be from the interest of the human race and *our* utilization of nature should conform to the needs of the human race. Nature is the cradle of humanity. And man should see that this cradle is not destroyed. By maintaining an ecological balance man's relation to nature is balanced.

I do not wish to deny Jesus Christ and Gautama the Buddha their right to be called men. As human beings they had their love and concern for man. If we infuse into our hearts Christ's love for humanity and Buddha's concern for man, we can have a better society and better social relationships than what we have to-day. Having grounded the moral values of human life in the human life itself, we can say, "*We have loved God enough, let us now turn our eyes towards the children of God*".

KCB's paper is a battle-cry against universalism in culture. He exhorts us to defend and revere our particular culture—to maintain our cultural individuality. If a culture is a set of ideas, then it can be analysed into a sub-set of core ideas and a sub-set of peripheral ideas. All the adjustment, synthesis, assimilation may be made in the peripheral sphere of ideas, but not in the centre. But can we really do that without bringing in some kind of disharmony and inconsistency into the system of culture, for what is there in the periphery may be logically related to what is there in the centre. Strictly speaking if *our framework* is the criterion of assimilation then no assimilation is possible. There is no point in saying that a cultural value p of an alien culture is equivalent to value q of our culture and so we assimilate it into our culture, for in that case either p or q as a separate entity will be a redundant element in our culture. What is needed is the assimilation of new cultural values, but if such values go against the framework they will not be assimilated. This is because our criterion of assimilation is the framework not the nobility of the ideas, i.e., to say the same thing in other words, our march is towards particularism not towards universalism. Particular cultures have to transcend this particularism and the people upholding such cultures must transcend the particularistic attitude they have towards the world and man. The cultures and people by themselves are helpless and they cannot transcend the narrow particularism. Science can help them in this matter. As science is universal, a culture which is based on science will be universal, and science as an in-built mechanism can safeguard the culture from the dangers of dogmatism and narrow particularism. Thus, science can help us to bring about this attitudinal change. The effect will be universal fraternity. Humanity can be saved from the irrational destruction of human lives in the name of *our* culture.

We must note here that this universal culture is not another science consisting of scientific truths, but it is a system of science-oriented values. Such a culture can enable us to assimilate what is nobler in the so-called alien culture, for here nobility of a value is the criterion of assimilation, not mere framework. And here again particular cultures will be pseudo-particulars, in essence they are universal. Being science-oriented, they have become truth-based and being truth-based, they have become living cultures. Let us struggle for such cultures for a better world. In our struggle we shall lose nothing but our superstitions, narrow-mindedness and dogmatism. Our gains are tremendous.—We march into a glorious future.

Some people may consider my views about science and science-based values as too optimistic and may even go so far as to say that my optimism is short-sighted and dogmatic and the result of (1) a deliberate refusal to look at the scars on the face of science and (2) a failure to see the truth that values cannot be derived from the facts of science.¹⁵ First, my whole contention is that there are no scars on the face of science. Rather, the face of science is fair and beautiful, for I make a distinction between science as a knowing process and consisting of the results obtained through this process, on the one hand, and the applications of scientific knowledge, on the other. It is the applications of the scientific knowledge which may be good or bad—may be beneficial or harmful to humanity. Science by itself is not harmful. There are no scars, so how can I see the scars which are not there? Second, by saying “science-oriented values”, I do not mean to say that the values can be *deduced* from the truths of science. Values are given to the facts of the world—not that they follow from them. Since we have said that the values of human life must be grounded in the human life itself and not in some supernatural power and as we find

that science is inextricably a part of human life, our value system must be developed by our scientific attitude such that value system would not be inconsistent with our scientific knowledge.— Our value system and our science will be at peace with each other. It might seem difficult to develop such a value system, but an attempt should be made and the sooner the better. Morality as a value can be secular, for it is not possible for a man to be religious without being moral, but it is always possible for a man to be moral without being religious. *A good man does not become bad, only because he does not believe in a god.*

Now, so far as the harmful applications of scientific knowledge is concerned, it is my belief that our humanistic value system in a living culture should and will be in a position to control the applications of scientific knowledge for the benefit of man, because our conception of a living culture is a conception of a universal culture, not the conception of a particular culture as opposed to other culture. Our conception of a living culture is a conception of a universal culture which is based on truth, not the conception of a particular culture based on dogmas and as opposed to other particular cultures. This universal, living culture would stand in the way of harmful application of scientific knowledge which is associated with one form or the other of exploitation, for a living culture would be opposed to any form of exploitation.

Whatever I have said above should not be understood to mean that I am urging upon the people to give up what we have as cultural heritage. What I urge upon the people is to winnow our heritage to gather the grains for a living culture.

Most of what I have said above have gone against most of what KCB says in his paper "Svaraj in Ideas". By that I do not mean to diminish the historical value of the paper. But

about the philosophical value of the paper it is left to the readers to draw their own conclusions.

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NOTES

* Bhattacharya, Krishnachandra, "Swaraj in Ideas". The discourse contained in the paper was given at a meeting of the students of the Hooghly College during 1929-30. The paper was found among the unpublished writing of Prof. Bhattacharya and it was subsequently published in the *Visva Bharati Journal*, Vol. XX, 1954, pp. 103-114. *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* had brought out a Special Number (Vol. XI, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1984.) on this paper. It is reprinted in the number of the *IPQ* under consideration, pp. 383-393. This Special Number of the *IPQ* also contains the critical reflections of some of the eminent thinkers of India on KCB's "Svaraj in Ideas". All my references are to this volume of the *IPQ*. I have referred to KCB's paper by paragraphs and of others by pages. All references in this paper are to the Special Number under consideration.

1. Prasad, Rajendra, "Svaraj, Reverence, and Creativity" in the *IPQ*, p. 491.
2. Goel, Dharmendra, "K. C. Bhattacharya's Svaraj in Ideas : Some Reflections" in the *IPQ*, p. 429.
3. Prasad, Rajendra, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-512; Goel Dharmendra, *op. cit.*, pp. 423-436; and Verma, Roop Rekha, "Comments and Communications", *IPQ*, pp. 545-549.
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6. — — —, *op. cit.*, para 1.
7. — — —, *op. cit.*, para 2.
8. — — —, *op. cit.*, para 3 (emphasis added).
9. — — —, *op. cit.*, para 13 (emphasis added).

This latter position urges upon us to discuss the relationship between growth of knowledge and dependence on God. In general we can say that growth of knowledge and dependence on God are inversely related—the more we know the less dependent we are on God. Our forefathers knew less and depended on God more and we know more and depend on God less. In the case of breaking out of cholera and small-pox our ancestors went to the temples to appease the local goddesses, but we go to the doctors.

Our ancestors knew very little about the stars and planets. They found the stars to be relatively fixed, but observed the planets to have relatively free movement. This led them to believe that the planets had free will. As a result, they were personified and thought to be endowed with powers—powers to influence human fate. Consequently, the so-called science of Astrology developed. But now no astronomer believes in such personification and power. It appears that the relationship between growth of knowledge and dependence on God is such that one can say : The more we know the less we depend on God. The growth of knowledge influences and changes our attitude towards God.

All natural phenomena which were incomprehensible were also personified and were thought to be endowed with powers to produce the natural phenomena. These personified gods were appeased by men in times of crisis. This leads me to say that *God is nothing but the ignorance of man rationalized.*

Here one may ask : Can science explain all that happens in the world ? We may readily concede that at any point of time science may not be able to explain all that happens in the world. For we have already said that there is no finality of knowledge. Knowledge is a growing process till the end of humanity. The

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