

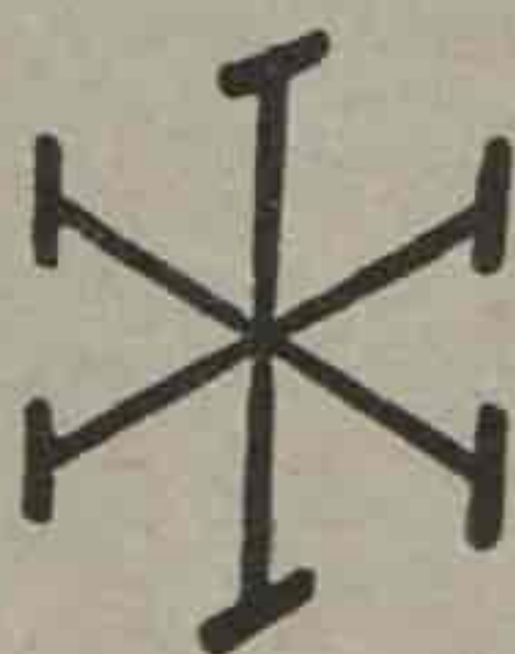
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THE MESSAGE OF
BHAGAVAN DAS

ON THE PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE VEDIC SOCIAL ORDER

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THE MESSAGE OF BHAGAVAN DAS ON THE PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VEDIC SOCIAL ORDER

Dr. Bhagavan Das was born about 1868 and died three years ago. As much as can here be told of his life is taken from the autobiographical sketches which he has given at the beginning of some of his books. In his early days he studied psychology, ethics and metaphysics, reading both in English and Sanskrit, and later he entered the service of the government of India. From his earliest thinking days he started to wrestle with the problems of life and thought and by the time he had reached his twentieth year he had, as he himself puts it, found satisfaction. An answer arose in his mind as to the ultimate 'Why' and 'How', and from then on his mind was more or less at peace in the centre. He thereupon set before himself as his life's work, with which he persisted tirelessly all his days, to communicate to others and to develop in action the results of his personal labours.

He started working on the notions of his whole scheme in 1887 at the age of nineteen, and some sketches of it were published in *The Theosophist* in 1894 and the following years. He received from then onwards the greatest help and encouragement from Mrs. Annie Besant, with whom he worked closely and for whom he had great admiration. It was at her suggestion that his first book, 'The Science of the Emotions', was written and published in 1900.

His written work may be divided into three main parts, represented by three major books: 'The Science of Peace', in which he gives the metaphysical foundations which are applied in the other two books: 'The Science of the Emotions', in which these are

applied to the subjective inner life of the individual person: and 'The Science of Social Organisation', in which these principles are applied to the social life of man and which he himself regarded as his most important work. He wrote many other books, including the Pranava Vada in which he gives the profoundest interpretation of the Sacred Word AUM as the basis of the Science of Peace, but these three books are put forward as a complete scheme of the relationship of thought or knowledge, feeling or desire, and will or action. All three were later summarised by Bhagavan Das in a short book 'The Science of the Self'. In their very scheme they reflect the triune nature of Man and the Cosmos, which is a basic principle of Vedanta and of all serious religious thought.

One of the most significant aspects of the life of Bhagavan Das was his insistence that thought should be for the sake of life and action and not be mere speculation, and equally that life and action should be guided by serious thought and not be a mere succession of empirical events. And this is evident not only in his writings, but throughout the whole of his life. After completing 'The Science of the Emotions' in 1900, he started work on 'The Science of Peace', which was first published in 1903/4. At the request of Mrs. Annie Besant he gave at the 34th Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Benares in 1909 four lectures on 'The Laws of Manu as embodying the Science of Social Organisation'. These were published by the Theosophical Publishing House in 1910. In 1918 they asked leave to issue another edition of these, but by this time Bhagavan Das had worked out his thoughts much further on this subject and he asked them to wait until he had had a chance to revise them. He was, however, so busy with other work that he was not able to start the work until ten years later. He then found that the whole work required to be thought out afresh and finally the second edition was published in 1932, completely recast from the form of lectures to that of a book.

At that time he hoped to bring out a second volume of the book in 1933, but he was in deep sympathy with Mahatma Gandhi and his civil disobedience campaign, for which his eldest son twice went to prison, and his active work in support of this prevented him from writing. In 1934 he was persuaded to stand for and entered the Central Legislative Assembly, but he was nevertheless

able to produce the second volume, which was published in 1935. He then started work on the third volume, which he hoped to publish in 1937. However he stayed on in the Central Legislative Assembly in the hope that Congress Party would support his Bill for the validation of inter-caste marriage among Hindus. Unfortunately at this time Congress boycotted the Assembly and the official members voted against it. In 1938 he resigned from the Assembly, but with much other work to do and with the intervention of war the third volume of his Science of Social Organisation, as it was now called, did not appear until 1948.

In April 1942 Gandhi began to appeal to the British Government to leave India. Bhagavan Das immediately and repeatedly, but in vain, represented to him that the notions 'Quit India', 'Withdraw' and 'Independence for India' were negative, separative, destructive notions and against the conception of Human Brotherhood, for which he assumed Gandhi stood. He tried to emphasise the importance in all political striving of a name, of finding the right formula to convey exactly what one means, and proposed instead the notion of an Indo-British Commonwealth.

This very short sketch of certain parts of a long and fruitful life should be enough to show how truly Bhagavan Das, like the philosopher kings of Plato's Republic, integrated theory and practice in his life and work. He was in all his writings very direct in his criticism of the worst excesses of modern democracy in the sense of everyone thinking he has a right to an opinion about everything, of the denial of knowledge and the substitution of mere opinion or pleasure, of the cult of hedonism and the cultivation of empty egoism, of leaders who are no wiser than those whom they are supposed to lead and only gain power by promising 'what the people want'. He was against plutocracy, the irresponsible wielding of the power of money for personal power and aggrandisement, as a main cause of unnecessary poverty; and against nationalism and the irresponsibility of political parties as causes of war: in short, he fought all the blots on our modern economic, political and cultural life. Yet equally he saw well-meaning people floundering for a solution of the main social problems because they had no background from which they could think them out constructively, but could only approach them empirically and haphazardly.

He saw such a background in the ancient wisdom of India, in Vedanta and in the Laws of Manu, in which social life is founded not upon what anyone happens at any time to think, but upon the profoundest understanding of the nature of the Cosmos and of Man's place in it. And it is of the greatest significance that while his thought and experience was essentially in the world of what we call the First Revelation, he had also studied modern European philosophy and psychology and therefore thought and wrote taking into account the impact of the Third Revelation.

The notion of the Triune Revelation, which was developed by Dimitrije Mitrinović, has been referred to in earlier Foundation Lectures. The three Revelations may be briefly recapitulated as: First: The revelation of the Divine Cosmic and Natural Order as revealed through sages and religious teachers before Christ. In this Revelation the duty of Man is to submit to God and His Divine Order.

Second: The Revelation of the Divine Man in Jesus Christ. In this Revelation the duty of Man is to follow Christ.

Third: The Revelation of the Divine in every man, which can be found in his own mind and heart if he will seek it. In this Revelation the duty of Man is to be true to his own self and his own true thinking.

Although these three Revelations succeeded one another in time, they are not to be regarded, as they sometimes wrongly are, as one superseding the other. The whole essence of the notion of the Triune Revelation is that although these three succeeded one another in history, they are three essential aspects of truth and as such inseparable. Truth is only to be found in their Triunity. Now just as there are many to point out that much of Christian doctrine derives from the pre-Christian thought of the First Revelation, so it is equally true that the First Revelation of the Divine Cosmic Order needs the Revelation of the Divine Man to complete it. And, just as the Christian Revelation must in our day not merely be accepted with faith, but be thought as far as possible with the critical mind, equally our modern critical thought—in which the Third Revelation is exaggerated as the illusion that we can freely think up new ideas on which to build a world—needs the notion Order, which is inherent in the First Revelation. It is one of the great works of Bhagavan Das to have brought this notion Order

from its Aryan home in India into modern consciousness, not merely as being of historic interest, but of urgent social concern.

It seems hard to modern man to realise and accept that certain profound aspects of truth concerning the nature of reality and the ordering of the universe and of life altogether on this planet may already have been known to man for thousands of years. We have seen how over the centuries old truths seem to have been superseded by new ones in constant succession, each opening up new horizons to man. And now, because Science, which was man's latest hope, always proceeds by destroying its own hypotheses and building on new ones and because our mere intellectual thinking cannot tell us the secret of organic order, we are tempted to give up any idea that truth can be known. And this leads to the conclusion that happiness, which tends to mean material and physical comfort, is the real end and aim of man's social life.

Now although the profoundest truths about reality, the universe and human life were indeed known to early man through the revelations of the sages and religious teachers, they were only known by intuition and accepted by faith. It was the knowledge of a child, wholly uncritical and without free will. Since those days Man has been growing his critical mind. It started with Greek philosophy and particularly with Socrates, and thence Plato and Aristotle, and went on right through modern European philosophy culminating in Kant, after whose critique naïveté is no longer possible for serious thought. And during all this time the Church guarded Man's intuitive sense of Order, appearing reactionary, but performing a very necessary function.

Now we have developed our critical mind and our intellectual thinking so far that we have the freewill to live in complete social and international disorder and the ability to destroy our whole world. Now, therefore, it is supremely necessary to bring into our thinking again the notion Order. We see that there is order in the universe and in nature and there is a most complex and wonderful order in our own bodies, an order capable of supporting and being the vehicle for self-consciousness and self-conscious thinking. Analytical thinking cannot, however much it tries, discover the principles of this organic order, but the key to the thinking which can discover it has been given to us in ancient Indian thought, in the Athanasian Creed and it has been worked

out in modern ways by Rudolf Steiner, as was explained by Dr. Twentyman in last year's Foundation lecture.

Human Order, in the sense social order, does not exist. All our so-called social orders are purely empirical and essentially disorderly. Only Divine and Natural Order exists. Human Order cannot be brought about without the knowledge that Mankind is one, and without the freewill of Man himself. The Providential morphology is already given to us in the order of nature, culminating in the order of our own bodies. It is now for Man from his own freewill and by his own love and critical intelligence to apply it to the building of World Social Order. The key to this morphology has already been given to him in the ancient Revelation, and the philosophical expression of it is found in the Vedanta.

Dr. Bhagavan Das gives an interpretation of this in his Science of Peace. He gives it as being necessary both for the peace of mind of the individual person and as a foundation for the peace of social order. We will, in the very short exposition which must here be given, in part follow Bhagavan Das' own approach, but first it is necessary for modern Man to achieve a most critical revolution in his thinking. He must know that Consciousness precedes Existence; that Awareness is the supreme reality, and not Matter. The word Spirit is here being intentionally avoided because it means very little to most people—especially since the Church confused the issue by identifying it with soul—and does not enter into their experience. Here is meant by consciousness that which is most immediate to everyone. Nevertheless the assertion that consciousness precedes and is more real than matter is to most ordinary people, however much they may pretend to the contrary, against common sense. My physical body preceded my self-consciousness and my corpse will be there after my self-consciousness has been blotted out. And as for some sort of Cosmic consciousness, call it God or what you will, what evidence is there for it? To which it should be answered that the belief in 'things' as the ultimate reality, that is to say in the physically perceptible world, is as naïve as the other may seem superstitious.

It is necessary to start our thinking somewhere and the critical soundness of our starting point is of paramount importance. That with which we must start, because we cannot go behind it, is

Experience. We are thinking about reality and we can indeed doubt the efficacy of our own thinking, mixed up as it is with perceptions and imagination, feelings and desires. We may doubt the reality of God, of Matter and even of I, but Experience we cannot doubt, since it is immediately experienced. This is the basic notion Chit, which we may call Awareness—not personalised consciousness, but awareness as the whole of reality. This may be compared with the apparently a-centric awareness of a small baby. As this awareness enters into the created world, we see in the baby's experience the development of the primal duality, I and not-I. I is the subject of consciousness, not-I is all that I can treat as object, including my body and, as I grow more critical, my thoughts, feelings and desires.

In Vedanta the supreme reality is Awareness and this in our world is the Self, the I, about which nothing can be predicated because it is beyond all limitation. Everything about which anything can be said is not-I or not-Self. Now the Self—in the cosmic sense called Brahman and in the human sense called Atman—is the same Self in the world and in the single human being. It is the universal awareness, which in each of us created beings appears as the subject of consciousness and is contrasted with the objects of consciousness. From this primal duality come all the pairs of opposites from which the world is created, but there is also the relationship between the self and not-self, which is one of affirmation or negation, according to whether I identify myself with the created world or not.

So when Brahman comes into manifestation as a Universe, it appears as threefold and this triunity is called Sat Chit Ananda—Being, Consciousness, Bliss. Consciousness as I, Being or Existence as not-I and Bliss as the relationship between them. To this triunity corresponds the triunity of our single human selves, namely knowledge or thought as Consciousness, action or will as Being and desire or feeling as Bliss. Bhagavan Das works this out fully in the Science of Peace and even more fully in the Pranava Vada, but it is not possible in the short scope of this lecture to do more than indicate the way in which he founds his Science of Social Organisation on metaphysical first principles. We should only add briefly that creation appears and develops as an indefinitely large number of separate selves, each of which has



to go through every possible experience in innumerable cycles of birth, death and rebirth and all of which are at any moment at different stages of their life development. Each self has to develop the feeling of its complete separateness from every other self and from the One Self in which they all inhere. This is the process known as Pravritti—going forth into deeper and deeper identification of the self with the not-self—with existence and matter. Then there is a disillusionment or disenchantment, known as Vairagya—the ceasing of desire for separate existence, which is the same as the ‘conversion’ described by Plato in his Myth of the Cave in the Republic. And after this starts the journey home known as Nivritti—release from the illusion of separateness as an ultimate reality, from the identification of self with not-self and realisation of oneness with the Self.

In the Science of the Emotions Bhagavan Das develops a whole systematic analysis of all emotions based on the relationship of the individual soul to other souls, either as acceptance or rejection, attraction or repulsion. These are the primary opposites Love and Hate; Hate being necessary for the creation of a universe and for the development of individual self-consciousness, that is for the path of Pravritti, Love being necessary for the dissolution of the universe and for the individual’s realisation of his oneness with all other beings, that is for the path of Nivritti.

It is too easy for us in the Western world to grasp the notion of self-attainment or self-fulfilment and to fail to see that this is only half of Man’s journey. It corresponds with the first half of the life of an individual when he is going out into the world to make his mark, to become someone and achieve something. But the time comes in his life when his outward striving energy, his physical and psychic strength, starts to ebb and he knows that in the end he will die. Our Western world has lost the understanding that every moment of this second half of life is as significant as the first half, but it must be seen as a wholly different experience. For then the individual must make a radical reorientation of his whole life; he must learn to cultivate and to rely upon inner strength rather than the natural outer energy which has hitherto activated him, and to prepare for physical dissolution.

In the ancient Indian view this is to be regarded as a home-coming; but only temporarily, for until the realisation of his

oneness with the Self is complete, each self must be born again and again to endure—as in the 'Bhagavad Gita' Arjuna was told by Krishna to endure bravely—the contacts of matter and the impermanent play of the pairs of opposites. Nor can the individual self find salvation alone, but only in unity with the whole world and therefore in the unity of the whole world. It was this unity of the whole world, known as Loka-sangraha, for which Krishna told Arjuna he should fight, and which is the end and aim of Man's life.

Social Order is thus not to be regarded, as we in the Western world are in danger of regarding it, as merely a very desirable state of peace and prosperity, in which everyone can find physical comfort and happiness. Such peace and prosperity are indeed desirable so that Mankind may change the emphasis of his consciousness from a continual striving after them. Indeed we might more easily have them if we would cease to treat the striving after them as the aim of our lives. For the attainment of Social Order is part of the goal and purpose of Man in his sojourn on this planet, so as to enable the individual spirits that we are to reach our own self-attainment and ultimately our self-transcendence.

Bhagavan Das himself considered The Science of Social Organisation as his most important work. In it he tried to give the true meaning of the Manu Code or the Laws of Manu in their ancient context and from that to interpret them in their present significance for the attainment of social order. The Manu Code is not, like Plato's Republic, the portrayal of an ideal but not actually existing Social State. It is not a Utopia. Nor is it a description of an existent constitution or a set of Laws as we understand it. It must be taken as somewhere between the two. It is clear that it refers to a Social State that actually did exist, but equally there is in it an element of the ideal which cannot actually have been achieved in practice; and this is confirmed by the detailed provisions for punishment of those who transgressed or failed in their duty.

The Sanskrit name for it is Manava-Dharma-Shastra and Bhagavan Das refers to it by the name Varna-Ashrama-Dharma. The word Manu is to be taken not merely as the name of a person, whether mythical or historic, or a succession of persons,

but as the archetypal name for Man, derived from his prime distinguishing characteristic, namely Mind or Reason. The name Manava-Dharma-Shastra therefore means the science (Shastra) of Order (Dharma) according to Manu or the reasoning mind of Man. The other name by which Bhagavan Das calls it will be explained later, but these names are here given because they both contain the important word Dharma, of which some understanding is necessary in order to grasp the significance of the Manu Code.

The word Dharma is variously translated as Religion, Right, Duty, Law, and it does indeed contain all those notions, but it is wider than any of them in the sense in which they are usually taken in Western thought. The words law and duty often convey a meaning of some sort of constraint from outside—by society or God—in the same way that, for instance, the word morality can nowadays have rather a nasty, unpleasant ring. The root Dhri, from which the word Dharma derives, means to hold, hold together, support, maintain; thus in the widest sense we may call Dharma Universal Law, that Divine Law or Law of Nature which makes the World-process what it is and holds all its parts together as One Whole in an unbreakable chain of causes and effects. In a social sense we may call it that scheme or code of laws which binds together all human beings in the bonds of mutual rights and duties, of causes and consequences of their actions in relation to one another, and thus maintains society as a whole. But even this must not be taken in an outer sense, for that which holds a thing together, makes it what it is, prevents it from breaking up and changing into something else is its own essential nature, the law of its own inner being.

The word Dharma can only be understood in relationship to the notion of Organic Order, in which the well-being and proper functioning of the whole is the end and aim of all its members. There is no conflict between the duty of the lungs and of the liver or between the interest of either of them and the well-being of the whole body, because the interest of the whole and the parts are in fact identical. Thus Dharma means both the Order of the whole and the proper function of each part, and in this sense—and only in this sense—it can be translated as law, right or duty. It means the same as the word 'Dikaiosune', which is the central

theme of Plato's Republic and which is usually translated 'justice'. In the Republic, Plato goes to great lengths to impress it upon his readers that the word is not to be taken in any mere outer sense, but that it means the true and orderly functioning of all the different parts of society and similarly of the three main functions of the individual Man—his thinking, feeling, and willing—and that therefore the Man in whom there is justice, in this sense, must be the happiest, whatever appearances there may be to the contrary.

Unfortunately, however, the mere notion Social Order or the idea of organism as referring to society sets up immediate resistance among the people of the so-called 'free world', because the notion Order is taken as infringing individual freedom. This reaction is intensified by the more unfortunate fact that Hitler and Mussolini stole the word to describe their rigid dictatorial regimes. It is, however, questionable whether the 'freedom' of the 'free world' is not a complementary, and equally inexcusable, misuse of terms. To a Western European or an American the notion Order as referring to society conveys the notion of the individual life being made to subserve the purposes of the State, but such an idea bears no relation to the true meaning of the idea of organism.

The essence of an organism is that its members are related to one another in such a way as to fulfil the goal or final cause of the whole; the goal or meaning of the whole organism is the principle of the organisation of its members and is the goal of each of them. Therefore the conflict between the freedom of the individual person and social order for Mankind as a whole is ultimately unreal. The greatest freedom and happiness for an individual man is to be truly himself without externally imposed restriction, and to be truly himself means to perform his life function. But the life of an individual man only has meaning within the life of Mankind as a whole, and therefore Dharma is not to be understood as an artificial imposition of order or duty or law, but as the clear realisation by the individual man who he is and the embodiment of this in his social life. Thus social order and individual freedom not only do not ultimately conflict, but are unattainable apart from one another.

Now it is true that in ancient India Man had not yet achieved



individual freedom as we now know it, and therefore in religious ordinances and in the Laws of Manu Order was in a sense being imposed from outside. It was imposed on the people by the lawgiver. This was at the time of Man's childhood. But Bhagavan Das has shown by his interpretation of the Manu Code into modern expression that the principles embodied in it are equally applicable today. Indeed it is of the essence of organism that there is not any one organ that rules all the others, but that they all function together towards the meaning of the whole. In this sense Social Order means Order achieved by human agreement in accordance with the true meaning and nature of Man.

Now we saw above that the nature of Man, as of Reality altogether, is triune, consisting of thought, feeling and will, or as they are otherwise expressed in Indian wisdom, knowledge, desire and action. Thus in the Social Order of Manu there is a class of persons representing each of these three parts of Man; the Brahmins representing knowledge, the Kshatriyas representing action and the Vaishyas representing desire. In later history we see these three emerging as Priests, Kings and Nobles, and Merchants; and in history each has in turn been dominant.

In the Manu Code one may in a sense say that the Brahmins are dominant in that the final authority rests with them, but it should be noted that this authority rests wholly on their having read and understood the Vedas. It is no sense authority to do what they like or please themselves. A Brahmin who has not read the Vedas is worthless and one who has read without understanding is very little better. To have read the Vedas means essentially to be wise about ultimate reality and about the meaning and purpose of Man's life. It is the Dharma of the Brahmin to guide society according to his best understanding and wisdom and according to the laws laid down by the sages. The whole authority rests with him and his wisdom, but no military or political power and no wealth.

The Kshatriyas are the kings and nobles and warriors and it is with them that military and political power resides. But this power is not to be used for their own mere gratification. Their function is to protect the people and they must in all things be guided by the Brahmins. The Vaishyas are the only ones whose function in society concerns wealth. They are the merchants and

farmers and altogether the providers of wealth. It is their duty to concern themselves with the providing of wealth for the whole community, for Kshatriyas and Brahmins as well as for themselves. There is described in the Manu Code a fourth class, the Sudras, who may be compared with labourers, but their existence is related to the peculiar racial circumstances of ancient India, to an earlier time in Man's development and to the institution of slavery, as we find it also in Plato's time; it is not an essential part of the threefold order of society as described in the Manu Code and is not relevant to modern thinking about social order.

Thus it is the function of the Brahmins to guide, of the Kshatriyas to rule and protect and of the Vaishyas to provide. The essence of the Manu Code is in the definition of these three functions and of the relationship between them. They must be kept separate in order that the whole may function properly. Guidance, political power and wealth must not be confused with one another. Those who guide must not have power and wealth, those who have power must be guided by those who have wisdom and they must not themselves have wealth, those who have and provide wealth must not themselves have power but must be ruled by others whose function is to rule.

It is at once evident that everything depends on the wisdom of those whose function it is to guide. To ensure this the whole life of a Brahmin is prescribed in the greatest detail from the moment he is born until his death. Never at any time in his whole life is there any possible suggestion that he is living for his own sake alone, but only for the proper performance of his function in society. His life was divided into four parts. In the first he was a religious student, studying the Vedas at the feet of his teacher. His life was regulated in every detail ritually and above all he had to obey his teacher in everything. Having, as it were, graduated, he had to take a wife and bring up a family and engage in some economic pursuit. When his child had in turn grown up and his

Footnote on Sudras. This is not a mere evasion. Dr. Bhagavan Das did indeed relate the fourth (Sannyasi) stage in the life of a Brahmin to the Sudras, calling the Brahmins in this stage spiritual Sudras. But whereas the other three classes were considered 'twice-born', the Sudras were only 'once-born', that is immature as human beings. Such a notion does not accord with the present development of Man. It can indeed be said that the social function of mere labourer is more and more being taken over by the machine and that all who work in the economic world are in that respect properly classed as Vaishya.

own hairs had started to turn grey, then he was allowed to retire from economic life, but was expected to continue to give his advice and counsel to others, thus performing his true function in society and receiving from society in return his sustenance. In the fourth quarter of his life the Brahmin was entitled to seek his own salvation. He had paid his debts to his ancestors, by himself rearing progeny, to the gods and to the sages, and he had given his wisdom freely to society. He was now allowed to become a beggar, seeking only his own inner salvation and relying on others to give him what little he needed as he prepared to die. This wholly ritual life which the Brahmin had to live ensured that he would not misuse the authority which reposed in him, but if he did the direst penalties were prescribed for him—far worse than those imposed on either of the other two classes for transgressing or failing in their duty.

A natural modern reaction to this order of society, and particularly to the discipline under which the Brahmins had to live, might be to say, with the critic of Socrates when he was outlining his ideal Republic, that this is just a city of pigs! No freedom, no joy, no right or opportunity to better oneself, to make wealth or rise to power! All prescribed from birth to death! And the answer to this must be the same as Socrates gave: that this was not designed to give pleasure to any particular class of people—such as those with initiative or ambition—but to make a healthy community as a whole. The three (or four) classes of society were known as Varnas, which literally means colours, and the four stages of life of the Brahmin were known as Ashramas, which literally means asylum or place of refuge. The emphasis is not on any one of either of these, as being more significant than the others, but on the well-ordering of the whole, which was accordingly called the Varn-Ashrama-Dharma.

Desire and ambition were indeed recognised as two of the three major aims of Man on the path of Pravritti (the outgoing path), and at the very beginning of the Manu Code it is stated at considerable length that nothing in the world is done without desire or self-love; but they were to be kept within bounds, recognising that though in the outgoing arc of Man's life they are his guiding motive into the experience of individual self-consciousness, yet they will not be found to be the end and aim

of life itself. For Pravritti is followed by Nivritti, which we have called the home-coming, of which the goal is salvation. And therefore even in the outgoing arc of life the whole emphasis of the Manu Code is on the third of the three major aims, which does not come to Man so naturally but is necessary for the right guidance of his life, namely Dharma or Order. But this is not order for the sake of any one class of the community, but regulated according to the triune nature of Man himself and aiming at bringing Mankind and every individual Man through the difficult experience of individual self-consciousness to the final end of Unity of the Whole (Loka-Sangraha) and release from pain and sorrow.

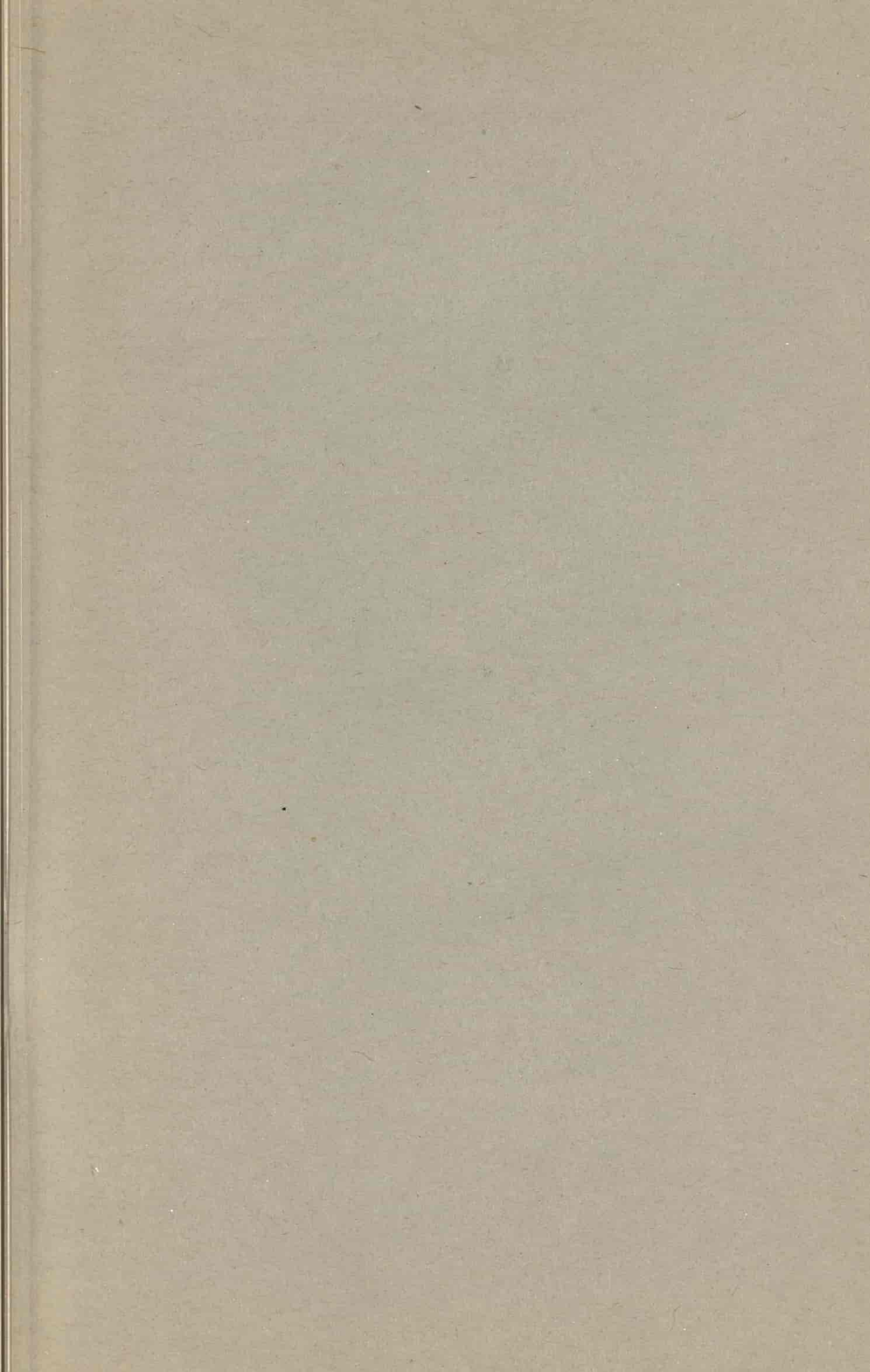
It is not possible in such a short talk to go into any further detail, either of the ordering of society according to Manu or of Bhagavan Das' commentary on it, but in considering its significance for the present time Bhagavan Das naturally lays particular emphasis on the work of education, which is the main function of the Brahmins. Most significant of all, however, is the very conception of Social Order as a whole patterned after the triune nature of Man himself. Plato describes this again in his Republic, though naturally he works it out differently for Greek thought, but the essential notion Dharma is in fact literally translatable as 'Dikaiosune', and it is this notion, so strange to Greek minds, that Plato is trying to express. More recently, Rudolf Steiner worked out for modern times the conception of a Threefold Commonwealth and Dimitrije Mitrinović gave the impulse for the New Britain proposal, drawn from the works of British sociological thinkers, for a Social State founded on self-governing economic and cultural Guilds culminating in a House of Industry and a Chamber of Culture both separated from the House of Commons.

Since earliest times each of the three classes of society has dominated in turn. First the priestly order, then kings and nobles, and now finally we suffer under the overwhelming domination of the economic world, holding all else in its power. But for the present day, though we can recognise that some are more essentially concerned with the whole world of culture—with religion, science, philosophy, art, education and medicine—others with the world of economics, and others again with the world of political administration, it is no longer constructive to think of three

separate classes of the community. But it is necessary to distinguish three aspects in the life of every man: his need for physical maintenance and for the provision of what is materially necessary to a full life, his relations with his fellow men individually and in groups, and his own inner striving to self-realisation and self-attainment. These three must be distinguished in order that they may be rightly related to one another, and their right relationship in the life of the individual must have its counterpart in their being distinguished and rightly related in society as a whole.

The right relationship which Manu ordained, and to which Bhagavan Das spent his life's work drawing attention, is that the inner life of Man, his thought, his valuation, his sense of a goal and meaning in the life, both for himself individually and for the whole of Mankind on this planet, must be the guide. His social life is the field in which the guidance of his inner life is worked out, and his physical economic life must serve them both. It is not that one is more important than the others, they are all three equally important as three equally necessary aspects of human life; and at different stages in the life of each individual different aspects will take priority. What is necessary is that the life of the single person should be seen within the scope of the whole life of Mankind, and that in this Man's own inner consciousness—the experience of valuation in his heart and the clarity of thinking in his mind—is known to be the key to the ultimate meaning of his life and must in future be his guide.

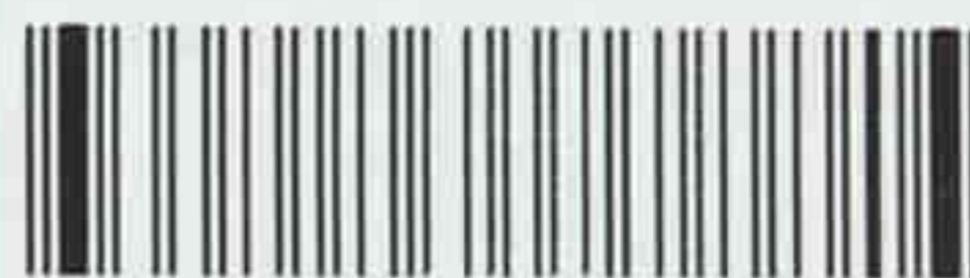




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