

*Sadhu Singh Dhani*

## INDIA'S EXOTIC EXPORT

HE MAY BE THE GENUINE ARTICLE—a flowing black beard streaked with white, large luminous eyes and the lotus smile of a soul in bliss, or a bootleg yogi who acquires a chocolate complexion, adorns himself with a bright-coloured tunic and discards the fedora for a neatly wound turban to commune with the occult. He may be a silent yogi who has snatched the truth from the womb of the Infinite and waits for the auspicious hour to reveal it, or he may choose to denounce American materialism at ten cents a word and impart his wisdom in a liquid flow of poetic paradoxes.

The area of esoteric wisdom in India is, in fact, vast; its achievements are both colourful and varied. It can reveal to you the secrets you hold in your hand or spell out your future twinkling in the stars. An ash-washed ascetic may heal men and animals of incurable diseases by mumbling magic *mantras*; a cobra coiled to strike may be frozen by a hypnotic stare. If you seek a *guru*, the choice may range from an emaciated Madrasi, combining profound Vedantic lore with a genuine hunger of the soul, to a vigorous Punjabi with a lusty voice and rippling muscles. Moreover, the traditional techniques of yogic *Sadhan* have been amended and simplified to meet modern requirements. If the original discipline of *Hatha Yoga* is too long and arduous for the seeker pressed for time and impatient of results, more understanding *Maharishis* have prepared an abridged edition based on mini-meditation, which enables the initiate, after three short lessons, to plunge his sub-conscious deep into the ocean of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* with effortless ease. And the result? For youth, the coveted crown of success; for age, the abiding joy of peace. There is *Karma Yoga* for the go-getter, assuring activity in peace and peace in activity. There is *Jnana Yoga*, with its pin-point concentration, for the scientist and the scholar. And for everybody the bliss of *Bhakti*, the *Yoga* of love—the eternal longing of the human soul, the meeting place of God and man.

Of such intangible riches India has much to give to the world, and

the world's need for these is great. In fact, the sophisticated way of life of the affluent society in the West makes the need most urgent. The abundance of material things leaves the soul heavily burdened but howling empty; sex is easily available but love is starved; and the curse that keeps Sammy on the run leaves no time for living. Man in advanced societies, forever doing and never done, is haunted by forms of fear unknown to his primitive ancestors. His lines of progress, smooth and straight, are strangers to the beauty of completion. Liberation is attainable through *Sadhana* (Self-realization) which, elevating knowledge to wisdom and greatness to goodness, could bring peace to the distracted world through love and creative unity.

In fact, India might welcome the opportunity of sharing its spiritual heritage with others, especially the industrially advanced countries in the West, which have given her extensive aid for economic development. Although in India the begging bowl awakens hallowed memories of passing pilgrims in search of light eternal, and even today some five million mendicants enjoy the privileges of this unproductive but not ungainful profession, begging abroad is beginning to abrade the newly-acquired national pride. A flow of assistance from India to the West, therefore, would help to reduce, if not to cancel, a mounting moral debt and might even help to restore her balance of payments. It would certainly improve the morale of all underdeveloped countries which, in order to maintain a semblance of national pride, insist on being described as "developing" and on requesting "technical co-operation" rather than "technical assistance". Fortunately, India is traditionally co-operative; her resources for providing assistance in *Sadhana* are immense, indeed inexhaustible, for spiritual treasures increase with sharing; and the cost involved is negligible. All that is needed, therefore, is an efficient organization, national and international.

Assistance in *Sadhana* may be provided bilaterally or multilaterally. Multilateral aid, however, is usually preferred, since it leaves the recipient uncommitted. Although many emerging nations which receive massive bilateral aid claim to accept it free of strings, some perverse observers see in it a rope around the neck. There would, of course, be no fear of neocolonialism when the recipients are powerful industrial countries. And it is they who need *Sadhanic* assistance most urgently if the gap between their material prosperity and spiritual salvation is not to widen to critical proportions. But in the true spirit of international co-operation, essential for world peace and the harmonious development of every nation, it must be provided multilaterally. This

would require the establishment of an appropriate international organization—the United Nations Sadhanic Organization (UNSO).

The initial reaction to such a proposal would be a cynical smile, for already the bewildering variety of international organizations makes it impossible for most people to decode their initials, let alone to differentiate between their activities. Their grey documents and repetitive reports have acquired forbidding attributes. Their conferences and meetings, so verbose in content and so tedious in procedure, take place with such frequency that a large number of competent officials in emergent nations, so badly needed to promote development at home, are kept busy travelling from one to the other.

The proposal will be opposed by governments on the ground of redundant proliferation. The governments of prosperous countries will oppose it for financial reasons. Many of them will, no doubt, resent the implication that they have anything to learn from shirtless natives. The most systematic and sophisticated opposition, however, is bound to come from the existing international organizations. They will argue that UNSO's proposed fields of activity—health, diet, training, cultural progress, spiritual advancement, and creative unity—are already amply covered by them, and that full use of their available resources should be assured before a new one is launched. This, however, will not deter their representatives from reading solemn statements at the inaugural conference, welcoming the new organization and promising whole-hearted co-operation in its unique task, provided its activities did not impinge on their particular field of competence as indicated in their respective constitutions.

But once the aims and objectives of UNSO, together with its unique organization and methods, are clearly grasped, opposition to it will disappear. When it is fully understood that the finite is forever seeking the Infinite, that even wealth and power are striving to reach the unlimited but, alas, by a deceptive path leading to inevitable disillusionment, people will turn to the world within. Man must, of course, satisfy his needs; it is even more important that he find himself. Only then would the conflicts and contradictions of life be reconciled in the unity of his soul. The existing international organizations would then realize that UNSO would not only complement their own activities, but also reveal to them the spiritual meaning of everything they resolve to do and sometimes achieve.

UNSO's ideal is perfection, not power: its aim is to promote the value, not the volume, of existence. The ideal of perfection is all-inclusive; by shar-

ing its munificence with all, it leads to harmony and peace. The ideal of power, on the other hand, is exclusive; its aggressive path is often strewn with human skulls and, in triumph, it sits uneasily on a mound of acquisition. The realization of the ideal of perfection, like thought taking shape in a poem, must pass through various stages—the emancipation of our physical nature through perfect health, of our social being through goodness, and of our real self through love. And the criteria of progress towards this ideal is not the distance travelled but the growth achieved through creative activity—not what you possess and how much of it, but what you express and in what manner.

The organization and methods for the promotion of *Sadhana* must, of course, correspond to its ideal and aims. Organization is necessary. It must not, however, be allowed to become a cumbersome absurdity like the skeleton and the armour of a mastodon, stultifying both the agility and the rhythm of life. Organization, when oppressively impersonal and served by a hidebound, file-focussed bureaucracy, is as inimical to spontaneity in life as is aridity to the urge for germination in a seed. It must remain vibrant with vision and pulsating with purpose if it is to inspire individuals to work in detachment and to find their fulfilment in devotion to duty.

UNSO would be located, like the *ashrams* of the ancient *Rishis*, in a tropical forest. The ideal of *Sadhana* cannot be nurtured in a cradle of brick and mortar, for cities, however lit and luxurious, represent the walled-in triumph of man over nature. And *Sadhana* requires an atmosphere conducive to a feeling of kinship with nature and harmony with all. UNSO officials, therefore, must be able to see life awakening in its lairs in the freshness of the dawn, appreciate its beauty and sacrifice in the gleaming daylight, and contemplate its mystery in the profound silence of the night.

The staffing of UNSO, too, must be designed to meet its unique requirements. For its Director-General, it would not have a creature of flesh and blood, no matter how impressive his certificates of learning and how sonorous his professions of idealism, for human vanity in high places is a serious handicap in the realization of high ideals. The common desire for a unanimous appointment alone, with its periodical renewal, requires, as a minimum, a persistent and tactful effort to please every government. As a result, the highest watermark of the organization's achievements must rise from its lowest common denominator. UNSO must remain free of this diplomatic drag.

It would, therefore, have at its head a life-size statue of Buddha, conveying, with praying eyes and joined hands, the aims and objectives of the

organization, and confirming, with rapturous calm, the unchanging principle behind the tumultuous winds of change. It will also symbolize the inevitable coexistence of good and evil until the attainment of *Nirvana*.

This arrangement has obvious advantages. It would certainly appeal to governments, who would be impressed by the substantial economies effected. Everybody would appreciate the relief from the bustle and omniscience of the cabinet secretariat; no one would miss the colourless ritual of the personality cult. The Buddha would be content with peaceful silence. He would be profoundly happy with a token offering of flowers and incense from a heart cleansed of the dross of desire.

UNSO, however, would have three Deputy Directors-General with equal status, each in charge of one of the three principal Departments: *Sadhana* through Work, Wisdom, and Love. This tripartite arrangement would, no doubt, be readily acceptable, for the mystique of three has played a profound role in human history. The Hindus adore Trimurti, the Christians the Trinity; and all thinking people know that man himself is a trinity, however inadequately integrated, of desire, intellect, and will. While Hegel reduced the progress of thought to a systematic three-step march, Marx ventured to interpret the entire history by the triple formula, inverted to a pedestrian posture. It was inevitable, therefore, that the U.S.S.R., dutifully supported by other dialectics-bound states, should propose a troika at the head of the United Nations. While fully respecting the principle of the trinity, the three UNSO Departments will be closely co-ordinated, so that the three aspects of life function harmoniously as an integrated entity. The Office of the Co-ordinator, therefore, will be of the highest importance. The incumbent will personify dynamic energy combined with profound wisdom and clear vision.

The staff of UNSO would be recruited on the basis of knowledge and experience as well as of devotion to its ideals. Its emoluments would be kept at a level adequate to meet the requirements of a wholesome life, but low enough not to tempt the ambitious. These, obviously, could not be based on the living standard of a country where a citizen's funeral expenses exceed, many times over, the annual income of the vast majority of the world's population. Voluntary service would be encouraged. These factors will help to eliminate the stubborn problem, encountered by all organizations devoted to human uplift, of how to create an atmosphere of social service in a system geared to personal advancement. The staff, moreover, will be truly international in outlook, and not merely a collection of nationals of different states sheltered by international privileges, selected on the basis of national quotas

justified by complicated formulae, and dependent for their influence and promotion on the support of their national governments rather than their own ability and performance.

It is obvious that UNSO would have no power except the power of service. Its authority would emerge solely from the evidence of its integrity, wisdom, and love. It will, therefore, be spared both the tribulations resulting from the exercise of truncated power grudgingly enjoined upon the different international organizations and the agony of sharing the tantalizing semblance of power among the crowd at the top striving for recognition. As a consequence, it would not be subjected to numerous external pressures, often exerted in diverse directions. It would certainly avoid the constant embarrassment resulting from indecision or half-hearted action. Its progress, upward and not forward, would no doubt be slow, but it would never be dubious of its direction and fumbling in its ways. Nor would it have to resort to devious methods and intricate procedural technicalities to bridge the gap between the aims formulated in lengthy and tortuous resolutions and the meagre results achieved. Finally, there would be no need for dramatic posturing and artificial bustle at the top; there would be no cause for frustration, supported by well-paid mental lassitude, farther down.

*Sadhana* would not lend itself to an unending exercise in report writing, for its objectives cannot be achieved by the careful collection and presentation of innumerable facts: their attainment depends on a complete comprehension of truth, which has no dimensions. Facts are necessary, but they can acquire significance only through adequate interpretation, and beauty only through creative unity. UNSO, therefore, would not deny the importance of facts. It would simply maintain that the fulfilment of life, an art rather than a science, requires their harmonization around an integrating principle of unity, and not their compilation in the prescribed order. It would not, therefore, need a large secretariat busily engaged in preparing various types of reports—survey reports, law and practice reports, quarterly progress reports, annual activity reports, follow-up and evaluation reports—in a stale, soporific jargon. This would be no great loss to the world outside which reads such reports only under compulsion.

Without reports it is difficult to hold meetings or conferences, for the essential function of reports is to provide pabulum for such meetings, justify their frequency, sustain their duration, and pave the way for similar gatherings in the future. An occasional UNSO conclave would, of course, be unavoidable.

able, for an exchange of views can be illuminating when new situations have created challenging problems. But its objectives are so precise and clear, and its methods of such well-proved value that the need for a formal conference would be rare.

When it does take place, the UNSO conference will be notable for silences rather than speeches, for if the tongue speaks out of the fulness of the heart, silence is its most eloquent expression. Each session would open with a long period of meditation to enable participants to contemplate the life-size Buddha on the dais and to imbibe the pervasive spirit of his message. This initial opportunity to commune with the Universal Soul would enable each delegate to tune up his own self, so that he is not only happy to receive new truths, but possesses the will to integrate them to enlarge his vision. As a result, understanding would be readily reached through a few simple sentences sincerely spoken, and not hopelessly choked by a profusion of words, spiced with emotional epithets and conventional wisdom. When the will to understand is combined with the genuine aspiration for higher truth, a lengthy dialogue is wasteful and debate a crudity.

Although the spread of Communism has alerted the rich to the threat of poverty, it is as yet not even vaguely realized that *Avidya* (ignorance) anywhere is a danger to *Bodhi* (enlightenment) everywhere. If the world cannot live half limousine and half ox-cart, it cannot be integrated half sage and half monster. Only a few, unfortunately, are stirred to greet the dawn on the mountain heights; most prefer to enjoy their sleep in the valley below. This lethargic enjoyment of the slumbering self makes the task of UNSO most difficult. Hunger can drive people to a mad fury; political servitude may spur them to a bloody revolt; but very few are sufficiently awakened to seek the light eternal. In the affluent society, fewer still would be prepared to prefer, like the Knight of La Mancha, the road to the inn, or to believe, like the *Rishis* of India, that the pursuit of the Unknown is superior to the power of possession. And genuine assistance, in *Sadhana* even more than in economic development, must be based on a vital and deeply felt need. You cannot force a man to self-realization any more than you can bribe a bud to bloom. How then to provide effective *Sadhanic* assistance?

UNSO must begin by sending preparatory missions to the developed countries in order to convince the natives that although their acquisitions are large, they are bigger than their possessions. They must be shown that their unending restlessness to get things and to go places is a race towards aimless-

ness. As the lamp must give up its oil for light, they must give up their possessions for *Sadhana*. Having acquired political power through Nietzschean virtues practised behind a paper curtain of Christian ethics, the people of advanced countries will find it difficult to believe that they stand to gain by their losses, or that they must triumph through surrender. Time is needed, therefore, and patience before the simple truth that a flower must shed its petals to become a fruit is fully grasped by a society preoccupied with a constant pursuit of consumer goods on a vast credit system. A more successful approach would be to make it clear to them that the renunciation required for *Sadhana* is not that of their actual possessions, but of the possessive attitude towards them. In detachment, in fact, they may keep their belongings, even add to them. This unique concept—that you can change the world by altering your consciousness—is so revolutionary that it will put an end to all revolutions, a point which will certainly add to its popularity among the affluent.

The preparatory missions would be followed by the despatch of qualified short-term or long-term experts to the beneficiary countries to provide *Sadhanic* training in small groups. When the number and the enthusiasm of the initiates justify it, *Sadhanic* institutes would be established. In addition, the advanced and more promising disciples would be awarded fellowships for higher training in a country carefully selected for its *Sadhanic* achievements and available facilities. Although the ultimate objective would be to make the prosperous countries independent of foreign experts, and to enable them to meet their future training requirements within their own territories, such self-sufficiency would require a long period of patient preparation.

The effectiveness of this programme obviously depends on the competence of *Sadhanic* experts. It is essential, therefore, that they be carefully selected on the basis of both knowledge and personality.

The function of *Sadhana*, both Karl Marx and the American Manufacturers Association would be delighted to learn, is not merely to interpret the world but to change it. Only *Sadhana* emphasizes the inevitability of co-existence during the period of transition and the need for genuine co-operation at all times. Although neither Capitalism nor Communism has succeeded, even at the heavy cost of war and destruction, in recreating the entire world in the likeness of their longings, they are already competing strenuously to bring the moon within their orbit. On the other hand, after a century of growth, opposition, and hostility, both hot and cold, they are often discovered in a loose liaison in the mixed economy popular in the vast backward areas



of the earth. And, in spite of their differences, both Capitalism and Communism are committed to making men happy: one, burdened with abundance, by creating needs in order to satisfy them; the other, fiercely messianic, by reducing them to a uniform pattern fed through the chain-belt system of planned production. It seems, however, that both find happiness rather elusive.

*Sadhana* does not repudiate the need to satisfy man's requirements for material things; it merely emphasizes his deep-seated longing for freedom, attainable through One-ness. If the wish for self-gratification is not harmonized with social good, there can be no fulfilment of our real self, and the growing pace of progress may result in stifling the very life it is striving to enrich. *Sadhana*, therefore, is not guided by the utilitarian calculus of happiness. It holds out the ideal of peace and freedom, attainable through enlightenment. Is this an impossible dream? But every child is impossible until it is born. And UNSO, when established in its forest *ashram*, will continue to affirm with Rabindranath Tagore that "the dwelling place of the impossible is in the dream of the impotent". Would it not be infinitely better to attain enlightenment through the influence of UNSO, gentle as the falling dew, than to annihilate ourselves through nuclear folly, or, with luck, to continue to surfeit our ego in blind confusion until redeemed by missions of mercy from Mars?