

# WINNERS AND WHINERS

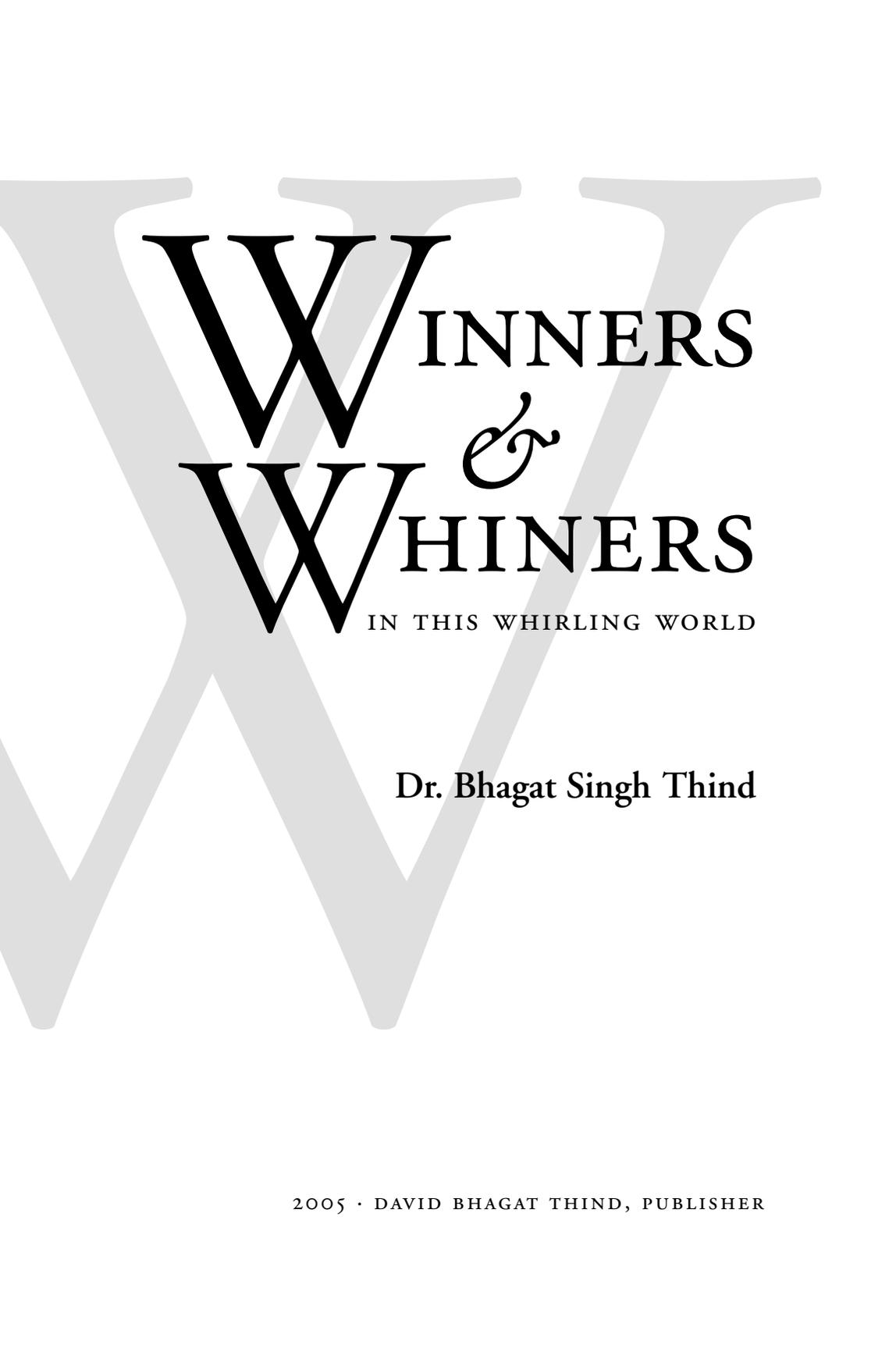


AND

In This Whirling World

Dr. Bhagat Singh Thind

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# I

COUNTLESS AMERICANS are emotionally disturbed and spiritually empty to the point of sickness and despair. Every state government is plagued by the endlessly mounting cost of providing care for the insane and the mentally ill. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that this indicates something spiritually lacking in the religion of the Hebrew-Christian world, and in the ethics of the modern, secular West. Emotion occupies the central place in these ills. Eminently successful men are unsatisfied and emotionally at odds with both themselves and their mates.

The progress of civilization is not to be altogether measured by advancing science, nor by the extent of material possessions, but rather by the esteem in which men generally hold the finer moral and spiritual values of life. Values are constituted by our needs and desires, and money is good only in so far as it can satisfy these.

Moral and spiritual good lies beyond the reach of misfortunes, accidents, poverty, or untoward circumstances. If one is really serious and desires enduring success, he must beware of the short-cuts. Moral and spiritual goods are cumulative. The more we possess them, the greater grows our capacity for enjoying them, and they open the way to ever greater accomplishments.

Man feels an inner compulsion which builds greater accomplishments and higher capabilities, and if he does not live up to them, he becomes consciously inferior, inferior to others and inferior to his own potentially superior self. This inferiority complex deadens his own imagination and creative genius. Hence comes the discontent, despair, frustration, and tragedy that spells ruin and failure. Man can never be enduringly happy except through the realization of his highest capacities. The advantages which follow in the train of doing one's utmost are moral and spiritual. The demand for them lies in human nature itself. Inner accomplishments are, after all and above all, the supreme accomplishments that mean the most, because they alone accompany us at death.

Every man has within himself an inherent voice of reason and right in

accordance with which he can act. Recognize this and you will see the worth and dignity of man, and democracy will grow all over the world. To direct wisely the course of life, one must be true to one's own best and highest self. All living things must progress or perish; must make good or make room, must cooperate toward the true and moral fulfillment for which they exist. Failing this they sicken, stagnate, and die by the waste and neglect of powers which they do not properly use. Whatever is unnatural is ugly, offensive, weakening, and degrading. As we work in unison with conformity to the purpose of nature, our work becomes easy and we unlock her closest secrets.

No creature is more miserable than man. All others are satisfied with their natural limitations, but man alone strives to go beyond the bounds proper to his place and station. He is always reaching out for more. Capacity for happiness and capacity for misery are intimately related to each other. Life is an advance, a going forward, a growing conquest of ever newer fields of social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual endeavor. The individual must not be turned in upon himself and his own resources alone, and thus find himself tied to a wheel of fate against which he cannot struggle and prevail. He can work by deliberate conscious free choice with the Lord of himself at the wheel and ever go forward and even fail forward. He can enter into "the stillness of an axis at the center of the wheel," or move with "the axis that moves forward with the wheel, but never revolves." This is working with the *chardhi kala*, the power that moves ever upward and Godward.

In building values, meaning, and quality into our characters, they become the objects of life and living for the awakened and the enlightened. It is then that the spiritually personalized individuality seeks fulfillment of self-expression in an ever higher range of interests, having mental, moral, and spiritual significance.

The individual finds the climax of his own achievement in the general good. He dies to his individual interests in order that he may begin to live in the universal and thus realize his full self, which is God. Man must advance, or the social order and civilization will fail. Values which lift us over the vicissitudes of misfortune to the highest satisfactions, to enduring happiness, to peace of mind, to the complete realization of our own inner Godhead and its powers, bring harmony within one's self and the world. All these are the attributes of a righteous life. Only morally stabilized men may be transformed and made Godlike by the Holy Nām.

WHERE RELIGIOUS INQUIRY has not been made, man's life drifts. He has not understood life's meaning, or its purpose. He cannot know how to put first things first. He is storm-driven in mid-ocean, without a star to steer by or any land in sight in any direction. With every passing breeze, he is a wisp tossed about by homeless winds. Religion is a matter of hearsay to him. He is an onlooker. Religion claims an ultimate truth and finds the worth of man in the fullness of God's life. Religion cannot be true now and then, nor here or there, any more than mathematics can. The assertion, "To every one his own religion," is as absurd as to say, "To every man his own mathematics."

The validity or truth of an experience lies in its universality, never in its privacy. To the knowing mind it is just as real as the pole star. Must not what is true also be true for any intelligence that can apprehend it?

The finite is potentially infinite in an endless process of self-realization. Man can seek to become only that which he potentially is. To realize it truly, fully, and actually is the goal. What man is capable of becoming is that which he most truly is. Divine plenitude is within man's own reach. His life is not his own only, but his God's, without whom he cannot live. It is not he who lives, but his God who lives in him. It is His will that is being realized in him and in the world. There is a perfect will, and there is man's will. The practical relationship of these wills is what is meant by religion. The union of wills can take place only if they are independent. It is their concurrence that makes them one; they cannot concur if either of them is not free. Nothing can unite wills except the adoption of the same purpose by free persons. Only wills that are free can truly unite.

Man is a finite being, but he is troubled with aims that are infinite. He is doomed to a spiritual unrest of which all other finite beings, such as animals, know nothing. Being human is his chief misery, and also his mighty glory. He aims at spiritual perfection, and to attain it is his only mission. Man is only the process of becoming that which he really is. He is not under an obligation to be, but to become the imperative movement from less

to more: to become more and more Godlike, to unify himself with God, and in this very act of unification to stand out more and more as an independent individual.

The flower needs help if it is to bloom, but nothing can make it bloom if it has no cooperating life of its own. All things are here for the soul to assimilate, appropriate, and convert into living forces in order to reinforce its own character and capacities. The individual selects and appropriates those elements that he can assimilate. He brings with him into his physical, mental, or moral world nothing but the powers to evaluate and appropriate the forces for which he has affinities and qualities in his character. A man's deeds spring from his character. What use he will make of his powers and circumstances must be left to him, because morality, in a sense, is a most solitary enterprise.

Neither God nor one's fellow man can take up another's burden or appropriate the value of another's opportunity. Man's moral destiny is exclusively in his own hands. It is for him, and for him only, to make or mar his moral character. Both men and nations learn thoroughly only when they learn through experience. Nothing less than the bitterness of an unworthy life can convince man of the wrong he is doing to his rational nature by his pursuit of bad purposes. No one has ever been sorry for having tried to do what seemed right, nor mourned his attempted obedience to the will of God.

Everything favors morality, which involves the life of all in the life of each and the welfare of each in the well-being of all. To learn goodness men must be as members of the same family; and if they are that, they must share the same destiny. The circumstances of life are rightly understood by those who build up good characters in dealing with each other.

Convert all manner of apparently unfavorable circumstances into the means of inward progress. External circumstances of all kinds are to be made into opportunities for the growth of the soul. There is no limit to the power of character over circumstances. The soul can find fuel in everything and break into the brighter flame for pain, poverty, and other natural ills. The natural world is the instrument of a spiritual end. There are rational connections between facts and relationships. Between them, they are discoverable by reason; otherwise the whole region of the real would be chaotic. Man would be helpless in a tumbledown universe.

A speculative attitude that belongs to reason and a spiritual attitude remain different. The temper of the mind that doubts, tests, reasons, and

questions for and against God differs fundamentally from that which knows, trusts, adores, loves, and worships. The ultimate meaning of the finite facts of the world in which we live cannot be known unless we taste the Word, the Holy Nām, in which we both are one. Our hypothesis is in every department. Our own ultimate explanatory conceptions, certainly, are not in them until verified. The Nām is the string on which the pearls of our lives and their events are hung.

Events take place in incalculable ways. Their incalculability is the truth concerning them. An isolated, finite fact is a figment. It is in relationship to other facts, and it is only in that relationship that facts act and exist. It is only in their activities that they reveal and actualize themselves. They are derived from the ultimate, the Nām, and only in such a relationship to God have they meaning, value, and reality.

There is one universe because there is one process at all stages of complexity, one reality revealing itself in an endless varieties of activities. Only in the light of their spiritual values can natural happenings be estimated. In the long run, right behavior brings physical and material well-being, and wrong behavior brings their opposite. Having found his refuge and given himself to his God, and found in Him his meaning and purpose of life, the spiritual spirit finds God everywhere. Divine immanence is the permanent indwelling of God in the human heart and history of the world. The scheme of things is only experienced and known in the Nām, when we taste it and are anchored in it. Then the facts of life justify our faith, and corroborate and exemplify the presuppositions and hypotheses that we bring with us. We discover our need of God when we come to ourselves. Evidence of divine benevolence is to be found only in our experience and in testing the scheme of things as a whole, in the Nām.

In meditation we are renewed, refitted, refreshed, and sent forth triumphantly into the world. Knowing it is our God's world, that which is changing is something that comes from Him who is our constant comrade, friend, and Father. All things of time express the intent of the eternal. In and through the Nām we know what is the highest best and divine and the power operating in man's destiny. God is immanent in the Nām, in man and the world. Until man finds God, his life is fragmentary, a thing of contradictions and strife, a thing of shreds and patches. Man's individuality is strengthened immeasurably by his conscious unity with God, who assures him victory.

The meeting point of God and man is not in love alone, but in the