

Words of Sri Aurobindo

(9)

Diary 2019

The Renascence of India is Inevitable

"The renascence of India is as inevitable as the rising of tomorrow's sun, and the renascence of a great nation of three hundred millions with so peculiar a temperament, such unique traditions and ideas of life, so powerful an intelligence and so great a mass of potential energies cannot but be one of the most formidable phenomena of the modern world."

– Sri Aurobindo

(25: 333)



With Best Compliments From:

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The Ideal or Ultimate Aim of Nature in Humanity

"…the ideal or ultimate aim of Nature must be to develop the individual and all individuals to their full capacity, to develop the community and all communities to the full expression of that many-sided existence and potentiality which their differences were created to express, and to evolve the united life of mankind to its full common capacity and satisfaction, not by suppression of the fullness of life of the individual or the smaller commonalty, but by full advantage taken of the diversity which they develop. This would seem the soundest way to increase the total riches of mankind and throw them into a fund of common possession and enjoyment."

– Sri Aurobindo

(25: 422)

The Light of lights



Words of Sri Aurobindo
(9)

Diary
2019

Acknowledgement:

Selections from the writings of Sri Aurobindo appearing here have been taken from the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Volumes 25, 26 and 27 i.e. The Human Cycle, The Future Poetry and Letters on Poetry and Art respectively, published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry, and have been reproduced here with its kind permission.

Editorial insertions are in **Bold Letters**. The parentheses at the end of the selections contain the volume and the page numbers of these selections.

The front cover title – The Light of lights – is in the original handwriting of Sri Aurobindo and was kindly made available to us by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, Pondicherry.

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Printed by:-

Ambujam, Jaipur, Rajasthan, Ph.: 0141-2373261

Published by:-

Sri Aurobindo Divine Life
Publication And Distribution Agency
(An autonomous unit of
Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust, *Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan)*
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Personal Information

PERSONAL

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BUSINESS

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Personal Insurance	Renewal
Medical Insurance	Renewal
Home Insurance	Renewal
Car Insurance	Renewal

FINANCIAL

Bank	A/c No.
Bank	A/c No.
Income Tax No.	Tax Due Date
Credit Card No.	Expiry
Credit Card No.	Expiry
ATM Card No.	

Important Dates in the Ashram

The Mother's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*21 February*
Foundation of Auroville	*28 February*
The Mother's First Arrival in Pondicherry	*29 March*
Sri Aurobindo's Arrival in Pondicherry	*4 April*
The Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry (Darshan Day)	*24 April*
Sri Aurobindo's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*15 August*
The Mother's Mahasamadhi	*17 November*
The Mother's Body Laid To Rest	*20 November*
Siddhi Day (Darshan Day)	*24 November*
Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi	*5 December*
Sri Aurobindo's Body Laid To Rest	*9 December*

List of Holidays

Id-Ul-Zuha	*Jan. 11*	*Baisakhi*	*Apr. 13*
Lohri	*Jan. 13*	*Buddha Poornima*	*May 13*
Makar Sankranti	*Jan. 14*	*Raksha Bandhan*	*Aug. 9*
Pongal	*Jan. 14*	*Independence Day*	*Aug. 15*
Republic Day	*Jan. 26*	*Janamashtami*	*Aug. 16*
Basant Panchami	*Feb. 2*	*Ganesh Chaturthi*	*Aug. 27*
Moharram	*Feb. 10*	*Anant Chaudas*	*Sep. 6*
Ravidaas Jayanti	*Feb. 13*	*Gandhi Jayanti*	*Oct. 2*
Shiv Ratri	*Mar. 26*	*Dashahara*	*Oct. 2*
Holi	*Mar. 14*	*Guru Nanak Jayanti*	*Nov. 5*
Dhulendi	*Mar. 15*	*Deepawali*	*Nov. 21*
Ugadi	*Mar. 30*	*Goverdhan Pooja*	*Nov. 22*
Ram Navami	*Apr. 6*	*Bhaiya Dooj*	*Nov. 24*
Mahavir Jayanti	*Apr. 11*	*Id-Ul-Fitar*	*Nov. 25*
Milad -Ul-Nabi	*Apr. 11*	*Christmas Day*	*Dec. 25*
Good Friday	*Apr. 14*	*Guru Govind Singh Jayanti*	*Dec. 27*



Constitutions cannot Abrogate Facts – Whatever the Constitution the Powerful Always Govern

"Constitutions can only disguise facts, they cannot abrogate them: for whatever ideas the form of the constitution may embody, its working is always that of the actually realised forces which can use it with effect. Most governments either have now or have passed through a democratic form, but nowhere yet has there been a real democracy; it has been everywhere the propertied and professional classes and the bourgeoisie who governed in the name of the people."

– Sri Aurobindo

(25: 400)



"Democracy is by no means a sure preservative of liberty; on the contrary, we see today the democratic system of government march steadily towards such an organised annihilation of individual liberty as could not have been dreamed of in the old aristocratic and monarchical systems.… there is a deprivation of liberty which is more respectable in appearance, more subtle and systematised, more mild in its method because it has a greater force at its back, but for that very reason more effective and pervading. The tyranny of the majority has become a familiar phrase and its deadening effects have been depicted with a great force of resentment by certain of the modern intellectuals;* but what the future promises us is something more formidable still, the tyranny of the whole, of the self-hypnotised mass over its constituent groups and units.**"

—Sri Aurobindo

(25: 508-09)

** E.g. Ibsen in his drama, "An Enemy of the People".*

*** There was first seen the drastic beginning of this phenomenon in Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia. At the time of writing this development could be seen only in speculative prevision. It assumed afterwards the proportions of a growing fact and we can now see its full and formidable body.*

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* *CWSA – Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo.*

Materialistic Approach to History and the Beginings of a Deeper Look

MODERN Science, obsessed with the greatness of its physical discoveries and the idea of the sole existence of Matter, has long attempted to base upon physical data even its study of Soul and Mind and of those workings of Nature in man and animal in which a knowledge of psychology is as important as any of the physical sciences. Its very psychology founded itself upon physiology and the scrutiny of the brain and nervous system. It is not surprising therefore that in history and sociology attention should have been concentrated on the external data, laws, institutions, rites, customs, economic factors and developments, while the deeper psychological elements so important in the activities of a mental, emotional, ideative being like man have been very much neglected. This kind of science would explain history and social development as much as possible by economic necessity or motive, – by economy understood in its widest sense. There are even historians who deny or put

aside as of a very subsidiary importance the working of the idea and the influence of the thinker in the development of human institutions. The French Revolution, it is thought, would have happened just as it did and when it did, by economic necessity, even if Rousseau and Voltaire had never written and the eighteenth-century philosophic movement in the world of thought had never worked out its bold and radical speculations.

Recently, however, the all-sufficiency of Matter to explain Mind and Soul has begun to be doubted and a movement of emancipation from the obsession of physical science has set in, although as yet it has not gone beyond a few awkward and rudimentary stumblings. Still there is the beginning of a perception that behind the economic motives and causes of social and historical development there are profound psychological, even perhaps soul factors;…" (25: 5)

The Four Distinct Psychological Stages of Human Society and the Discovery of the Veiled Secret of Our Historic Evolution

"The theorist, Lamprecht, basing himself on European and particularly on German history, supposed that human society progresses through certain distinct psychological stages which he terms respectively symbolic, typal and conventional, individualist and subjective. This development forms, then, a sort of psychological cycle through which a nation or a civilisation is bound to proceed. Obviously, such classifications are likely to err by rigidity and to substitute a mental straight line for the coils and zigzags of Nature. The psychology of man and his societies is too complex, too synthetical of many-sided and intermixed tendencies to satisfy any such rigorous and formal analysis.

Nor does this theory of a psychological cycle tell us what is the inner meaning of its successive phases or the necessity of their succession or the term and end towards which they are driving. But still to understand natural laws whether of Mind or Matter it is necessary to analyse their working into its discoverable elements, main constituents, dominant forces, though these may not actually be found anywhere in isolation. I will leave aside the Western thinker's own dealings with his idea. The suggestive names he has offered us, if we examine their intrinsic sense and value, may yet throw some light on the thickly veiled secret of our historic evolution, and this is the line on which it would be most useful to investigate." (25: 6)

"Undoubtedly, wherever we can seize human society in what to us seems its primitive beginnings or early stages, – no matter whether the race is comparatively cultured or savage or economically advanced or backward, – we do find a strongly symbolic mentality that governs or at least pervades its thought, customs and institutions. Symbolic, but of what?… The symbol then is of something which man feels to be present behind himself and his life and his activities, – the Divine, the Gods, the vast and deep unnameable, a hidden, living and mysterious nature of things. All his religious and social institutions, all the moments and phases of his life are to him symbols in which he seeks to express what he knows or guesses of the mystic influences that are behind his life and shape and govern or at the least intervene in its movements.

If we look at the beginnings of Indian society, the far-off Vedic age which we no longer understand, for we have lost that mentality, we see that everything is symbolic. The religious institution of sacrifice governs the whole society and all its hours and moments, and the ritual of the sacrifice is at every turn and in every detail, as even a cursory study of the Brahmanas and Upanishads ought to show us, mystically symbolic. The theory that there was nothing in the sacrifice except a propitiation of Nature-gods for the gaining of worldly prosperity and of Paradise, is a misunderstanding by a later humanity which had already become profoundly affected by an intellectual and practical bent of mind, practical even in its religion and even in its own mysticism and symbolism, and therefore could no longer enter into the ancient spirit. Not only the actual religious worship but also the social institutions of the time were penetrated through and through with the symbolic spirit. Take the hymn of the Rig Veda which is supposed to be a marriage hymn for the union of a human couple and was certainly used as such in the later Vedic ages. Yet the whole sense of the hymn turns about the successive marriages of Suryā, daughter of the Sun, with different gods and the human marriage is quite a subordinate matter overshadowed and governed entirely by the divine and mystic figure and is spoken of in the terms of that figure. Mark, however, that the divine marriage here is not, as it would be in later ancient poetry, a decorative image or poetical ornamentation used to set off and embellish the human union; on the contrary, the human is an inferior figure and image of the divine. The distinction marks off the entire contrast between that more ancient mentality and our modern regard upon things. This symbolism influenced for a long time Indian ideas of marriage and is even now conventionally remembered though no longer understood or effective.

We may note also in passing that the Indian ideal of the relation between man and woman has always been governed by the symbolism of the relation between the Purusha and Prakriti (in the Veda Nri and Gna), the male and female divine Principles in the universe. Even, there is to some degree a practical

correlation between the position of the female sex and this idea. In the earlier Vedic times when the female principle stood on a sort of equality with the male in the symbolic cult, though with a certain predominance for the latter, woman was as much the mate as the adjunct of man; in later times when the Prakriti has become subject in idea to the Purusha, the woman also depends entirely on the man, exists only for him and has hardly even a separate spiritual existence. In the Tantrik Shakta religion which puts the female principle highest, there is an attempt which could not get itself translated into social practice, – even as this Tantrik cult could never entirely shake off the subjugation of the Vedantic idea, – to elevate woman and make her an object of profound respect and even of worship.

Or let us take, for this example will serve us best, the Vedic institution of the fourfold order, *caturvaṃa*, miscalled the system of the four castes, – for caste is a conventional, *vaṃa* a symbolic and typal institution. We are told that the institution of the four orders of society was the result of an economic evolution complicated by political causes. Very possibly;* but the important point is that it was not so regarded and could not be so regarded by the men of that age. For while we are satisfied when we have found the practical and material causes of a social phenomenon and do not care to look farther, they cared little or only subordinately for its material factors and looked always first and foremost for its symbolic, religious or psychological significance. This appears in the Purushasukta of the Veda, where the four orders are described as having sprung from the body of the creative Deity, from his head, arms, thighs and feet. To us this is merely a poetical image and its sense is that the Brahmins were the men of knowledge, the Kshatriyas the men of power, the Vaishyas the producers and support of society, the Shudras its servants. As if that were all, as if the men of those days would have so profound a reverence for mere poetical figures like this of the body of Brahma or that other of the marriages of Suryā, would have built upon them elaborate systems of ritual and sacred ceremony, enduring institutions, great demarcations of social type and ethical discipline. We read always our own mentality into that of these ancient forefathers and it is therefore that we can find in them nothing but imaginative barbarians. To us poetry is a revel of intellect and fancy, imagination a plaything and caterer for our amusement, our entertainer, the nautch-girl of the mind. But to the men of old the poet was a seer, a revealer of hidden truths, imagination no dancing courtesan but a priestess in God's house commissioned not to spin fictions but to image difficult and hidden truths; even the metaphor or simile in the Vedic style is used with a serious purpose and expected to convey a reality, not to suggest a pleasing artifice of thought. The image was to these seers a revelative symbol of the

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* *It is at least doubtful. The Brahmin class at first seem to have exercised all sorts of economic functions and not to have confined themselves to those of the priesthood.*

unrevealed and it was used because it could hint luminously to the mind what the precise intellectual word, apt only for logical or practical thought or to express the physical and the superficial, could not at all hope to manifest. To them this symbol of the Creator's body was more than an image, it expressed a divine reality. Human society was for them an attempt to express in life the cosmic Purusha who has expressed himself otherwise in the material and the supraphysical universe. Man and the cosmos are both of them symbols and expressions of the same hidden Reality." (25: 7-10)

The Movement of the Symbolic Stage Towards the Typal

"From .. symbolic attitude came the tendency to make everything in society a sacrament, religious and sacrosanct, but as yet with a large and vigorous freedom in all its forms, – a freedom which we do not find in the rigidity of "savage" communities because these have already passed out of the symbolic into the conventional stage though on a curve of degeneration instead of a curve of growth. The spiritual idea governs all; the symbolic religious forms which support it are fixed in principle; the social forms are lax, free and capable of infinite development. One thing, however, begins to progress towards a firm fixity and this is the psychological type. Thus we have first the symbolic idea of the four orders, expressing – to employ an abstractly figurative language which the Vedic thinkers would not have used nor perhaps understood, but which helps best our modern understanding – the Divine as knowledge in man, the Divine as power, the Divine as production, enjoyment and mutuality,

the Divine as service, obedience and work. These divisions answer to four cosmic principles, the Wisdom that conceives the order and principle of things, the Power that sanctions, upholds and enforces it, the Harmony that creates the arrangement of its parts, the Work that carries out what the rest direct. Next, out of this idea there developed a firm but not yet rigid social order based primarily upon temperament and psychic type* with a corresponding ethical discipline and secondarily upon the social and economic function.** But the function was determined by its suitability to the type and its helpfulness to the discipline; it was not the primary or sole factor. The first, the symbolic stage of this evolution is predominantly religious and spiritual; the other elements, psychological, ethical, economic, physical are there but subordinated to the spiritual and religious idea." (25: 10-11)

* guṇa. ** karma.

The Typal Stage and Its Move Towards the Conventional

"The second stage, which we may call the typal, is predominantly psychological and ethical; all else, even the spiritual and religious, is subordinate to the psychological idea and to the ethical ideal which expresses it. Religion becomes then a mystic sanction for the ethical motive and discipline, Dharma; that becomes its chief social utility, and for the rest it takes a more and more other-worldly turn. The idea of the direct expression of the divine Being or cosmic Principle in man ceases to dominate or to be the leader and in the forefront; it recedes, stands in the background and finally disappears from the practice and in the end even from the theory of life.

This typal stage creates the great social ideals which remain impressed upon the human mind even when the stage itself is passed. The principal active contribution it leaves behind when it is dead is the idea of social honour;

the honour of the Brahmin which resides in purity, in piety, in a high reverence for the things of the mind and spirit and a disinterested possession and exclusive pursuit of learning and knowledge; the honour of the Kshatriya which lives in courage, chivalry, strength, a certain proud self-restraint and self-mastery, nobility of character and the obligations of that nobility; the honour of the Vaishya which maintains itself by rectitude of dealing, mercantile fidelity, sound production, order, liberality and philanthropy; the honour of the Shudra which gives itself in obedience, subordination, faithful service, a disinterested attachment. But these more and more cease to have a living root in the clear psychological idea or to spring naturally out of the inner life of the man; they become a convention, though the most noble of conventions. In the end they remain more as a tradition in the thought and on the lips than a reality of the life." (25: 11)

The Conventional Age and Its Movement Towards the Age of Individualism

"For the typal passes naturally into the conventional stage. The conventional stage of human society is born when the external supports, the outward expressions of the spirit or the ideal become more important than the ideal, the body or even the clothes more important than the person. Thus in the evolution of caste, the outward supports of the ethical fourfold order, – birth, economic function, religious ritual and sacrament, family custom, – each began to exaggerate enormously its proportions and its importance in the scheme. At first, birth does not seem to have been of the first importance in the social order, for faculty and capacity prevailed; but afterwards, as the type fixed itself, its maintenance by education and tradition became necessary and education and tradition naturally fixed themselves in a hereditary groove. Thus the son of a Brahmin came always to be looked upon conventionally as a Brahmin; birth and profession were together the double bond of the hereditary convention at the time when it was most firm and faithful to its own character. This rigidity once established, the maintenance of the ethical type passed from the first place to a secondary or even a quite tertiary importance. Once the very basis of the system, it came now to be a not indispensable crown or pendent tassel, insisted upon indeed by the thinker and the ideal code-maker but not by the actual rule of society or its practice. Once ceasing to be indispensable, it came inevitably to be dispensed with except as an ornamental fiction. Finally, even the economic basis began to disintegrate; birth, family custom and remnants, deformations, new accretions of meaningless or fanciful religious sign and ritual, the very scarecrow and caricature of the old profound symbolism, became the riveting links of the system of caste in the iron age of the old society. In the full economic period of caste the priest and the Pundit masquerade under the name of the Brahmin, the aristocrat and feudal baron under the name of the Kshatriya, the trader and money-getter under the name of the Vaishya, the half-fed labourer and economic serf under the name of the Shudra. When the economic basis also breaks down, then the unclean and diseased decrepitude of the old system has begun; it has become a name, a shell, a sham and must either be dissolved in the crucible of an individualist period of society or else fatally affect with weakness and falsehood the system of life that clings to it. That in visible fact is the last and present state of the caste system in India.

The tendency of the conventional age of society is to fix, to arrange firmly, to formalise, to erect a system of rigid grades and hierarchies, to stereotype religion, to bind education and training to a traditional and unchangeable form, to subject thought to infallible authorities, to cast a stamp of finality on what seems to it the finished life of man. The conventional period of society has its golden age when the spirit and thought that inspired

its forms are confined but yet living, not yet altogether walled in, not yet stifled to death and petrified by the growing hardness of the structure in which they are cased. That golden age is often very beautiful and attractive to the distant view of posterity by its precise order, symmetry, fine social architecture, the admirable subordination of its parts to a general and noble plan. Thus at one time the modern litterateur, artist or thinker looked back often with admiration and with something like longing to the mediaeval age of Europe; he forgot in its distant appearance of poetry, nobility, spirituality the much folly, ignorance, iniquity, cruelty and oppression of those harsh ages, the suffering and revolt that simmered below these fine surfaces, the misery and squalor that was hidden behind that splendid façade. So too the Hindu orthodox idealist looks back to a perfectly regulated society devoutly obedient to the wise yoke of the Shastra, and that is his golden age, – a nobler one than the European in which the apparent gold was mostly hard burnished copper with a thin gold-leaf covering it, but still of an alloyed metal, not the true Satya Yuga. In these conventional periods of society there is much indeed that is really fine and sound and helpful to human progress, but still they are its copper age and not the true golden; they are the age when the Truth we strive to arrive at is not realised, not accomplished,* but the exiguity of it eked out or its full appearance imitated by an artistic form, and what we have of the reality has begun to fossilise and is doomed to be lost in a hard mass of rule and order and convention.

For always the form prevails and the spirit recedes and diminishes. It attempts indeed to return, to revive the form, to modify it, anyhow to survive and even to make the form survive; but the time-tendency is too strong. This is visible in the history of religion; the efforts of the saints and religious reformers become progressively more scattered, brief and superficial in their actual effects, however strong and vital the impulse. We see this recession in the growing darkness and weakness of India in her last millennium; the constant effort of the most powerful spiritual personalities kept the soul of the people alive but failed to resuscitate the ancient free force and truth and vigour or permanently revivify a conventionalised and stagnating society; in a generation or two the iron grip of that conventionalism has always fallen on the new movement and annexed the names of its founders. We see it in Europe in the repeated moral tragedy of ecclesiasticism and Catholic monasticism. Then there arrives a period when the gulf between the convention and the truth becomes intolerable and the men of intellectual power arise, the great "swallowers of formulas", who, rejecting robustly or fiercely or with the calm light of reason symbol and type and convention, strike at the walls of the prison-house and seek by the individual reason, moral sense or emotional desire the Truth that society has lost or

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* *The Indian names of the golden age are Satya, the Age of the Truth, and Krita, the Age when the law of the Truth is accomplished.*

buried in its whited sepulchres. It is then that the individualistic age of religion and thought and society is created; the Age of Protestantism has begun, the Age of Reason, the Age of Revolt, Progress, Freedom. A partial and external freedom, still betrayed by the conventional age that preceded it into the idea that the Truth can be found in outsides, dreaming vainly that perfection can be determined by machinery, but still a necessary passage to the subjective period of humanity through which man has to circle back towards the recovery of his deeper self and a new upward line or a new revolving cycle of civilisation." (25: 11-14)

The Reason for the Coming of the Age of Individualism

"AN INDIVIDUALISTIC age of human society comes as a result of the corruption and failure of the conventional, as a revolt against the reign of the petrified typal figure. Before it can be born it is necessary that the old truths shall have been lost in the soul and practice of the race and that even the conventions which ape and replace them shall have become devoid of real sense and intelligence; stripped of all practical justification, they exist only mechanically by fixed idea, by the force of custom, by attachment to the form. It is then that men in spite of the natural conservatism of the social mind are compelled at last to perceive that the Truth is dead in them and that they are living by a lie. The individualism of the new age is an attempt to get

back from conventionalism of belief and practice to some solid bed-rock, no matter what, of real and tangible Truth. And it is necessarily individualistic, because all the old general standards have become bankrupt and can no longer give any inner help; it is therefore the individual who has to become a discoverer, a pioneer, and to search out by his individual reason, intuition, idealism, desire, claim upon life or whatever other light he finds in himself the true law of the world and of his own being. By that, when he has found or thinks he has found it, he will strive to rebase on a firm foundation and remould in a more vital even if a poorer form religion, society, ethics, political institutions, his relations with his fellows, his strivings for his own perfection and his labour for mankind." (25: 15)

The Reason Behind Its Initial Triumphant March – The Absence of Any Deeper or More Powerful Truth to Confront It

"It is in Europe that the age of individualism has taken birth and exercised its full sway; the East has entered into it only by contact and influence, not from an original impulse. And it is to its passion for the discovery of the actual truth of things and for the governing of human life by whatever law of the truth it has found that the West owes its centuries of strength, vigour, light, progress, irresistible expansion. Equally, it is due not to any original falsehood in the ideals on which its life was founded, but to the loss of the living sense of the Truth it once held and its long contented slumber in the cramping bonds of a mechanical conventionalism that the East has found itself helpless

in the hour of its awakening, a giant empty of strength, inert masses of men who had forgotten how to deal freely with facts and forces because they had learned only how to live in a world of stereotyped thought and customary action. Yet the truths which Europe has found by its individualistic age covered only the first more obvious, physical and outward facts of life and only such of their more hidden realities and powers as the habit of analytical reason and the pursuit of practical utility can give to man. If its rationalistic civilisation has swept so triumphantly over the world, it is because it found no deeper and more powerful truth to confront it; for all the rest of mankind was still in the inactivity of the last dark hours of the conventional age." (25: 15-16)

The Individualistic Age of Europe

"The individualistic age of Europe was in its beginning a revolt of reason, in its culmination a triumphal progress of physical Science. Such an evolution was historically inevitable. The dawn of individualism is always a questioning, a denial. The individual finds a religion imposed upon him which does not base its dogma and practice upon a living sense of ever verifiable spiritual Truth, but on the letter of an ancient book, the infallible dictum of a Pope, the tradition of a Church, the learned casuistry of schoolmen and Pundits, conclaves of ecclesiastics, heads of monastic orders, doctors of all sorts, all of them unquestionable tribunals whose sole function is to judge and pronounce, but none of whom seems to think it necessary or even allowable to search, test, prove, inquire, discover. He finds that, as is inevitable under such a regime, true science and knowledge are either banned, punished and persecuted or else rendered obsolete by the habit of blind reliance on fixed authorities; even what is true in old authorities is no longer of any value, because its words are learnedly or ignorantly repeated but its real sense is no longer lived except at most by a few. In politics he finds everywhere divine rights, established privileges, sanctified tyrannies which are evidently armed with an oppressive power and justify themselves by long prescription, but seem to have no real claim or title to exist. In the social order he finds an equally stereotyped reign of convention, fixed disabilities, fixed privileges, the self-regarding arrogance of the high, the blind prostration of the low, while the old functions which might have justified at one time such a distribution of status are either not performed at all or badly performed without any sense of obligation and merely as a part of caste pride. He has to rise in revolt; on every claim of authority he has to turn the eye of a resolute inquisition; when he is told that this is the sacred truth of things or the command of God or the immemorial order of human life, he has to reply, "But is it really so? How shall I know that this is the truth of things and not superstition and falsehood? When did God command it, or how do I know that this was the sense of His command and not your error or invention, or that the book on which you found yourself is His word at all, or that He has ever spoken His will to mankind? This immemorial order of which you speak, is it really immemorial, really a law of Nature or an imperfect result of Time and at present a most false convention? And of all you say, still I must ask, does it agree with the facts of the world, with my sense of right, with my judgment of truth, with my experience of reality?" And if it does not, the revolting individual flings off the yoke, declares the truth as he sees it and in doing so strikes inevitably at the root of the religious, the social, the political, momentarily perhaps even the moral order of the community as it stands, because it stands upon the authority he discredits and the convention he destroys and not upon a living truth which can be successfully opposed to his own." (25: 16-17)

The Movement of Religious Freedom in Europe

"The movement of religious freedom in Europe took its stand first on a limited, then on an absolute right of the individual experience and illumined reason to determine the true sense of inspired Scripture and the true Christian ritual and order of the Church. The vehemence of its claim was measured by the vehemence of its revolt from the usurpations, pretensions and brutalities of the ecclesiastical power which claimed to withhold the Scripture from general knowledge and impose by moral authority and physical violence its own arbitrary interpretation of Sacred Writ, if not indeed another and substituted doctrine, on the recalcitrant individual conscience. In its more tepid and moderate forms the revolt engendered such compromises as the Episcopalian Churches, at a higher degree of fervour Calvinistic Puritanism,

at white heat a riot of individual religious judgment and imagination in such sects as the Anabaptist, Independent, Socinian and countless others. In the East such a movement divorced from all political or any strongly iconoclastic social significance would have produced simply a series of religious reformers, illumined saints, new bodies of belief with their appropriate cultural and social practice; in the West atheism and secularism were its inevitable and predestined goal. At first questioning the conventional forms of religion, the mediation of the priesthood between God and the soul and the substitution of Papal authority for the authority of the Scripture, it could not fail to go forward and question the Scripture itself and then all supernaturalism, religious belief or suprarational truth no less than outward creed and institute." (25: 18-19)

The Two Sources of the Age of Individualism in Europe

"…the evolution of Europe was determined less by the Reformation than by the Renascence; it flowered by the vigorous return of the ancient Graeco-Roman mentality of the one rather than by the Hebraic and religio-ethical temperament of the other. The Renascence gave back to Europe on one hand the free curiosity of the Greek mind, its eager search for first principles and rational laws, its delighted intellectual scrutiny of the facts of life by the force of direct observation and individual reasoning, on the other the Roman's large practicality and his sense for the ordering of life in harmony with a robust utility and the just principles of things. But both these tendencies were pursued with a passion, a seriousness, a moral and almost religious ardour which, lacking in the ancient Graeco-Roman mentality, Europe owed to her long centuries of Judaeo-Christian discipline. It was from these sources that the individualistic age of Western society sought ultimately for that principle of order and control which all human society needs and which more ancient times attempted to realise first by the materialisation of fixed symbols of truth, then by ethical type and discipline, finally by infallible authority or stereotyped convention." (25: 19)

The Perils of an Unrestrained Use of Individual Judgment and the Need of a General Standard of Truth and Some Principle of Social Order

"…the unrestrained use of individual illumination or judgment without either any outer standard or any generally recognisable source of truth is a perilous experiment for our imperfect race. It is likely to lead rather to a continual fluctuation and disorder of opinion than to a progressive unfolding of the truth of things. No less, the pursuit of social justice through the stark assertion of individual rights or class interests and desires must be a source of continual struggle and revolution and may end in an exaggerated assertion of the will in each to live his own life and to satisfy his own ideas and desires which will produce a serious malaise or a radical trouble in the social body. Therefore on every individualistic age of mankind there is imperative the

search for two supreme desiderata. It must find a general standard of Truth to which the individual judgment of all will be inwardly compelled to subscribe without physical constraint or imposition of irrational authority. And it must reach too some principle of social order which shall be equally founded on a universally recognisable truth of things; an order is needed that will put a rein on desire and interest by providing at least some intellectual and moral test which these two powerful and dangerous forces must satisfy before they can feel justified in asserting their claims on life. Speculative and scientific reason for their means, the pursuit of a practicable social justice and sound utility for their spirit, the progressive nations of Europe set out on their search for this light and this law." (25: 19-20)

Triumphant March of Science in Europe

"The triumphant domination, the all-shattering and irresistible victory of Science in nineteenth-century Europe is explained by the absolute perfection with which it at least seemed for a time to satisfy these great psychological wants of the Western mind. Science seemed to it to fulfil impeccably its search for the two supreme desiderata of an individualistic age. Here at last was a truth of things which depended on no doubtful Scripture or fallible human authority but which Mother Nature herself had written in her eternal book for all to read who had patience to observe and intellectual honesty to judge. Here were laws, principles, fundamental facts of the world and of our being which all could verify at once for themselves and which must therefore satisfy and guide the free individual judgment, delivering it equally from alien

compulsion and from erratic self-will. Here were laws and truths which justified and yet controlled the claims and desires of the individual human being; here a science which provided a standard, a norm of knowledge, a rational basis for life, a clear outline and sovereign means for the progress and perfection of the individual and the race. The attempt to govern and organise human life by verifiable Science, by a law, a truth of things, an order and principles which all can observe and verify in their ground and fact and to which therefore all may freely and must rationally subscribe, is the culminating movement of European civilisation. It has been the fulfilment and triumph of the individualistic age of human society; it has seemed likely also to be its end, the cause of the death of individualism and its putting away and burial among the monuments of the past." (25: 20-21)

The Reason Behind the End of the Age of Individualism in the West and the East

"In the first place, rationalistic and physical Science has overpassed itself and must before long be overtaken by a mounting flood of psychological and psychic knowledge which cannot fail to compel quite a new view of the human being and open a new vista before mankind. At the same time the Age of Reason is visibly drawing to an end; novel ideas are sweeping over the world and are being accepted with a significant rapidity, ideas inevitably subversive of any premature typal order of economic rationalism, dynamic ideas such as Nietzsche's Will-to-live, Bergson's exaltation of Intuition above intellect or the latest German philosophical tendency to acknowledge a suprarational faculty and a suprarational order of truths. Already another mental poise is beginning to settle and conceptions are on the way to apply themselves in the field of practice which promise to give the succession of the individualistic age of society not to a new typal order, but to a subjective age which may well be a great and momentous passage to a very different goal. It may be doubted whether we are not already in the morning twilight of a new period of the human cycle.

Secondly, the West in its triumphant conquest of the world has awakened the slumbering East and has produced in its midst an increasing struggle between an imported Western individualism and the old conventional principle of society. The latter is here rapidly, there slowly breaking down, but something quite different from Western individualism may very well take its place. Some opine, indeed, that Asia will reproduce Europe's Age of Reason with all its materialism and secularist individualism while Europe itself is pushing onward into new forms and ideas; but this is in the last degree improbable. On the contrary, the signs are that the individualistic period in the East will be neither of long duration nor predominantly rationalistic and secularist in its character. If then the East, as the result of its awakening, follows its own bent and evolves a novel social tendency and culture, that is bound to have an enormous effect on the direction of the world's civilisation; we can measure its probable influence by the profound results of the first reflux of the ideas even of the unawakened East upon Europe. Whatever that effect may be, it will not be in favour of any re-ordering of society on the lines of the still current tendency towards a mechanical economism which has not ceased to dominate mind and life in the Occident. The influence of the East is likely to be rather in the direction of subjectivism and practical spirituality, a greater opening of our physical existence to the realisation of ideals other than the strong but limited aims suggested by the life and the body in their own gross nature." (25: 22-24)

The Two Idea-Forces of Master Potency Discovered by the Individualistic Age of Europe

"…the individualistic age of Europe has in its discovery of the individual fixed among the idea-forces of the future two of a master potency which cannot be entirely eliminated by any temporary reaction. The first of these, now universally accepted, is the democratic conception of the right of all individuals as members of the society to the full life and the full development of which they are individually capable. It is no longer possible that we should accept as an ideal any arrangement by which certain classes of society should arrogate development and full social fruition to themselves while assigning a bare and barren function of service alone to others.… in addition there is this deeper truth which individualism has discovered, that the individual is not merely a social unit; his existence, his right and claim to live and grow are not founded solely on his social work and function. He is not merely a member of a human pack, hive or ant-hill; he is something in himself, a soul, a being, who has to fulfil his own individual truth and law as well as his natural or his

assigned part in the truth and law of the collective existence.* He demands freedom, space, initiative for his soul, for his nature, for that puissant and tremendous thing which society so much distrusts and has laboured in the past either to suppress altogether or to relegate to the purely spiritual field, an individual thought, will and conscience. If he is to merge these eventually, it cannot be into the dominating thought, will and conscience of others, but into something beyond into which he and all must be both allowed and helped freely to grow. That is an idea, a truth which, intellectually recognised and given its full exterior and superficial significance by Europe, agrees at its root with the profoundest and highest spiritual conceptions of Asia and has a large part to play in the moulding of the future." (25: 24-25)

** This is no longer recognised by the new order, Fascist or Communistic, – here the individual is reduced to a cell or atom of the social body. "We have destroyed" proclaims a German exponent "the false view that men are individual beings; there is no liberty of individuals, there is only liberty of nations or races."*

The Psychological Seed-Cause and Justification of an Individualistic Age of Mankind

"THE INHERENT aim and effort and justification, the psychological seed-cause, the whole tendency of development of an individualistic age of mankind, all go back to the one dominant need of rediscovering the substantial truths of life, thought and action which have been overlaid by the falsehood of conventional standards no longer alive to the truth of the ideas from which their conventions started. It would seem at first that the shortest way would be to return to the original ideas themselves for light, to rescue the kernel of their truth from the shell of convention in which it has become incrusted. But to this course there is a great practical obstacle; and there is another which reaches beyond the surface of things, nearer to the deeper principles of the development of the soul in human society. The recovery of the old original ideas now travestied by convention is open to the practical disadvantage that it tends after a time to restore force to the conventions

which the Time-Spirit is seeking to outgrow and, if or when the deeper truth-seeking tendency slackens in its impulse, the conventions re-establish their sway. They revive, modified, no doubt, but still powerful; a new incrustation sets in, the truth of things is overlaid by a more complex falsity. And even if it were otherwise, the need of a developing humanity is not to return always to its old ideas. Its need is to progress to a larger fulfilment in which, if the old is taken up, it must be transformed and exceeded. For the underlying truth of things is constant and eternal, but its mental figures, its life forms, its physical embodiments call constantly for growth and change.

It is this principle and necessity that justify an age of individualism and rationalism and make it, however short it may be, an inevitable period in the cycle. A temporary reign of the critical reason largely destructive in its action is an imperative need for human progress." (25: 26-27)

The Place and the Working of the West Inspired Individualistic, Rationalistic and Utilitarian Age in India

"In India, since the great Buddhistic upheaval of the national thought and life, there has been a series of recurrent attempts to rediscover the truth of the soul and life and get behind the veil of stifling conventions; but these have been conducted by a wide and tolerant spiritual reason, a plastic soul-intuition and deep subjective seeking, insufficiently militant and destructive. Although productive of great internal and considerable external changes, they have never succeeded in getting rid of the predominant conventional order. The work of a dissolvent and destructive intellectual criticism, though not entirely absent from some of these movements, has never gone far enough; the constructive force, insufficiently aided by the destructive, has not been able to make a wide and free space for its new formation. It is only with the period of European influence and impact that circumstances and tendencies powerful enough to enforce the beginnings of a new age of

radical and effective revaluation of ideas and things have come into existence. The characteristic power of these influences has been throughout – or at any rate till quite recently – rationalistic, utilitarian and individualistic. It has compelled the national mind to view everything from a new, searching and critical standpoint, and even those who seek to preserve the present or restore the past are obliged unconsciously or half-consciously to justify their endeavour from the novel point of view and by its appropriate standards of reasoning. Throughout the East, the subjective Asiatic mind is being driven to adapt itself to the need for changed values of life and thought. It has been forced to turn upon itself both by the pressure of Western knowledge and by the compulsion of a quite changed life-need and life-environment. What it did not do from within, has come on it as a necessity from without and this externality has carried with it an immense advantage as well as great dangers." (25: 27)

The Need to Move Towards a Greater Subjective Age of Society

"…after a time it must become apparent that the knowledge of the physical world is not the whole of knowledge; it must appear that man is a mental as well as a physical and vital being and even much more essentially mental than physical or vital. Even though his psychology is strongly affected and limited by his physical being and environment, it is not at its roots determined by them, but constantly reacts, subtly determines their action, effects even their new-shaping by the force of his psychological demand on life. His economic state and social institutions are themselves governed by his psychological demand on the possibilities, circumstances, tendencies created by the relation between the mind and soul of humanity and its life and body. Therefore to find the truth of things and the law of his being in relation to that truth he must go deeper and fathom the subjective secret of himself and things as well as their objective forms and surroundings.

This he may attempt to do for a time by the power of the critical and analytic reason which has already carried him so far; but not for very long. For in his study of himself and the world he cannot but come face to face with the soul in himself and the soul in the world and find it to be an entity so profound, so complex, so full of hidden secrets and powers that his intellectual reason betrays itself as an insufficient light and a fumbling seeker: it is successfully analytical only of superficialities and of what lies just behind the superficies. The need of a deeper knowledge must then turn him to the discovery of new powers and means within himself. He finds that he can only know himself entirely by becoming actively self-conscious and not merely self-critical, by more and more living in his soul and acting out of it rather than floundering on surfaces, by putting himself into conscious harmony with that which lies behind his superficial mentality and psychology and by enlightening his reason and making dynamic his action through this deeper light and power to which he thus opens. In this process the rationalistic ideal begins to subject itself to the ideal of intuitional knowledge and a deeper self-awareness; the utilitarian standard gives way to the aspiration towards self-consciousness and self-realisation; the rule of living according to the manifest laws of physical Nature is replaced by the effort towards living according to the veiled Law and Will and Power active in the life of the world and in the inner and outer life of humanity.

All these tendencies, though in a crude, initial and ill developed form, are manifest now in the world and are growing from day to day with a significant rapidity. And their emergence and greater dominance means the transition from the rationalistic and utilitarian period of human development which individualism has created to a greater subjective age of society." (25: 28-29)

The New Subjective Tendencies in Education

"Formerly, education was merely a mechanical forcing of the child's nature into arbitrary grooves of training and knowledge in which his individual subjectivity was the last thing considered, and his family upbringing was a constant repression and compulsory shaping of his habits, his thoughts, his character into the mould fixed for them by the conventional ideas or individual interests and ideals of the teachers and parents. The discovery that education must be a bringing out of the child's own intellectual and moral capacities to their highest possible value and must be based on the psychology of the child-nature was a step forward towards a more healthy because a more subjective system; but it still fell short because it still regarded him as an object to be handled and moulded by the teacher, to be educated. But at least there was a glimmering of the realisation that each human being is a self-developing soul and that the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material. It is not yet realised what this soul is or that the true secret, whether with child or man, is to help him to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as "the leader of the march set in our front", will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception. These new educational methods are on the straight way to this truer dealing. The closer touch attempted with the psychical entity behind the vital and physical mentality and an increasing reliance on its possibilities must lead to the ultimate discovery that man is inwardly a soul and a conscious power of the Divine and that the evocation of this real man within is the right object of education and indeed of all human life if it would find and live according to the hidden Truth and deepest law of its own being. That was the knowledge which the ancients sought to express through religious and social symbolism, and subjectivism is a road of return to the lost knowledge. First deepening man's inner experience, restoring perhaps on an unprecedented scale insight and self-knowledge to the race, it must end by revolutionising his social and collective self-expression." (25: 32-33)

The Primal Law and Purpose of the Individual Life and the Life of a Collectivity

"THE PRIMAL law and purpose of the individual life is to seek its own self-development. Consciously or half-consciously or with an obscure unconscious groping it strives always and rightly strives at self-formulation, – to find itself, to discover within itself the law and power of its own being and to fulfil it. This aim in it is fundamental, right, inevitable because, even after all qualifications have been made and caveats entered, the individual is not merely the ephemeral physical creature, a form of mind and body that aggregates and dissolves, but a being, a living power of the eternal Truth, a self-manifesting spirit. In the same way the primal law and purpose of a society, community or nation is to seek its own self-fulfilment; it strives rightly to find itself, to become aware within itself of the law and power of its own being and to

fulfil it as perfectly as possible, to realise all its potentialities, to live its own self-revealing life. The reason is the same; for this too is a being, a living power of the eternal Truth, a self-manifestation of the cosmic Spirit, and it is there to express and fulfil in its own way and to the degree of its capacities the special truth and power and meaning of the cosmic Spirit that is within it. The nation or society, like the individual, has a body, an organic life, a moral and aesthetic temperament, a developing mind and a soul behind all these signs and powers for the sake of which they exist. One may say even that, like the individual, it essentially is a soul rather than has one; it is a group-soul that, once having attained to a separate distinctness, must become more and more self-conscious and find itself more and more fully as it develops its corporate action and mentality and its organic self-expressive life." (25: 35)

Difference Between the Individual Soul and the Group-Soul and the Evolution of the Latter

"There is only this difference that the group-soul is much more complex because it has a great number of partly self-conscious mental individuals for the constituents of its physical being instead of an association of merely vital subconscious cells. At first, for this very reason, it seems more crude, primitive and artificial in the forms it takes; for it has a more difficult task before it, it needs a longer time to find itself, it is more fluid and less easily organic. When it does succeed in getting out of the stage of vaguely conscious self-formation, its first definite self-consciousness is objective much more than subjective. And so far as it is subjective, it is apt to be superficial or loose and vague. This objectiveness comes out very strongly in the ordinary emotional conception of the nation which centres round its geographical,

its most outward and material aspect, the passion for the land in which we dwell, the land of our fathers, the land of our birth, *country*, *patria*, *vaterland*, *janma-bhūmi*. When we realise that the land is only the shell of the body, though a very living shell indeed and potent in its influences on the nation, when we begin to feel that its more real body is the men and women who compose the nation-unit, a body ever changing, yet always the same like that of the individual man, we are on the way to a truly subjective communal consciousness. For then we have some chance of realising that even the physical being of the society is a subjective power, not a mere objective existence. Much more is it in its inner self a great corporate soul with all the possibilities and dangers of the soul-life." (25: 35-36)

The Objective and Subjective Views of Society and Its History

"The objective view of society has reigned throughout the historical period of humanity in the West; it has been sufficiently strong though not absolutely engrossing in the East. Rulers, people and thinkers alike have understood by their national existence a political status, the extent of their borders, their economic well-being and expansion, their laws, institutions and the working of these things. For this reason political and economic motives have everywhere predominated on the surface and history has been a record of their operations and influence. The one subjective and psychological force consciously admitted and with difficulty deniable has been that of the individual. This predominance is so great that most modern historians and some political thinkers have concluded that objective necessities are by law of Nature the only really determining forces, all else is result or superficial accidents of these forces. Scientific history has been conceived as if it must be a record and

appreciation of the environmental motives of political action, of the play of economic forces and developments and the course of institutional evolution. The few who still valued the psychological element have kept their eye fixed on individuals and are not far from conceiving of history as a mass of biographies. The truer and more comprehensive science of the future will see that these conditions only apply to the imperfectly self-conscious period of national development. Even then there was always a greater subjective force working behind individuals, policies, economic movements and the change of institutions; but it worked for the most part subconsciously, more as a subliminal self than as a conscious mind. It is when this subconscious power of the group-soul comes to the surface that nations begin to enter into possession of their subjective selves; they set about getting, however vaguely or imperfectly, at their souls." (25: 36-37)

Germany – A Nation Preparing for a Subjective Stage

"Germany was for the time the most remarkable present instance of a nation preparing for the subjective stage because it had, in the first place, a certain kind of vision – unfortunately intellectual rather than illuminated – and the courage to follow it – unfortunately again a vital and intellectual rather than a spiritual hardihood, – and, secondly, being master of its destinies, was able to order its own life so as to express its self-vision. We must not be misled by appearances into thinking that the strength of Germany was created by Bismarck or directed by the Kaiser Wilhelm II. Rather the appearance of Bismarck was in many respects a misfortune for the growing nation because his rude and powerful hand precipitated its subjectivity into form and action

at too early a stage; a longer period of incubation might have produced results less disastrous to itself, if less violently stimulative to humanity. The real source of this great subjective force which has been so much disfigured in its objective action, was not in Germany's statesmen and soldiers – for the most part poor enough types of men – but came from her great philosophers, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Nietzsche, from her great thinker and poet Goethe, from her great musicians, Beethoven and Wagner, and from all in the German soul and temperament which they represented. A nation whose master achievement has lain almost entirely in the two spheres of philosophy and music, is clearly predestined to lead in the turn to subjectivism and to produce a profound result for good or evil on the beginnings of a subjective age." (25: 40-41)

The False Subjectivism of the German State and Its Terrible Consequences

"This was one side of the predestination of Germany; the other is to be found in her scholars, educationists, scientists, organisers. It was the industry, the conscientious diligence, the fidelity to ideas, the honest and painstaking spirit of work for which the nation has been long famous. A people may be highly gifted in the subjective capacities, and yet if it neglects to cultivate this lower side of our complex nature, it will fail to build that bridge between the idea and imagination and the world of facts, between the vision and the force, which makes realisation possible; its higher powers may become a joy and inspiration to the world, but it will never take possession of its own world until it has learned the humbler lesson. In Germany the bridge was there, though it ran mostly through a dark tunnel with a gulf underneath; for there was no pure transmission from the subjective mind of the thinkers and singers to the objective mind of the scholars and organisers. The misapplication by Treitschke of the teaching of Nietzsche to national and international uses which would have profoundly disgusted the philosopher himself, is an example of this obscure transmission. But still a transmission there was. For more than a half-century Germany turned a deep eye of subjective introspection on herself and things and ideas in search of the truth of her own being and of the world, and for another half-century a patient eye of scientific research on the objective means for organising what she had or thought she had gained. And something was done, something indeed powerful and enormous, but also in certain directions, not in all, misshapen and disconcerting. Unfortunately, those directions were precisely the very central lines on which to go wrong is to miss the goal.

It may be said, indeed, that the last result of the something Done – the war, the collapse, the fierce reaction towards the rigid, armoured, aggressive, formidable Nazi State, – is not only discouraging enough, but a clear warning to abandon that path and go back to older and safer ways. But the misuse of great powers is no argument against their right use. To go back is impossible; the attempt is always, indeed, an illusion; we have all to do the same thing which Germany has attempted, but to take care not to do it likewise. Therefore we must look beyond the red mist of blood of the War and the dark fuliginous confusion and chaos which now oppress the world to see why and where was the failure. For her failure which became evident by the turn her action took and was converted for the time being into total collapse, was clear even then to the dispassionate thinker who seeks only the truth. That befell her which sometimes befalls the seeker on the path of Yoga, the art of conscious self-finding, – a path exposed to far profounder perils than beset ordinarily the average man, – when he follows a false light to his spiritual ruin. She had mistaken her vital ego for herself; she had sought for her soul and found only

her force. For she had said, like the Asura, "I am my body, my life, my mind, my temperament," and become attached with a Titanic force to these; especially she had said, "I am my life and body," and than that there can be no greater mistake for man or nation. The soul of man or nation is something more and diviner than that; it is greater than its instruments and cannot be shut up in a physical, a vital, a mental or a temperamental formula. So to confine it, even though the false formation be embodied in the armour-plated social body of a huge collective human dinosaurus, can only stifle the growth of the inner Reality and end in decay or the extinction that overtakes all that is unplastic and unadaptable. It is evident that there is a false as well as a true subjectivism and the errors to which the subjective trend may be liable are as great as its possibilities and may well lead to capital disasters. This distinction must be clearly grasped if the road of this stage of social evolution is to be made safe for the human race." (25: 41-43)

The Subjective Stage of Human Development and the Critical Importance of Distinguishing Between True and False Subjectivism

"THE SUBJECTIVE stage of human development is that critical juncture in which, having gone forward from symbols, types, conventions, having turned its gaze superficially on the individual being to discover his truth and right law of action and its relation to the superficial and external truth and law of the universe, our race begins to gaze deeper, to see and feel what is behind the outside and below the surface and therefore to live from within. It is a step towards self-knowledge and towards living in and from the self, away from knowledge of things as the not-self and from the living according to this objective idea of life and the universe. Everything depends on how that step is taken, to what kind of subjectivity we arrive and how far we go in self-knowledge; for here the dangers of error are as great and far-reaching as the results of right seeking. The symbolic, the typal, the conventional age avoid these dangers by building a wall of self-limitation against them; and it is because this wall becomes in the end a prison of self-ignorance that it has to be broken down and the perilous but fruitful adventure of subjectivism undertaken." (25: 44)

The Necessary Psychic Self-Knowledge for Distinguishing Between The True and the False Movement of Subjectivism

"A psychic self-knowledge tells us that there are in our being many formal, frontal, apparent or representative selves and only one that is entirely secret and real; to rest in the apparent and to mistake it for the real is the one general error, root of all others and cause of all our stumbling and suffering, to which man is exposed by the nature of his mentality.…

The individual seeking for the law of his being can only find it safely if he regards clearly two great psychological truths and lives in that clear vision. First, the ego is not the self; there is one self of all and the soul is a portion of that universal Divinity. The fulfilment of the individual is not the utmost development of his egoistic intellect, vital force, physical well-being and the utmost satisfaction of his mental, emotional, physical cravings, but the flowering of the divine in him to its utmost capacity of wisdom, power, love and universality and through this flowering his utmost realisation of all the possible beauty and delight of existence.

The will to be, the will to power, the will to know are perfectly legitimate, their satisfaction the true law of our existence and to discourage and repress them improperly is to mutilate our being and dry up or diminish the sources of life and growth. But their satisfaction must not be egoistic, – not for any other reason moral or religious, but simply because they cannot so be satisfied. The attempt always leads to an eternal struggle with other egoisms, a mutual wounding and hampering, even a mutual destruction in which if we are conquerors today, we are the conquered or the slain tomorrow; for we exhaust ourselves and corrupt ourselves in the dangerous attempt to live by the destruction and exploitation of others. Only that which lives in its own self-existence can endure. And generally, to devour others is to register oneself also as a subject and predestined victim of Death.

No doubt, so long as we live without self-knowledge, we can do no other; men and nations have to act and think egoistically, because in their self-ignorance that is the only life known to them, and to live is their God-given impulse; therefore they must live egoistically rather than not at all, with whatever curb of law, ethics and practical common sense of self-restraint nature and experience have taught them. But subjectivism is in its very nature an attempt at self-knowledge and at living by a true self-knowledge and by an inner strength, and there is no real gain in it if we only repeat the old error in new terms. Therefore we must find out that the true individual is not the ego, but the divine individuality which is through our evolution preparing to emerge in us; its emergence and satisfaction and not the satisfaction of the mere egoistic will-to-live for the sake of one's lower members is the true object at which a humanity subjectively seeking to know and fulfil its own deepest law and truth should increasingly aim.

The second psychic truth the individual has to grasp is this, that he is not only himself, but is in solidarity with all of his kind, – let us leave aside for the moment that which seems to be not of his kind. That which we are has expressed itself through the individual, but also through the universality, and though each has to fulfil itself in its own way, neither can succeed independently of the other. The society has no right to crush or efface the individual for its own better development or self-satisfaction; the individual, so long at least as he chooses to live in the world, has no right to disregard for the sake of his own solitary satisfaction and development his fellow-beings and to live at war with them or seek a selfishly isolated good. And when we say, no right, it is from no social, moral or religious standpoint, but from the most positive and simply with a view to the law of existence itself. For neither the society nor the individual can so develop to their fulfilment. Every time the society crushes or effaces the individual, it is inflicting a wound on itself and depriving its own

life of priceless sources of stimulation and growth. The individual too cannot flourish by himself; for the universal, the unity and collectivity of his fellow-beings, is his present source and stock; it is the thing whose possibilities he individually expresses, even when he transcends its immediate level, and of which in his phenomenal being he is one result. Its depression strikes eventually at his own sources of life, by its increasing he also increases. This is what a true subjectivism teaches us, – first, that we are a higher self than our ego or our members, secondly, that we are in our life and being not only ourselves but all others; for there is a secret solidarity which our egoism may kick at and strive against, but from which we cannot escape. It is the old Indian discovery that our real "I" is a Supreme Being which is our true self and which it is our business to discover and consciously become and, secondly, that that Being is one in all, expressed in the individual and in the collectivity, and only by admitting and realising our unity with others can we entirely fulfil our true self-being." (25: 44-48)

The Errors of the German Subjectivism and Their Terrible Consequences

"Here was the first error of the German subjectivism. Reasoning of the Absolute and the individual and the universal, it looked into itself and saw that in fact, as a matter of life, That seemed to express itself as the ego and, reasoning from the conclusions of modern Science, it saw the individual merely as a cell of the collective ego. This collective ego was, then, the greatest actual organised expression of life and to that all ought to be subservient, for so could Nature and its evolution best be assisted and affirmed. The greater human collectivity exists, but it is an inchoate and unorganised existence, and its growth can best be developed by the better development of the most efficient organised collective life already existing; practically, then, by the growth, perfection and domination of the most advanced nations, or possibly of the one most advanced nation, the collective ego which has best realised the purpose of Nature and whose victory and rule is therefore the will of God. For all organised lives, all self-conscious egos are in a state of war, sometimes overt, sometimes covert, sometimes complete, sometimes partial, and by the survival of the best is secured the highest advance of the race. And where was the best, which was the most advanced, self-realising, efficient, highest-cultured nation, if not, by common admission as well as in Germany's own self-vision, Germany itself? To fulfil then the collective German ego and secure its growth and domination was at once the right law of reason, the supreme good of humanity and the mission of the great and supreme Teutonic race.*

From this egoistic self-vision flowed a number of logical consequences, each in itself a separate subjective error. First, since the individual is only a cell of the collectivity, his life must be entirely subservient to the efficient life of the nation. He must be made efficient indeed, – the nation should see to his education, proper living, disciplined life, carefully trained and subordinated activity, – but as a part of the machine or a disciplined instrument of the national Life. Initiative must be the collectivity's, execution the individual's. But where was that vague thing, the collectivity, and how could it express itself not only as a self-conscious, but an organised and efficient collective will and self-directing energy? The State, there was the secret. Let the State be perfect, dominant, all-pervading, all-seeing, all-effecting; so only could the collective ego be concentrated, find itself, and its life be brought to the highest pitch of strength, organisation and efficiency. Thus Germany founded and established the growing modern error of the cult of the State and the growing subordination driving in the end towards the effacement of the individual. We can see what it gained, an immense collective power and a certain kind of perfection and scientific adjustment of means to end and a high general level

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* *The emphasis has somewhat shifted now and taken its stand more upon the crude vitalistic notions of blood, race, life-room, but the old idea is there giving more force to the later formulation.*

of economic, intellectual and social efficiency, – apart from the tremendous momentary force which the luminous fulfilment of a great idea gives to man or nation. What it had begun to lose is as yet only slightly apparent, – all that deeper life, vision, intuitive power, force of personality, psychical sweetness and largeness which the free individual brings as his gift to the race.

Secondly, since the State is supreme, the representative of the Divine or the highest realised functioning of human existence, and has a divine right to the obedience, the unquestioning service and the whole activity of the individual, the service of State and community is the only absolute rule of morality. Within the State this may include and sanction all other moral rules because there no rebel egoism can be allowed, for the individual ego must be lost in that of the State or become part of it and all condition of covert or overt war must be abrogated in obedience to the collective good as determined by the collective will. But in relation to other States, to other collective egos the general condition, the effective law is still that of war, of strife between sharply divided egoisms each seeking to fulfil itself, each hampered and restricted in its field by the others. War then is the whole business of the State in its relation to other States, a war of arms, a war of commerce, a war of ideas and cultures, a war of collective personalities each seeking to possess the world or at least to dominate and be first in the world. Here there can enter no morality except that of success, though the pretence of morality may be a useful stratagem of war. To serve the State, the German collectivity which is his greater and real self is the business of the German individual whether at home or abroad, and to that end everything which succeeds is justifiable. Inefficiency, incompetence, failure are the only immorality. In war every method is justified which leads to the military success of the State, in peace every method which prepares it; for peace between nations is only a covert state of war. And as war is the means of physical survival and domination, so commerce is the means of economic survival and domination; it is in fact only another kind of war, another department of the struggle to live, one physical, the other vital. And the life and the body are, so Science has assured us, the whole of existence.

Thirdly, since the survival of the best is the highest good of mankind and the survival of the best is secured by the elimination of the unfit and the assimilation of the less fit, the conquest of the world by German culture is the straight path of human progress. But culture is not, in this view, merely a state of knowledge or a system or cast of ideas and moral and aesthetic tendencies; culture is life governed by ideas, but by ideas based on the truths of life and so organised as to bring it to its highest efficiency. Therefore all life not capable of this culture and this efficiency must be eliminated or trodden down, all life capable of it but not actually reaching to it must be taken up and assimilated. But capacity is always a matter of genus and species and in humanity a matter of race. Logically, then, the Teutonic* race is alone entirely capable, and therefore

* *"Nordic" is now the established term.*

all Teutonic races must be taken into Germany and become part of the German collectivity; races less capable but not wholly unfit must be Germanised; others, hopelessly decadent like the Latins of Europe and America or naturally inferior like the vast majority of the Africans and Asiatics, must be replaced where possible, like the Hereros, or, where not possible, dominated, exploited and treated according to their inferiority. So evolution would advance, so the human race grow towards its perfection.*

We need not suppose that all Germany thought in this strenuous fashion, as it was too long represented, or that the majority thought thus consciously; but it is sufficient that an energetic minority of thinkers and strong personalities should seize upon the national life and impress certain tendencies upon it for these to prevail practically or at the least to give a general trend subconsciously even where the thought itself is not actually proposed in the conscious mind. And the actual events of the present hour seem to show that it was this gospel that partly consciously, partly subconsciously or half articulately had taken possession of the collective German mind." (25: 48-51)

** This was written more than thirty years ago, but later developments have emphasised and brought out the truth of the description which was indeed much less apparent then.*

The Principle of Individualism – The Liberty of Individuals and Nations

"THE PRINCIPLE of individualism is the liberty of the human being regarded as a separate existence to develop himself and fulfil his life, satisfy his mental tendencies, emotional and vital needs and physical being according to his own desire governed by his reason; it admits no other limit to this right and this liberty except the obligation to respect the same individual liberty and right in others. The balance of this liberty and this obligation is the principle which the individualistic age adopted in its remodelling of society; it adopted in effect a harmony of compromises between rights and duties, liberty and law, permissions and restraints as the scheme both of the personal life and the life of the society. Equally, in the life of nations the individualistic age made liberty the ideal and strove though with less success than in its own proper sphere to affirm a mutual respect for each other's freedom as the proper conduct of nations to one another. In this idea of life, as with the individual, so with the nation, each has the inherent right to manage its own affairs freely or, if it wills, to mismanage them freely and not to be interfered with in its

rights and liberties so long as it does not interfere with the rights and liberties of other nations. As a matter of fact, the egoism of individual and nation does not wish to abide within these bounds; therefore the social law of the nation has been called in to enforce the violated principle as between man and man and it has been sought to develop international law in the same way and with the same object. The influence of these ideas is still powerful. In the recent European struggle the liberty of nations was set forth as the ideal for which the war was being waged, – in defiance of the patent fact that it had come about by nothing better than a clash of interests. The development of international law into an effective force which will restrain the egoism of nations as the social law restrains the egoism of individuals, is the solution which still attracts and seems the most practicable to most when they seek to deal with the difficulties of the future.*" (25: 55-56)

** No longer perhaps now, except with a dwindling minority – now that the League of Nations, constantly misused or hampered from its true functioning by the egoism and insincerity of its greater members, has collapsed into impotence and failure.*

"…the group self has no true right to regard the individual as if he were only a cell of its body, a stone of its edifice, a passive instrument of its collective life and growth. Humanity is not so constituted. We miss the divine reality in man and the secret of the human birth if we do not see that each individual man is that Self and sums up all human potentiality in his own being. That potentiality he has to find, develop, work out from within. No State or legislator or reformer can cut him rigorously into a perfect pattern; no Church or priest can give him a mechanical salvation; no order, no class life or ideal, no nation, no civilisation or creed or ethical, social or religious Shastra can be allowed to say to him permanently, "In this way of mine and thus far shalt thou act and grow and in no other way and no farther shall thy growth be permitted." These things may help him temporarily or they may curb and he grows in proportion as he can use them and then exceed them, train and teach his individuality by them, but assert it always in the end in its divine freedom. Always he is the traveller of the cycles and his road is forward.

True, his life and growth are for the sake of the world, but he can help the world by his life and growth only in proportion as he can be more and more freely and widely his own real self. True, he has to use the ideals, disciplines, systems of cooperation which he finds upon his path; but he can only use them well, in their right way and to their right purpose if they are to his life means towards something beyond them and not burdens to be borne by him for their own sake or despotic controls to be obeyed by him as their slave or subject; for though laws and disciplines strive to be the tyrants of the human soul, their only purpose is to be its instruments and servants and when their use is over they have to be rejected and broken. True it is, too, that he has to gather in his material from the minds and lives of his fellow-men around him and to make the most of the experience of humanity's past ages and not confine himself in a narrow mentality; but this he can only do successfully by making all this his own through assimilation of it to the principle of his own nature and through its subservience to the forward call of his enlarging future. The liberty claimed by the struggling human mind for the individual is no mere egoistic challenge and revolt, however egoistically or with one-sided exaggeration and misapplication it may sometimes be advanced; it is the divine instinct within him, the law of the Self, its claim to have room and the one primary condition for its natural self-unfolding.

Individual man belongs not only to humanity in general, his nature is not only a variation of human nature in general, but he belongs also to his race-type, his class-type, his mental, vital, physical, spiritual type in which he resembles some, differs from others. According to these affinities he tends to group himself in Churches, sects, communities, classes, coteries, associations whose life he helps, and by them he enriches the life of the large economic, social and

political group or society to which he belongs. In modern times this society is the nation. By his enrichment of the national life, though not in that way only, he helps the total life of humanity. But it must be noted that he is not limited and cannot be limited by any of these groupings; he is not merely the noble, merchant, warrior, priest, scholar, artist, cultivator or artisan, not merely the religionist or the worldling or the politician. Nor can he be limited by his nationality; he is not merely the Englishman or the Frenchman, the Japanese or the Indian; if by a part of himself he belongs to the nation, by another he exceeds it and belongs to humanity. And even there is a part of him, the greatest, which is not limited by humanity; he belongs by it to God and to the world of all beings and to the godheads of the future. He has indeed the

tendency of self-limitation and subjection to his environment and group, but he has also the equally necessary tendency of expansion and transcendence of environment and groupings. The individual animal is dominated entirely by his type, subordinated to his group when he does group himself; individual man has already begun to share something of the infinity, complexity, free variation of the Self we see manifested in the world. Or at least he has it in possibility even if there be as yet no sign of it in his organised surface nature. There is here no principle of a mere shapeless fluidity; it is the tendency to enrich himself with the largest possible material constantly brought in, constantly assimilated and changed by the law of his individual nature into stuff of his growth and divine expansion." (25: 67-69)

The Ideal Law of Social or National Development

"The nation or community is an aggregate life that expresses the Self according to the general law of human nature and aids and partially fulfils the development and the destiny of mankind by its own development and the pursuit of its own destiny according to the law of its being and the nature of its corporate individuality. It has like the individual the right to be itself, and its just claim, as against any attempt at domination by other nations or of attack upon its separate development by any excessive tendency of human uniformity and regimentation, is to defend its existence, to insist on being itself, to persist in developing according to the secret Idea within it or, as we say, according to the law of its own nature. This right it must assert not only or even principally for its own sake, but in the interests of humanity. For the only things that we can really call our rights are those conditions which are necessary to our free and sound development, and that again is our right because it is necessary to the development of the world and the fulfilment of the destiny of mankind.

…As the individual lives by the life of other individuals, so does the nation by the life of other nations, by accepting from them material for its own mental, economic and physical life; but it has to assimilate this material, subject it to the law of its own nature, change it into stuff of itself, work upon it by its own free will and consciousness, if it would live securely and grow soundly. To have the principle or rule of another nature imposed upon it by force or a de-individualising pressure is a menace to its existence, a wound to its being, a fetter upon its march. As the free development of individuals from within is the best condition for the growth and perfection of the community, so the free development of the community or nation from within is the best condition for the growth and perfection of mankind.

Thus the law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonise his life with the life of the

social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for the community or nation is equally to perfect its corporate existence by a free development from within, aiding and taking full advantage of that of the individual, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development of other communities and nations. Its law is to harmonise its life with that of the human aggregate and to pour itself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family, but even then, when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by the free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates." (25: 70-71)

The Economic Barbarism

"But if Science has thus prepared us for an age of wider and deeper culture and if in spite of and even partly by its materialism it has rendered impossible the return of the true materialism, that of the barbarian mentality, it has encouraged more or less indirectly both by its attitude to life and its discoveries another kind of barbarism, – for it can be called by no other name, – that of the industrial, the commercial, the economic age which is now progressing to its culmination and its close. This economic barbarism is essentially that of the vital man who mistakes the vital being for the self and accepts its satisfaction as the first aim of life. The characteristic of Life is desire and the instinct of possession. Just as the physical barbarian makes the excellence of the body and the development of physical force, health and prowess his standard and aim, so the vitalistic or economic barbarian makes the satisfaction of wants and desires and the accumulation of possessions his standard and aim. His ideal man is not the cultured or noble or thoughtful or moral or religious, but the successful man. To arrive, to succeed, to produce, to accumulate, to possess is his existence. The accumulation of wealth and more wealth, the adding of possessions to possessions, opulence, show, pleasure, a cumbrous inartistic luxury, a plethora of conveniences, life devoid of beauty and nobility, religion vulgarised or coldly formalised, politics and government turned into a trade and profession, enjoyment itself made a business, this is commercialism. To the natural unredeemed economic man beauty is a thing otiose or a nuisance, art and poetry a frivolity or an ostentation and a means of advertisement. His idea of civilisation is comfort, his idea of morals social respectability, his idea of politics the encouragement of industry, the opening of markets, exploitation and trade following the flag, his idea of religion at best a pietistic formalism or the satisfaction of certain vitalistic emotions. He values education for its utility in fitting a man for success in a competitive or, it may be, a socialised industrial existence, science for the useful inventions and knowledge, the comforts, conveniences, machinery of production with which it arms him, its power for organisation, regulation, stimulus to production. The opulent plutocrat and the successful mammoth capitalist and organiser of industry are the supermen of the commercial age and the true, if often occult rulers of its society.

The essential barbarism of all this is its pursuit of vital success, satisfaction, productiveness, accumulation, possession, enjoyment, comfort, convenience for their own sake. The vital part of the being is an element in the integral human existence as much as the physical part; it has its place but must not exceed its place. A full and well-appointed life is desirable for man living in society, but on condition that it is also a true and beautiful life. Neither the life nor the body exist for their own sake, but as vehicle and instrument of a good higher than their own. They must be subordinated to the superior needs of the mental being, chastened and purified by a greater law of truth, good and beauty before they can take their proper place in the integrality of human perfection. Therefore in a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession the soul of man may linger a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest. If it persisted too long, Life would become clogged and perish of its own plethora or burst in its straining to a gross expansion. Like the too massive Titan it will collapse by its own mass, *mole ruet sua.*" (25: 79-81)

The Definition of Culture and the Five Elements of Mental Culture

"The pursuit of the mental life for its own sake is what we ordinarily mean by culture;… our mental existence is a very complex matter and is made up of many elements. First, we have its lower and fundamental stratum, which is in the scale of evolution nearest to the vital. And we have in that stratum two sides, the mental life of the senses, sensations and emotions in which the subjective purpose of Nature predominates although with the objective as its occasion, and the active or dynamic life of the mental being concerned with the organs of action and the field of conduct in which her objective purpose predominates although with the subjective as its occasion. We have next in the scale, more sublimated, on one side the moral being and its ethical life, on the other the aesthetic; each of them attempts to possess and dominate the fundamental mind stratum and turn its experiences and activities to its own benefit, one for the culture and worship of Right, the other for the culture and worship of Beauty. And we have, above all these, taking advantage of them, helping, forming, trying often to govern them entirely, the intellectual being." (25: 84)

A Great Light and Its Working in Man

"..the intelligence of man is not composed entirely and exclusively of the rational intellect and the rational will; there enters into it a deeper, more intuitive, more splendid and powerful, but much less clear, much less developed and as yet hardly at all self-possessing light and force for which we have not even a name. But, at any rate, its character is to drive at a kind of illumination, – not the dry light of the reason, nor the moist and suffused light of the heart, but a lightning and a solar splendour. It may indeed subordinate itself and merely help the reason and heart with its flashes; but there is another urge in it, its natural urge, which exceeds the reason. It tries to illuminate the intellectual being, to illuminate the ethical and aesthetic, to illuminate the emotional and the active, to illuminate even the senses and the sensations. It offers in words of revelation, it unveils as if by lightning flashes, it shows in a sort of mystic or psychic glamour or brings out into a settled but for mental man almost a supernatural light a Truth greater and truer than the knowledge given by Reason

and Science, a Right larger and more divine than the moralist's scheme of virtues, a Beauty more profound, universal and entrancing than the sensuous or imaginative beauty worshipped by the artist, a joy and divine sensibility which leaves the ordinary emotions poor and pallid, a Sense beyond the senses and sensations, the possibility of a diviner Life and action which man's ordinary conduct of life hides away from his impulses and from his vision. Very various, very fragmentary, often very confused and misleading are its effects upon all the lower members from the reason downward, but this in the end is what it is driving at in the midst of a hundred deformations. It is caught and killed or at least diminished and stifled in formal creeds and pious observances; it is unmercifully traded in and turned into poor and base coin by the vulgarity of conventional religions; but it is still the light of which the religious spirit and the spirituality of man is in pursuit and some pale glow of it lingers even in their worst degradations." (25: 84-85)

A Great Complexity and Lack of Order in Man's Mental Being

"This very complexity of his mental being, with the absence of any one principle which can safely dominate the others, the absence of any sure and certain light which can guide and fix in their vacillations the reason and the intelligent will, is man's great embarrassment and stumbling-block. All the hostile distinctions, oppositions, antagonisms, struggles, conversions, reversions, perversions of his mentality, all the chaotic war of ideas and impulses and tendencies which perplex his efforts, have arisen from the natural misunderstandings and conflicting claims of his many members. His reason is a judge who gives conflicting verdicts and is bribed and influenced by the suitors; his intelligent will is an administrator harassed by the conflicts of the different estates of his realm and by the sense of his own partiality and final incompetence. Still in the midst of it all he has formed certain large ideas of culture and the mental life, and his conflicting notions about them follow certain definite lines determined by the divisions of his nature and shaped into a general system of curves by his many attempts to arrive either at an exclusive standard or an integral harmony." (25: 85-86)

The Philistine – The Modern Cultured Barbarian

"The last generation drew emphatically the distinction between the cultured man and the Philistine and got a fairly clear idea of what was meant by it. Roughly, the Philistine was for them the man who lives outwardly the civilised life, possesses all its paraphernalia, has and mouths the current stock of opinions, prejudices, conventions, sentiments, but is impervious to ideas, exercises no free intelligence, is innocent of beauty and art, vulgarises everything that he touches, religion, ethics, literature, life. The Philistine is in fact the modern civilised barbarian; he is often the half-civilised physical and vital barbarian by his unintelligent attachment to the life of the body, the life of the vital needs and impulses and the ideal of the merely domestic and economic human animal; but essentially and commonly he is the mental barbarian, the average sensational man. That is to say, his mental life is that of the lower substratum of the mind, the life of the senses, the life of the sensations, the life of the emotions, the life of practical conduct – the first status of the mental being. In all these he may be very active, very vigorous, but he does not govern them by a higher light or seek to uplift them to a freer and nobler eminence; rather he pulls the higher faculties down to the level of his senses, his sensations, his unenlightened and unchastened emotions, his gross utilitarian practicality. His aesthetic side is little developed; either he cares nothing for beauty or has the crudest aesthetic tastes which help to lower and vulgarise the general standard of aesthetic creation and the aesthetic sense. He is often strong about morals, far more particular usually about moral conduct than the man of culture, but his moral being is as crude and undeveloped as the rest of him; it is conventional, unchastened, unintelligent, a mass of likes and dislikes, prejudices and current opinions, attachment to social conventions and respectabilities and an obscure dislike – rooted in the mind of sensations and not in the intelligence – of any open defiance or departure from the generally accepted standard of conduct. His ethical bent is a habit of the sense-mind; it is the morality of the average sensational man. He has a reason and the appearance of an intelligent will, but they are not his own, they are part of the group-mind, received from his environment; or so far as they are his own, merely a practical, sensational, emotional reason and will, a mechanical repetition of habitual notions and rules of conduct, not a play of real thought and intelligent determination. His use of them no more makes him a developed mental being than the daily movement to and from his place of business makes the average Londoner a developed physical being or his quotidian contributions to the economic life of the country make the bank-clerk a developed economic man. He is not mentally active, but mentally reactive, – a very different matter." (25: 87-89)

The Modern Sensational Man

"The Philistine is not dead, – quite the contrary, he abounds, – but he no longer reigns. The sons of Culture have not exactly conquered, but they have got rid of the old Goliath and replaced him by a new giant. This is the sensational man who has got awakened to the necessity at least of some intelligent use of the higher faculties and is trying to be mentally active. He has been whipped and censured and educated into that activity and he lives besides in a maelstrom of new information, new intellectual fashions, new ideas and new movements to which he can no longer be obstinately impervious. He is open to new ideas, he can catch at them and hurl them about in a rather confused fashion; he can understand or misunderstand ideals, organise to get them carried out and even, it would appear, fight and die for them. He knows he has to think about ethical problems, social problems, problems of science and religion, to welcome

new political developments, to look with as understanding an eye as he can attain to at all the new movements of thought and inquiry and action that chase each other across the modern field or clash upon it. He is a reader of poetry as well as a devourer of fiction and periodical literature, – you will find in him perhaps a student of Tagore or an admirer of Whitman; he has perhaps no very clear ideas about beauty and aesthetics, but he has heard that Art is a not altogether unimportant part of life. The shadow of this new colossus is everywhere. He is the great reading public; the newspapers and weekly and monthly reviews are his; fiction and poetry and art are his mental caterers, the theatre and the cinema and the radio exist for him: Science hastens to bring her knowledge and discoveries to his doors and equip his life with endless machinery; politics are shaped in his image." (25: 89)

Sensational Activism – The Driving Force of Commercialism

"Commercialism is still the heart of modern civilisation; a sensational activism is still its driving force. Modern education has not in the mass redeemed the sensational man; it has only made necessary to him things to which he was not formerly accustomed, mental activity and occupations, intellectual and even aesthetic sensations, emotions of idealism. He still lives in the vital substratum, but he wants it stimulated from above. He requires an army of writers to keep him mentally occupied and provide some sort of intellectual pabulum for him; he has a thirst for general information of all kinds which he does not care or has not time to coordinate or assimilate, for popularised scientific knowledge, for such new ideas as he can catch, provided they are put before him with force or brilliance, for mental sensations and excitation of many kinds, for ideals which he likes to think of as actuating his conduct

and which do give it sometimes a certain colour. It is still the activism and sensationalism of the crude mental being, but much more open and free. And the cultured, the intelligentsia find that they can get a hearing from him such as they never had from the pure Philistine, provided they can first stimulate or amuse him; their ideas have now a chance of getting executed such as they never had before. The result has been to cheapen thought and art and literature, to make talent and even genius run in the grooves of popular success, to put the writer and thinker and scientist very much in a position like that of the cultured Greek slave in a Roman household where he has to work for, please, amuse and instruct his master while keeping a careful eye on his tastes and preferences and repeating trickily the manner and the points that have caught his fancy. The higher mental life, in a word, has been democratised, sensationalised, activised with both good and bad results." (25: 90-91)

Culture and Barbarism

"THE IDEA of culture begins to define itself for us a little more clearly, or at least it has put away from it in a clear contrast its natural opposites. The unmental, the purely physical life is very obviously its opposite, it is barbarism; the unintellectualised vital, the crude economic or the grossly domestic life which looks only to money-getting, the procreation of a family and its maintenance, are equally its opposites; they are another and even uglier barbarism. We agree to regard the individual who is dominated by them and has no thought of higher things as an uncultured and undeveloped human being, a prolongation of the savage, essentially a barbarian even if he lives in a civilised nation and in a society which has arrived at the general idea and at some ordered practice of culture and refinement. The societies or nations which bear this stamp we agree to call barbarous or semi-barbarous. Even when a nation or an age has developed within itself knowledge and science and arts, but still in its general outlook, its habits of life and thought is content

to be governed not by knowledge and truth and beauty and high ideals of living, but by the gross vital, commercial, economic view of existence, we say that that nation or age may be civilised in a sense, but for all its abundant or even redundant appliances and apparatus of civilisation it is not the realisation or the promise of a cultured humanity. Therefore upon even the European civilisation of the nineteenth century with all its triumphant and teeming production, its great developments of science, its achievement in the works of the intellect we pass a certain condemnation, because it has turned all these things to commercialism and to gross uses of vitalistic success. We say of it that this was not the perfection to which humanity ought to aspire and that this trend travels away from and not towards the higher curve of human evolution. It must be our definite verdict upon it that it was inferior as an age of culture to ancient Athens, to Italy of the Renascence, to ancient or classical India.… they were more advanced in the art of life, knew better its object and aimed more powerfully at some clear ideal of human perfection." (25: 92-93)

Aesthetic and Ethical Culture

"There is in our mentality a side of will, conduct, character which creates the ethical man; there is another side of sensibility to the beautiful, – understanding beauty in no narrow or hyper-artistic sense, – which creates the artistic and aesthetic man. Therefore there can be such a thing as a predominantly or even exclusively ethical culture; there can be too, evidently, a predominantly or even exclusively aesthetic culture. There are at once created two conflicting ideals which must naturally stand opposed and look askance at each other with a mutual distrust or even reprobation. The aesthetic man tends to be impatient of the ethical rule; he feels it to be a barrier to his aesthetic freedom and an oppression on the play of his artistic sense and his artistic faculty; he is naturally hedonistic, – for beauty and delight are inseparable powers, – and the ethical rule tramples on pleasure, even very often on quite innocent pleasures, and tries to put a strait waistcoat on the human impulse to delight. He may accept the ethical rule when it makes itself beautiful or even seize on it as one

of his instruments for creating beauty, but only when he can subordinate it to the aesthetic principle of his nature, – just as he is often drawn to religion by its side of beauty, pomp, magnificent ritual, emotional satisfaction, repose or poetic ideality and aspiration, – we might almost say, by the hedonistic aspects of religion. Even when fully accepted, it is not for their own sake that he accepts them. The ethical man repays this natural repulsion with interest. He tends to distrust art and the aesthetic sense as something lax and emollient, something in its nature undisciplined and by its attractive appeals to the passions and emotions destructive of a high and strict self-control. He sees that it is hedonistic and he finds that the hedonistic impulse is non-moral and often immoral. It is difficult for him to see how the indulgence of the aesthetic impulse beyond a very narrow and carefully guarded limit can be combined with a strict ethical life. He evolves the puritan who objects to pleasure on principle;…" (25: 95-96)

Republican Rome and Its Ethical Culture

"Republican Rome – before it was touched and finally taken captive by conquered Greece – stands out in relief as one of the most striking psychological phenomena of human history. From the point of view of human development it presents itself as an almost unique experiment in high and strong character-building divorced as far as may be from the sweetness which the sense of beauty and the light which the play of the reason brings into character and uninspired by the religious temperament; for the early Roman creed was a superstition, a superficial religiosity and had nothing in it of the true religious spirit. Rome was the human will oppressing and disciplining the emotional and sensational mind in order to arrive at the self-mastery of a definite ethical type; and it was this self-mastery

which enabled the Roman republic to arrive also at the mastery of its environing world and impose on the nations its public order and law. All supremely successful imperial nations have had in their culture or in their nature, in their formative or expansive periods, this predominance of the will, the character, the impulse to self-discipline and self-mastery which constitutes the very basis of the ethical tendency. Rome and Sparta like other ethical civilisations had their considerable moral deficiencies, tolerated or deliberately encouraged customs and practices which we should call immoral, failed to develop the gentler and more delicate side of moral character, but this is of no essential importance. The ethical idea in man changes and enlarges its scope, but the kernel of the true ethical being remains always the same, – will, character, self-discipline, self-mastery." (25: 97-98)

Rome and Sparta and the Failure of Their Ethical Culture

"Early Rome and Sparta were barren of thought, art, poetry, literature, the larger mental life, all the amenity and pleasure of human existence; their art of life excluded or discouraged the delight of living. They were distrustful, as the exclusively ethical man is always distrustful, of free and flexible thought and the aesthetic impulse. The earlier spirit of republican Rome held at arm's length as long as possible the Greek influences that invaded her, closed the schools of the Greek teachers, banished the philosophers, and her most typical minds looked upon the Greek language as a peril and Greek culture as an abomination: she felt instinctively the arrival at her gates of an enemy, divined a hostile and destructive force fatal to her principle of living. Sparta, though a Hellenic city, admitted as almost the sole aesthetic element of her deliberate ethical training and education a martial music and poetry, and even then, when she wanted a poet of war, she had to import an Athenian. We have a curious

example of the repercussion of this instinctive distrust even on a large and aesthetic Athenian mind in the utopian speculations of Plato who felt himself obliged in his Republic first to censure and then to banish the poets from his ideal polity. The end of these purely ethical cultures bears witness to their insufficiency. Either they pass away leaving nothing or little behind them by which the future can be attracted and satisfied, as Sparta passed, or they collapse in a revolt of the complex nature of man against an unnatural restriction and repression, as the early Roman type collapsed into the egoistic and often orgiastic licence of later republican and imperial Rome. The human mind needs to think, feel, enjoy, expand; expansion is its very nature and restriction is only useful to it in so far as it helps to steady, guide and strengthen its expansion. It readily refuses the name of culture to those civilisations or periods, however noble their aim or even however beautiful in itself their order, which have not allowed an intelligent freedom of development." (25: 98-99)

Athens – A Culture Concentrated on Thought and Beauty and the Delight of Living

"…we are tempted to give the name of a full culture to all those periods and civilisations, whatever their defects, which have encouraged a freely human development and like ancient Athens have concentrated on thought and beauty and the delight of living. But there were in the Athenian development two distinct periods, one of art and beauty, the Athens of Phidias and Sophocles, and one of thought, the Athens of the philosophers. In the first period the sense of beauty and the need of freedom of life and the enjoyment of life are the determining forces. This Athens thought, but it thought in the terms of art and poetry, in figures of music and drama and architecture and sculpture; it delighted in intellectual discussion, but not so much with any will to arrive at truth as for the pleasure of thinking and the beauty of ideas. It had its moral order, for without that no society can exist, but it had no true ethical impulse or ethical type, only a conventional and customary morality; and when it thought about ethics, it tended to express it in the terms of beauty, *to kalon*, *to epieikes*,

the beautiful, the becoming. Its very religion was a religion of beauty and an occasion for pleasant ritual and festivals and for artistic creation, an aesthetic enjoyment touched with a superficial religious sense. But without character, without some kind of high or strong discipline there is no enduring power of life. Athens exhausted its vitality within one wonderful century which left it enervated, will-less, unable to succeed in the struggle of life, uncreative. It turned indeed for a time precisely to that which had been lacking to it, the serious pursuit of truth and the evolution of systems of ethical self-discipline; but it could only think, it could not successfully practise. The later Hellenic mind and Athenian centre of culture gave to Rome the great Stoic system of ethical discipline which saved her in the midst of the orgies of her first imperial century, but could not itself be stoical in its practice; for to Athens and to the characteristic temperament of Hellas, this thought was a straining to something it had not and could not have; it was the opposite of its nature and not its fulfilment." (25: 99-100)

Italy of Renascence – An Example of the Insufficiency of the Aesthetic View of Life

"This insufficiency of the aesthetic view of life becomes yet more evident when we come down to its other great example, Italy of the Renascence. The Renascence was regarded at one time as pre-eminently a revival of learning, but in its Mediterranean birth-place it was rather the efflorescence of art and poetry and the beauty of life. Much more than was possible even in the laxest times of Hellas, aesthetic culture was divorced from the ethical impulse and at times was even anti-ethical and reminiscent of the licence of imperial Rome. It had learning and curiosity, but gave very little of itself to high thought and truth and the more finished achievements of the reason, although it helped to make free the way for philosophy and science. It so corrupted religion as to

provoke in the ethically minded Teutonic nations the violent revolt of the Reformation, which, though it vindicated the freedom of the religious mind, was an insurgence not so much of the reason, – that was left to Science, – but of the moral instinct and its ethical need. The subsequent prostration and loose weakness of Italy was the inevitable result of the great defect of its period of fine culture, and it needed for its revival the new impulse of thought and will and character given to it by Mazzini. If the ethical impulse is not sufficient by itself for the development of the human being, yet are will, character, self-discipline, self-mastery indispensable to that development. They are the backbone of the mental body." (25: 100)

Neither the Ethical, nor the Aesthetic Culture Alone or in Their Combination Can be the Sovereign Principle in Human Life

"Neither the ethical being nor the aesthetic being is the whole man, nor can either be his sovereign principle; they are merely two powerful elements. Ethical conduct is not the whole of life; even to say that it is three-fourths of life is to indulge in a very doubtful mathematics. We cannot assign to it its position in any such definite language, but can at best say that its kernel of will, character and self-discipline are almost the first condition for human self-perfection. The aesthetic sense is equally indispensable, for without that the self-perfection of the mental being cannot arrive at its object, which is on the mental plane the right and harmonious possession and enjoyment of the truth, power, beauty and delight of human existence. But neither can be the highest principle of the human order. We can combine them; we can enlarge the sense of ethics by the sense of beauty and delight and introduce into it to correct its tendency of hardness and austerity the element of gentleness, love, amenity, the hedonistic side of morals; we can steady, guide and strengthen the delight of life by the introduction of the necessary will and austerity and self-discipline

which will give it endurance and purity. These two powers of our psychological being, which represent in us the essential principle of energy and the essential principle of delight, – the Indian terms are more profound and expressive, Tapas and Ananda,* – can be thus helped by each other, the one to a richer, the other to a greater self-expression. But that even this much reconciliation may come about they must be taken up and enlightened by a higher principle which must be capable of understanding and comprehending both equally and of disengaging and combining disinterestedly their purposes and potentialities. That higher principle seems to be provided for us by the human faculty of reason and intelligent will. Our crowning capacity, it would seem to be by right the crowned sovereign of our nature." (25: 100-101)

** Tapas is the energising conscious-power of cosmic being by which the world is created, maintained and governed; it includes all concepts of force, will, energy, power, everything dynamic and dynamising. Ananda is the essential nature of bliss of the cosmic consciousness and, in activity, its delight of self-creation and self-experience.*

The Uniqueness of Reason Among the Means of Knowledge

"The intellectual reason is not man's only means of knowledge. All action, all perception, all aesthesis and sensation, all impulse and will, all imagination and creation imply a universal, many-sided force of knowledge at work and each form or power of this knowledge has its own distinct nature and law, its own principle of order and arrangement, its logic proper to itself, and need not follow, still less be identical with the law of nature, order and arrangement which the intellectual reason would assign to it or itself follow if it had control of all these movements. But the intellect has this advantage over the others that it can disengage itself from the work, stand back from it to study and understand it disinterestedly, analyse its processes, disengage its principles. None

of the other powers and faculties of the living being can do this: for each exists for its own action, is confined by the work it is doing, is unable to see beyond it, around it, into it as the reason can; the principle of knowledge inherent within each force is involved and carried along in the action of the force, helps to shape it, but is also itself limited by its own formulations. It exists for the fulfilment of the action, not for knowledge, or for knowledge only as part of the action. Moreover, it is concerned only with the particular action or working of the moment and does not look back reflectively or forward intelligently or at other actions and forces with a power of clear coordination." (25: 103-04)

The Work of Reason and Its Role as Governor of Life

"Reason,… exists for the sake of knowledge, can prevent itself from being carried away by the action, can stand back from it, intelligently study, accept, refuse, modify, alter, improve, combine and recombine the workings and capacities of the forces in operation, can repress here, indulge there, strive towards an intelligent, intelligible, willed and organised perfection. Reason is science, it is conscious art, it is invention. It is observation and can seize and arrange truth of facts; it is speculation and can extricate and forecast truth of potentiality. It is the idea and its fulfilment, the ideal and its bringing to fruition. It can look through the immediate appearance and unveil the hidden truths behind it. It is the servant and yet the master of all utilities; and it can, putting away all utilities, seek disinterestedly Truth for its own sake and by finding it reveal a whole world of new possible utilities. Therefore it is the sovereign power by which man has become possessed of himself, student and master of his own forces, the godhead on which the other godheads in him have leaned for help in their ascent; it has been the Prometheus of the mythical parable, the helper, instructor, elevating friend, civiliser of mankind." (25: 104-05)

The Highest Power of Reason and Man's Inability to Use It Properly

"The highest power of reason, because its pure and characteristic power, is the disinterested seeking after true knowledge. When knowledge is pursued for its own sake, then alone are we likely to arrive at true knowledge. Afterwards we may utilise that knowledge for various ends; but if from the beginning we have only particular ends in view, then we limit our intellectual gain, limit our view of things, distort the truth because we cast it into the mould of some particular idea or utility and ignore or deny all that conflicts with that utility or that set idea. By so doing we may indeed make the reason act with great immediate power within the limits of the idea or the utility we have in view, just as instinct in the animal acts with great power within certain limits, for a certain end, yet finds itself helpless outside those limits.… Even the thinking man ordinarily limits his reason to the working out of certain preferred ideas; he ignores or denies all that is not useful to these or does not assist or justify or actually contradicts or seriously modifies them,… It is in such limits that man's reason normally acts." (25: 106-07)

"But even the man who is capable of governing his life by ideas, who recognises, that is to say, that it ought to express clearly conceived truths and principles of his being or of all being and tries to find out or to know from others what these are, is not often capable of the highest, the free and disinterested use of his rational mind. As others are subject to the tyranny of their interests, prejudices, instincts or passions, so he is subjected to the tyranny of ideas. Indeed, he turns these ideas into interests, obscures them with his prejudices and passions and is unable to think freely about them, unable to distinguish their limits or the relation to them of other, different and opposite ideas and the equal right of these also to existence. Thus, as we constantly see, individuals, masses of men, whole generations are carried away by certain ethical, religious, aesthetic, political ideas or a set of ideas, espouse them with passion, pursue them as interests, seek to make them a system and lasting rule of life and are swept away in the drive of their action and do not really use the free and disinterested reason for the right knowledge of existence and for its right and sane government. The ideas are to a certain extent fulfilled, they triumph for a time, but their very success brings disappointment and disillusionment. This happens, first, because they can only succeed by compromises and pacts with the inferior, irrational life of man which diminish their validity and tarnish their light and glory. Often indeed their triumph is convicted of unreality, and doubt and disillusionment fall on the faith and enthusiasm which brought victory to their side. But even were it not so, the ideas themselves are partial and insufficient; not only have they a very partial triumph, but if their success were complete, it would still disappoint, because they are not the whole truth of life and therefore cannot securely govern and perfect life. Life escapes from the formulas and systems which our reason labours to impose on it; it proclaims itself too complex, too full of infinite potentialities to be tyrannised over by the arbitrary intellect of man.

This is the cause why all human systems have failed in the end; for they have never been anything but a partial and confused application of reason to life. Moreover, even where they have been most clear and rational, these systems have pretended that their ideas were the whole truth of life and tried so to apply them. This they could not be, and life in the end has broken or undermined them and passed on to its own large incalculable movement. Mankind, thus using its reason as an aid and justification for its interests and passions, thus obeying the drive of a partial, a mixed and imperfect rationality towards action, thus striving to govern the complex totalities of life by partial truths, has stumbled on from experiment to experiment, always believing that it is about to grasp the crown, always finding that it has fulfilled as yet little or nothing of what it has to accomplish." (25: 107-08)

No Real Success Inspite of the Persistence of a Faith that Reason Would Triumph Over Its Difficulties Eventually

"But behind all this continuity of failure there has persisted a faith that the reason of man would end in triumphing over its difficulties, that it would purify and enlarge itself, become sufficient to its work and at last subject rebellious life to its control. For, apart from the stumbling action of the world, there has been a labour of the individual thinker in man and this has achieved a higher quality and risen to a loftier and clearer atmosphere above the general human thought-levels. Here there has been the work of a reason that seeks always after knowledge and strives patiently to find out truth for itself, without bias, without the interference of distorting interests, to study everything, to analyse everything, to know the principle and process of everything. Philosophy, Science, learning, the reasoned arts, all the agelong labour of the critical reason

in man have been the result of this effort. In the modern era under the impulsion of Science this effort assumed enormous proportions and claimed for a time to examine successfully and lay down finally the true principle and the sufficient rule of process not only for all the activities of Nature, but for all the activities of man. It has done great things, but it has not been in the end a success. The human mind is beginning to perceive that it has left the heart of almost every problem untouched and illumined only outsides and a certain range of processes. There has been a great and ordered classification and mechanisation, a great discovery and practical result of increasing knowledge, but only on the physical surface of things. Vast abysses of Truth lie below in which are concealed the real springs, the mysterious powers and secretly decisive influences of existence." (25: 109)

The Difficulty of Reason in Governing Life

"The whole difficulty of the reason in trying to govern our existence is that because of its own inherent limitations it is unable to deal with life in its complexity or in its integral movements; it is compelled to break it up into parts, to make more or less artificial classifications, to build systems with limited data which are contradicted, upset or have to be continually modified by other data, to work out a selection of regulated potentialities which is broken down by the bursting of a new wave of yet unregulated potentialities. It would almost appear even that there are two worlds, the world of ideas proper to the intellect and the world of life which escapes from the full control of the reason, and that to bridge adequately the gulf between these two domains is beyond the power and province of the reason and the intelligent will. It would seem that these can only create either a series of more or less empirical compromises or else a series of arbitrary and practically inapplicable or only partially applicable systems. The reason of man struggling with life becomes either an empiric or a doctrinaire." (25: 110)

Why Even at Its Best Reason Fails to Govern Life

"…when it attempts a higher action reason separates itself from life. Its very attempt at a disinterested and dispassionate knowledge carries it to an elevation where it loses hold of that other knowledge which our instincts and impulses carry within themselves and which, however imperfect, obscure and limited, is still a hidden action of the universal Knowledge-Will inherent in existence that creates and directs all things according to their nature. True, even Science and Philosophy are never entirely dispassionate and disinterested. They fall into subjection to the tyranny of their own ideas, their partial systems, their hasty generalisations and by the innate drive of man towards practice they seek to impose these upon the life. But even so they enter into a world either of abstract ideas or of ideals or of rigid laws from which the complexity of life escapes. The idealist, the thinker, the philosopher, the poet and artist, even the moralist, all those who live much in ideas, when they come to grapple at close quarters with practical life, seem to find themselves something at a loss

and are constantly defeated in their endeavour to govern life by their ideas. They exercise a powerful influence, but it is indirectly, more by throwing their ideas into Life which does with them what the secret Will in it chooses than by a direct and successfully ordered action. Not that the pure empiric, the practical man really succeeds any better by his direct action; for that too is taken by the secret Will in life and turned to quite other ends than the practical man had intended. On the contrary, ideals and idealists are necessary; ideals are the savour and sap of life, idealists the most powerful diviners and assistants of its purposes. But reduce your ideal to a system and it at once begins to fail; apply your general laws and fixed ideas systematically as the doctrinaire would do, and Life very soon breaks through or writhes out of their hold or transforms your system, even while it nominally exists, into something the originator would not recognise and would repudiate perhaps as the very contradiction of the principles which he sought to eternise." (25: 111-12)

The Root of All the Difficulties of Reason

"The root of the difficulty is this that at the very basis of all our life and existence, internal and external, there is something on which the intellect can never lay a controlling hold, the Absolute, the Infinite. Behind everything in life there is an Absolute, which that thing is seeking after in its own way; everything finite is striving to express an infinite which it feels to be its real truth. Moreover, it is not only each class, each type, each tendency in Nature that is thus impelled to strive after its own secret truth in its own way, but each individual brings in his own variations. Thus there is not only an Absolute, an Infinite in itself which governs its own expression in many forms and tendencies, but there is also a principle of infinite potentiality and variation quite baffling to the reasoning intelligence; for the reason deals successfully only with the settled and the finite. In man this difficulty reaches its acme. For not only is mankind unlimited in potentiality; not only is each of its powers and tendencies seeking after its own absolute in its own way and therefore naturally restless under any rigid control

by the reason; but in each man their degrees, methods, combinations vary, each man belongs not only to the common humanity, but to the Infinite in himself and is therefore unique. It is because this is the reality of our existence that the intellectual reason and the intelligent will cannot deal with life as its sovereign, even though they may be at present our supreme instruments and may have been in our evolution supremely important and helpful. The reason can govern, but only as a minister, imperfectly, or as a general arbiter and giver of suggestions which are not really supreme commands, or as one channel of the sovereign authority, because that hidden Power acts at present not directly but through many agents and messengers. The real sovereign is another than the reasoning intelligence. Man's impulse to be free, master of Nature in himself and his environment cannot be really fulfilled until his self-consciousness has grown beyond the rational mentality, become aware of the true sovereign and either identified itself with him or entered into constant communion with his supreme will and knowledge." (25: 112-13)

The Office or Work of Reason

"It provides us with the great ideas that are forces (*idées forces*), ideas which in their own strength impose themselves upon our life and compel it into their moulds. Only the forms we give these ideas are intellectual; they themselves descend from a plane of truth of being where knowledge and force are one, the idea and the power of self-fulfilment in the idea are inseparable. Unfortunately, when translated into the forms of our intelligence which acts only by a separating and combining analysis and synthesis and into the effort of our life which advances by a sort of experimental and empirical seeking, these powers become disparate and conflicting ideals which we have all the difficulty in the world to bring into any kind of satisfactory harmony. Such are the primary principles of liberty and order, good, beauty and truth, the ideal of power and the ideal of love, individualism and collectivism, self-denial and self-fulfilment and a hundred others. In each sphere of human life, in each part of our being and our action the intellect presents us with the opposition of a number of such master ideas and such conflicting principles.

It finds each to be a truth to which something essential in our being responds, – in our higher nature a law, in our lower nature an instinct. It seeks to fulfil each in turn, builds a system of action round it and goes from one to the other and back again to what it has left. Or it tries to combine them but is contented with none of the combinations it has made because none brings about their perfect reconciliation or their satisfied oneness. That indeed belongs to a larger and higher consciousness, not yet attained by mankind, where these opposites are ever harmonised and even unified because in their origin they are eternally one.…

The individual and social progress of man has been thus a double movement of self-illumination and self-harmonising with the intelligence and the intelligent will as the intermediaries between his soul and its works. He has had to bring out numberless possibilities of self-understanding, self-mastery, self-formation out of his first crude life of instincts and impulses; …being, instincts into ideas, impulses into ordered movements of an intelligent will." (25: 116-17)

The Double Movement of Reason

"The one is a disinterested pursuit of truth for the sake of Truth and of knowledge for the sake of Knowledge without any ulterior motive, with every consideration put away except the rule of keeping the eye on the object, on the fact under enquiry and finding out its truth, its process, its law. The other is coloured by the passion for practice, the desire to govern life by the truth discovered or the fascination of an idea which we labour to establish as the sovereign law of our life and action. We have seen indeed that this is the superiority of reason over the other faculties of man that it is not confined to a separate absorbed action of its own, but plays upon all the others, discovers their law and truth, makes its discoveries serviceable to them and even in pursuing its own bent and end serves also their ends and arrives at a catholic utility. Man in fact does not live for knowledge alone; life in its widest sense is his principal preoccupation and he seeks knowledge for its utility to life much

more than for the pure pleasure of acquiring knowledge. But it is precisely in this putting of knowledge at the service of life that the human intellect falls into that confusion and imperfection which pursues all human action. So long as we pursue knowledge for its own sake, there is nothing to be said: the reason is performing its natural function; it is exercising securely its highest right. In the work of the philosopher, the scientist, the savant labouring to add something to the stock of our ascertainable knowledge, there is as perfect a purity and satisfaction as in that of the poet and artist creating forms of beauty for the aesthetic delight of the race. Whatever individual error and limitation there may be, does not matter; for the collective and progressive knowledge of the race has gained the truth that has been discovered and may be trusted in time to get rid of the error. It is when it tries to apply ideas to life that the human intellect stumbles and finds itself at fault." (25: 119-20)

The Limitations of Reason

"It can in its nature be used and has always been used to justify any idea, theory of life, system of society or government, ideal of individual or collective action to which the will of man attaches itself for the moment or through the centuries. In philosophy it gives equally good reasons for monism and pluralism or for any halting-place between them, for the belief in Being or for the belief in Becoming, for optimism and pessimism, for activism and quietism. It can justify the most mystic religionism and the most positive atheism, get rid of God or see nothing else. In aesthetics it supplies the basis equally for classicism and romanticism, for an idealistic, religious or mystic theory of art or for the most earthy realism. It can with equal power base austerely a strict and narrow moralism or prove triumphantly the thesis of the antinomian. It has been the sufficient and convincing prophet of every kind of autocracy or oligarchy and of every species of democracy; it supplies excellent and satisfying reasons

for competitive individualism and equally excellent and satisfying reasons for communism or against communism and for State socialism or for one variety of socialism against another. It can place itself with equal effectivity at the service of utilitarianism, economism, hedonism, aestheticism, sensualism, ethicism, idealism or any other essential need or activity of man and build around it a philosophy, a political and social system, a theory of conduct and life. Ask it not to lean to one idea alone, but to make an eclectic combination or a synthetic harmony and it will satisfy you; only, there being any number of possible combinations or harmonies, it will equally well justify the one or the other and set up or throw down any one of them according as the spirit in man is attracted to or withdraws from it. For it is really that which decides and the reason is only a brilliant servant and minister of this veiled and secret sovereign." (25: 121)

The Two Articles of the Faith of the Rationalist – The First Article

"This truth is hidden from the rationalist because he is supported by two constant articles of faith, first that his own reason is right and the reason of others who differ from him is wrong, and secondly that whatever may be the present deficiencies of the human intellect, the collective human reason will eventually arrive at purity and be able to found human thought and life securely on a clear rational basis entirely satisfying to the intelligence. His first article of faith is no doubt the common expression of our egoism and arrogant fallibility, but it is also something more; it expresses this truth that it is the legitimate function of the reason to justify to man his action and his hope and the faith that is in him and to give him that idea and knowledge, however restricted, and that dynamic conviction, however narrow and intolerant, which he needs in order that he may live, act and grow in the highest light available to him. The reason cannot grasp all truth in its embrace because truth is too infinite for it; but still it does grasp the something of it which we immediately need, and its insufficiency does not detract from the value of its work, but is

rather the measure of its value. For man is not intended to grasp the whole truth of his being at once, but to move towards it through a succession of experiences and a constant, though not by any means a perfectly continuous self-enlargement. The first business of reason then is to justify and enlighten to him his various experiences and to give him faith and conviction in holding on to his self-enlargings. It justifies to him now this, now that, the experience of the moment, the receding light of the past, the half-seen vision of the future. Its inconstancy, its divisibility against itself, its power of sustaining opposite views are the whole secret of its value. It would not do indeed for it to support too conflicting views in the same individual, except at moments of awakening and transition, but in the collective body of men and in the successions of Time that is its whole business. For so man moves towards the infinity of the Truth by the experience of its variety; so his reason helps him to build, change, destroy what he has built and prepare a new construction, in a word, to progress, grow, enlarge himself in his self-knowledge and world-knowledge and their works." (25: 121-22)

The Second Article of the Faith of the Rationalist

"The second article of faith of the believer in reason is also an error and yet contains a truth. The reason cannot arrive at any final truth because it can neither get to the root of things nor embrace the totality of their secrets; it deals with the finite, the separate, the limited aggregate, and has no measure for the all and the infinite. Nor can reason found a perfect life for man or a perfect society. A purely rational human life would be a life baulked and deprived of its most powerful dynamic sources; it would be a substitution of the minister for the sovereign. A purely rational society could not come into being and, if it could be born, either could not live or would sterilise and petrify human existence. The root powers of human life, its intimate causes are below, irrational, and they are above, suprarational. But this is true that by constant enlargement, purification, openness the reason of man is bound to

arrive at an intelligent sense even of that which is hidden from it, a power of passive, yet sympathetic reflection of the Light that surpasses it. Its limit is reached, its function is finished when it can say to man, 'There is a Soul, a Self, a God in the world and in man who works concealed and all is his self-concealing and gradual self-unfolding. His minister I have been, slowly to unseal your eyes, remove the thick integuments of your vision until there is only my own luminous veil between you and him. Remove that and make the soul of man one in fact and nature with this Divine; then you will know yourself, discover the highest and widest law of your being, become the possessors or at least the receivers and instruments of a higher will and knowledge than mine and lay hold at last on the true secret and the whole sense of a human and yet divine living.'" (25: 122-23)

Reason and Religion

"Here is a realm at which the intellectual reason gazes with the bewildered mind of a foreigner who hears a language of which the words and the spirit are unintelligible to him and sees everywhere forms of life and principles of thought and action which are absolutely strange to his experience. He may try to learn this speech and understand this strange and alien life; but it is with pain and difficulty, and he cannot succeed unless he has, so to speak, unlearned himself and become one in spirit and nature with the natives of this celestial empire. Till then his efforts to understand and interpret them in his own language and according to his own notions end at the worst in a gross misunderstanding and deformation. The attempts of the positive critical reason to dissect the phenomena of the religious life sound to men of spiritual experience like the prattle of a child who is trying to shape into the mould of his own habitual notions the life of adults or the blunders of an ignorant mind which thinks fit to criticise patronisingly or adversely the labours of a profound thinker or a great scientist." (25: 129)

The Two Attitudes of the Unaided Intellectual Reason Towards the Religious Life

"The unaided intellectual reason faced with the phenomena of the religious life is naturally apt to adopt one of two attitudes, both of them shallow in the extreme, hastily presumptuous and erroneous. Either it views the whole thing as a mass of superstition, a mystical nonsense, a farrago of ignorant barbaric survivals, – that was the extreme spirit of the rationalist now happily, though not dead, yet much weakened and almost moribund, – or it patronises religion, tries to explain its origins, to get rid of it by the process of explaining it away; or it labours gently or forcefully to reject or correct its superstitions, crudities, absurdities, to purify it into an abstract nothingness or persuade it to purify itself in the light of the reasoning intelligence; or it allows it a role, leaves it perhaps for the edification of the ignorant, admits its value as a moralising influence or its utility to the State for keeping the lower classes in order, even perhaps tries to invent that strange chimera, a rational religion." (25: 129-30)

The Deepest Heart, the Inmost Essence of Religion

"The deepest heart, the inmost essence of religion, apart from its outward machinery of creed, cult, ceremony and symbol, is the search for God and the finding of God. Its aspiration is to discover the Infinite, the Absolute, the One, the Divine, who is all these things and yet no abstraction but a Being. Its work is a sincere living out of the true and intimate relations between man and God, relations of unity, relations of difference, relations of an illuminated knowledge, an ecstatic love and delight, an absolute surrender and service, a casting of every part of our existence out of its normal status into an uprush of man towards the Divine and a descent of the Divine into man. All this has nothing to do with the realm of reason or its normal activities; its aim, its sphere, its process is suprarational. The knowledge of God is not to be gained by weighing the feeble arguments of reason for or against his existence: it is to be gained only by a self-transcending and absolute consecration, aspiration and experience. Nor does that experience proceed by anything like rational scientific experiment or

rational philosophic thinking. Even in those parts of religious discipline which seem most to resemble scientific experiment, the method is a verification of things which exceed the reason and its timid scope. Even in those parts of religious knowledge which seem most to resemble intellectual operations, the illuminating faculties are not imagination, logic and rational judgment, but revelations, inspirations, intuitions, intuitive discernments that leap down to us from a plane of suprarational light. The love of God is an infinite and absolute feeling which does not admit of any rational limitation and does not use a language of rational worship and adoration; the delight in God is that peace and bliss which passes all understanding. The surrender to God is the surrender of the whole being to a suprarational light, will, power and love and his service takes no account of the compromises with life which the practical reason of man uses as the best part of its method in the ordinary conduct of mundane existence. Wherever religion really finds itself, wherever it opens itself to its own spirit,… its way is absolute and its fruits are ineffable." (25: 131-32)

The Legitimate but Secondary and Subordinate Role of Reason in the Field of Religion

"It cannot lay down the law for the religious life, it cannot determine in its own right the system of divine knowledge; it cannot school and lesson the divine love and delight; it cannot set bounds to spiritual experience or lay its yoke upon the action of the spiritual man. Its sole legitimate sphere is to explain as best it can, in its own language and to the rational and intellectual parts of man, the truths, the experiences, the laws of our suprarational and spiritual existence. That has been the work of spiritual philosophy in the East and – much more crudely and imperfectly done – of theology in the West, a work of great importance at moments like the present when the intellect of mankind after a long wandering is again turning towards the search for the Divine. Here there must inevitably enter a part of those operations proper to the intellect, logical reasoning, inferences from the data given by rational experience, analogies drawn from our knowledge of the apparent facts of existence, appeals even to the physical truths of science, all the apparatus of

the intelligent mind in its ordinary workings. But this is the weakest part of spiritual philosophy. It convinces the rational mind only where the intellect is already predisposed to belief, and even if it convinces, it cannot give the true knowledge. Reason is safest when it is content to take the profound truths and experiences of the spiritual being and the spiritual life, just as they are given to it, and throw them into such form, order and language as will make them the most intelligible or the least unintelligible to the reasoning mind. Even then it is not quite safe, for it is apt to harden the order into an intellectual system and to present the form as if it were the essence. And, at best, it has to use a language which is not the very tongue of the suprarational truth but its inadequate translation and, since it is not the ordinary tongue either of the rational intelligence, it is open to non-understanding or misunderstanding by the ordinary reason of mankind. It is well-known to the experience of the spiritual seeker that even the highest philosophising cannot give a true inner knowledge, is not the spiritual light, does not open the gates of experience." (25: 132-33)

A Purely Rational Religion

"A purely rational religion could only be a cold and bare Deism, and such attempts have always failed to achieve vitality and permanence; for they act contrary to the *dharma*, the natural law and spirit of religion. If reason is to play any decisive part, it must be an intuitive rather than an intellectual reason, touched always by spiritual intensity and insight. For it must be remembered that the infrarational also has behind it a secret Truth which does not fall within the domain of the Reason and is not wholly amenable to its judgments. The heart has its knowledge, the life has its intuitive spirit within it, its intimations, divinations, outbreaks and upflamings of a Secret Energy, a divine or at least semi-divine aspiration and outreaching which the eye of intuition alone can fathom and only intuitive speech or symbol can shape or utter. To root out these things from religion or to purge religion of any elements necessary for its completeness because the forms are defective or obscure, without having the power to illuminate them from within or the patience to wait for their illumination from above or without replacing them by more luminous symbols, is not to purify but to pauperise." (25: 134-35)

The Spirit of the Great Classical and Romantic Art and Poetry

"The spirit of the real, the great classical art and poetry is to bring out what is universal and subordinate individual expression to universal truth and beauty, just as the spirit of romantic art and poetry is to bring out what is striking and individual and this it often does so powerfully or with so vivid an emphasis as to throw into the background of its creation the universal, on which yet all true art romantic or classical builds and fills in its forms. In truth, all great art has carried in it both a classical and a romantic as well as a realistic element, – understanding realism in the sense of the prominent bringing out of the external truth of things, not the perverse inverted romanticism of the "real" which brings into exaggerated prominence the ugly, common or morbid and puts that forward as the whole truth of life." (25: 139)

Reason and Beauty

"We find that in the end the place of reason and the limits of its achievement are precisely of the same kind in regard to beauty as in regard to religion. It helps to enlighten and purify the aesthetic instincts and impulses, but it cannot give them their highest satisfaction or guide them to a complete insight. It shapes and fulfils to a certain extent the aesthetic intelligence, but it cannot justly pretend to give the definitive law for the creation of beauty or for the appreciation and enjoyment of beauty. It can only lead the aesthetic instinct, impulse, intelligence towards a greatest possible conscious satisfaction, but not to it; it has in the end to hand them over to a higher faculty which is in direct touch with the suprarational and in its nature and workings exceeds the intellect.

And for the same reason, because that which we are seeking through beauty is in the end that which we are seeking through religion, the Absolute, the Divine." (25: 143-44)

To Find Highest Beauty is to Find God

"When, fulfilled in our growing sense and knowledge of beauty and delight in beauty and our power for beauty, we are able to identify ourselves in soul with this Absolute and Divine in all the forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive and embody of the All-Beautiful, then the aesthetic being in us who was born for this end, has fulfilled himself and risen to his divine consummation. To find highest beauty is to find God; to reveal, to embody, to create, as we say, highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God." (25: 145)

The Value of Religion, Art and Poetry to the Human Spirit

"This truth comes most easily home to us in Religion and in Art, in the cult of the spiritual and in the cult of the beautiful, because there we get away most thoroughly from the unrestful pressure of the outward appearances of life, the urgent siege of its necessities, the deafening clamour of its utilities. There we are not compelled at every turn to make terms with some gross material claim, some vulgar but inevitable necessity of the hour and the moment. We have leisure and breathing-time to seek the Real behind the apparent:… We begin to shake off our chains, we get rid of life in its aspect of a prison-house with Necessity for our jailer and utility for our constant taskmaster; we are admitted to the liberties of the soul; we enter God's infinite kingdom of beauty and delight or we lay hands on the keys of our absolute self-finding and open ourselves to the possession or the adoration of the Eternal. There lies the immense value of Religion, the immense value of Art and Poetry to the human spirit; it lies in their immediate power for inner truth, for self-enlargement, for liberation." (25: 147-48)

All Life is Only an Opportunity to Discover, Realise and Express the Divine

"…in all our practical life, we are content to be the slaves of an outward Necessity and think ourselves always excused when we admit as the law of our thought, will and action the yoke of immediate and temporary utilities. Yet even there we must arrive eventually at the highest truth. We shall find out in the end that our daily life and our social existence are not things apart, are not another field of existence with another law than the inner and ideal. On the contrary, we shall never find out their true meaning or resolve their harsh and often agonising problems until we learn to see in them a means towards the discovery and the individual and collective expression of our highest and, because our highest, therefore our truest and fullest self, our largest most imperative principle and power of existence. All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity given us to discover, realise, express the Divine." (25: 148)

The Rule for the Ethical Man

"There is only one safe rule for the ethical man, to stick to his principle of good, his instinct for good, his vision of good, his intuition of good and to govern by that his conduct. He may err, but he will be on his right road in spite of all stumblings, because he will be faithful to the law of his nature. The saying of the Gita is always true; better is the law of one's own nature though ill-performed, dangerous is an alien law however speciously superior it may seem to our reason. But the law of nature of the ethical being is the pursuit of good; it can never be the pursuit of utility.

Neither is its law the pursuit of pleasure high or base, nor self-satisfaction of any kind, however subtle or even spiritual. It is true, here too, that the highest good is both in its nature and inner effect the highest bliss.… The action of the ethical man is not motived by even an inner pleasure, but by a call of his being, the necessity of an ideal, the figure of an absolute standard, a law of the Divine." (25: 150-51)

The Ethical Being

"..the ethical being like the rest is a growth and a seeking towards the absolute, the divine, which can only be attained securely in the suprarational. It seeks after an absolute purity, an absolute right, an absolute truth, an absolute strength, an absolute love and self-giving, and it is most satisfied when it can get them in absolute measure, without limit, curb or compromise, divinely, infinitely, in a sort of godhead and transfiguration of the ethical being. The reason is chiefly concerned with what it best understands, the apparent process, the machinery, the outward act, its result and effect, its circumstance, occasion and motive; by these it judges the morality of the action and the morality of the doer. But the developed ethical being knows instinctively that it is an inner something which it seeks and the outward act is only a means of bringing out and manifesting within ourselves by its psychological effects that inner absolute and eternal entity. The value of our actions lies not so much in their apparent

nature and outward result as in their help towards the growth of the Divine within us. It is difficult, even impossible to justify upon outward grounds the absolute justice, absolute right, absolute purity, love or selflessness of an action or course of action; for action is always relative, it is mixed and uncertain in its results, perplexed in its occasions. But it is possible to relate the inner being to the eternal and absolute good, to make our sense and will full of it so as to act out of its impulsion or its intuitions and inspirations. That is what the ethical being labours towards and the higher ethical man increasingly attains to in his inner efforts.

In fact ethics is not in its essence a calculation of good and evil in the action or a laboured effort to be blameless according to the standards of the world, – those are only crude appearances, – it is an attempt to grow into the divine nature." (25: 153)

The Life Being

"…here we get to another power of our being which is different from the ethical, aesthetic, rational and religious, – one which, even if we recognise it as lower in the scale, still insists on its own reality and has not only the right to exist but the right to satisfy itself and be fulfilled. It is indeed the primary power, it is the base of our existence upon earth, it is that which the others take as their starting-point and their foundation. This is the life-power in us, the vitalistic, the dynamic nature. Its whole principle and aim is to be, to assert its existence, to increase, to expand, to possess and to enjoy: its native terms are growth of being, pleasure and power. Life itself here is Being at labour in Matter to express itself in terms of conscious force; human life is the human being at labour to impress himself on the material world with the greatest possible force and intensity and extension. His primary insistent aim must be to live and make for himself a place in the world, for himself and his species, secondly, having made it to possess, produce and enjoy with an ever-widening scope, and finally to spread himself over all the earth-life and dominate it;…"

(25: 156-57)

Life Can Fulfil Itself Only in the Spirit

"The ultimates of life are spiritual and only in the full light of the liberated self and spirit can it achieve them. That full light is not intellect or reason, but a knowledge by inner unity and identity which is the native self-light of the fully developed spiritual consciousness and, preparing that, on the way to it, a knowledge by intimate inner contact with the truth of things and beings which is intuitive and born of a secret oneness. Life seeks for self-knowledge; it is only by the light of the spirit that it can find it. It seeks for a luminous guidance and mastery of its own movements; it is only when it finds within itself this inner self and spirit and by it or in obedience to it governs its own steps that it can have the illumined will it needs and the unerring leadership. For it is so only that the blind certitudes of the instincts and the speculative hypotheses and theories and the experimental and inferential certitudes of reason can be replaced by the seeing spiritual certitudes. Life seeks the fulfilment of its instincts of love and sympathy, its yearnings after accord and union; but these are crossed by opposing instincts and it is only the spiritual consciousness with its realised abiding oneness that can abolish these oppositions. Life seeks for full growth of being, but it can attain to it only when the limited being has found in itself its own inmost soul of existence and around it its own widest self of cosmic consciousness by which it can feel the world and all being in itself and as itself. Life seeks for power; it is only the power of the spirit and the power of this conscious oneness that can give it mastery of its self and its world. It seeks for pleasure, happiness, bliss; but the infrarational forms of these things are stricken with imperfection, fragmentariness, impermanence and the impact of their opposites. Moreover infrarational life still bears some stamp of the Inconscient in an underlying insensitiveness, a dullness of fibre, a weakness of vibratory response, – it cannot attain to true happiness or bliss and what it can obtain of pleasure it cannot support for long or bear or keep any extreme intensity of these things. Only the spirit has the secret of an unmixed and abiding happiness or ecstasy, is capable of a firm tenseness of vibrant response to it, can achieve and justify a spiritual pleasure or joy of life as one form of the infinite and universal delight of being. Life seeks a harmonious fulfilment of all its powers, now divided and in conflict, all its possibilities, parts, members; it is only in the consciousness of the one self and spirit that that is found, for there they arrive at their full truth and their perfect agreement in the light of the integral Self-existence.

There is then a suprarational ultimate of Life no less than a suprarational Truth, Good and Beauty. The endeavour to reach it is the spiritual meaning of this seeking and striving Life-nature." (25: 171-72)

The Necessity of Making Religion as the Law of Life to Lift the Whole Life of Man into the Divine

"SINCE the infinite, the absolute and transcendent, the universal, the One is the secret summit of existence and to reach the spiritual consciousness and the Divine the ultimate goal and aim of our being and therefore of the whole development of the individual and the collectivity in all its parts and all its activities, reason cannot be the last and highest guide; culture, as it is understood ordinarily, cannot be the directing light or find out the regulating and harmonising principle of all our life and action. For reason stops short of the Divine and only compromises with the problems of life, and culture in order to attain the Transcendent and Infinite must become spiritual culture, something much more than an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and practical training.

Where then are we to find the directing light and the regulating and harmonising principle? The first answer which will suggest itself, the answer constantly given by the Asiatic mind, is that we shall find it directly and immediately in religion. And this seems a reasonable and at first sight a satisfying solution; for religion is that instinct, idea, activity, discipline in man which aims directly at the Divine, while all the rest seem to aim at it only indirectly and reach it with difficulty after much wandering and stumbling in the pursuit of the outward and imperfect appearances of things. To make all life religion and to govern all activities by the religious idea would seem to be the right way to the development of the ideal individual and ideal society and the lifting of the whole life of man into the Divine." (25: 173)

True Religion and Religionism

"There are two aspects of religion, true religion and religionism. True religion is spiritual religion, that which seeks to live in the spirit, in what is beyond the intellect, beyond the aesthetic and ethical and practical being of man, and to inform and govern these members of our being by the higher light and law of the spirit. Religionism, on the contrary, entrenches itself in some narrow pietistic exaltation of the lower members or lays exclusive stress on intellectual dogmas, forms and ceremonies, on some fixed and rigid moral code, on some religio-political or religio-social system. Not that these things are altogether negligible or that they must be unworthy or unnecessary or that a spiritual religion need disdain the aid of forms, ceremonies, creeds or systems. On the contrary, they are needed by man because the lower members have to be exalted and raised before they can be fully spiritualised, before they can

directly feel the spirit and obey its law. An intellectual formula is often needed by the thinking and reasoning mind, a form or ceremony by the aesthetic temperament or other parts of the infrarational being, a set moral code by man's vital nature in their turn towards the inner life. But these things are aids and supports, not the essence; precisely because they belong to the rational and infrarational parts, they can be nothing more and, if too blindly insisted on, may even hamper the suprarational light. Such as they are, they have to be offered to man and used by him, but not to be imposed on him as his sole law by a forced and inflexible domination. In the use of them toleration and free permission of variation is the first rule which should be observed. The spiritual essence of religion is alone the one thing supremely needful, the thing to which we have always to hold and subordinate to it every other element or motive." (25: 177-78)

"The mystics become the sowers of the seed of an immense spiritual development in which whole classes of society and even men from all classes seek the light, as happened in India in the age of the Upanishads. The solitary individual thinkers are replaced by a great number of writers, poets, thinkers, rhetoricians, sophists, scientific inquirers, who pour out a profuse flood of acute speculation and inquiry stimulating the thought-habit and creating even in the mass a generalised activity of the intelligence, – as happened in Greece in the age of the sophists. The spiritual development, arising uncurbed by reason in an infrarational society, has often a tendency to outrun at first the rational and intellectual movement. For the greatest illuminating force of the infrarational man, as he develops, is an inferior intuition, an instinctively intuitional sight arising out of the force of life in him, and the transition from this to an intensity of inner life and the growth of a deeper spiritual intuition which outleaps the intellect and seems to dispense with it, is an easy passage in the individual man. But for humanity at large this movement cannot last; the mind and intellect must develop to their fullness so that the spirituality of the race may rise securely upward upon a broad basis of the developed lower nature in man, the intelligent mental being. Therefore we see that the reason in its growth either does away with the distinct spiritual tendency for a time, as in ancient Greece, or accepts it but spins out around its first data and activities a vast web of the workings of the intelligence, so that, as in India, the early mystic seer is replaced by the philosopher-mystic, the religious thinker and even the philosopher pure and simple.

For a time the new growth and impulse may seem to take possession of a whole community as in Athens or in old Aryan India. But these early dawns cannot endure in their purity, so long as the race is not ready. There is a crystallisation, a lessening of the first impetus, a new growth of infrarational forms in which the thought or the spirituality is overgrown with inferior accretions or it is imbedded in the form and may even die in it, while the tradition of the living knowledge, the loftier life and activity remains the property of the higher classes or a highest class. The multitude remains infrarational in its habit of mind, though perhaps it may still keep in capacity an enlivened intelligence or a profound or subtle spiritual receptiveness as its gain from the past. So long as the hour of the rational age has not arrived, the irrational period of society cannot be left behind; and that arrival can

only be when not a class or a few but the multitude has learned to think, to exercise its intelligence actively – it matters not at first however imperfectly – upon their life, their needs, their rights, their duties, their aspirations as human beings. Until then we have as the highest possible development a mixed society, infrarational in the mass, but saved for civilisation by a higher class whose business it is to seek after the reason and the spirit, to keep the gains of mankind in these fields, to add to them, to enlighten and raise with them as much as possible the life of the whole.

At this point we see that Nature in her human mass tends to move forward slowly on her various lines of active mind and life towards a greater application of reason and spirituality which shall at last bring near the possibility of a rational and, eventually, a spiritual age of mankind. Her difficulties proceed from two sides. First, while she originally developed thought and reason and spirituality by exceptional individuals, now she develops them in the mass by exceptional communities or nations, – at least in the relative sense of a nation governed, led and progressively formed and educated by its intellectually or spiritually cultured class or classes. But the exceptional nation touched on its higher levels by a developed reason or spirituality or both, as were Greece and later Rome in ancient Europe, India, China and Persia in ancient Asia, is surrounded or neighboured by enormous masses of the old infrarational humanity and endangered by this menacing proximity; for until a developed science comes in to redress the balance, the barbarian has always a greater physical force and unexhausted native power of aggression than the cultured peoples. At this stage the light and power of civilisation always collapses in the end before the attack of the outer darkness. Then ascending Nature has to train the conquerors more or less slowly, with long difficulty and much loss and delay to develop among themselves what their incursion has temporarily destroyed or impaired. In the end humanity gains by the process; a greater mass of the nations is brought in, a larger and more living force of progress is applied, a starting-point is reached from which it can move to richer and more varied gains. But a certain loss is always the price of this advance." (25: 188-90)

How Reason and Spirituality Suffer in Infrarational Spiritual Societies and How the Rational Age Gets Instituted in Such Societies

"But even within the communities themselves reason and spirituality at this stage are always hampered and endangered by existing in a milieu and atmosphere not their own. The élite, the classes in charge of these powers, are obliged to throw them into forms which the mass of human ignorance they lead and rule will accept, and both reason and spirituality tend to be stifled by these forms, to get stereotyped, fossilised, void of life, bound up from their natural play. Secondly, since they are after all part of the mass, these higher enlightened elements are themselves much under the influence of their infrarational parts and do not, except in individuals, arrive at the entirely free play of the reason or the free light of the spirit. Thirdly, there is always the danger of these elements gravitating downward to the ignorance below or even collapsing into it. Nature guards herself by various devices for maintaining the tradition of intellectual and spiritual activity in the favoured classes; here she makes it a point of honour for them to preserve and promote the national

culture, there she establishes a preservative system of education and discipline. And in order that these things may not degenerate into mere traditionalism, she brings in a series of intellectual or spiritual movements which by their shock revivify the failing life and help to bring about a broadening and an enlarging and to drive the dominant reason or spirituality deeper down into the infrarational mass. Each movement indeed tends to petrify after a shorter or longer activity, but a fresh shock, a new wave arrives in time to save and regenerate. Finally, she reaches the point when, all immediate danger of relapse overcome, she can proceed to her next decisive advance in the cycle of social evolution. This must take the form of an attempt to universalise first of all the habit of reason and the application of the intelligence and intelligent will to life. Thus is instituted the rational age of human society, the great endeavour to bring the power of the reason and intelligence to bear on all that we are and do and to organise in their light and by their guiding force the entire existence of the race." (25: 190-91)

The Working of Reason and the Development of Universal Questioning

"Reason can accept no tradition merely for the sake of its antiquity or its past greatness: it has to ask, first, whether the tradition contains at all any still living truth and, secondly, whether it contains the best truth available to man for the government of his life. Reason can accept no convention merely because men are agreed upon it: it has to ask whether they are right in their agreement, whether it is not an inert and false acquiescence. Reason cannot accept any institution merely because it serves some purpose of life: it has to ask whether there are not greater and better purposes which can be best served by new institutions. There arises the necessity of a universal questioning, and from that necessity arises the idea that society can only be perfected by the universal application of the rational intelligence to the whole of life, to its principle as to its details, to its machinery and to the powers that drive the machine." (25: 195)

The Universal Application of Reason, the Practice of the Principle of Individualistic Democracy and the First Results of Its Practice

"This reason which is to be universally applied, cannot be the reason of a ruling class; for in the present imperfection of the human race that always means in practice the fettering and misapplication of reason degraded into a servant of power to maintain the privileges of the ruling class and justify the existing order. It cannot be the reason of a few pre-eminent thinkers; for, if the mass is infrarational, the application of their ideas becomes in practice disfigured, ineffective, incomplete, speedily altered into mere form and convention. It must be the reason of each and all seeking for a basis of agreement. Hence arises the principle of individualistic democracy, that the reason and will of every individual in the society must be allowed to count equally with the reason and will of every other in determining its government, in selecting the essential basis and in arranging the detailed ordering of the common life. This must be, not because the reason of one man is as good as the reason of any other, but because otherwise we get back inevitably to the rule of a predominant class which, however modified by being obliged to consider to some extent the opinion of the ruled, must exhibit always the irrational vice of reason subordinated to the purposes of power and not flexibly used for its own proper and ideal ends. Secondly, each individual must be allowed to govern his life according to the dictates of his own reason and will so far as that can be done without impinging on the same right in others. This is a necessary corollary of the primary principle on which the age of reason founds its initial movement. It is sufficient for the first purposes of the rational age that each man should be supposed to have sufficient intelligence to understand views which are presented and explained to him, to consider the opinions of his fellows and to form in consultation with them his own judgment. His individual judgment so formed and by one device or another made effective is the share he contributes to the building of the total common judgment by which society must be ruled, his little brick in appearance insignificant and yet indispensable to the imposing whole. And it is sufficient also for the first ideal of the rational age that this common judgment should be effectively organised only for the indispensable common ends of the society, while in all else men must be left free to govern their own life according to their own reason and will and find freely its best possible natural adjustment with the lives of others. In this way by the practice of the free use of reason men can grow into rational beings and learn to live by common agreement a liberal, a vigorous, a natural and yet rationalised existence.

In practice it is found that these ideas will not hold for a long time. For the ordinary man is not yet a rational being; emerging from a long infrarational past, he is not naturally able to form a reasonable judgment, but thinks either according to his own interests, impulses and prejudices or else according to

the ideas of others more active in intelligence or swift in action who are able by some means to establish an influence over his mind. Secondly, he does not yet use his reason in order to come to an agreement with his fellows, but rather to enforce his own opinions by struggle and conflict with the opinions of others. Exceptionally he may utilise his reason for the pursuit of truth, but normally it serves for the justification of his impulses, prejudices and interests, and it is these that determine or at least quite discolour and disfigure his ideals, even when he has learned at all to have ideals. Finally, he does not use his freedom to arrive at a rational adjustment of his life with the life of others; his natural tendency is to enforce the aims of his life even at the expense of or, as it is euphemistically put, in competition with the life of others. There comes thus to be a wide gulf between the ideal and the first results of its practice. There is here a disparity between fact and idea that must lead to inevitable disillusionment and failure." (25: 195-97)

The First Results of the Practice of the Democratic Ideal – The Rule of a Dominant Class in the Name of Democracy

"The individualistic democratic ideal brings us at first in actual practice to the more and more precarious rule of a dominant class in the name of democracy over the ignorant, numerous and less fortunate mass. Secondly, since the ideal of freedom and equality is abroad and cannot any longer be stifled, it must lead to the increasing effort of the exploited masses to assert their down-trodden right and to turn, if they can, this pseudo-democratic falsehood into the real democratic truth; therefore, to a war of classes. Thirdly, it develops inevitably as part of its process a perpetual strife of parties, at first few and simple in composition, but afterwards as at the present time an

impotent and sterilising chaos of names, labels, programmes, war-cries. All lift the banner of conflicting ideas or ideals, but all are really fighting out under that flag a battle of conflicting interests. Finally, individualistic democratic freedom results fatally in an increasing stress of competition which replaces the ordered tyrannies of the infrarational periods of humanity by a sort of ordered conflict. And this conflict ends in the survival not of the spiritually, rationally or physically fittest, but of the most fortunate and vitally successful. It is evident enough that, whatever else it may be, this is not a rational order of society; it is not at all the perfection which the individualistic reason of man had contemplated as its ideal or set out to accomplish." (25: 197-98)

The Prescribed Remedy for the Defects – The Movement Towards Universal Education

"The natural remedy for the first defects of the individualistic theory in practice would seem to be education; for if man is not by nature, we may hope at least that he can be made by education and training something like a rational being. Universal education, therefore, is the inevitable second step of the democratic movement in its attempt to rationalise human society. But a rational education means necessarily three things, first, to teach men how to observe and know rightly the facts on which they have to form a judgment; secondly, to train them to think fruitfully and soundly; thirdly, to fit them to use their knowledge and their thought effectively for their own and the common good. Capacity of observation and knowledge, capacity of intelligence and judgment, capacity of action and high character are

required for the citizenship of a rational order of society; a general deficiency in any of these difficult requisites is a sure source of failure. Unfortunately, – even if we suppose that any training made available to the millions can ever be of this rare character, – the actual education given in the most advanced countries has not had the least relation to these necessities. And just as the first defects and failures of democracy have given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme and to vaunt the superiority or even the quite imaginary perfection of the ideal past, so also the first defects of its great remedy, education, have led many superior minds to deny the efficacy of education and its power to transform the human mind and driven them to condemn the democratic ideal as an exploded fiction." (25: 198-99)

The Achievements of Democracy and Its Panacea of Education and Freedom and Their Initial Bankruptcies

"Democracy and its panacea of education and freedom have certainly done something for the race. To begin with, the people are, for the first time in the historical period of history, erect, active and alive, and where there is life, there is always a hope of better things. Again, some kind of knowledge and with it some kind of active intelligence based on knowledge and strengthened by the habit of being called on to judge and decide between conflicting issues and opinions in all sorts of matters have been much more generalised than was formerly possible. Men are being progressively trained to use their minds, to apply intelligence to life, and that is a great gain. If they have not yet learned to think for themselves or to think soundly, clearly and rightly, they are at least more able now to choose with some kind of initial intelligence, however imperfect as yet it may be, the thought they shall accept and the rule they shall follow. Equal educational equipment and equal opportunity of life have by no means been acquired; but there is a much greater equalisation than was at all possible in former states of society. But here a new and enormous defect has revealed itself which is proving fatal to the social idea which engendered it. For given even perfect equality of educational and other opportunity, – and that does not yet really exist and cannot in the individualistic state of society, – to what purpose or in what manner is the opportunity likely to be used? Man, the half infrarational being, demands three things for his satisfaction, power, if he can have it, but at any rate the use and reward of his faculties and the enjoyment of his desires. In the old societies the possibility of these could be secured by him to a certain extent according to his birth, his fixed status and the use of his capacity within the limits of his hereditary status. That basis once removed and no proper substitute provided, the same ends can only be secured by success in a scramble for the one power left, the power of wealth. Accordingly, instead of a harmoniously ordered society there has been developed a huge organised competitive system, a frantically rapid and one-sided development of industrialism and, under the garb of democracy, an increasing plutocratic tendency that shocks by its ostentatious grossness and the magnitudes of its gulfs and distances. These have been the last results of the individualistic ideal and its democratic machinery, the initial bankruptcies of the rational age.

The first natural result has been the transition of the rational mind from democratic individualism to democratic socialism. Socialism, labouring under the disadvantageous accident of its birth in a revolt against capitalism, an uprising against the rule of the successful bourgeois and the plutocrat, has been compelled to work itself out by a war of classes." (25: 199-200)

The Likely Future of Russian Marxism and Other Collectivist Idealisms

"In Russia the Marxist system of Socialism has been turned almost into a gospel. Originally a rationalistic system worked out by a logical thinker and discoverer and systematiser of ideas, it has been transformed by the peculiar turn of the Russian mind into something like a social religion, a collectivist *mystique*, an inviolable body of doctrines with all denial or departure treated as a punishable heresy, a social cult enforced by the intolerant piety and enthusiasm of a converted people. In Fascist countries the swing away from Rationalism is marked and open; a surface vital subjectivism has taken its place and it is in the name of the national soul and its self-expression and manifestation that the leaders and prophets teach and violently enforce their totalitarian *mystique*. The essential features are the same in Russia and in Fascist countries, so that to the eye of the outsider their deadly quarrel seems to be a blood-feud of kinsmen fighting for the inheritance of their slaughtered parents – Democracy and the Age of Reason. There is the seizure of the life of the community by a dominant individual leader, Führer, Dux, dictator, head of a small active minority, the Nazi, Fascist or Communist party, and supported by a militarised partisan force; there is a rapid crystallisation of the social, economic, political life of the people into a new rigid organisation effectively controlled at every point; there is the compulsory casting of thought, education, expression, action, into a set iron mould, a fixed system of ideas and life-motives, with a fierce and ruthless, often a sanguinary repression of all that denies and differs; there is a total unprecedented compression of the whole communal existence so as to compel a maximum efficiency and a complete unanimity of mind, speech, feeling, life.

If this trend becomes universal, it is the end of the Age of Reason, the suicide or the execution – by decapitation or lethal pressure, *peine forte et dure*, – of the rational and intellectual expansion of the human mental being. Reason cannot do its work, act or rule if the mind of man is denied freedom to think or freedom to realise its thought by action in life. But neither can a subjective age be the outcome; for the growth of subjectivism also cannot proceed without plasticity, without movement of self-search, without room to move, expand, develop, change. The result is likely to be rather the creation of a tenebrous No Man's Land where obscure mysticisms, materialistic, vitalistic or mixed, clash and battle for the mastery of human life. But this consummation is not certain; chaos and confusion still reign and all hangs in the balance. Totalitarian mysticism may not be able to carry out its menace of occupying the globe, may not even endure. Spaces of the earth may be left where a rational idealism can still survive. The terrible compression now exercised on the national mind and life may lead to an explosion from within or, on the other hand, having fulfilled its immediate aim may relax and give way in calmer times to a greater plasticity which will restore to the human mind or soul a more natural line of progress, a freer field for their self-expanding impulse." (25: 205-06)

Reason Cannot Harmonise the Conflicting Elements in Life, Only the Spirit Can

"Life differs from the mechanical order of the physical universe with which the reason has been able to deal victoriously just because it is mechanical and runs immutably in the groove of fixed cosmic habits. Life, on the contrary, is a mobile, progressive and evolving force, – a force that is the increasing expression of an infinite soul in creatures and, as it progresses, becomes more and more aware of its own subtle variations, needs, diversities. The progress of Life involves the development and interlocking of an immense number of things that are in conflict with each other and seem often to be absolute oppositions and contraries. To find amid these oppositions some principle or standing-ground of unity, some workable lever of reconciliation which will make possible a larger and better development on a basis of harmony and not of conflict and struggle, must be increasingly the common aim of humanity in its active life-evolution, if it at all means to rise out of life's more confused, painful and obscure movement, out of the compromises made by Nature with the ignorance of the Life-mind and the nescience of

Matter. This can only be truly and satisfactorily done when the soul discovers itself in its highest and completest spiritual reality and effects a progressive upward transformation of its life-values into those of the spirit; for there they will all find their spiritual truth and in that truth their standing-ground of mutual recognition and reconciliation. The spiritual is the one truth of which all others are the veiled aspects, the brilliant disguises or the dark disfigurements, and in which they can find their own right form and true relation to each other. This is a work the reason cannot do. The business of the reason is intermediate: it is to observe and understand this life by the intelligence and discover for it the direction in which it is going and the laws of its self-development on the way. In order that it may do its office, it is obliged to adopt temporarily fixed view-points none of which is more than partially true and to create systems none of which can really stand as the final expression of the integral truth of things. The integral truth of things is truth not of the reason but of the spirit." (25: 213-14)

There is Only One Solution and That Lies Not in the Reason, but in the Soul of Man

"The solution lies not in the reason, but in the soul of man, in its spiritual tendencies. It is a spiritual, an inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. It is a spiritual, a greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature of man and impose harmony on its self-seekings, antagonisms and discords. A deeper brotherhood, a yet unfound law of love is the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it. But this brotherhood and love will not proceed by the vital instincts or the reason where they can be met, baffled or deflected by opposite reasonings and other discordant instincts. Nor will it found itself in the natural heart of man where there are plenty of other passions to combat it. It is in the soul that it must find its roots; the love which is founded upon a deeper truth of our being, the brotherhood or, let us say, – for this is another feeling than any vital or mental sense of brotherhood, a calmer more durable motive-force, – the spiritual comradeship which is the expression of an inner realisation of oneness. For so only can egoism disappear and the true individualism of the unique godhead in each man found itself on the true communism of the equal godhead in the race; for the Spirit, the inmost self, the universal Godhead in every being is that whose very nature of diverse oneness it is to realise the perfection of its individual life and nature in the existence of all, in the universal life and nature.

This is a solution to which it may be objected that it puts off the consummation of a better human society to a far-off date in the future evolution of the race. For it means that no machinery invented by the reason can perfect either the individual or the collective man; an inner change is needed in human nature, a change too difficult to be ever effected except by the few. This is not certain; but in any case, if this is not the solution, then there is no solution, if this is not the way, then there is no way for the human kind. Then the terrestrial evolution must pass beyond man as it has passed beyond the animal and a greater race must come that will be capable of the spiritual change, a form of life must be born that is nearer to the divine. After all there is no logical necessity for the conclusion that the change cannot begin at all because its perfection is not immediately possible. A decisive turn of mankind to the spiritual ideal, the beginning of a constant ascent and guidance towards the heights may not be altogether impossible, even if the summits are attainable at first only by the pioneer few and far-off to the tread of the race. And that beginning may mean the descent of an influence that will alter at once the whole life of mankind in its orientation and enlarge for ever, as did the development of his reason and more than any development of the reason, its potentialities and all its structure." (25: 220-21)

The Nature of the Radical Defect in the Process of Human Civilisation

"The normal society treats man essentially as a physical, vital and mental being. For the life, the mind, the body are the three terms of existence with which it has some competence to deal. It develops a system of mental growth and efficiency, an intellectual, aesthetic and moral culture. It evolves the vital side of human life and creates an ever-growing system of economic efficiency and vital enjoyment, and this system becomes more and more rich, cumbrous and complex as civilisation develops. Depressing by its mental and vital overgrowth the natural vigour of the physical and animal man, it tries to set the balance right by systems of physical culture, a cumbrous science of habits and remedies intended to cure the ills it has created and as much amelioration as it can manage of the artificial forms of living that are necessary to its social system. In the end, however, experience shows that society tends to die by its own development, a sure sign that there is some radical defect in its system, a certain proof that its idea of man and its method of development do not correspond to all the reality of the human being and to the aim of life which that reality imposes.

There is then a radical defect somewhere in the process of human civilisation; but where is its seat and by what issue shall we come out of the perpetual cycle of failure? Our civilised development of life ends in an exhaustion of vitality and a refusal of Nature to lend her support any further to a continued advance upon these lines; our civilised mentality, after disturbing the balance of the human system to its own greater profit, finally discovers that it has exhausted and destroyed that which fed it and loses its power of healthy action and productiveness. It is found that civilisation has created many more problems than it can solve, has multiplied excessive needs and desires the satisfaction of which it has not sufficient vital force to sustain, has developed a jungle of claims and artificial instincts in the midst of which life loses its way and has no longer any sight of its aim. The more advanced minds begin to declare civilisation a failure and society begins to feel that they are right. But the remedy proposed is either a halt or even a retrogression, which means in the end more confusion, stagnation and decay, or a reversion to "Nature" which is impossible or can only come about by a cataclysm and disintegration of society; or even a cure is aimed at by carrying artificial remedies to their acme, by more and more Science, more and more mechanical devices, a more scientific organisation of life, which means that the engine shall replace life, the arbitrary logical reason substitute itself for complex Nature and man be saved by machinery. As well say that to carry a disease to its height is the best way to its cure. It may be suggested on the contrary and with some chance of knocking at the right door that the radical defect of all our systems

is their deficient development of just that which society has most neglected, the spiritual element, the soul in man which is his true being. Even to have a healthy body, a strong vitality and an active and clarified mind and a field for their action and enjoyment, carries man no more than a certain distance; afterwards he flags and tires for want of a real self-finding, a satisfying aim for his action and progress. These three things do not make the sum of a complete manhood; they are means to an ulterior end and cannot be made for ever an aim in themselves. Add a rich emotional life governed by a well-ordered ethical standard, and still there is the savour of something left out, some supreme good which these things mean, but do not in themselves arrive at, do not discover till they go beyond themselves. Add a religious system and a widespread spirit of belief and piety, and still you have not found the means of social salvation. All these things human society has developed, but none of them has saved it from disillusionment, weariness and decay. The ancient intellectual cultures of Europe ended in disruptive doubt and sceptical impotence, the pieties of Asia in stagnation and decline. Modern society has discovered a new principle of survival, progress, but the aim of that progress it has never discovered, – unless the aim is always more knowledge, more equipment, convenience and comfort, more enjoyment, a greater and still greater complexity of the social economy, a more and more cumbrously opulent life. But these things must lead in the end where the old led, for they are only the same thing on a larger scale; they lead in a circle, that is to say, nowhere: they do not escape from the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death, they do not really find the secret of self-prolongation by constant self-renewal which is the principle of immortality, but only seem for a moment to find it by the illusion of a series of experiments each of which ends in disappointment. That so far has been the nature of modern progress. Only in its new turn inwards, towards a greater subjectivity now only beginning, is there a better hope; for by that turning it may discover that the real truth of man is to be found in his soul. It is not indeed certain that a subjective age will lead us there, but it gives us the possibility, can turn in that direction, if used rightly, the more inward movement.

It will be said that this is an old discovery and that it governed the old societies under the name of religion. But that was only an appearance. The discovery was there, but it was made for the life of the individual only, and even for him it looked beyond the earth for its fulfilment and at earth only as the place of his preparation for a solitary salvation or release from the burden of life. Human society itself never seized on the discovery of the soul as a means for the discovery of the law of its own being or on a knowledge of the soul's true nature and need and its fulfilment as the right way of terrestrial perfection." (25: 222-25)

The Attempt by Religion and the Fundamental Reason Behind Its Failure to Solve the Problem

"If we look at the old religions in their social as apart from their individual aspect, we see that the use society made of them was only of their most unspiritual or at any rate of their less spiritual parts. It made use of them to give an august, awful and would-be eternal sanction to its mass of customs and institutions; it made of them a veil of mystery against human questioning and a shield of darkness against the innovator. So far as it saw in religion a means of human salvation and perfection, it laid hands upon it at once to mechanise it, to catch the human soul and bind it on the wheels of a socio-religious machinery, to impose on it in the place of spiritual freedom an imperious yoke and an iron prison. It saddled upon the religious life of man a Church, a priesthood and a mass of ceremonies and set over it a pack of watchdogs under the name of creeds and dogmas, dogmas which one had to accept and obey under pain of condemnation to eternal hell by an eternal judge beyond, just as one had to accept and to obey the laws of society on pain of condemnation to temporal imprisonment or death by a mortal judge below. This false socialisation of religion has been always the chief cause of its failure to regenerate mankind.

For nothing can be more fatal to religion than for its spiritual element to be crushed or formalised out of existence by its outward aids and forms and machinery. The falsehood of the old social use of religion is shown by its effects. History has exhibited more than once the coincidence of the greatest religious fervour and piety with darkest ignorance, with an obscure squalor and long vegetative stagnancy of the mass of human life, with the unquestioned reign of cruelty, injustice and oppression, or with an organisation of the most ordinary, unaspiring and unraised existence hardly relieved by some touches of intellectual or half-spiritual light on the surface, – the end of all this a widespread revolt that turned first of all against the established religion as the key-stone of a regnant falsehood, evil and ignorance. It is another sign when the too scrupulously exact observation of a socio-religious system and its rites and forms, which by the very fact of this misplaced importance begin to lose their sense and true religious value, becomes the law and most prominent aim of religion rather than any spiritual growth of the individual and the race. And a great sign too of this failure is when the individual is obliged to flee from society in order to find room for his spiritual growth; when, finding human life given over to the unregenerated mind, life and body and the place of spiritual freedom occupied by the bonds of form, by Church and Shastra, by some law of the Ignorance, he is obliged to break away from all these to seek for growth into the spirit in the monastery, on the mountain-top, in the cavern, in the desert and the forest. When there is that division between life and the spirit, sentence of condemnation is passed upon human life. Either it is left to

circle in its routine or it is decried as worthless and unreal, a vanity of vanities, and loses that confidence in itself and inner faith in the value of its terrestrial aims, *śraddhā*, without which it cannot come to anything. For the spirit of man must strain towards the heights; when it loses its tension of endeavour, the race must become immobile and stagnant or even sink towards darkness and the dust. Even where life rejects the spirit or the spirit rejects life, there may be a self-affirmation of the inner being; there may even be a glorious crop of saints and hermits in a forcing-soil of spirituality, but unless the race, the society, the nation is moved towards the spiritualisation of life or moves forward led by the light of an ideal, the end must be littleness, weakness and stagnation. Or the race has to turn to the intellect for rescue, for some hope or new ideal, and arrive by a circle through an age of rationalism at a fresh effort towards the restatement of spiritual truth and a new attempt to spiritualise human life." (25: 225-27)

The True and Full Spiritual Aim in Society and Its Working

"The true and full spiritual aim in society will regard man not as a mind, a life and a body, but as a soul incarnated for a divine fulfilment upon earth, not only in heavens beyond, which after all it need not have left if it had no divine business here in the world of physical, vital and mental nature. It will therefore regard the life, mind and body neither as ends in themselves, sufficient for their own satisfaction, nor as mortal members full of disease which have only to be dropped off for the rescued spirit to flee away into its own pure regions, but as first instruments of the soul, the yet imperfect instruments of an unseized diviner purpose. It will believe in their destiny and help them to believe in themselves, but for that very reason in their highest and not only in their lowest or lower possibilities. Their destiny will be, in its view, to spiritualise themselves so as to grow into visible members of the spirit, lucid means of its manifestation, themselves spiritual, illumined, more and more conscious and perfect. For, accepting the truth of man's soul as a thing entirely divine in its essence, it will accept also the possibility of his whole being becoming divine in spite of Nature's first patent contradictions of this possibility, her darkened denials of this ultimate certitude, and even with these as a necessary earthly starting-point. And as it will regard man the individual, it will regard too man the collectivity as a soul-form of the Infinite, a collective soul myriadly embodied upon earth for a divine fulfilment in its manifold relations and its multitudinous activities. Therefore it will hold sacred all the different parts of man's life which correspond to the parts of his being, all his physical, vital, dynamic, emotional, aesthetic, ethical, intellectual, psychic evolution, and see in them instruments for a growth towards a diviner living. It will regard every human society, nation, people or other organic aggregate from the same standpoint, sub-souls, as it were, means of a complex manifestation and self-fulfilment of the Spirit, the divine Reality, the conscious Infinite in man upon earth. The possible godhead of man because he is inwardly of one being with God will be its one solitary creed and dogma.

But it will not seek to enforce even this one uplifting dogma by any external compulsion upon the lower members of man's natural being; for that is *nigraha*, a repressive contraction of the nature which may lead to an apparent suppression of the evil, but not to a real and healthy growth of the good; it will rather hold up this creed and ideal as a light and inspiration to all his members to grow into the godhead from within themselves, to become freely divine. Neither in the individual nor in the society will it seek to imprison, wall in, repress, impoverish, but to let in the widest air and the highest light. A large liberty will be the law of a spiritual society and the increase of freedom a sign of the growth of human society towards the possibility of true spiritualisation. To spiritualise in this sense a society of slaves, slaves of power, slaves of authority, slaves of custom, slaves of dogma, slaves of all sorts of

imposed laws which they live under rather than live by them, slaves internally of their own weakness, ignorance and passions from whose worst effect they seek or need to be protected by another and external slavery, can never be a successful endeavour. They must shake off their fetters first in order to be fit for a higher freedom. Not that man has not to wear many a yoke in his progress upward; but only the yoke which he accepts because it represents, the more perfectly the better, the highest inner law of his nature and its aspiration, will be entirely helpful to him. The rest buy their good results at a heavy cost and may retard as much as or even more than they accelerate his progress.

The spiritual aim will recognise that man as he grows in his being must have as much free space as possible for all its members to grow in their own strength, to find out themselves and their potentialities. In their freedom they will err, because experience comes through many errors, but each has in itself a divine principle and they will find it out, disengage its presence, significance and law as their experience of themselves deepens and increases. Thus true spirituality will not lay a yoke upon science and philosophy or compel them to square their conclusions with any statement of dogmatic religious or even of assured spiritual truth, as some of the old religions attempted, vainly, ignorantly, with an unspiritual obstinacy and arrogance. Each part of man's being has its own dharma which it must follow and will follow in the end, put on it what fetters you please. The dharma of science, thought and philosophy is to seek for truth by the intellect dispassionately, without prepossession and prejudgment, with no other first propositions than the law of thought and observation itself imposes. Science and philosophy are not bound to square their observations and conclusions with any current ideas of religious dogma or ethical rule or aesthetic prejudice. In the end, if left free in their action, they will find the unity of Truth with Good and Beauty and God and give these a greater meaning than any dogmatic religion or any formal ethics or any narrower aesthetic idea can give us. But meanwhile they must be left free even to deny God and good and beauty if they will, if their sincere observation of things so points them. For all these rejections must come round in the end of their circling and return to a larger truth of the things they refuse. Often we find atheism both in individual and society a necessary passage to deeper religious and spiritual truth: one has sometimes to deny God in order to find him; the finding is inevitable at the end of all earnest scepticism and denial.

The same law holds good in Art; the aesthetic being of man rises similarly on its own curve towards its diviner possibilities. The highest aim of the aesthetic being is to find the Divine through beauty; the highest Art is that which by an inspired use of significant and interpretative form unseals the doors of the spirit. But in order that it may come to do this greatest thing largely and sincerely, it must first endeavour to see and depict man and Nature and life for their own sake, in their own characteristic truth and beauty; for behind these first characters lies always the beauty of the Divine in life and

man and Nature and it is through their just transformation that what was at first veiled by them has to be revealed. The dogma that Art must be religious or not be at all, is a false dogma, just as is the claim that it must be subservient to ethics or utility or scientific truth or philosophic ideas. Art may make use of these things as elements, but it has its own *svadharma*, essential law, and it will rise to the widest spirituality by following out its own natural lines with no other yoke than the intimate law of its own being.

Even with the lower nature of man, though here we are naturally led to suppose that compulsion is the only remedy, the spiritual aim will seek for a free self-rule and development from within rather than a repression of his dynamic and vital being from without. All experience shows that man must be given a certain freedom to stumble in action as well as to err in knowledge so long as he does not get from within himself his freedom from wrong movement and error; otherwise he cannot grow. Society for its own sake has to coerce the dynamic and vital man, but coercion only chains up the devil and alters at best his form of action into more mitigated and civilised movements; it does not and cannot eliminate him. The real virtue of the dynamic and vital being, the Life Purusha, can only come by his finding a higher law and spirit for his activity within himself; to give him that, to illuminate and transform and not to destroy his impulse is the true spiritual means of regeneration.

Thus spirituality will respect the freedom of the lower members, but it will not leave them to themselves; it will present to them the truth of the spirit in themselves, translated into their own fields of action, presented in a light which illumines all their activities and shows them the highest law of their own freedom. It will not, for instance, escape from scientific materialism by a barren contempt for physical life or a denial of Matter, but pursue rather the sceptical mind into its own affirmations and denials and show it there the Divine. If it cannot do that, it is proved that it is itself unenlightened or deficient, because one-sided, in its light. It will not try to slay the vitality in man by denying life, but will rather reveal to life the divine in itself as the principle of its own transformation. If it cannot do that, it is because it has itself not yet wholly fathomed the meaning of the creation and the secret of the Avatar.

The spiritual aim will seek to fulfil itself therefore in a fullness of life and man's being in the individual and the race which will be the base for the heights of the spirit, – the base becoming in the end of one substance with the peaks. It will not proceed by a scornful neglect of the body, nor by an ascetic starving of the vital being and an utmost bareness or even squalor as the rule of spiritual living, nor by a puritanic denial of art and beauty and the aesthetic joy of life, nor by a neglect of science and philosophy as poor, negligible or misleading intellectual pursuits, – though the temporary utility even of these exaggerations as against the opposite excesses need not be denied; it will be all things to all, but in all it will be at once their highest aim and meaning and the

most all-embracing expression of themselves in which all they are and seek for will be fulfilled. It will aim at establishing in society the true inner theocracy, not the false theocracy of a dominant Church or priesthood, but that of the inner Priest, Prophet and King. It will reveal to man the divinity in himself as the Light, Strength, Beauty, Good, Delight, Immortality that dwells within and build up in his outer life also the kingdom of God which is first discovered within us. It will show man the way to seek for the Divine in every way of his being, *sarvabhāvena*,* and so find it and live in it, that however – even in all kinds of ways – he lives and acts, he shall live and act in that,** in the Divine, in the Spirit, in the eternal Reality of his being." (25: 227-31)

* *Gita.* ** *Gita.* Sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate.

Abnormality and Imperfection of Man is an Asset

"Man is an abnormal who has not found his own normality, – he may imagine he has, he may appear to be normal in his own kind, but that normality is only a sort of provisional order; therefore, though man is infinitely greater than the plant or the animal, he is not perfect in his own nature like the plant and the animal. This imperfection is not a thing to be at all deplored, but rather a privilege and a promise, for it opens out to us an immense vista of self-development and self-exceeding. Man at his highest is a half-god who has risen up out of the animal Nature and is splendidly abnormal in it, but the thing which he has started out to be, the whole god, is something so much greater than what he is that it seems to him as abnormal to himself as he is to the animal. This means a great and arduous labour of growth before him, but also a splendid crown of his race and his victory. A kingdom is offered to him beside which his present triumphs in the realms of mind or over external Nature will appear only as a rough hint and a poor beginning." (25: 234)

Human Life Cannot be Entirely Rationalised

"Life cannot be entirely rational, cannot conform entirely to the ethical or the aesthetic or the scientific and philosophic mentality; mind is not the destined archangel of the transformation. All appearances to the contrary are always a *trompe l'oeil*, an intellectual, aesthetic or ethical illusion. Dominated, repressed life may be, but it reserves its right; and though individuals or a class may establish this domination for a time and impose some simulacrum of it upon the society, Life in the end circumvents the intelligence; it gets strong elements in it – for always there are traitor elements at work – to come over to its side and re-establishes its instincts, recovers its field; or if it fails in this, it has its revenge in its own decay which brings about the decay of the society, the disappointment of the perennial hope. So much so, that there are times when mankind perceives this fact and, renouncing the attempt to dominate the life-instinct, determines to use the intelligence for its service and to give it light in its own field instead of enslaving it to a higher but chimerical ideal." (25: 237)

Mind at the Service of Life in the Modern Materialistic Age

"Such a period was the recent materialistic age, when the intellect of man seemed decided to study thoroughly Life and Matter, to admit only that, to recognise mind only as an instrument of Life and Matter, and to devote all its knowledge to a tremendous expansion of the vital and physical life, its practicality, its efficiency, its comfort and the splendid ordering of its instincts of production, possession and enjoyment. That was the character of the materialistic, commercial, economic age of mankind, a period in which the ethical mind persisted painfully, but with decreasing self-confidence, an increasing self-questioning and a tendency to yield up the fortress of the moral law to the life-instinct, the aesthetic instinct and intelligence flourished as a rather glaring exotic ornament, a sort of rare orchid in the button-hole of the vital man, and reason became the magnificent servant of Life and Matter." (25: 238)

"The secret of the transformation lies in the transference of our centre of living to a higher consciousness and in a change of our main power of living. This will be a leap or an ascent even more momentous than that which Nature must at one time have made from the vital mind of the animal to the thinking mind still imperfect in our human intelligence. The central will implicit in life must be no longer the vital will in the life and the body, but the spiritual will of which we have now only rare and dim intimations and glimpses. For now it comes to us hardly disclosed, weakened, disguised in the mental Idea; but it is in its own nature supramental and it is its supramental power and truth that we have somehow to discover. The main power of our living must be no longer the inferior vital urge of Nature which is already accomplished in us and can only whirl upon its rounds about the ego-centre, but that spiritual force of which we sometimes hear and speak but have not yet its inmost secret. For that is still retired in our depths and waits for our transcendence of the ego and the discovery of the true individual in whose universality we shall be united with all others. To transfer from the vital being, the instrumental reality in us, to the spirit, the central reality, to elevate to that height our will to be and our power of living is the secret which our nature is seeking to discover. All that we have done hitherto is some half-successful effort to transfer this will and power to the mental plane; our highest endeavour and labour has been to become the mental being and to live in the strength of the idea. But the mental idea in us is always intermediary and instrumental; always it depends on something other than it for its ground of action and therefore although it can follow for a time after its own separate satisfaction, it cannot rest for ever satisfied with that alone. It must either gravitate downwards and outwards towards the vital and physical life or it must elevate itself inwards and upwards towards the spirit.

And that must be why in thought, in art, in conduct, in life we are always divided between two tendencies, one idealistic, the other realistic. The latter very easily seems to us more real, more solidly founded, more in touch with actualities because it relies upon a reality which is patent, sensible and already accomplished; the idealistic easily seems to us something unreal, fantastic, unsubstantial, nebulous, a thing more of thoughts and words than of live actualities, because it is trying to embody a reality not yet accomplished. To a certain extent we are perhaps right; for the ideal, a stranger among the actualities of our physical existence, is in fact a thing unreal until it has either in some way reconciled itself to the imperfections of our outer life or else has found the greater and purer reality for which it is seeking and imposed it on our outer activities; till then it hangs between two worlds and has conquered neither the upper light nor the nether darkness. Submission to the actual by a compromise is easy; discovery of the spiritual truth and the transformation of our actual

way of living is difficult: but it is precisely this difficult thing that has to be done, if man is to find and fulfil his true nature. Our idealism is always the most rightly human thing in us, but as a mental idealism it is a thing ineffective. To be effective it has to convert itself into a spiritual realism which shall lay its hands on the higher reality of the spirit and take up for it this lower reality of our sensational, vital and physical nature.

…Therefore the perfection of man cannot consist in pursuing the unillumined round of the physical life. Neither can it be found in the wider rounds of the mental being; for that also is instrumental and tends towards something else beyond it, something whose power indeed works in it, but whose larger truth is superconscient to its present intelligence, supramental. The perfection of man lies in the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit." (25: 241-43)

Two Necessary Conditions for the Coming of a Spiritual Age

"There must be the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit and to communicate both their idea and its power to the mass. And there must be at the same time a mass, a society, a communal mind or at the least the constituents of a group-body, the possibility of a group-soul which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow and effectively arrive, not compelled by its own inherent deficiencies, its defect of preparation to stop on the way or fall back before the decisive change is made. Such a simultaneity has never yet happened, although the appearance of it has sometimes been created by the ardour of a moment. That the combination must happen some day is a certainty, but none can tell how many attempts will have to be made and how many sediments of spiritual experience will have to be accumulated in the subconscient mentality of the communal human being before the soil is ready.

For the chances of success are always less powerful in a difficult upward effort affecting the very roots of our nature than the numerous possibilities of failure. The initiator himself may be imperfect, may not have waited to become entirely the thing that he has seen. Even the few who have the apostolate in their charge may not have perfectly assimilated and shaped it in themselves and may hand on the power of the Spirit still farther diminished to the many who will come after them. The society may be intellectually, vitally, ethically, temperamentally unready, with the result that the final acceptance of the spiritual idea by the society may be also the beginning of its debasement and distortion and of the consequent departure or diminution of the Spirit. Any or all of these things may happen, and the result will be, as has so often happened in the past, that even though some progress is made and an important change effected, it will not be the decisive change which can alone re-create humanity in a diviner image." (25: 247-48)

The Imperative Condition for the Spiritualisation of Mankind

"If mankind is to be spiritualised, it must first in the mass cease to be the material or the vital man and become the psychic and the true mental being. It may be questioned whether such a mass progress or conversion is possible; but if it is not, then the spiritualisation of mankind as a whole is a chimera."

(25: 253)

The Three Essential Truths of Existence – God, Freedom, Unity

"…a spiritual human society would start from and try to realise three essential truths of existence which all Nature seems to be an attempt to hide by their opposites and which therefore are as yet for the mass of mankind only words and dreams, God, freedom, unity. Three things which are one, for you cannot realise freedom and unity unless you realise God, you cannot possess freedom and unity unless you possess God, possess at once your highest Self and the Self of all creatures. The freedom and unity which otherwise go by that name, are simply attempts of our subjection and our division to get away from themselves by shutting their eyes while they turn somersaults around their own centre. When man is able to see God and to possess him, then he will know real freedom and arrive at real unity, never

otherwise. And God is only waiting to be known, while man seeks for him everywhere and creates images of the Divine, but all the while truly finds, effectively erects and worships images only of his own mind-ego and life-ego. When this ego pivot is abandoned and this ego-hunt ceases, then man gets his first real chance of achieving spirituality in his inner and outer life. It will not be enough, but it will be a commencement, a true gate and not a blind entrance.

A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, but in the spirit, not as the collective ego, but as the collective soul. This freedom from the egoistic standpoint would be its first and most prominent characteristic." (25: 254-55)

"Therefore a society which was even initially spiritualised would make the revealing and finding of the divine Self in man the supreme, even the guiding aim of all its activities, its education, its knowledge, its science, its ethics, its art, its economical and political structure. As it was to some imperfect extent in the ancient Vedic times with the cultural education of the higher classes, so it would be then with all education. It would embrace all knowledge in its scope, but would make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, though that efficiency would not be neglected, but this self-developing and self-finding and all else as its powers. It would pursue the physical and psychic sciences not in order merely to know the world and Nature in her processes and to use them for material human ends, but still more to know through and in and under and over all things the Divine in the world and the ways of the Spirit in its masks and behind them. It would make it the aim of ethics not to establish a rule of action whether supplementary to the social law or partially corrective of it, the social law that is after all only the rule, often clumsy and ignorant, of the biped pack, the human herd, but to develop the divine nature in the human being. It would make it the aim of Art not merely to present images of the subjective and objective world, but to see them with the significant and creative vision that goes behind their appearances and to reveal the Truth and Beauty of which things visible to us and invisible are the forms, the masks or the symbols and significant figures.

A spiritualised society would treat in its sociology the individual, from the saint to the criminal, not as units of a social problem to be passed through some skilfully devised machinery and either flattened into the social mould or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be rescued, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn by the lesser spirits who are not yet adult. The aim of its economics would be not to create a huge engine of production, whether of the competitive or the cooperative kind, but to give to men – not only to some but to all men each in his highest possible measure – the joy of work according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly, as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all. In its politics it would not regard the nations within the scope of their own internal life as enormous State machines regulated and armoured with man living for the sake of the machine and worshipping it as his God and his larger self, content at the first call to kill others upon its altar and to bleed there himself so that the machine may remain intact and powerful and be made ever larger, more complex, more cumbrous, more mechanically efficient and entire. Neither would it be content to maintain these nations or States in their mutual relations as noxious engines meant to discharge poisonous gas upon each other in peace and to rush in times of clash upon each other's armed hosts and unarmed millions, full of belching shot and men missioned to murder like war-planes or hostile tanks in a modern battlefield. It would regard the peoples

as group-souls, the Divinity concealed and to be self-discovered in its human collectivities, group-souls meant like the individual to grow according to their own nature and by that growth to help each other, to help the whole race in the one common work of humanity. And that work would be to find the divine Self in the individual and the collectivity and to realise spiritually, mentally, vitally, materially its greatest, largest, richest and deepest possibilities in the inner life of all and their outer action and nature.

For it is into the Divine within them that men and mankind have to grow; it is not an external idea or rule that has to be imposed on them from without. Therefore the law of a growing inner freedom is that which will be most honoured in the spiritual age of mankind. True it is that so long as man has not come within measurable distance of self-knowledge and has not set his face towards it, he cannot escape from the law of external compulsion and all his efforts to do so must be vain. He is and always must be, so long as that lasts, the slave of others, the slave of his family, his caste, his clan, his Church, his society, his nation; and he cannot but be that and they too cannot help throwing their crude and mechanical compulsion on him, because he and they are the slaves of their own ego, of their own lower nature. We must feel and obey the compulsion of the Spirit if we would establish our inner right to escape other compulsion: we must make our lower nature the willing slave, the conscious and illumined instrument or the ennobled but still self-subjected portion, consort or partner of the divine Being within us, for it is that subjection which is the condition of our freedom, since spiritual freedom is not the egoistic assertion of our separate mind and life but obedience to the Divine Truth in ourself and our members and in all around us. But we have, even so, to remark that God respects the freedom of the natural members of our being and that he gives them room to grow in their own nature so that by natural growth and not by self-extinction they may find the Divine in themselves. The subjection which they finally accept, complete and absolute, must be a willing subjection of recognition and aspiration to their own source of light and power and their highest being. Therefore even in the unregenerated state we find that the healthiest, the truest, the most living growth and action is that which arises in the largest possible freedom and that all excess of compulsion is either the law of a gradual atrophy or a tyranny varied or cured by outbreaks of rabid disorder. And as soon as man comes to know his spiritual self, he does by that discovery, often even by the very seeking for it, as ancient thought and religion saw, escape from the outer law and enter into the law of freedom.

A spiritual age of mankind will perceive this truth. It will not try to make man perfect by machinery or keep him straight by tying up all his limbs. It will not present to the member of the society his higher self in the person of the policeman, the official and the corporal, nor, let us say, in the form of a socialistic bureaucracy or a Labour Soviet. Its aim will be to diminish as soon and as far as possible the need of the element of external compulsion in human life by

awakening the inner divine compulsion of the spirit within and all the preliminary means it will use will have that for its aim. In the end it will employ chiefly if not solely the spiritual compulsion which even the spiritual individual can exercise on those around him, – and how much more should a spiritual society be able to do it, – that which awakens within us in spite of all inner resistance and outer denial the compulsion of the Light, the desire and the power to grow through one's own nature into the Divine. For the perfectly spiritualised society will be one in which, as is dreamed by the spiritual anarchist, all men will be deeply free, and it will be so because the preliminary condition will have been satisfied. In that state each man will be not a law to himself, but *the* law, the divine Law, because he will be a soul living in the Divine Reality and not an ego living mainly if not entirely for its own interest and purpose. His life will be led by the law of his own divine nature liberated from the ego." (25: 256-59)

Humanity's Way of Dealing with an Ideal

"..the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration which is for the most part left only as an aspiration, accepted only as a partial influence. The ideal is not allowed to mould the whole life, but only more or less to colour it; it is often used even as a cover and a plea for things that are diametrically opposed to its real spirit. Institutions are created which are supposed, but too lightly supposed to embody that spirit and the fact that the ideal is held, the fact that men live under its institutions is treated as sufficient. The holding of an ideal becomes almost an excuse for not living according to the ideal; the existence of its institutions is sufficient to abrogate the need of insisting on the spirit that made the institutions. But spirituality is in its very nature a thing subjective and not mechanical; it is nothing if it is not lived inwardly and if the outward life does not flow out of this inward living. Symbols, types, conventions, ideas are not sufficient. A spiritual symbol is only a meaningless ticket, unless the thing symbolised is realised in the spirit. A spiritual convention may lose or expel its spirit and become a falsehood." (25: 262)

The One Sign of the Coming of the Spiritual Age

"A society that lives not by its men but by its institutions, is not a collective soul, but a machine; its life becomes a mechanical product and ceases to be a living growth. Therefore the coming of a spiritual age must be preceded by the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are no longer satisfied with the normal intellectual, vital and physical existence of man, but perceive that a greater evolution is the real goal of humanity and attempt to effect it in themselves, to lead others to it and to make it the recognised goal of the race. In proportion as they succeed and to the degree to which they carry this evolution, the yet unrealised potentiality which they represent will become an actual possibility of the future." (25: 263)

What the Religious Movements Usually End Up With

"A religious movement brings usually a wave of spiritual excitement and aspiration that communicates itself to a large number of individuals and there is as a result a temporary uplifting and an effective formation, partly spiritual, partly ethical, partly dogmatic in its nature. But the wave after a generation or two or at most a few generations begins to subside; the formation remains. If there has been a very powerful movement with a great spiritual personality as its source, it may leave behind a central influence and an inner discipline which may well be the starting point of fresh waves; but these will be constantly less powerful and enduring in proportion as the movement gets farther and farther away from its source. For meanwhile in order to bind together the faithful and at the same time to mark them off from the unregenerated outer world, there will have grown up a religious order, a Church, a hierarchy, a fixed and unprogressive type of ethical living, a set of crystallised dogmas, ostentatious ceremonials, sanctified superstitions, an elaborate machinery for the salvation of mankind. As a result spirituality is

increasingly subordinated to intellectual belief, to outward forms of conduct and to external ritual, the higher to the lower motives, the one thing essential to aids and instruments and accidents. The first spontaneous and potent attempt to convert the whole life into spiritual living yields up its place to a set system of belief and ethics touched by spiritual emotion; but finally even that saving element is dominated by the outward machinery, the sheltering structure becomes a tomb. The Church takes the place of the spirit and a formal subscription to its creed, rituals and order is the thing universally demanded; spiritual living is only practised by the few within the limits prescribed by their fixed creed and order. The majority neglect even that narrow effort and are contented to replace by a careful or negligent piety the call to a deeper life. In the end it is found that the spirit in the religion has become a thin stream choked by sands; at the most brief occasional floodings of its dry bed of conventions still prevent it from becoming a memory in the dead chapters of Time." (25: 263-64)

The Kind of Individuals Who Will Most Help the Future of Humanity

"…the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being. Even as the animal man has been largely converted into a mentalised and at the top a highly mentalised humanity, so too now or in the future an evolution or conversion – it does not greatly matter which figure we use or what theory we adopt to support it – of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity is the need of the race and surely the intention of Nature; that evolution or conversion will be their ideal and endeavour. They will be comparatively indifferent to particular belief and form and leave men to resort to the beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn. They will only hold as essential the faith in this spiritual conversion, the attempt to live it out and whatever knowledge – the form of opinion into which it is thrown does not so much matter – can be converted into this living. They will especially not make the mistake of thinking that this change can be effected by machinery and outward institutions; they will know and never forget that it has to be lived out by each man inwardly or it can never be made a reality for the kind. They will adopt in its heart of meaning the inward view of the East which bids man seek the secret of his destiny and salvation within; but also they will accept, though with a different turn given to it, the importance which the West rightly attaches to life and to the making the best we know and can attain the general rule of all life. They will not make society a shadowy background to a few luminous spiritual figures or a rigidly fenced and earth-bound root for the growth of a comparatively rare and sterile flower of ascetic spirituality. They will not accept the theory that the many must necessarily remain for ever on the lower ranges of life and only a few climb into the free air and the light, but will start from the standpoint of the great spirits who have striven to regenerate the life of the earth and held that faith in spite of all previous failure. Failures must be originally numerous in everything great and difficult, but the time comes when the experience of past failures can be profitably used and the gate that so long resisted opens. In this as in all great human aspirations and endeavours, an *a priori* declaration of impossibility is a sign of ignorance and weakness, and the motto of the aspirant's endeavour must be the *solvitur ambulando* of the discoverer. For by the doing the difficulty will be solved. A true beginning has to be made; the rest is a work for Time in its sudden achievements or its long patient labour.

The thing to be done is as large as human life, and therefore the individuals who lead the way will take all human life for their province. These pioneers will consider nothing as alien to them, nothing as outside their scope." (25: 265-66)

What Needs to be Done

"..every part of human life has to be taken up by the spiritual, – not only the intellectual, the aesthetic, the ethical, but the dynamic, the vital, the physical; therefore for none of these things or the activities that spring from them will they have contempt or aversion, however they may insist on a change of the spirit and a transmutation of the form. In each power of our nature they will seek for its own proper means of conversion; knowing that the Divine is concealed in all, they will hold that all can be made the spirit's means of self-finding and all can be converted into its instruments of divine living. And they will see that the great necessity is the conversion of the normal into the spiritual mind and the opening of that mind again into its own higher reaches and more and more integral movement. For before the decisive change can be made, the stumbling intellectual reason has to be converted into the precise and luminous intuitive, until that again can rise into higher ranges to overmind and supermind or gnosis. The uncertain and stumbling mental will

has to rise towards the sure intuitive and into a higher divine and gnostic will, the psychic sweetness, fire and light of the soul behind the heart, *hṛdaye guhāyām*, has to alchemise our crude emotions and the hard egoisms and clamant desires of our vital nature. All our other members have to pass through a similar conversion under the compelling force and light from above. The leaders of the spiritual march will start from and use the knowledge and the means that past effort has developed in this direction, but they will not take them as they are without any deep necessary change or limit themselves by what is now known or cleave only to fixed and stereotyped systems or given groupings of results, but will follow the method of the Spirit in Nature. A constant rediscovery and new formulation and larger synthesis in the mind, a mighty remoulding in its deeper parts because of a greater enlarging Truth not discovered or not well fixed before, is that Spirit's way with our past achievement when he moves to the greatnesses of the future." (25: 266-67)

The Transition of Human Life to Larger and Purer Horizons

"If the light that is being born increases, if the number of individuals who seek to realise the possibility in themselves and in the world grows large and they get nearer the right way, then the Spirit who is here in man, now a concealed divinity, a developing light and power, will descend more fully as the Avatar of a yet unseen and unguessed Godhead from above into the soul of mankind and into the great individualities in whom the light and power are the strongest. There will then be fulfilled the change that will prepare the transition of human life from its present limits into those larger and purer horizons; the earthly evolution will have taken its grand impetus upward and accomplished the revealing step in a divine progression of which the birth of thinking and aspiring man from the animal nature was only an obscure preparation and a far-off promise." (25: 269)

The True Law and Aim of Human Existence – The Need of a Wiser, Larger and More Patient Search After It

"THE SURFACES of life are easy to understand; their laws, characteristic movements, practical utilities are ready to our hand and we can seize on them and turn them to account with a sufficient facility and rapidity. But they do not carry us very far. They suffice for an active superficial life from day to day, but they do not solve the great problems of existence. On the other hand, the knowledge of life's profundities, its potent secrets, its great, hidden, all-determining laws is exceedingly difficult to us. We have found no plummet that can fathom these depths; they seem to us a vague, indeterminate movement, a profound obscurity from which the mind recoils willingly to play with the fret and foam and facile radiances of the surface. Yet it is these depths and their unseen forces that we ought to know if we would understand existence; on the surface we get only Nature's secondary rules and practical bye-laws which help us to tide over the difficulties of the moment and to organise empirically without understanding them her continual transitions.

Nothing is more obscure to humanity or less seized by its understanding, whether in the power that moves it or the sense of the aim towards which it moves, than its own communal and collective life. Sociology does not help us, for it only gives us the general story of the past and the external conditions under which communities have survived. History teaches us nothing; it is a confused torrent of events and personalities or a kaleidoscope of changing institutions. We do not seize the real sense of all this change and this continual streaming forward of human life in the channels of Time. What we do seize are current or recurrent phenomena, facile generalisations, partial ideas. We talk of democracy, aristocracy and autocracy, collectivism and individualism, imperialism and nationalism, the State and the commune, capitalism and labour; we advance hasty generalisations and make absolute systems which are positively announced today only to be abandoned perforce tomorrow; we espouse causes and ardent enthusiasms whose triumph turns to an early disillusionment and then forsake them for others, perhaps for those that we have taken so much trouble to destroy. For a whole century mankind thirsts and battles after liberty and earns it with a bitter expense of toil, tears and blood; the century that enjoys without having fought for it turns away as from a puerile illusion and is ready to renounce the depreciated gain as the price of some new good. And all this happens because our whole thought and action with regard to our collective life is shallow and empirical; it does not seek for, it does not base itself on a firm, profound and complete knowledge. The moral is not the vanity of human life, of its ardours and enthusiasms and of the ideals it pursues, but the necessity of a wiser, larger, more patient search after its true law and aim." (25: 279-80)

The Period of India Most Productive of the Best and Most Enduring Fruits

"Her most wonderful activities, her most vigorous and enduring work, that which, if we had to make a choice, we should keep at the sacrifice of all else, belonged to that period; the second best came afterwards in larger, but still comparatively small nations and kingdoms like those of the Pallavas, Chalukyas, Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras. In comparison she received little from the greater empires that rose and fell within her borders, the Moghul, the Gupta or the Maurya – little indeed except political and administrative organisation, some fine art and literature and a certain amount of lasting work in other kinds, not always of the best quality. Their impulse was rather towards elaborate organisation than original, stimulating and creative.

Nevertheless, in this regime of the small city state or of regional cultures there was always a defect which compelled a tendency towards large organisations. The defect was a characteristic of impermanence, often of disorder, especially of defencelessness against the onslaught of larger organisations, even of an insufficient capacity for widespread material well-being. Therefore this earlier form of collective life tended to disappear and give place to the organisation of nations, kingdoms and empires." (25: 282)

Smaller Groupings Have More Vigour and Intenser Life Than the Large Aggregates

"…it is the groupments of smaller nations which have had the most intense life and not the huge States and colossal empires. Collective life diffusing itself in too vast spaces seems to lose intensity and productiveness. Europe has lived in England, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, the small States of Germany – all her later civilisation and progress evolved itself there, not in the huge mass of the Holy Roman or the Russian Empire. We see a similar phenomenon in the social and political field when we compare the intense life and activity of Europe in its many nations acting richly upon each other, rapidly progressing by quick creative steps and sometimes by bounds, with the great masses of Asia, her long periods of immobility in which wars and revolutions seem to be small, temporary and usually unproductive episodes, her centuries of religious, philosophic and artistic reveries, her tendency towards an increasing isolation and a final stagnancy of the outward life." (25: 282-83)

Large Aggregates are Characterised by an Artificial Concentration of All Vitality in Some Head or Centre at the Expense of the Smaller Towns

"..we note that in this organisation of nations and kingdoms those which have had the most vigorous life have gained it by a sort of artificial concentration of the vitality into some head, centre or capital, London, Paris, Rome. By this device Nature, while acquiring the benefits of a larger organisation and more perfect unity, preserves to some extent that equally precious power of fruitful concentration in a small space and into a closely packed activity which she had possessed in her more primitive system of the city state or petty kingdom. But this advantage was purchased by the condemnation of the rest of the organisation, the district, the provincial town, the village to a dull, petty and somnolent life in strange contrast with the vital intensity of the *urbs* or metropolis." (25: 283)

The Roman Empire – Its Strengths and Weaknesses

"The Roman Empire is the historic example of an organisation of unity which transcended the limits of the nation, and its advantages and disadvantages are there perfectly typified. The advantages are admirable organisation, peace, widespread security, order and material well-being; the disadvantage is that the individual, the city, the region sacrifice their independent life and become mechanical parts of a machine; life loses its colour, richness, variety, freedom and victorious impulse towards creation. The organisation is great and admirable, but the individual dwindles and is overpowered and overshadowed; and eventually by the smallness and feebleness of the individual the huge organism inevitably and slowly loses even its great conservative vitality and dies of an increasing stagnation. Even while outwardly whole and untouched, the structure has become rotten and begins to crack and dissolve at the first shock from outside. Such organisations, such periods are immensely useful for conservation, even as the Roman Empire served to consolidate the gains of the rich centuries that preceded it. But they arrest life and growth." (25: 283)

The Prospects of an Organisation of Human Unity

"We see, then, what is likely to happen if there were a social, administrative and political unification of mankind, such as some have begun to dream of nowadays. A tremendous organisation would be needed under which both individual and regional life would be crushed, dwarfed, deprived of their necessary freedom like a plant without rain and wind and sunlight, and this would mean for humanity, after perhaps one first outburst of satisfied and joyous activity, a long period of mere conservation, increasing stagnancy and ultimately decay.

Yet the unity of mankind is evidently a part of Nature's eventual scheme and must come about. Only it must be under other conditions and with safeguards which will keep the race intact in the roots of its vitality, richly diverse in its oneness." (25: 283-84)

A Fundamental Equality Between Individuals and Classes Essential for Perfection

"The perfection of the individual in a perfected society or eventually in a perfected humanity – understanding perfection always in a relative and progressive sense – is the inevitable aim of Nature. But the progress of all the individuals in a society does not proceed *pari passu*, with an equal and equable march. Some advance, others remain stationary – absolutely or relatively, – others fall back. Consequently the emergence of a dominant class is inevitable within the aggregate itself, just as in the constant clash between the aggregates the emergence of dominant nations is inevitable. That class will predominate which develops most perfectly the type Nature needs at the time for her progress or, it may be, for her retrogression. If she demands power and strength of character, a dominant aristocracy emerges; if knowledge and science, a dominant literary or savant class; if practical ability, ingenuity, economy and efficient organisation, a dominant bourgeoisie or Vaishya class, usually with the lawyer at the head; if diffusion rather than concentration of general well-being and a close organisation of toil, then even the domination of an artisan class is not impossible.

But this phenomenon, whether of dominant classes or dominant nations, can never be more than a temporary necessity; for the final aim of Nature in human life cannot be the exploitation of the many by the few or even of the few by the many, can never be the perfection of some at the cost of the abject submergence and ignorant subjection of the bulk of humanity; these can only be transient devices. Therefore we see that such dominations bear always in them the seed of their own destruction. They must pass either by the ejection or destruction of the exploiting element or else by a fusion and equalisation. We see in Europe and America that the dominant Brahmin and the dominant Kshatriya have been either abolished or are on the point of subsidence into equality with the general mass. Two rigidly separate classes alone remain, the dominant propertied class and the labourer, and all the most significant movements of the day have for their purpose the abolition of this last superiority. In this persistent tendency, Europe has obeyed one great law of Nature's progressive march, her trend towards a final equality. Absolute equality is surely neither intended nor possible, just as absolute uniformity is both impossible and utterly undesirable; but a fundamental equality which will render the play of true superiority and difference inoffensive, is essential to any conceivable perfectibility of the human race." (25: 287-88)

The Main Cause of the Decline of India – The Refusal of the Privileged to Call up the Bulk of the Nation to their Level

"Therefore, the perfect counsel for a dominant minority is always to recognise in good time the right hour for its abdication and for the imparting of its ideals, qualities, culture, experience to the rest of the aggregate or to as much of it as is prepared for that progress. Where this is done, the social aggregate advances normally and without disruption or serious wound or malady; otherwise a disordered progress is imposed upon it, for Nature will not suffer human egoism to baffle for ever her fixed intention and necessity. Where the dominant classes successfully avoid her demand upon them, the worst of destinies is likely to overtake the social aggregate, – as in India where the final refusal of the Brahmin and other privileged classes to call up the bulk of the nation as far as possible to their level, their fixing of an unbridgeable gulf of superiority between themselves and the rest of society, has been a main cause of eventual decline and degeneracy. For where her aims are frustrated, Nature inevitably withdraws her force from the offending unit till she has brought in and used other and external means to reduce the obstacle to a nullity." (25: 288)

The Glaring Defects of an Organised State

"The organised State is neither the best mind of the nation nor is it even the sum of the communal energies. It leaves out of its organised action and suppresses or unduly depresses the working force and thinking mind of important minorities, often of those which represent that which is best in the present and that which is developing for the future. It is a collective egoism much inferior to the best of which the community is capable. What that egoism is in its relation to other collective egoisms we know, and its ugliness has recently been forced upon the vision and the conscience of mankind. The individual has usually something at least like a soul, and at any rate he makes up for the deficiencies of the soul by a system of morality and an ethical sense, and for the deficiencies of these again by the fear of social opinion or, failing that, a fear of the communal law which he has ordinarily either to obey or at least to circumvent; and even the difficulty of circumventing is a check on all except the most violent or the most skilful. But the State is an entity which, with the greatest amount of power, is the least hampered by internal scruples

or external checks. It has no soul or only a rudimentary one. It is a military, political and economic force; but it is only in a slight and undeveloped degree, if at all, an intellectual and ethical being. And unfortunately the chief use it makes of its undeveloped intellect is to blunt by fictions, catchwords and recently by State philosophies, its ill-developed ethical conscience. Man within the community is now at least a half-civilised creature, but his international existence is still primitive. Until recently the organised nation in its relations with other nations was only a huge beast of prey with appetites which sometimes slept when gorged or discouraged by events, but were always its chief reason for existence. Self-protection and self-expansion by the devouring of others were its *dharma*. At the present day there is no essential improvement; there is only a greater difficulty in devouring. A "sacred egoism" is still the ideal of nations, and therefore there is neither any true and enlightened consciousness of human opinion to restrain the predatory State nor any effective international law." (25: 298-99)

The Problem of Human Unity is Not Likely to be Solved by the Creation of Vast Homogenous Aggregates – The Grand Example of the Roman Empire

"..it does not appear that this tendency towards vast homogeneous aggregates, although it has for some time played an important part in the world's history and is not exhausted or finally baffled, is ever likely to be the eventual solution; for even if it triumphed, it would have to meet in a greater or less degree the difficulties of the heterogeneous type. The true problem of empire therefore still remains, how to transform the artificial political unity of a heterogeneous empire, heterogeneous in racial composition, language and culture, into a real and psychological unity.

History gives us only one great and definite example of an attempt to solve this problem on this large scale and with antecedent conditions which could at all afford any guidance for the vast heterogeneous modern empires, those of Russia, England,* France to which the problem is now offered. The old Chinese empire of the five nations, admirably organised, was not a case in point; for all its constituent parts were Mongolian in race and presented no formidable cultural difficulties. But the imperial Roman had to face essentially the same problems as the moderns minus one or two very important complications and he solved them up to a certain point with a masterly success. His empire endured through several centuries and, though often threatened with disruption, yet by its inner principle of unity and by its overpowering centripetal attraction triumphed over all disruptive tendencies. Its one failure was the bisection into the Eastern and Western Empires which hastened its final ending. Still when that end came it was not by a disruption from within but simply by the decaying of its centre of life. And it was not till this central life faded that the pressure of the barbarian world without, to which its ruin is wrongly attributed, could prevail over its magnificent solidarity.

The Roman effected his sway by military conquest and military colonisation; but once that conquest was assured, he was not content with holding it together as an artificial political unity, nor did he trust solely to that political convenience of a good, efficient and well-organised government economically and administratively beneficent which made it at first acceptable to the conquered peoples. He had too sure a political instinct to be so easily satisfied; for it is certain that if he had stopped short there, the empire would have broken up at a much earlier date. The peoples under his sway would have preserved their sense of separate nationality and, once accustomed to Roman efficiency and administrative organisation, would inevitably have tended to the separate enjoyment of these advantages as independent organised nations.

** This empire has so altered its form into that of a free Commonwealth that the objection is no longer relevant; there is no longer an old-world empire but a free Commonwealth and a number of subject peoples moving rapidly towards self-government.*

It was this sense of separate nationality which the Roman rule succeeded in blotting out wherever it established its own dominant influence. And this was done not by the stupid expedient of a brutal force after the Teutonic fashion, but by a peaceful pressure. Rome first compounded with the one rival culture that was superior in certain respects to her own and accepted it as part of her own cultural existence and even as its most valuable part; she created a Graeco-Roman civilisation, left the Greek tongue to spread and secure it in the East, but introduced it everywhere else by the medium of the Latin language and a Latin education and succeeded in peacefully overcoming the decadent or inchoate cultures of Gaul and her other conquered provinces. But since even this process might not have been sufficient to abolish all separatist tendency, she not only admitted her Latinised subjects to the highest military and civil offices and even to the imperial purple, so that within less than a century after Augustus, first an Italian Gaul and then an Iberian Spaniard held the name and power of the Caesars, but she proceeded rapidly enough to deprive of all vitality and then even nominally to abolish all the grades of civic privilege with which she had started and extended the full Roman citizenship to all her subjects, Asiatic, European and African, without distinction.

The result was that the whole empire became psychologically and not only politically a single Graeco-Roman unity. Not only superior force or the recognition of Roman peace and good government, but all the desires, associations, pride, cultural affinities of the provinces made them firmly attached to the maintenance of the empire. Every attempt of provincial ruler or military chief to start provincial empires for their own benefit failed because it found no basis, no supporting tendency, no national sentiment and no sense of either material or any other advantage to be gained by the change in the population on whom the successful continuity of the attempt had to depend. So far the Roman succeeded; where he failed, it was due to the essential vice of his method. By crushing out, however peacefully, the living cultures or the incipient individuality of the peoples he ruled, he deprived these peoples of their sources of vitality, the roots of their force. No doubt he removed all positive causes of disruption and secured a passive force of opposition to all disruptive change; but his empire lived only at the centre and when that centre tended to become exhausted, there was no positive and abounding life throughout the body from which it could be replenished. In the end Rome could not even depend on a supply of vigorous individuals from the peoples whose life she had pressed out under the weight of a borrowed civilisation; she had to draw on the frontier barbarians. And when she fell to pieces, it was these barbarians and not the old peoples resurgent who became her heirs. For their barbarism was at least a living force and a principle of life, but the Graeco-Roman civilisation had become a principle of death. All the living forces were destroyed by whose contact it could have modified and renewed its own force. In the end it had itself to be destroyed in its form and its

principle resown in the virgin field of the vital and vigorous culture of mediaeval Europe. What the Roman had not the wisdom to do by his organised empire, – for even the profoundest and surest political instinct is not wisdom, – had to be done by Nature herself in the loose but living unity of mediaeval Christendom.

The example of Rome has haunted the political imagination of Europe ever since. Not only has it been behind the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne and Napoleon's gigantic attempt and the German dream of a world-empire governed by Teutonic efficiency and Teutonic culture, but all the imperial nations, including France and England, have followed to a certain extent in its footsteps. But, significantly enough, every attempt at renewing the Roman success has failed. The modern nations have not been able to follow Rome completely in the lines she had traced out or if they tried to follow, have clashed against different conditions and either collapsed or been obliged to call a halt. It is as if Nature had said, 'That experiment has been carried once to its logical consequences and once is enough. I have made new conditions; find you new means or at least mend and add to the old where they were deficient or went astray.'" (25: 314-17)

The Proven Futility of Attempts to Impose Foreign Culture on the Conquered Nations

"All these empires have at first carried with them the idea of imposing their culture along with the flag, first simply as an instinct of the conqueror and as a necessary adjunct to the fact of political domination and a security for its permanence, but latterly with the conscious intention of extending, as it is somewhat pharisaically put, the benefits of civilisation to the "inferior" races. It cannot be said that the attempt has anywhere been very prosperous. It was tried with considerable thoroughness and ruthlessness in Ireland, but although the Irish speech was stamped out except in the wilds of Connaught and all distinctive signs of the old Irish culture disappeared, the outraged nationality simply clung to whatever other means of distinctiveness it could find, however exiguous, its Catholic religion, its Celtic race and nationhood, and even when it became Anglicised, refused to become English. The removal or slackening of the foreign pressure has resulted in a violent recoil, an attempt

to revive the Gaelic speech, to reconstitute the old Celtic spirit and culture. The German failed to Prussianise Poland or even his own kin who speak his own language, the Alsatians. The Finn remained unconquerably Finnish in Russia. The mild Austrian methods left the Austrian Pole as Polish as his oppressed brother in German Posen. Accordingly there began to rise everywhere a growing sense of the inutility of the endeavour and the necessity of leaving the soul of the subject nation free, confining the action of the sovereign State to the enforcement of new administrative and economic conditions with as much social and cultural change as may be freely accepted or may come about by education and the force of circumstances.

… The earth is in travail now of one common, large and flexible civilisation for the whole human race into which each modern and ancient culture shall bring its contribution and each clearly defined human aggregate shall introduce its necessary element of variation." (25: 317-19)

The Democratic Element in the Ancient Indian Polity

"In India the early communities were free societies in which the king was only a military head or civic chief; we find the democratic element persisting in the days of Buddha and surviving in small States in the days of Chandragupta and Megasthenes even when great bureaucratically governed monarchies and empires were finally replacing the free earlier polity. It was only in proportion as the need for a large organisation of Indian life over the whole peninsula or at least the northern part of it made itself increasingly felt that the form of absolute monarchy grew upon the country and the learned and sacerdotal caste imposed its theocratic domination over the communal mind and its rigid Shastra as the binding chain of social unity and the binding link of a national culture." (25: 359)

Democratic Equality in Ancient Greece and India

"The natural social type of the small community is such as we see in Athens, where not only Cleon, the tanner, exercised as strong a political influence as the highborn and wealthy Nicias and the highest offices and civic functions were open to men of all classes, but in social functions and connections also there was a free association and equality. We see a similar democratic equality, though of a different type, in the earlier records of Indian civilisation. The rigid hierarchy of castes with the pretensions and arrogance of the caste spirit was a later development; in the simpler life of old, difference or even superiority of function did not carry with it a sense of personal or class superiority: at the beginning, the most sacred religious and social function, that of the Rishi and sacrificer, seems to have been open to men of all classes and occupations. Theocracy, caste and absolute kingship grew in force *pari passu* like the Church and the monarchical power in mediaeval Europe under the compulsion of the new circumstances created by the growth of large social and political aggregates." (25: 360)

The Rajputs, the Sikhs and the Marathas

"..in India the people which first developed some national self-consciousness not of a predominantly spiritual character were the Rajputs, especially of Mewar, to whom the Raja was in every way the head of society and of the nation; and the peoples which having achieved national self-consciousness came nearest to achieving also organised political unity were the Sikhs for whom Guru Govind Singh deliberately devised a common secular and spiritual centre in the Khalsa, and the Mahrattas who not only established a secular head, representative of the conscious nation, but so secularised themselves that, as it were, the whole people indiscriminately, Brahmin and Shudra, became for a time potentially a people of soldiers, politicians and administrators.

In other words, the institution of a fixed social hierarchy, while it seems to have been a necessary stage for the first tendencies of national formation, needed to modify itself and prepare its own dissolution if the later stages were to be rendered possible." (25: 377)

Liberty and Equality Cannot be Reconciled Without Fraternity

"Perhaps liberty and equality, liberty and authority, liberty and organised efficiency can never be quite satisfactorily reconciled so long as man individual and aggregate lives by egoism, so long as he cannot undergo a great spiritual and psychological change and rise beyond mere communal association to that third ideal which some vague inner sense made the revolutionary thinkers of France add to their watchwords of liberty and equality, – the greatest of all the three, though till now only an empty word on man's lips, the ideal of fraternity or, less sentimentally and more truly expressed, an inner oneness. That no mechanism social, political, religious has ever created or can create; it must take birth in the soul and rise from hidden and divine depths within." (25: 383)

An Ideal Aggregate of All Humanity to be Based on National Liberty and Free National Growth and Self-Realization of Constituting Units

"The ideal society or State is that in which respect for individual liberty and free growth of the personal being to his perfection is harmonised with respect for the needs, efficiency, solidarity, natural growth and organic perfection of the corporate being, the society or nation. In an ideal aggregate of all humanity, in the international society or State, national liberty and free national growth and self-realisation ought in the same way to be progressively harmonised with the solidarity and unified growth and perfection of the human race.

Therefore, if this basic principle were admitted, there might indeed be fluctuations due to the difficulty of a perfect working combination, as in the growth of the national aggregate there has been sometimes a stress on liberty and at others a stress on efficiency and order; but since the right conditions of the problem would have been recognised from the beginning and not left to be worked out in a blind tug of war, there would be some chance of an earlier reasonable solution with much less friction and violence in the process.

But there is little chance of such an unprecedented good fortune for mankind. Ideal conditions cannot be expected, for they demand a psychological clarity, a diffused reasonableness and scientific intelligence and, above all, a moral elevation and rectitude to which neither the mass of mankind nor its leaders and rulers have yet made any approach. In their absence, not reason and justice and mutual kindliness, but the trend of forces and their practical and legal adjustment must determine the working out of this as of other problems.…

Forces take the first place in actual effectuation; moral principles, reason, justice only so far as forces can be compelled or persuaded to admit them or, as more often happens, use them as subservient aids or inspiring battle-cries, a camouflage for their own interests. Ideas sometimes leap out as armed forces and break their way through the hedge of unideal powers; sometimes they reverse the position and make interests their subordinate helpers, a fuel for their own blaze; sometimes they conquer by martyrdom: but ordinarily they have to work not only by a half-covert pressure but by accommodation to powerful forces or must even bribe and cajole them or work through and behind them. It cannot be otherwise until the average and the aggregate man become more of an intellectual, moral and spiritual being and less predominantly the vital and emotional half-reasoning human animal. The unrealised international idea will have for some time at least to work by this secondary method and through such accommodations with the realised forces of nationalism and imperialism." (25: 395-97)

The Necessity of Both Unity and Diversity

"..freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime; diversity is as necessary as unity to our true completeness. Existence is one only in its essence and totality, in its play it is necessarily multiform. Absolute uniformity would mean the cessation of life, while on the other hand the vigour of the pulse of life may be measured by the richness of the diversities which it creates. At the same time, while diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability. Unity we must create, but not necessarily uniformity. If man could realise a perfect spiritual unity, no sort of uniformity would be necessary; for the utmost play of diversity would be securely possible on that foundation. If again he could realise a secure, clear, firmly-held unity in the principle, a rich, even an unlimited diversity in its application might be possible without any fear of disorder, confusion or strife. Because he cannot do either of these things he is tempted always to substitute uniformity for real unity. While the life-power in man demands diversity, his reason favours uniformity. It prefers it because uniformity gives him a strong and ready illusion of unity in place of the real oneness at which it is so much more difficult to arrive." (25: 423-24)

The Secret of Life – The Harmony Between Unity and Diversity

"The natural variation of human communities from each other proceeds on the same plan as the variation of individuals; each develops its own character, variant principle, natural law. This variation and fundamental following of its own separate law is necessary to its life, but it is equally necessary to the healthy total life of mankind. For the principle of variation does not prevent free interchange, does not oppose the enrichment of all from a common stock and of the common stock by all which we have seen to be the ideal principle of existence; on the contrary, without a secure variation such interchange and mutual assimilation would be out of the question. Therefore we see that in this harmony between our unity and our diversity lies the secret of life; Nature insists equally in all her works upon unity and upon variation. We shall find that a real spiritual and psychological unity can allow a free diversity and dispense with all but the minimum of uniformity which is sufficient to embody the community of nature and of essential principle." (25: 424-25)

The Harmonisation of Law and Liberty

"The quarrel between law and liberty stands on the same ground and moves to the same solution. The diversity, the variation must be a free variation. Nature does not manufacture, does not impose a pattern or a rule from outside; she impels life to grow from within and to assert its own natural law and development modified only by its commerce with its environment. All liberty, individual, national, religious, social, ethical, takes its ground upon this fundamental principle of our existence. By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfilment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment. The dangers and disadvantages of liberty, the disorder, strife, waste and confusion to which its wrong use leads are indeed obvious. But they arise from the absence or defect of the sense of unity between individual and individual, between community and community, which pushes them to assert themselves at the expense of each other instead of growing by mutual help and interchange and to assert freedom for themselves in the very act of encroaching on the free development of their fellows. If a real, a spiritual and psychological unity were effectuated, liberty would have no perils and disadvantages; for free individuals enamoured of unity would be compelled by themselves, by their own need, to accommodate perfectly their own growth with the growth of their fellows and would not feel themselves complete except in the free growth of others. Because of our present imperfection and the ignorance of our mind and will, law and regimentation have to be called in to restrain and to compel from outside. The facile advantages of a strong law and compulsion are obvious, but equally great are the disadvantages. Such perfection as it succeeds in creating tends to be mechanical and even the order it imposes turns out to be artificial and liable to break down if the yoke is loosened or the restraining grasp withdrawn. Carried too far, an imposed order discourages the principle of natural growth which is the true method of life and may even slay the capacity for real growth. We repress and over-standardise life at our peril; by over-regimentation we crush Nature's initiative and habit of intuitive self-adaptation. Dwarfed or robbed of elasticity, the devitalised individuality, even while it seems outwardly fair and symmetrical, perishes from within. Better anarchy than the long continuance of a law which is not our own or which our real nature cannot assimilate. And all repressive or preventive law is only a makeshift, a substitute for the true law which must develop from within and be not a check on liberty, but its outward image and visible expression. Human society progresses really and vitally in proportion as law becomes the child of freedom; it will reach its perfection when, man having learned to know and become spiritually one with his fellow-man, the spontaneous law of his society exists only as the outward mould of his self-governed inner liberty." (25: 425-26)

The Ideal Principle of Human Unity – A System of Free and National Groupings of Mankind

"In principle, then, the ideal unification of mankind would be a system in which, as a first rule of common and harmonious life, the human peoples would be allowed to form their own groupings according to their natural divisions of locality, race, culture, economic convenience and not according to the more violent accidents of history or the egoistic will of powerful nations whose policy it must always be to compel the smaller or less timely organised to serve their interests as dependents or obey their commands as subjects. The present arrangement of the world has been worked out by economic forces, by political diplomacies, treaties and purchases and by military violence without regard to any moral principle or any general rule of the good of mankind. It has served roughly certain ends of the World-Force in its development and helped at much cost of bloodshed, suffering, cruelty, oppression and revolt to bring humanity more together. Like all things that, though in themselves unideal, have been and have asserted themselves with force, it has had its justification, not moral but biological, in the necessity of the rough methods which Nature has to use with a half-animal mankind as with her animal creation. But the great step of unification once taken, the artificial arrangements which have resulted would no longer have any reason for existence. It would be so in the first place because the convenience and good of the world at large and not the satisfaction of the egoism, pride and greed of particular nations would be the object to be held in view, in the second because whatever legitimate claim any nation might have upon others, such as necessities of economic well-being and expansion, would be arranged for in a soundly organised world-union or world-state no longer on the principle of strife and competition, but on a principle of cooperation or mutual adjustment or at least of competition regulated by law and equity and just interchange. Therefore no ground would remain for forced and artificial groupings except that of historical tradition or accomplished fact which would obviously have little weight in a great change of world conditions impossible to achieve unless the race is prepared to break hundreds of traditions and unsettle the great majority of accomplished facts.

The first principle of human unity, groupings being necessary, should be a system of free and natural groupings which would leave no room for internal discords, mutual incompatibilities and repression and revolt as between race and race or people and people. For otherwise the world-state would be founded in part at least upon a system of legalised injustice and repression or at the best upon a principle of force and compulsion, however mitigated. Such a system would contain dissatisfied elements eager to seize upon any hope of change and throw their moral force and whatever material power they might still keep on the side of any velleities that might appear in the race towards disorder, secession, dissolution of the system and perhaps a return to the old order of things. Moral centres of revolt would thus be preserved which, given the restlessness of the human mind, could not fail to have, in periods favourable to them, a great power of contagion and self-diffusion." (25: 428-29)

The Idea of a World-State – Its Realisation Inevitable in the Scheme of Nature

"The idea of a World-State or world-union has been born not only in the speculating forecasting mind of the thinker, but in the consciousness of humanity out of the very necessity of this new common existence.

The World-State must now either be brought about by a mutual understanding or by the force of circumstances and a series of new and disastrous shocks. For the old still-prevailing order of things was founded on circumstances and conditions which no longer exist. A new order is demanded by the new conditions and, so long as it is not created, there will be a transitional era of continued trouble or recurrent disorders, inevitable crises through which Nature will effect in her own violent way the working out of the necessity which she has evolved." (25: 463)

The Double Self-fulfilment Desired by Every National Ego

"Every national ego, like every organic life, desires a double self-fulfilment, intensive and extensive or expansive. The deepening and enriching of its culture, political strength and economic well-being within its borders is not felt to be sufficient if there is not, without, an extension or expansion of its culture, an increase of its political extent, dominion, power or influence and a masterful widening of its commercial exploitation of the world. This natural and instinctive desire is not an abnormal moral depravity but the very instinct of egoistic life; and what life at present is not egoistic? But it can be satisfied only to a very limited degree by peaceful and unaggressive means." (25: 477)

The Gist of the Modern Economic View of Life

"For the modern economic view of life, culture and its products have chiefly a decorative value; they are costly and desirable luxuries, not at all indispensable necessities. Religion is in this view a by-product of the human mind with a very restricted utility – if indeed it is not a waste and a hindrance. Education has a recognised importance but its object and form are no longer so much cultural as scientific, utilitarian and economic, its value the preparation of the efficient individual unit to take his place in the body of the economic organism. Science is of immense importance not because it discovers the secrets of Nature for the advancement of knowledge, but because it utilises them for the creation of machinery and develops and organises the economic resources of the community. The thought-power of the society, almost its

soul-power – if it has any longer so unsubstantial and unproductive a thing as a soul – is not in its religion or its literature, although the former drags on a feeble existence and the latter teems and spawns, but in the daily Press primarily an instrument of commercialism and governed by the political and commercial spirit and not like literature a direct instrument of culture. Politics, government itself are becoming more and more a machinery for the development of an industrialised society, divided between the service of bourgeois capitalism and the office of a half-involuntary channel for the incoming of economic Socialism. Free thought and culture remain on the surface of this great increasing mass of commercialism and influence and modify it, but are themselves more and more influenced, penetrated, coloured, subjugated by the economic, commercial and industrial view of human life." (25: 487)

The Principle of Sound Order and Its Application to the Problem of the Unity of the Human Race

"The sound order is that which comes from within as the result of a nature that has discovered itself and found its own law and the law of its relations with others. Therefore the truest order is that which is founded on the greatest possible liberty; for liberty is at once the condition of vigorous variation and the condition of self-finding. Nature secures variation by division into groups and insists on liberty by the force of individuality in the members of the group. Therefore the unity of the human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws of life must be founded on free groupings, and the groupings again must be the natural association of free individuals. This is an ideal which it is certainly impossible to realise under present conditions or perhaps in any near future of the human race; but it is an ideal which ought to be kept in view, for the more we can approximate to it, the more we can be sure of being on the right road. The artificiality of much in human life is the cause of its most deep-seated maladies; it is not faithful to itself or sincere with Nature and therefore it stumbles and suffers." (25: 513-14)

A Large and Free Use of Varying Natural Languages of Humanity Beneficial to Human Life and Progress

"The seeking for a common language for all mankind was very strong at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century and gave rise to several experiments, none of which could get to any vital permanence. Now whatever may be the need of a common medium of communication for mankind and however it may be served by the general use either of an artificial and conventional language or of some natural tongue, as Latin, and later on to a slight extent French, was for some time the common cultural tongue of intercourse between the European nations or Sanskrit for the Indian peoples, no unification which destroyed or overshadowed, dwarfed and discouraged the large and free use of the varying natural languages of humanity, could fail to be detrimental to human life and progress." (25: 514)

The Two Purposes Served by the Diversity of Language

"Diversity of language serves two important ends of the human spirit, a use of unification and a use of variation. A language helps to bring those who speak it into a certain large unity of growing thought, formed temperament, ripening spirit. It is an intellectual, aesthetic and expressive bond which tempers division where division exists and strengthens unity where unity has been achieved. Especially it gives self-consciousness to national or racial unity and creates the bond of a common self-expression and a common record of achievement. On the other hand, it is a means of national differentiation and perhaps the most powerful of all, not a barren principle of division merely, but a fruitful and helpful differentiation. For each language is the sign and power of the soul of the people which naturally speaks it. Each

develops therefore its own peculiar spirit, thought-temperament, way of dealing with life and knowledge and experience. If it receives and welcomes the thought, the life-experience, the spiritual impact of other nations, still it transforms them into something new of its own and by that power of transmutation it enriches the life of humanity with its fruitful borrowings and does not merely repeat what had been gained elsewhere. Therefore it is of the utmost value to a nation, a human group-soul, to preserve its language and to make of it a strong and living cultural instrument. A nation, race or people which loses its language cannot live its whole life or its real life. And this advantage to the national life is at the same time an advantage to the general life of the human race." (25: 515-16)

The Example of Ireland

"Ireland had its own tongue when it had its own free nationality and culture and its loss was a loss to humanity as well as to the Irish nation. For what might not this Celtic race with its fine psychic turn and quick intelligence and delicate imagination, which did so much in the beginning for European culture and religion, have given to the world through all these centuries under natural conditions? But the forcible imposition of a foreign tongue and the turning of a nation into a province left Ireland for so many centuries mute and culturally stagnant, a dead force in the life of Europe. Nor can we count as an adequate compensation for this loss the small indirect influence of the race upon English culture or the few direct contributions made by gifted

Irishmen forced to pour their natural genius into a foreign mould of thought. Even when Ireland in her struggle for freedom was striving to recover her free soul and give it a voice, she has been hampered by having to use a tongue which does not naturally express her spirit and peculiar bent. In time she may conquer the obstacle, make this tongue her own, force it to express her, but it will be long, if ever, before she can do it with the same richness, force and unfettered individuality as she would have done in her Gaelic speech. That speech she had tried to recover but the natural obstacles have been and are likely always to be too heavy and too strongly established for any complete success in that endeavour." (25: 517)

The Example of Modern India

"Modern India is another striking example. Nothing has stood more in the way of the rapid progress in India, nothing has more successfully prevented her self-finding and development under modern conditions than the long overshadowing of the Indian tongues as cultural instruments by the English language. It is significant that the one sub-nation in India which from the first refused to undergo this yoke, devoted itself to the development of its language, made that for long its principal preoccupation, gave to it its most original minds and most living energies, getting through everything else perfunctorily, neglecting commerce, doing politics as an intellectual and oratorical pastime, – that it is Bengal which first recovered its soul, re-

spiritualised itself, forced the whole world to hear of its great spiritual personalities, gave it the first modern Indian poet and Indian scientist of world-wide fame and achievement, restored the moribund art of India to life and power, first made her count again in the culture of the world, first, as a reward in the outer life, arrived at a vital political consciousness and a living political movement not imitative and derivative in its spirit and its central ideal. For so much does language count in the life of a nation; for so much does it count to the advantage of humanity at large that its group-souls should preserve and develop and use with a vigorous group-individuality their natural instrument of expression." (25: 517-18)

The Advantages of a Common Language Far Outweighed by the Advantage of the Diversity of Languages

"A common language makes for unity and therefore it might be said that the unity of the human race demands unity of language; the advantages of diversity must be foregone for this greater good, however serious the temporary sacrifice. But it makes for a real, fruitful, living unity, only when it is the natural expression of the race or has been made natural by a long adaptation and development from within. The history of universal tongues spoken by peoples to whom they were not natural, is not encouraging. Always they have tended to become dead tongues, sterilising so long as they kept their hold, fruitful only when they were decomposed and broken up into new derivative languages or departed leaving the old speech, where that still persisted, to revive with this new stamp and influence upon it. Latin, after its first century of general domination in the West, became a dead thing, impotent for creation, and generated no new or living and evolving culture in the nations that spoke it; even so great a force as Christianity could not give it a new life. The times during which it was an instrument of European thought, were precisely those in which that thought was heaviest, most traditional and least fruitful. A rapid and vigorous new life only grew up when the languages which appeared out of the detritus of dying Latin or the old languages which had not been lost took its place as the complete instruments of national culture. For it is not enough that the natural language should be spoken by the people; it must be the expression of its higher life and thought. A language that survives only as a patois or a provincial tongue like Welsh after the English conquest or Breton or Provençal in France or as Czech survived once in Austria or Ruthenian and Lithuanian in imperial Russia, languishes, becomes sterile and does not serve all the true purpose of survival.

Language is the sign of the cultural life of a people, the index of its soul in thought and mind that stands behind and enriches its soul in action. Therefore it is here that the phenomena and utilities of diversity may be most readily seized, more than in mere outward things; but these truths are important because they apply equally to the thing which it expresses and symbolises and serves as an instrument. Diversity of language is worth keeping because diversity of cultures and differentiation of soul-groups are worth keeping and because without that diversity life cannot have full play; for in its absence there is a danger, almost an inevitability of decline and stagnation. The disappearance of national variation into a single uniform human unity, of which the systematic thinker dreams as an ideal and which we have seen to be a substantial possibility and even a likelihood if a certain tendency becomes dominant, might lead to political peace, economic well-being, perfect administration, the solution of a hundred material problems, as did on a lesser scale the Roman unity in old times; but to what eventual good if it leads also to an uncreative sterilisation

of the mind and the stagnation of the soul of the race?… For we see that in the life of a nation a great period of national culture and vigorous mental and soul life is always part of a general stirring and movement which has its counterpart in the outward political, economic and practical life of the nation. The cultural brings about or increases the material progress but also it needs it that it may itself flourish with an entirely full and healthy vigour. The peace, well-being and settled order of the human world is a thing eminently to be desired as a basis for a great world-culture in which all humanity must be united; but neither of these unities, the outward or inward, ought to be devoid of an element even more important than peace, order and well-being, – freedom and vigour of life, which can only be assured by variation and by the freedom of the group and of the individual. Not then a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical sameness, but a living oneness full of healthy freedom and variation is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised in man's future." (25: 518-20)

The Conditions of a Free World-Union

"A FREE world-union must in its very nature be a complex unity based on a diversity and that diversity must be based on free self-determination. A mechanical unitarian system would regard in its idea the geographical groupings of men as so many conveniences for provincial division, for the convenience of administration, much in the same spirit as the French Revolution reconstituted France with an entire disregard of old natural and historic divisions. It would regard mankind as one single nation and it would try to efface the old separative national spirit altogether; it would arrange its system probably by continents and subdivide the continents by convenient geographical demarcations. In this other quite opposite idea, the geographical, the physical principle of union would be subordinated to a psychological principle; for not a mechanical division, but a living diversity would be its object. If this object is to be secured, the peoples of humanity must be allowed to group

themselves according to their free-will and their natural affinities; no constraint or force could be allowed to compel an unwilling nation or distinct grouping of peoples to enter into another system or join itself or remain joined to it for the convenience, aggrandisement or political necessity of another people or even for the general convenience, in disregard of its own wishes. Nations or countries widely divided from each other geographically like England and Canada or England and Australia might cohere together. Nations closely grouped locally might choose to stand apart, like England and Ireland or like Finland and Russia. Unity would be the largest principle of life, but freedom would be its foundation-stone.*" (25: 540)

** Necessarily to every principle there must be in application a reasonable limit; otherwise fantastic and impracticable absurdities might take the place of a living truth.*

The World-State and Its Supports – The Need of a Religion of Humanity

"The World-State will give its inhabitants the great advantages of peace, economic well-being, general security, combination for intellectual, cultural, social activity and progress. None of these are in themselves sufficient to create the thing needed. Peace and security we all desire at present, because we have them not in sufficiency; but we must remember that man has also within him the need of combat, adventure, struggle, almost requires these for his growth and healthy living; that instinct would be largely suppressed by a universal peace and a flat security and it might rise up successfully against suppression. Economic well-being by itself cannot permanently satisfy and the price paid for it might be so heavy as to diminish its appeal and value. The human instinct for liberty, individual and national, might well be a constant menace to the World-State, unless it so skilfully arranged its system as to give them sufficient free play. A common intellectual and cultural activity and progress may do much, but need not by themselves be sufficient to bring into being the fully powerful psychological factor that would be required. And the collective ego

created would have to rely on the instinct of unity alone; for it would be in conflict with the separative instinct which gives the national ego half its vitality.

It is not impossible that the indispensable inner factor for this outer frame might be increasingly created in its very process of growth, but certain psychological elements would have to be present in great strength. There would be needed, to make the change persist, a religion of humanity or an equivalent sentiment much more powerful, explicit, self-conscious, universal in its appeal than the nationalist's religion of country; the clear recognition by man in all his thought and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form; an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separativeness, – and yet there must be no destruction of individuality, for without that man would stagnate; a principle and arrangement of the common life which would give free play to individual variation, interchange in diversity and the need of adventure and conquest by which the soul of man lives and grows great,…" (25: 562-63)

"The fundamental idea is that mankind is the godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and the chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the State, the family nor anything else ought to take its place; they are only worthy of respect so far as they are images of the human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid its self-manifestation. But where the cult of these idols seeks to usurp the place of the spirit and makes demands inconsistent with its service, they should be put aside. No injunctions of old creeds, religious, political, social or cultural, are valid when they go against its claims. Science even, though it is one of the chief modern idols, must not be allowed to make claims contrary to its ethical temperament and aim, for science is only valuable in so far as it helps and serves by knowledge and progress the religion of humanity. War, capital punishment, the taking of human life, cruelty of all kinds whether committed by the individual, the State or society, not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human being or any class of human beings under whatever specious plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by its primary tenets, to be fought against always, in no degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventable death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind. This, speaking largely, is the idea and spirit of the intellectual religion of humanity.

One has only to compare human life and thought and feeling a century or two ago with human life, thought and feeling in the pre-war period to see how great an influence this religion of humanity has exercised and how fruitful a work it has done. It accomplished rapidly many things which orthodox religion failed to do effectively, largely because it acted as a constant intellectual

and critical solvent, an unsparing assailant of the thing that is and an unflinching champion of the thing to be, faithful always to the future, while orthodox religion allied itself with the powers of the present, even of the past, bound itself by its pact with them and could act only at best as a moderating but not as a reforming force. Moreover, this religion has faith in humanity and its earthly future and can therefore aid its earthly progress, while the orthodox religions looked with eyes of pious sorrow and gloom on the earthly life of man and were very ready to bid him bear peacefully and contentedly, even to welcome its crudities, cruelties, oppressions, tribulations as a means for learning to appreciate and for earning the better life which will be given us hereafter. Faith, even an intellectual faith, must always be a worker of miracles, and this religion of humanity, even without taking bodily shape or a compelling form or a visible means of self-effectuation, was yet able to effect comparatively much of what it set out to do. It to some degree humanised society, humanised law and punishment, humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery, raised those who were depressed and fallen, gave large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions. It had almost succeeded in humanising war and would perhaps have succeeded entirely but for the contrary trend of modern Science. It made it possible for man to conceive of a world free from war as imaginable even without waiting for the Christian millennium. At any rate, this much change came about that, while peace was formerly a rare interlude of constant war, war became an interlude, if a much too frequent interlude of peace, though as yet only of an armed peace. That may not be a great step, but still it was a step forward. It gave new conceptions of the dignity of the human being and opened new ideas and new vistas of his education, self-development and potentiality. It spread enlightenment; it made man feel more his responsibility for the progress and happiness of the race; it raised the average self-respect and capacity of mankind; it gave hope to the serf, self-assertion to the downtrodden and made the labourer in his manhood the potential equal of the rich and powerful. True, if we compare what is with what should be, the actual achievement with the ideal, all this will seem only a scanty work of preparation. But it was a remarkable record for a century and a half or a little more and for an unembodied spirit which had to work through what instruments it could find and had as yet no form, habitation or visible engine of its own concentrated workings. But perhaps it was in this that lay its power and advantage, since that saved it from crystallising into a form and getting petrified or at least losing its more free and subtle action." (25: 565-67)

The Purely Intellectual Religion of Humanity Is Not Sufficient Without an Inner Change for Achieving Its Aim – The Triple Godhead of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

" . . this is the question whether a purely intellectual and sentimental religion of humanity will be sufficient to bring about so great a change in our psychology. The weakness of the intellectual idea, even when it supports itself by an appeal to the sentiments and emotions, is that it does not get at the centre of man's being. The intellect and the feelings are only instruments of the being and they may be the instruments of either its lower and external form or of the inner and higher man, servants of the ego or channels of the soul. The aim of the religion of humanity was formulated in the eighteenth century by a sort of primal intuition; that aim was and it is still to re-create human society in the image of three kindred ideas, liberty, equality and fraternity. None of these has really been won in spite of all the progress that has been achieved. The liberty that has been so loudly proclaimed as an essential of modern progress is an outward, mechanical and unreal liberty. The equality that has been so much sought after and battled for is equally an outward and mechanical and will turn out to be an unreal equality. Fraternity is not even claimed to be a practicable principle of the ordering of life and what is put forward as its substitute is the outward and mechanical principle of equal association or at the best a comradeship of labour. This is because the idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being. It has limited his effort to the attempt to revolutionise political and social institutions and to bring about such a modification of the ideas and sentiments of the common mind of mankind as would make these institutions practicable; it has worked at the machinery of human life and on the outer mind much more than upon the soul of the race. It has laboured to establish a political, social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association.

But though these aims are of great importance in their own field, they are not the central thing; they can only be secure when founded upon a change of the inner human nature and inner way of living; they are themselves of importance only as means for giving a greater scope and a better field for man's development towards that change and, when it is once achieved, as an outward expression of the larger inward life. Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that

pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment.

Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is

the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race." (25: 568-70)

The Eventual Unification of Mankind is Inevitable

"…mankind will finally be forced in self-defence to a new, closer and more stringently unified order of things. Its choice will be between that and a lingering suicide. If the human reason cannot find out the way, Nature herself is sure to shape these upheavals in such a way as to bring about her end. Therefore, – whether soon or in the long run, whether brought about by its own growing sentiment of unity, stimulated by common interest and convenience, or by the evolutionary pressure of circumstances, – we may take it that an eventual unification or at least some formal organisation of human life on earth is, the incalculable being always allowed for, practically inevitable." (25: 574)

A Spiritual Religion of Humanity – The Hope of the Future

"A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this

knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded. There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race." (25: 577-78)

The Future of Mankind

"Mankind has a habit of surviving the worst catastrophes created by its own errors or by the violent turns of Nature and it must be so if there is any meaning in its existence, if its long history and continuous survival is not the accident of a fortuitously self-organising Chance, which it must be in a purely materialistic view of the nature of the world. If man is intended to survive and carry forward the evolution of which he is at present the head and, to some extent, a half-conscious leader of its march, he must come out of his present chaotic international life and arrive at a beginning of organised united action; some kind of World-State, unitary or federal, or a confederacy or a coalition he must arrive at in the end; no smaller or looser expedient would adequately serve the purpose." (25: 585)

The Ultimate Result – The Formation of a World-State

"The ultimate result must be the formation of a World-State and the most desirable form of it would be a federation of free nationalities in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would have disappeared and, though some might preserve a greater natural influence, all would have an equal status. A confederacy would give the greatest freedom to the nations constituting the World-State, but this might give too much room for fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies to operate; a federal order would then be the most desirable. All else would be determined by the course of events and by general agreement or the shape given by the ideas and necessities that may grow up in the future. A world-union of this kind would have the greatest chances of long survival or permanent existence. This is a mutable

world and uncertainties and dangers might assail or trouble for a time; the formed structure might be subjected to revolutionary tendencies as new ideas and forces emerged and produced their effect on the general mind of humanity, but the essential step would have been taken and the future of the race assured or at least the present era overpassed in which it is threatened and disturbed by unsolved needs and difficulties, precarious conditions, immense upheavals, huge and sanguinary world-wide conflicts and the threat of others to come. The ideal of human unity would be no longer an unfulfilled ideal but an accomplished fact and its preservation given into the charge of the united human peoples. Its future destiny would lie on the knees of the gods and, if the gods have a use for the continued existence of the race, may be left to lie there safe." (25: 594-95)

The Intellectual Idealism of Europe – The Prospects

"The mind of Europe laboured by Hellenism and Christianity and enlarging its horizons by free thought and science has arrived at an idea of human perfectibility or progress expressed in the terms of an intellectual, material and vital freedom, equality and unity of close association, an active fraternity or comradeship in thought and feeling and labour. The difficulty is to make of the component parts of this idea a combined and real reality in practice and the effort of European progress has been a labour to discover and set up a social machinery that shall automatically turn out this production. The first equation discovered, an individualistic democracy, a system of political liberty and equality before the law, has helped only to a levelling as between the higher orders, the competitive liberty of the strongest and most skilful to arrive, an inhuman social inequality and economic exploitation, an incessant class war and a monstrous and opulently sordid reign of wealth and productive machinery. It is the turn now of another equation, an equality as absolute as can be fabricated amid the inequalities of Nature by reason and social science

and machinery, – and most of all an equal association in the labour and the common profits of a collective life. It is not certain that this formula will succeed very much better than its predecessor. This equality can only be presently secured by strict regulation, and that means that liberty at least for a time must go under. And at any rate the root of the whole difficulty is ignored, that nothing can be real in life that is not made real in the spirit. It is only if men can be made free, equal and united in spirit that there can be a secure freedom, equality and brotherhood in their life. The idea and sentiment are not enough, for they are incomplete and combated by deep-seated nature and instinct and they are besides inconstant and fluctuate. There must be an immense advance that will make freedom, equality and unity our necessary internal and external atmosphere. This can come only by a spiritual change and the intellect of Europe is beginning to see that the spiritual change is at least a necessity; but it is still too intent on rational formula and on mechanical effort to spare much time for discovery and realisation of the things of the spirit." (25: 679-80)

Asia and Europe

"..now Asia enduring the powerful pressure of Europe is being forced to face the life problem again under the necessity of another and a more active solution. Assimilative, she may reproduce or imitate the occidental experiment of industrialism, its first phase of capitalism, its second phase of socialism; but then her resurgence will bring no new meaning or possibility into the human endeavour. Or the closer meeting of these two halves of the mind of humanity may set up a more powerful connection between the two poles of our being and realise some sufficient equation of the highest ideals of each, the inner and the outer freedom, the inner and the outer equality, the inner and the outer unity. That is the largest hope that can be formed on present data and circumstance for the human future." (25: 681)

Technique Versus Inspiration in Poetry

"…technique, however indispensable, occupies a smaller field perhaps in poetry than in any other art, – first, because its instrument, the rhythmic word, is fuller of subtle and immaterial elements; then because, the most complex, flexible, variously suggestive of all the instruments of the artistic creator, it has more – almost infinite – possibilities in many directions than any other. The rhythmic word has a subtly sensible element, its sound value, a quite immaterial element, its significance or thought value, and both of these again, its sound and its sense, have separately and together a soul value, a direct spiritual power, which is infinitely the most important thing about them. And though this comes to birth with a small element subject to the laws of technique, yet almost immediately, almost at the beginning of its flight, its power soars up beyond the province of any laws of mechanical construction: and this form of speech carries in it on its summits an element which draws close to the empire of the ineffable.

Poetry rather determines its own form; the form is not imposed on it by any law mechanical or external to it. The poet least of all artists needs to create with his eye fixed anxiously on the technique of his art. He has to possess it, no doubt; but in the heat of creation the intellectual sense of it becomes a subordinate action or even a mere undertone in his mind, and in his best moments he is permitted, in a way, to forget it altogether. For then the perfection of his sound-movement and style come entirely as the spontaneous form of his soul: that utters itself in an inspired rhythm and an innate, a revealed word, even as the universal Soul created the harmonies of the universe out of the power of the word secret and eternal within him, leaving the mechanical work to be done in a surge of hidden spiritual excitement by the subconscient part of his Nature. It is this highest speech which is the supreme poetic utterance, the immortal element in his poetry, and a little of it is enough to save the rest of his work from oblivion. *Svalpam apyasya dharmasya!"* (26: 13)

The Importance of Rhythmic Movement in Poetry

"This power makes the rhythmic word of the poet the highest form of speech available to man for the expression whether of his self-vision or of his world-vision. It is noticeable that even the deepest experience, the pure spiritual which enters into things that can never be wholly expressed, still, when it does try to express them and not merely to explain them intellectually, tends instinctively to use, often the rhythmic forms, almost always the manner of speech characteristic of poetry. But poetry attempts to extend this manner of vision and utterance to all experience, even the most objective, and therefore it has a natural urge towards the expression of something in the object beyond its mere appearances, even when these seem outwardly to be all that it is enjoying." (26: 14)

"Ordinary speech uses language mostly for a limited practical utility of communication; it uses it for life and for the expression of ideas and feelings necessary or useful to life. In doing so, we treat words as conventional signs for ideas with nothing but a perfunctory attention to their natural force, much as we use any kind of common machine or simple implement; we treat them as if, though useful for life, they were themselves without life. When we wish to put a more vital power into them, we have to lend it to them out of ourselves, by marked intonations of the voice, by the emotional force or vital energy we throw into the sound so as to infuse into the conventional word-sign something which is not inherent in itself. But if we go back earlier in the history of language and still more if we look into its origins, we shall, I think, find that it was not always so with human speech. Words had not only a real and vivid life of their own, but the speaker was more conscious of it than we can possibly be with our mechanised and sophisticated intellects. This arose from the primitive nature of language which, probably, in its first movement was not intended, – or shall we say, did not intend, – so much to stand for distinct ideas of the intelligence as for feelings, sensations, broad indefinite mental impressions with minute shades of quality in them which we do not now care to pursue. The intellectual sense in its precision must have been a secondary element which grew more dominant as language evolved along with the evolving intelligence.

For the reason why sound came to express fixed ideas, lies not in any natural and inherent equivalence between the sound and its intellectual sense, for there is none, – intellectually any sound might express any sense, if men were agreed on a conventional equivalence between them; it started from an indefinable quality or property in the sound to raise certain vibrations in the life-soul of the human creature, in his sensational, his emotional, his crude mental being. An example may indicate more clearly what I mean. The word wolf, the origin of which is no longer present to our minds, denotes to our intelligence a certain living object and that is all, the rest we have to do for ourselves: the Sanskrit word *vṛka*, "tearer", came in the end to do the same thing, but originally it expressed the sensational relation between the wolf and man which most affected the man's life, and it did so by a certain quality in the sound which readily associated it with the sensation of tearing. This must have given early language a powerful life, a concrete vigour, in one direction a natural poetic force which it has lost, however greatly it has gained in precision, clarity, utility.

Now, poetry goes back in a way and recovers, though in another fashion, as much as it can of this original element. It does this partly by a stress on the image replacing the old sensational concreteness, partly by a greater attention to the suggestive force of the sound, its life, its power, the mental impression

it carries. It associates this with the definitive thought value contributed by the intelligence and increases both by each other. In that way it succeeds at the same time in carrying up the power of speech to the direct expression of a higher reach of experience than the intellectual or vital. For it brings out not only the definitive intellectual value of the word, not only its power of emotion and sensation, its vital suggestion, but through and beyond these aids its soul-suggestion, its spirit. So poetry arrives at the indication of infinite meanings beyond the finite intellectual meaning the word carries. It expresses not only the life-soul of man as did the primitive word, not only the ideas of his intelligence for which speech now usually serves, but the experience, the vision, the ideas, as we may say, of the higher and wider soul in him. Making them real to our life-soul as well as present to our intellect, it opens to us by the word the doors of the Spirit." (26: 14-16)

The Prose Style

"Prose style carries speech to a much higher power than its ordinary use, but it differs from poetry in not making this yet greater attempt. For it takes its stand firmly on the intellectual value of the word. It uses rhythms which ordinary speech neglects, and aims at a general fluid harmony of movement. It seeks to associate words agreeably and luminously so as at once to please and to clarify the intelligence. It strives after a more accurate, subtle, flexible and satisfying expression than the rough methods of ordinary speech care to compass. A higher adequacy of speech is its first object. Beyond this adequacy it may aim at a greater forcefulness and effectiveness by various devices of speech, by many rhetorical means for heightening the stress of its intellectual appeal. Passing beyond this first limit, this just or strong, but always restrained

measure, it may admit a more emphatic rhythm, more directly and powerfully stimulate the emotion, appeal to a more vivid aesthetic sense. It may even make such a free or rich use of images as to suggest an outward approximation to the manner of poetry; but it employs them decoratively, as ornaments, *alaṅkāra*, or for their effective value in giving a stronger intellectual vision of the thing or the thought it describes or defines; it does not use the image for that profounder and more living vision for which the poet is always seeking. And always it has its eye on its chief hearer and judge, the intelligence, and calls in other powers only as important aids to capture his suffrage. Reason and taste, two powers of the intelligence, are rightly the supreme gods of the prose stylist, while to the poet they are only minor deities." (26: 16)

Poetic Prose and Pure Poetry Leading to Mantra

"If it goes beyond these limits, approaches in its measures a more striking rhythmic balance, uses images for sheer vision, opens itself to a mightier breath of speech, prose style passes beyond its normal province and approaches or even enters the confines of poetry. It becomes poetical prose or even poetry itself using the apparent forms of prose as a disguise or a loose apparel. A high or a fine adequacy, effectivity, intellectual illuminativeness and a carefully tempered aesthetic satisfaction are the natural and proper powers of its speech. But the privilege of the poet is to go beyond and discover that more intense illumination of speech, that inspired word and supreme inevitable utterance, in which there meets the unity of a divine rhythmic movement with a depth of sense and a power of infinite suggestion welling up directly from the fountain-heads of the spirit within us. He may not always or often find it, but to seek for it is the law or at least the highest trend of his utterance, and when he can not only find it, but cast into it some deeply revealed truth of the spirit itself, he utters the *mantra*." (26: 16-17)

The Style and Rhythm of Poetry

"But always, whether in the search or the finding, the whole style and rhythm of poetry are the expression and movement which come from us out of a certain spiritual excitement caused by a vision in the soul of which it is eager to deliver itself. The vision may be of anything in Nature or God or man or the life of creatures or the life of things; it may be a vision of force and action, or of sensible beauty, or of truth of thought, or of emotion and pleasure and pain, of this life or the life beyond. It is sufficient that it is the soul which sees and the eye, sense, heart and thought-mind become the passive instruments of the soul. Then we get the real, the high poetry. But if what acts is too much an excitement of the intellect, the imagination, the emotions, the vital activities seeking rhythmical and forceful expression, without that greater

spiritual excitement embracing them, or if all these are not sufficiently sunk into the soul, steeped in it, fused in it, and the expression does not come out purified and uplifted by a sort of spiritual transmutation, then we fall to lower levels of poetry and get work of a much more doubtful immortality. And when the appeal is altogether to the lower things in us, to the mere mind, we arrive outside the true domain of poetry; we approach the confines of prose or get prose itself masking in the apparent forms of poetry, and the work is distinguished from prose style only or mainly by its mechanical elements, a good verse form and perhaps a more compact, catching or energetic expression than the prose writer will ordinarily permit to the easier and looser balance of his speech. It will not have at all or not sufficiently the true essence of poetry." (26: 17-18)

The Two Elements of All Things Expressible by Speech

"..in all things that speech can express there are two elements, the outward or instrumental and the real or spiritual. In thought, for instance, there is the intellectual idea, that which the intelligence makes precise and definite to us, and the soul-idea, that which exceeds the intellectual and brings us into nearness or identity with the whole reality of the thing expressed. Equally in emotion, it is not the mere emotion itself the poet seeks, but the soul of emotion, that in it for the delight of which the soul in us and the world desires or accepts emotional experience. So too with the poetical sense of objects, the poet's attempt to embody in his speech truth of life or truth of Nature. It is this greater truth and its delight and beauty for which he is seeking, beauty which

is truth and truth beauty and therefore a joy for ever, because it brings us the delight of the soul in the discovery of its own deeper realities. This greater element the more timid and temperate speech of prose can sometimes shadow out to us, but the heightened and fearless style of poetry makes it close and living and the higher cadences of poetry carry in on their wings what the style by itself could not bring. This is the source of that intensity which is the stamp of poetical speech and of the poetical movement. It comes from the stress of the soul-vision behind the word; it is the spiritual excitement of a rhythmic voyage of self-discovery among the magic islands of form and name in these inner and outer worlds." (26: 18)

When does Mantric Poetry Become Possible

"THE MANTRA, poetic expression of the deepest spiritual reality, is only possible when three highest intensities of poetic speech meet and become indissolubly one, a highest intensity of rhythmic movement, a highest intensity of interwoven verbal form and thought-substance, of style, and a highest intensity of the soul's vision of truth. All great poetry comes about by a unison of these three elements; it is the insufficiency of one or another which makes the inequalities in the work of even the greatest poets, and it is the failure of some one element which is the cause of their lapses, of the scoriae in their work, the spots in the sun. But it is only at a certain highest level of the fused intensities that the Mantra becomes possible." (26: 19)

Rhythm – The First Fundamental and Indispensable Element of the Poetic Movements

"It is from a certain point of view the rhythm, the poetic movement that is of primary importance; for that is the first fundamental and indispensable element without which all the rest, whatever its other value, remains inacceptable to the Muse of poetry. A perfect rhythm will often even give immortality to work which is slight in vision and very far from the higher intensities of style. But it is not merely metrical rhythm, even in a perfect technical excellence, which we mean when we speak of poetic movement; that perfection is only a first step, a physical basis. There must be a deeper and more subtle music, a rhythmical soul-movement entering into the metrical form and often over flooding it before the real poetic achievement begins. A mere metrical excellence, however subtle, rich or varied, however perfectly it satisfies the outer ear, does not meet the deeper aims of the creative spirit; for there is an inner hearing which makes its greater claim, and to reach and satisfy it is the true aim of the creator of melody and harmony." (26: 19)

The Importance of Metrical Movement in Poetry

"When mankind found out the power of thought and feeling thrown into fixed and recurring measures of sound to move and take possession of the mind and soul, they were not discovering a mere artistic device, but a subtle truth of psychology, of which the conscious theory is preserved in the Vedic tradition. And when the ancient Indians chose more often than not to throw whatever they wished to endure, even philosophy, science and law, into metrical form, it was not merely to aid the memory, – they were able to memorise huge prose Brahmanas quite as accurately as the Vedic hymnal or the metrical Upanishads, – but because they perceived that metrical speech

has in itself not only an easier durability, but a greater natural power than unmetrical, not only an intenser value of sound, but a force to compel language and sense to heighten themselves in order to fall fitly into this stricter mould. There is perhaps a truth in the Vedic idea that the Spirit of creation framed all the movements of the world by *chandas*, in certain fixed rhythms of the formative Word, and it is because they are faithful to the cosmic metres that the basic world-movements unchangingly endure. A balanced harmony maintained by a system of subtle recurrences is the foundation of immortality in created things, and metrical movement is nothing else than creative sound grown conscious of this secret of its own powers." (26: 20-21)

A Set Harmony or Set Melody not Enough

"Poets of considerable power, sometimes even the greatest in their less exalted moments, are satisfied ordinarily with a set harmony or a set melody, which is very satisfying to the outward ear and carries the aesthetic sense along with it in a sort of even, indistinctive pleasure, and into this mould of easy melody or harmony they throw their teeming or flowing imaginations without difficulty or check, without any need of an intenser heightening, a deeper appeal. It is beautiful poetry; it satisfies the aesthetic sense, the imagination and the ear; but there the charm ends. Once we have heard its rhythm, we have nothing new to expect, no surprise for the inner ear, no danger of the soul being suddenly seized and carried away into unknown depths. It is sure of being floated along evenly as if upon a flowing stream." (26: 22)

Highest Levels of Poetic Rhythm

"Poetic rhythm begins to reach its highest levels, the greater poetic movements become possible when, using any of these powers but rising beyond them, the soul begins to make its direct demand and yearn for a profounder satisfaction: they awake when the inner ear begins to listen. Technically, we may say that this comes in when the poet becomes, in Keats' phrase, a miser of sound and syllable, economical of his means, not in the sense of a niggardly sparing, but of making the most of all its possibilities of sound. It is then that poetry gets farthest away from the method of prose-rhythm. Proser-hythm aims characteristically at a general harmony in which the parts are subdued to get the tone of a total effect;… Poetry on the contrary makes much of its beats and measures; it seeks for a very definite and insistent rhythm. But still, where the greater rhythmical intensities are not pursued, it is only some total effect that predominates and the rest is subdued to it." (26: 23)

The Object of Poetry and Poetic Style

"Poetry, like the kindred arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, appeals to the spirit of man through significant images, and it makes no essential difference that in this case the image is mental and verbal and not material. The essential power of the poetic word is to make us see, not to make us think or feel; thought and feeling* must arise out of the sight or be included in it, but sight is the primary consequence and power of poetic speech. For the poet has to make us live in the soul and in the inner mind and heart what is ordinarily lived in the outer mind and the senses, and for that he must first make us see by the soul, in its light and with its deeper vision, what we ordinarily see in a more limited and halting fashion by the senses and the intelligence. He is, as the ancients knew, a seer and not merely a maker of rhymes, not merely a jongleur, rhapsodist or troubadour, and not merely a thinker in lines and stanzas. He sees beyond the sight of the surface mind and finds the revealing word, not merely the adequate and effective, but the illumined and illuminating, the inspired and inevitable word, which compels us to see also. To arrive at that word is the whole endeavour of poetic style." (26: 26-27)

** I speak here of the outer emotional or sensational feeling, not of the spiritual sense and soul-stir which is the invariable concomitant of the soul's sight.*

The Aim of Poetry, as of All True Art, is to Reveal What is Concealed from Us by Nature

"The modern distinction is that the poet appeals to the imagination and not to the intellect. But there are many kinds of imagination; the objective imagination which visualises strongly the outward aspects of life and things; the subjective imagination which visualises strongly the mental and emotional impressions they have the power to start in the mind; the imagination which deals in the play of mental fictions and to which we give the name of poetic fancy; the aesthetic imagination which delights in the beauty of words and images for their own sake and sees no farther. All these have their place in poetry, but they only give the poet his materials, they are only the first instruments in the creation of poetic style. The essential poetic imagination does not stop

short with even the most subtle reproductions of things external or internal, with the richest or delicatest play of fancy or with the most beautiful colouring of word or image. It is creative, not of either the actual or the fictitious, but of the more and the most real; it sees the spiritual truth of things, – of this truth too there are many gradations, – which may take either the actual or the ideal for its starting-point. The aim of poetry, as of all true art, is neither a photographic or otherwise realistic imitation of Nature, nor a romantic furbishing and painting or idealistic improvement of her image, but an interpretation by the images she herself affords us, not on one but on many planes of her creation, of that which she conceals from us, but is ready, when rightly approached, to reveal." (26: 27)

What a Great Poet Does Which Makes Him Great

"…it is an inner sight which he opens in us, and this inner sight must have been intense in him before he can awaken it in us.

Therefore the greatest poets have been always those who have had a large and powerful interpretative and intuitive vision of Nature and life and man and whose poetry has arisen out of that in a supreme revelatory utterance of it. Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Valmiki, Kalidasa, however much they may differ in everything else, are at one in having this as the fundamental character of their greatness. Their supremacy does not lie essentially in a greater thought-power or a more lavish imagery or a more penetrating force of passion and emotion; these things they may have had, one being more gifted in one direction, another in others, but these other powers were aids to their poetic expression rather than its essence or its source." (26: 32)

The Work of a Poet Versus That of a Prophet or Philosopher

"The poet-seer sees differently, thinks in another way, voices himself in quite another manner than the philosopher or the prophet. The prophet announces the Truth as the Word, the Law or the command of the Eternal, he is the giver of the message; the poet shows us Truth in its power of beauty, in its symbol or image, or reveals it to us in the workings of Nature or in the workings of life, and when he has done that, his whole work is done; he need not be its explicit spokesman or its official messenger. The philosopher's business is to discriminate Truth and put its parts and aspects into intellectual relation with each other; the poet's is to seize and embody aspects of Truth in their living relations, or rather – for that is too philosophical a language – to see her features and, excited by the vision, create in the beauty of her image." (26: 33-34)

The Work of a Poet Versus That of a Scientist

"The poet really creates out of himself and not out of what he sees outwardly: that outward seeing only serves to excite the inner vision to its work. Otherwise his work would be a mechanical construction and putting together, not a living creation.

Sheer objectivity brings us down from art to photography; and the attempt to diminish the subjective view to the vanishing-point so as to get an accurate presentation is proper to science, not to poetry. We are not thereby likely to get a greater truth or reality, but very much the reverse; for the scientific presentation of things, however valid in its own domain, that of the senses and the observing reason, is not true to the soul. It is not the integral truth or the whole vision of things, for it gives only their process and machinery and mechanic law, but not their inner life and spirit." (26: 36-37)

The Promise of the Coming Age

"The religious poetry of the later Indian tongues has for us fervours of poetic revelation which in the great classics are absent, even though no mediaeval poet can rank in power with Valmiki and Kalidasa. The modern literatures of Europe commonly fall short of the Greek perfection of harmony and form, but they give us what the greatest Greek poets had not and could not have. And in our own days a poet of secondary power in his moments of inspiration can get to a vision far more satisfying to the deepest soul within us than Shakespeare's or Dante's. Greatest of all is the promise of the age that is coming, if the race fulfils its highest and largest opening possibilities and does not founder in a vitalistic bog or remain tied in the materialistic paddock; for it will be an age in which all the worlds are beginning to withdraw their screens from man's gaze and invite his experience, and he will be near to the revelation of the Spirit of which they are, as we choose, the obscuring veils, the significant forms and symbols or else the transparent raiment. It is as yet uncertain to which of these consummations destiny is leading us." (26: 39-40)

English Poetry

"OF ALL the modern European tongues the English language – I think this may be said without any serious doubt, – has produced, not always the greatest or most perfect, but at least the most rich and naturally powerful poetry, the most lavish of energy and innate genius. The unfettered play of poetic energy and power has been here the most abundant and brought forth the most constantly brilliant fruits. And yet it is curious to note that English poetry and literature have been a far less effective force in the shaping of European culture than the poetry and literature of other tongues inferior actually in natural poetic and creative energy." (26: 48)

Greek Poetry

"No poetry has had so powerful an influence as Greek poetry; no poetry is, I think, within its own limits so perfect and satisfying. The limits indeed are marked and even, judged by the undulating many-sidedness and wideness of the modern mind, narrow; but on its own lines this poetry works with a flawless power and sufficiency. From beginning to end it dealt with life from one large view-point; it worked always from the inspired reason, used a luminous intellectual observation and harmonised all it did by the rule of an enlightened and chastened aesthetic sense; whatever changes overtook it, it never departed from this motive and method which are the very essence of the Greek spirit. And of this motive it was very conscious and by its clear recognition of it and fidelity to it it was able to achieve an artistic beauty and sufficiency of expressive form which affect us like an easily accomplished miracle and which have been the admiration of after ages. Even the poetry of the Greek decadence preserved enough of this power to act as a shaping influence on Latin literature." (26: 49-50)

French Poetry

"French poetry is much more limited than the Greek, much less powerful in inspiration. For it deals with life from the standpoint not of the inspired reason, but of the clear-thinking intellect, not of the enlightened aesthetic sense, but of emotional sentiment. These are its two constant powers; the one gives it its brain-stuff, the other its poetical fervour and grace and charm and appeal. Throughout all the changes of the last century, in spite of apparent cultural revolutions, the French spirit has remained in its poetry faithful to these two motives which are of its very essence, and because of this fidelity it has always or almost always found for its work a satisfying and characteristic form. To that combination of a clear and strong motive and a satisfying form it owes the immense influence it has exercised from time to time on other European literatures." (26: 50)

The General Contribution of the English Nation to Human Life and Culture

"The poetry of a nation is only one side of its self-expression and its characteristics may be best understood if we look at it in relation to the whole mental and dynamic effort of the people. If we so look at the general contribution of the English nation to human life and culture, the eye is arrested by some remarkable lacunae. These are especially profound in the arts: English music is a zero, English sculpture an unfilled void, English architecture only a little better; English painting, illustrated by a few great names, has been neither a great artistic tradition nor a powerful cultural force and merits only a casual mention by the side of the rich achievement of Italy, Spain, France, Holland, Belgium." (26: 51)

The Course of the English Poetry

"The revolutions of the spirit of English poetry are extreme and violent, astonishing in their decisiveness and abruptness. We can mark off first the early English poetry which found its solitary greater expression in Chaucer; indeed it marks itself off by an absolute exhaustion and cessation, a dull and black Nirvana. The magnificent Elizabethan outburst has another motive, spirit and manner of expression which seem to have nothing to do with the past; it is a godhead self-born under the impulse of a new age and environment. As this fades away, we see standing high and apart the lonely figure of Milton with his strenuous effort at an intellectual poetry cast in the type of the ancients. The age which succeeds, hardly linked to it by a slender stream of Caroline lyrics, is that of a trivial intellectuality which does not follow the lead of Milton and is the exact contrary of the Elizabethan form and spirit, the thin and arid reign of Pope and Dryden. Another violent and impatient breaking away, a new outburst of wonderful freshness gives us the poetry of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Blake with another spirit and another language of the spirit." (26: 57)

An Important Characteristic of the English Mind

"A strong hold upon this life, the earth-life, is the characteristic of the English mind, and it is natural that it should take possession of its poetry. The pure Celtic genius leans towards the opposite extreme: it seems to care little for the earth-life for its own sake and has little hold on it or only a light and ethereal hold; it accepts it as a starting-point for the expression of other-life, but is attracted by all that is hidden and secret. The Latin mind insists on the presentation of life, but for the purposes of thought; its eye is on the universal truths and realities of which life is the visible expression, – not the remoter, the spiritual or soul-truths, but those which present themselves to the clarities

of the intelligence. But the English mind looks at life and loves it for its own sake, in all its externalities, its play of outer individualities, its immediate subjective idiosyncrasies. Even when it is strongly attracted by other motives, the intellectual, the aesthetic or the spiritual, it seldom follows these with a completely disinterested fidelity, but comes back with them on the external life and tries to subject them to its mould and use them for its purpose. This turn is not universal, – Blake escapes from it; nor is it the single dominant power, – Keats and Shelley and Wordsworth have their hearts elsewhere: but it is a constant power; it attracts even the poets who have not a real genius for it and vitiates their work by the immixture of an alien motive." (26: 59)

Shakespeare

"The great magician, Shakespeare, by his marvellous poetic rendering of life and the spell his poetry casts upon us, conceals this general inadequacy of the work of his time: the whole age which he embodies is magnified by his presence and the adjacent paler figures catch something of the light and kinship of his glory and appear in it more splendid than they are. But Shakespeare is an exception, a genius that transcends all laws, a miracle of poetic force; he survives untouched all adverse criticism, not because there are not plenty of fairly large spots in this sun, but because in any complete view of him they disappear in the greatness of his lustre." (26: 72-73)

"The defect of this Elizabethan work is most characteristic and prominent in that part of it which has been vaunted as its chief title to greatness, its drama. Shakespeare and Marlowe can be looked at in their separate splendours; but the rest of Elizabethan dramatic work is a brilliantly smoky nebula, powerful in effort rather than sound and noble in performance. All its vigorous presentation of life has not been able to keep it alive; it is dead or keeps only "the dusty immortality of the libraries", and this in spite of the attention drawn to it in quite recent times by scholars and critics and the hyperbolic eulogies of two or three eminent writers. This is not to say that it has not merits and, in a way, very striking merits. The Elizabethan playwrights were men of a confident robust talent; some of them had real, if an intermittent genius. They had too the use of the language of an age in which the power of literary speech was a common possession and men were handling the language with delight as a quite new and rich instrument, lavishly and curiously, turning it this way and that, moulding and new-moulding it, exulting in its novel capacities of expression. The first elements of the dramatic form, the temper and some of the primary faculties which go to make dramatic creation possible were there in the literary spirit of the age, and all these writers in more or less degree possessed these things and could use them. A certain force of vital creation was common to them all, a vigorous turn for the half romantic, half realistic reproduction of life and manners. The faculty of producing very freely a mass or a stream of incident and movement was there, much power of exuberant dialogue, a knack of expression both in verse and prose, some skill in the trick of putting the language of the passions into the mouth of cleverly constructed human figures which walk actively about the stage, if not in a quite natural manner, yet with enough of it to give for the time the illusion of living creatures. Especially, it was a time in which there was a fresh and vivid interest in life and man and action, in the adventure and wonder and appeal of the mere vital phenomenon of living and feeling and thinking, and their work is full of this freshness and interest and intense spontaneous delight in living and acting. All this, it might be thought, is quite enough to build a great dramatic poetry; and certainly, if we require no more than this, we shall give a prominent place to the Elizabethan drama, higher perhaps than to the Greek or any other. But these things are enough only to produce plays which will live their time on the stage and in the library; they are not, by themselves, sufficient for great dramatic creation. Something else is needed for that, which we get in Shakespeare, in Racine, Corneille and Molière, in Calderón, in the great Greeks, in the leading Sanskrit dramatists; but these other Elizabethans show themselves in the bulk of their work to be rather powerful writers and playwrights than inspired dramatic poets and creators." (26: 73-74)

Dramatic Poetry

"Dramatic poetry cannot live by the mere presentation of life and action and the passions, however truly they may be portrayed or however vigorously and abundantly pushed across the scene. Its object is something greater and its conditions of success much more onerous. It must have, to begin with, as the fount of its creation or in its heart an interpretative vision and in that vision an explicit or implicit seeing idea of life and the human being; and the vital presentation which is its outward instrument, must arise out of that deeper sight harmoniously, whether by a spontaneous creation, as in Shakespeare, or by the compulsion of an intuitive artistic will, as with the Greeks. This interpretative vision and seeing idea have in the presentation to seem to arise out of the inner life of a few vital types of the human soul or individual representatives of its enigma and to work themselves out through an evolution of speech leading to an evolution of action. And of these two speech in the drama is the first and more important instrument, because through it the poet reveals the action of the soul; outward action and event are only the second, important, but less essential, reducible even to an indispensable minimum, because the outward movements serve only to make visible and concrete to us the result of the inner action and have no other intrinsic purpose. In all very great drama the true movement and result is psychological; and the outward action, even when it is considerable, and the consummating event, even though loud and violent, are either its symbol or else its condition of culmination. All has to be cast into a close dramatic form, a successful weaving of interdependent relations, relations of soul to soul, of speech to speech, of action to action, the more close and inevitable the better, because so the truth of the whole evolution comes home to us. And if it is asked what in a word is the essential purpose of all this creation, I think we might possibly say that drama is the poet's vision of some part of the world-act in the life of the human soul, it is in a way his vision of Karma, in an extended and very flexible sense of the word; and at its highest point it becomes a poetic rendering or illustration of the Aeschylean *drasanti pathein*, "the doer shall feel the effect of his act," in an inner as well as an outer, a happy no less than an austere significance, whether that effect be represented as psychological or vital, whether it comes to its own through sorrow and calamity, ends in a judgment by laughter or finds an escape into beauty and joy, whether the presentation be tragic or comic or tragi-comic or idyllic. To satisfy these conditions is extremely difficult and the great dramatists are few in their number; the entire literature of the world has hardly given us more than a dozen. The difficult evolution of dramatic poetry is always more hard to lead than the lyric which is poetry's native expression, or than the narrative which is its simpler expansion." (26: 74-75)

The Defects of the Elizabethan Drama

"The greatness of a period of dramatic poetry can be measured by the extent to which these complex conditions were understood in it or were intuitively practised. But in the mass of the Elizabethan drama the understanding is quite absent and the practice comes, if at all, only rarely, imperfectly and by a sort of accident. Shakespeare himself seems to have divined these conditions or contained them in the shaping flame of his genius rather than perceived them by the artistic intelligence. The rest have ordinarily no light of interpretative vision, no dramatic idea. Their tragedy and comedy are both oppressively external; this drama presents, but does not at all interpret; it is an outward presentation of manners and passions and lives by vigour of action and a quite outward-going speech; it means absolutely nothing. The tragedy is irrational, the comedy has neither largeness nor subtlety of idea; they are mixed together too without any artistic connection such as Shakespeare manages to give to them so as to justify thoroughly their coexistence. The characters are not living beings working out their mutual Karma, but external figures of humanity jostling each other on a crowded stage, mere tossing drift of the waves of life. The form of the drama too is little more than a succession of speech and incident,* as in a story, with a culminating violent or happy ending, which comes not because psychologically it must, but because a story has to have a release of ending, or, if tragic, its point of loud detonation. To make up for their essential defects these poets have to heap up incident and situation and assail us with vehement and often grossly exaggerated speech and passion, frequently tearing the passion into glaringly coloured tatters, almost always overstraining or in some way making too much of it. They wish to pile on us the interest of life in whose presentation their strength lies, to accumulate in a mass, so as to carry us away, things attracting, things amusing, things striking, things horrible; they will get at us through the nerves and the lower emotional being, – and in this they succeed eminently, – since they cannot get at us through a higher intellectual and imaginative appeal. The evolution of the action is rather theatrically effective than poetic, the spirit and the psychology melodramatic rather than dramatic. Nor are these radical dramatic defects atoned for by any great wealth of poetry, for their verse has more often some formal merit and a great air of poetry than its essence, – though there are exceptions as in lines and passages of Peele and Webster. The presentation of life with some surface poetic touch but without any transforming vision or strongly suffusing power in the poetic temperament is the general character of their work. It is necessary to emphasise these defects because indiscriminate praise of these poets helps to falsify or quite exclude the just artistic view of the aim of sound dramatic creation, and imitation of the catching falsities of this model has been the real root of the inefficacy of subsequent attempts in the dramatic form even by poets of great gifts. It explains the failure of even a mind which had the true dramatic turn, a creator like Browning, to achieve drama of the first excellence." (26: 75-77)

** Ben Jonson is an exception. He has the idea of construction, but his execution is heavy and uninspired, the work of a robustly conscientious craftsman rather than a creative artist.*

A Critical Assessment of the Genius of Shakespeare

"Shakespeare stands out alone, both in his own age when so many were drawn to the form and circumstances were favourable to this kind of genius, and in all English literature, as the one great and genuine dramatic poet; but this one is indeed equal to a host. He stands out too as quite unique in his spirit, method and quality. For his contemporaries resemble him only in externals; they have the same outward form and crude materials, but not the inner dramatic method by which he transformed and gave them a quite other meaning and value. Later romantic drama, not only in England but elsewhere, though it has tried hard to imitate the Shakespearian motive and touch, has been governed by another kind of poetic mind; its intrinsic as distinguished from its external method has been really different. Romantic drama, in Hugo and in others, takes hold of life, strings together its unusual effects and labours to make it out of the way, brilliant, coloured, conspicuous. Shakespeare does not do that, except rarely, in early imitative work or when he is uninspired. He does not need to lay violent hands on life and turn it into romantic pyrotechnics; for life itself has taken hold of him in order to recreate itself in his image, and he sits within himself at its heart and pours out from its impulse a throng of beings, as real in the world he creates as men are in this other world from which he takes his hints, a multitude, a riot of living images carried on a many-coloured sea of revealing speech and a never failing surge of movement. His dramatic method seems indeed to have usually no other intellectual purpose, aesthetic motive or spiritual secret: ordinarily it labours simply for the joy of a multiple poetic vision of life and vital creation with no centre except the life-power itself, no coordination except that thrown out spontaneously by the unseizable workings of its energy, no unity but the one unity of man and the life-spirit in Nature working in him and before his eyes. It is this sheer creative *ānanda* of the life-spirit which is Shakespeare; abroad everywhere in that age, it incarnates itself in him for the pleasure of poetic self-vision.

All Shakespeare's powers and limitations – for it is now permissible to speak of his limitations – arise from this character of the force that moved him to poetic utterance. He is not primarily an artist, a poetic thinker or anything else of the kind, but a great vital creator and intensely, though within marked limits, a seer of life. His art itself is life arranging its forms in its own surge and excitement, not in any kind of symmetry, – for symmetry here there is none, – nor in fine harmonies, but still in its own way supremely and with a certain intimately metric arrangement of its many loose movements, in mobile perspectives, a succession of crowded but successful and satisfying vistas. While he has given a wonderful language to poetic thought, he yet does not think for the sake of thought, but for the sake of life. His way indeed is not so much the poet himself thinking about life, as life thinking itself out in him through many mouths, in many moods and moments, with a rich throng of fine thought-effects, but not for any clear sum of intellectual vision or to any high power of either ideal or spiritual result. His development of human character has a sovereign force within its bounds, but it is the soul of the human being as seen through outward character, passion, action, – the life-soul, and not either the thought-soul or the deeper psychic being, still less the

profounder truth of the human spirit. Something of these things we may get, but only in shadow or as a partial reflection in a coloured glass, not in their own action. In his vision and therefore in his poetic motive Shakespeare never really either rises up above life or gets behind it; he neither sees what it reaches out to nor the great unseen powers that are active within it. At one time, in two or three of his tragedies, he seems to have been striving to do this, but all that he does see then is the action of certain tremendous life-forces, which he either sets in a living symbol or indicates behind the human action, as in *Macbeth*, or embodies, as in *King Lear*, in a tragically uncontrollable possession of his human characters. Nevertheless, his is not a drama of mere externalised action, for it lives from within and more deeply than our external life. This is not Virat, the seer and creator of gross forms, but Hiranyagarbha, the luminous mind of dreams, looking through those forms to see his own images behind them. More than any other poet Shakespeare has accomplished mentally the legendary feat of the impetuous sage Vishwamitra; his power of vision has created a Shakespearian world of his own, and it is, in spite of its realistic elements, a romantic world in a very true sense of the word, a world of the wonder and free power of life and not of its mere external realities, where what is here dulled and hampered finds a greater enlarged and intense breath of living, an ultra-natural play of beauty, curiosity and amplitude.

It is needful in any view of the evolution of poetry to note the limits within which Shakespeare did his work, so that we may fix the point reached; but still within the work itself his limitations do not matter. And even his positive defects and lapses cannot lower him, because there is an unfailing divinity of power in his touch which makes them negligible. He has, however much toned down, his share of the Elizabethan crudities, violences, extravagances; but they are upborne on a stream of power and end by falling in into the general greatness of his scheme. He has deviations into stretches of half prosaic verse and vagaries of tortured and bad poetic expression, sometimes atrociously bad; but they are yet always very evidently not failures of power, but the wilful errors of a great poet, more careful of dramatic truth and carried on by his force of expression than bound to verbal perfection. We feel obliged to accept his defects, which in another poet our critical sense would be swift to condemn or reject, because they are part of his force, just as we accept the vigorous errors of a great personality. His limitations are very largely the condition of his powers. Certainly, he is no universal revealer, as his idolators would have him be, – for even in the life-soul of man there are a multitude of things beyond him; but to have given a form so wonderful, so varied, so immortally alive, in so great a surge of the intensest poetical expression, to a life-vision of this kind and this power, is a unique achievement of poetic genius. The future may find for us a higher and profounder, even a more deeply and finely vital aim for the dramatic form than any Shakespeare ever conceived; but until that has been done with an equal power, grasp and fullness of vision and an equal intensity of revealing speech, he keeps his sovereign station. The claim made for him that he is the greatest of poets may very well be challenged, – he is not quite that, – but that he is first among dramatic poets cannot well be questioned." (26: 78-81)

How Great Poets Have Failed When They Have Turned to the Dramatic Form

"Great poets, poets of noble subjective power, delicate artists, fine thinkers and singers, all directly they turn to the dramatic form, begin fatally to externalise; they become violent, they gesticulate, they press to the action and forget to have an informing thought, hold themselves bound to the idea of drama as a robust presentation of life and incident and passion. And because this is not a true idea and, in any case, it is quite inconsistent with the turn of their own genius, they fail inevitably. Dryden stumbling heavily through his rhymed plays, Wordsworth of all people, the least Elizabethan of poets, penning with a conscientious dullness his *Borderers*, Byron diffusing his elemental energy in bad blank verse and worse dramatic construction, Keats turning from his unfinished *Hyperion* to wild schoolboy imitations of the worst Elizabethan type, Shelley even, forgetting his discovery of a new and fine literary form for dramatic poetry to give us the Elizabethan violences of the *Cenci*, Tennyson, Swinburne, even after *Atalanta*, following the same ignis fatuus, a very flame of fatuity and futility, are all victims of the same hypnotism." (26: 81-82)

The Intellectual and Classical Age of English Poetry and Milton's Early Poetry

"The mind of this age went for its sustaining influence and its suggestive models to Greece, Rome and France. That was inevitable; for these have been the three typically intellectual nations of Europe. It is these three literatures that have achieved, each following its own different way and peculiar spirit, the best in form and substance that that kind of inspiration can produce. The English mind, not natively possessed of any inborn intellectual depth and subtlety, not trained to a fine classical lucidity and sure aesthetic taste, had to turn to these sources, if the attempt was to be made at all. Steeping itself in these sources, it might hope to blend with the classical clarity and form its own masculine force and strenuousness, its strong imagination, its deeper colour and profounder intuitive suggestiveness and so arrive at something new and great to which the world could turn as another supreme element of its aesthetic culture. But the effect actually obtained did not answer to the possibility offered. To arrive at this perfection, this new turn of poetry ought to have kept, transmuted but not diminished, all that was best in the Elizabethan spirit and to have coloured, enriched and sweetened with its magic touch the classical form and the intellectual motive. There was instead a revolutionary departure, a breaking away, decisive rejection, and entirely new attempt with no roots in the past. In the end not only was the preceding structure of poetry abolished, but all its strong and brilliant Muses were expelled from their seats. A stucco imitation classical temple, very elegant, very cold and very empty, was erected in the vacant place, and the gods of satire and didactic commonplace set up in a shrine which was built more like a coffee-house than a sanctuary. A sterile brilliance, a set polished rhetoric was the poor final outcome.

… Milton's early poetry is the fruit of a strong classical intellectuality still touched with a glow and beauty which has been left by a fast receding tide of romantic colour, spontaneous warmth of emotion and passion and vital intuition, gifts of a greater depth and force of life. Many softer influences wove themselves together into his high language and rhythm and were fused in his personality into something wonderfully strong, rich and beautiful. Suggestions and secrets were caught from Chaucer, Peele, Spenser, Shakespeare, and their hints gave a strange grace to a style whose austerity of power had been nourished by great classical influences. A touch of Virgilian beauty and majesty, a poise of Lucretian grandeur, a note of Aeschylean sublimity, the finest gifts of the ancients coloured or mellowed by richer romantic elements and subtly toned into each other, entered in and helped to prepare the early Miltonic manner. Magnified and exalted by the stress of an original personality, noble and austere, their result was the blending of a peculiar kind of greatness and beauty not elsewhere found in English verse. The substance is often slight, for it is as yet Milton's imagination rather than his soul or his whole mind that is using the poetic form; but the form itself is of a faultless beauty." (26: 90-91)

"The opening of an age of intellect was not the time when a great mystical poetry could leap into existence.

This ebb is rapid and the change is soon complete. The colour has faded, the sweetness has vanished, song has fallen into a dead hush. For a whole long dry metallic century the lyrical faculty disappeared from the English tongue. The grandiose epic chant of Milton breaks what would be otherwise a complete silence of all higher or profounder poetic power; but it is a Milton who has turned away from the richer beauty and promise of his youth, lost the Virgilian accent, put away from him all Pagan delicacies of colour and grace and sweetness to express only in fit greatness of speech and form the conception of Heaven and Hell and man and the universe which his imagination had built out of his beliefs and reviewed in the vision of his soul. One is moved to speculate on what we might have had from him if, instead of writing after the long silence of his poetic genius during which he remained absorbed in barren political controversy until public and private calamities compelled him to go back to himself and his true power, he had written his master work in a ripened continuity and deepened strength of his earlier style and vision. Nothing quite so great perhaps, but surely something more opulent, many-toned and perfect. As things happened, it is by *Paradise Lost* that he occupies his high rank among the poets.…

Paradise Lost is one of the few great epic poems in the world's literature; certain qualities in it reach heights which no other of them had climbed, even though as a whole it has defects and elements of failure which are absent in the other great world epics. Rhythm and speech have never attained to a mightier amplitude of epic expression and movement; seldom has there been an equal sublimity of flight. And to a great extent Milton has done in this respect what he had set out to do; he has given English poetic speech a language of intellectual thought which is of itself highly poetic without depending on any of the formal aids of poetic expression except those which are always essential and indispensable, a speech which succeeds by its own intrinsic force and is in its very grain poetry and in its very grain inspired intellectual thought-utterance. This is always the aim of the classical poet in his style and movement, and Milton has fulfilled it. At the same time he has raised this achievement to a highest possible pitch by that peculiar grandeur in the soul and manner of the utterance and that magnificence of sound-tones and amplitude of gait in the rhythm which belong to him alone of poets. These qualities are easily sustained throughout this long work, because with him they are less an art, great artist though he is, than the natural language of his spirit and the natural sound of its motion. His aim is high, his subject loftier than that of any one of his predecessors except Dante. There is nowhere any more magnificently successful opening than the conception and execution of his Satan and Hell;

nowhere has there been a more powerful portraiture of the living spirit of egoistic revolt fallen to its natural element of darkness and pain and yet still sustained by the greatness of the divine principle from which it was born, even when it has lost oneness with it and faces it with dissonance and defiance. If the rest of the epic had been equal to its opening books, there would have been no greater poem, few as great in literature.

But here too the total performance failed and fell below the promise. *Paradise Lost* compels our admiration throughout by its greatness of style and rhythm, but as a whole, in spite of its mighty opening, its whole substance as distinct from its more magnificent or striking parts has failed to enter victoriously either into the mind or into the heart of the world; much of it has not lodged itself deeply in its imagination or enriched sovereignly the acquired stock of its more intimate poetical thought and experience. But the poem that does neither of these things, however noble its powers of language and rhythm, has missed its destiny. The reason is not to be found in the disparity between Milton's professed aim, which was to justify the ways of God to man, and the intellectual means available to him for fulfilling his purpose. The theology of the Puritan religion was a poor enough aid for so ambitious a purpose; but the Scriptural legend treated was poetically sufficient if only it had received throughout a deeper interpretation. Dante's theology had the advantage of the richness of import and spiritual experience of mediaeval Catholicism, but intellectually for so deep and vast a purpose it was not any more satisfying or durable. Still through his primitive symbols Dante has seen and has revealed things which make his work throughout poetically and creatively great and sufficient up to a certain high, if narrow level. It is here that Milton failed altogether. Nor is the failure mainly intellectual; it is of a more radical kind. It is true that he had not an original intellect; his mind was scholastic and traditional to a point that discouraged any free thinking power; but he had an original soul and personality and the vision of a poet. It is not the province of poetry to justify intellectually the ways of God to man; what it can do, is to reveal them: but just here is the point of failure. Milton has seen Satan and Death and Sin and Hell and Chaos; there is a scriptural greatness in his account of these things. But he has not seen God and heaven and man or the soul embodied in humanity, at once divine and fallen, enslaved to suffering and evil, striving for redemption, yearning for a forfeited bliss and perfection. On this side there is no inner greatness in the poetic interpretation of his materials. In other words, he has ended by stumbling over the rock of offence that always awaits poetry in which the intellectual element is too predominant, the fatal danger of a failure of vision: he has tried to poetise the stock ideas of his religion and not reached through sight to a living figure of Truth and its great expressive thoughts or revelatory symbols." (26: 92-95)

The Insufficiency of Intellect and Reason and the Inevitability of a Movement Towards an Ideal and Spiritual Poetry

"Intellect, reason, a firm clarity of the understanding and arranging intelligence are not the highest powers of our nature. If this were our summit, many things which have now a great or a supreme importance for human culture, religion, art, poetry, would either be no more than a lure or a graceful play of the imagination and emotions, or, though admissible and useful for certain human ends, would still be deprived of the truth of their own highest indications. Poetry, even when it is dominated by intellectual tendency and motive, cannot really live and work by intellect alone. Its impetus is not created and its functioning and results are not shaped either wholly or predominantly by reason and judgment; an intuitive seeing and an inspired hearing are its natural means or its native sources. But intuition and inspiration are not only spiritual in their essence, they are the characteristic means of all spiritual vision and utterance; they are rays from a greater and intenser Light than the tempered clarity of our intellectual understanding. Ordinarily these powers are turned in human action and creation to a use which is not spiritual and not perhaps their last or most intrinsic purpose. Their common use in poetry is to give a deeper and more luminous force and a heightened beauty to the perceptions of outward life or to sublimate the more inward but still untransformed and comparatively surface movements of human emotion and passion or to empower thought to perceive and utter certain individual and universal truths which enlighten or which raise to a greater meaning the sensible appearances of the inner and outer life of Nature and man. But every power in the end finds itself drawn towards its own proper home and own highest capacity and field of expression and one day or another the spiritual faculties of intuitive hearing and seeing must climb at last to the expression of things spiritual and eternal and their power and working in temporal things. Poetry will yet find in that supreme interpretation its own richest account, its largest and most satisfied possible action, its purest zenith of native force. An ideal and spiritual poetry revealing the spirit in itself and in things, showing to us the unseen present in the seen, unveiling ranges of existence which the physical mind ignores, pointing man himself to undreamed capacities of godhead, future heights of being, truth, beauty, power, joy which are beyond the highest of his common or his now realised values of existence, – this will surely appear as the last potentiality of this high and beautiful creative power. When the eye of the poet has seen the life of man and the world externally or penetrated into its more vital inwardness or has risen to the clarities and widenesses of a thought which observantly perceives or intimately understands it, and when his word has caught some revealing speech and rhythm of what he has seen, much has been done, but not all that is possible to poetic vision and utterance. This other and greater realm still remains open for a last transcendence." (26: 101-02)

The Six Great Voices of the New Poetry – The Poets of the Dawn

"This new poetry has six great voices who fall naturally in spite of their pronounced differences into pairs, Wordsworth and Byron, Blake and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. Byron sets out with a strangely transformed echo of the past intellectualism, is carried beyond it by the elemental force of his personality, has even one foot across the borders of the spiritual, but never quite enters into that kingdom. Wordsworth breaks away with deliberate purpose from the past, forces his way into this new realm, but finally sinks under the weight of the narrower intellectual tendencies which he carries with him into its amplitudes. Blake and Coleridge open magical gates, pass by flowering side lanes with hedges laden with supernatural blooms into a middle

world whence their voices come to us ringing with an unearthly melody. In Shelley the idealism and spiritual impulse rise to almost giddy heights in a luminous ether and are lost there, unintelligible to contemporary humanity, only now beginning to return to us with their message. Keats, the youngest and in many directions the most gifted of these initiators, enters the secret temple of ideal Beauty, but has not time to find his way into the deepest mystic sanctuary. In him the spiritual seeking stops abruptly short and prepares to fall away down a rich sensuous incline to a subsequent poetry which turns from it to seek poetic Truth or pleasure through the senses and an artistic or curiously observing or finely psychologising intellectualism. This dawn has no noon, hardly even a morning." (26: 105-06)

An Interest in the Future Man – A Characteristic of the Modern Mind

"..an insistent interest in future man has been the most novel, the most fruitfully distinguishing characteristic of the modern mind. Once limited to the far-off dream of religions or the distant speculation of isolated thinkers, the attempt to cast a seeing eye as well as a shaping will on the future is now an essential side of the human outlook. Formerly the human mentality of the present lived in the great shadow thrown on it by its past, nowadays on the contrary it turns more to some image of coming possibility. The colour of this futurism has changed with the changes of modern intellectualism. At first it came in on the wave of a partly naturalistic, partly transcendentalist idealism, a reverie of the perfected individual and the perfected society, and was commonly associated with the passion for civic or the idea of a spiritual and personal liberty. A more sober colouring intervened, the intellectual constructions of positivism, liberalism, utilitarian thought which were soon in their turn followed by broader democratic and socialistic utopias. Touched

sometimes with an aesthetic and idealistic colouring, they have grown for a time more scientific, economic, practical with the advance of realism and rationalism. But the new force of subjectivism will have probably the effect of rehabilitating the religious and spiritually idealistic element in our vision of the future of the race. Poetry, which has been less able to follow this stream of thought than prose literature, will find its account in the change; for it will be the natural interpreter of this more inner and intuitive vision. The futurist outlook has never been more pronounced than at the present day; on all sides, in thought, in life, in the motives and forms of literary and artistic creation, we are swinging violently away from the past into an unprecedented adventure of new teeming possibilities. Never has the past counted so little for its own sake, – its tradition is still effectual only when it can be made a power or an inspiration for the future; never has the present looked so persistently and creatively forward." (26: 121-22)

" . . what the poet sees and feels, not what he opines, is the real substance of his poetry. Wordsworth saw Nature and he saw man near to Nature, and when he speaks of these things, he finds either his noblest or his purest and most penetrating tones. His view of them is native to his temperament and personality and at the opposite pole to Byron's. Not that which is wild, dynamic or tumultuously great in Nature, but her calm, her serenity, the soul of peace, the tranquil Infinite, the still, near, intimate voice that speaks from flower and bird, sky and star, mountain and stream, this he knew, felt and lived in as no poet before or after him has done, with a spiritual closeness and identity which is of the nature of a revelation, the first spiritual revelation of this high near kind to which English poetry had given voice. Some soul of man, too, he sees, not in revolt, – he has written unforgettable lines about liberty, but a calm and ordered liberty, – in harmony with this tranquil soul in Nature, finding in it some original simplicity and purity of his being and founding on it a life in tune with the order of an eternal law. On this perception the moralist in Wordsworth founds a rule of simple faith, truth, piety, self-control, affection, grave gladness in which the sentimental naturalism of the eighteenth century disappears into an ethical naturalism, a very different idealisation of humanity in the simplicity of its direct contact with Nature unspoiled by the artifice and corruption of a too developed society. All that Wordsworth has to say worth saying is confined to these motives and from them he draws his whole genuine thought inspiration.

But it is in the Nature strain of which he is the discoverer that he is unique, for it is then that the seer in him either speaks the revelatory thought of his spirit or gives us strains greater than thought's, the imperishable substance of spiritual consciousness finding itself in sight and speech. At other times, especially when he fuses this Nature-strain with his thought and ethical motive, he writes sometimes poetry of the very greatest; at others again it is of a varying worth and merit; but too often also he passes out from his uninspired intelligence work with no stamp of endurance, much less of the true immortality. In the end the poet in him died while the man and the writer lived on; the moralist and concentred thinker had killed the singer, the intellect had walled up the issues of the imagination and spiritual vision. But even from the beginning there is an inequality and uncertainty which betray an incomplete fusion of the sides of his personality, and the heavy weight of intellectuality shadows over and threatens the spiritual light which it eventually extinguished." (26: 134-35)

Coleridge and Blake

"IF WORDSWORTH and Byron failed by an excess of the alloy of untransmuted intellect in their work, two other poets of the time, Blake and Coleridge, miss the highest greatness they might otherwise have attained by an opposite defect, by want of the gravity and enduring substance which force of thought gives to the poetical inspiration. They are, Coleridge in his scanty best work, Blake almost always, strong in sight, but are unable to command the weight and power in the utterance which arises from the thinking mind when it is illumined and able to lay hold on and express the reality behind the idea. They have the faculty of revelatory sense in a high degree, but little of the revelatory thought which should go with it; or at least though they can suggest this sometimes with the intense force which comes from spiritual feeling, they cannot command it and constantly give it greatness and distinctness of body.

And their sight is only of the middle kind; it is not the highest things they see, but only those of a borderland or middle region. Their poetry has a strange and unique quality and charm, but it stops short of something which would have made it supreme. They are poets of the supernatural and of such spiritual truth as may be shadowed by it or penetrate through it, but not of the greatest truths of the spirit. And this supernature remains in them a thing seen indeed and objectively real, but abnormal; but it is only when supernature becomes normal to the inner experience that it can be turned into material of the very greatest poetry.

Coleridge more than any of his great contemporaries missed his poetic crown; he has only found and left to us three or four scattered jewels of a strange and singular beauty. The rest of his work is a failure." (26: 138)

The Mystic Poetry of Blake

"Blake lives ordinarily far up in this middle world of which Coleridge only catches some glimpses or at most stands occasionally just over its border. Blake's seeing teems with images of this other world, he hears around him the echoes of its sounds and voices. He is not only a seer, but almost an inhabitant of other planes, another domain of being; or at least this second subtle sight is his normal sight. His power of expression is akin in its strangeness to his eye of vision. His speech like his seeing has a singular other-world clarity and sheerness of expression in it, the light of supernature. When he prophetises as in some of his more ambitious efforts, he mentalises too much the mystic and misses the marvel and the magic. It is when he casts into some echo of the language of the luminous children of those shores the songs of their childhood and their innocence, that he becomes limpid to us and sheds upon our earth

some clear charm, felicity, wonder of a half divine otherwhere. Here again we have something unique, a voice of things which had not been heard before nor has it been heard since; for the Celtic poets who sometimes give us something that is in its source akin, bring a ripe reflective knowledge and a colour of intellectuality into their speech and vision, but Blake seeks to put away from him as much as possible the intellectual mind, to see only and sing. By this effort and his singularity and absorption he stands apart solitary and remote, a unique voice among the poets of the time; he occupies indeed a place unique in the poetry of the English language, for there is no other singer of the beyond who is like him or equal to him in the strangeness, supernatural lucidity, power and directness of vision of the beyond and the rhythmic clarity and beauty of his singing." (26: 139-40)

"A greater poet by nature than almost any of these, Shelley was alone of them all very nearly fitted to be a sovereign voice of the new spiritual force that was at the moment attempting to break into poetry and possess there its kingdom. He has on the one hand, one feels, been a native of the heights to which he aspires and the memory of them, not indeed quite distinct, but still environing his imagination with its luminous ethereality, is yet with him. If the idea of a being not of our soil fallen into the material life and still remembering his skies can be admitted as an actual fact of human birth, then Shelley was certainly a living example of one of these luminous spirits half obscured by earth; the very stumblings of his life came from the difficulty of such a nature moving in the alien terrestrial environment in which he is not at home nor capable of accepting its muddy vesture and iron chain, attempting impatiently to realise there the law of his own being in spite of the obstruction of the physical clay. This mind and nature cannot live at ease in their dusk day and time, but escape to dwell prophetically in a future heaven and earth in which the lower life shall have accepted the law of his own celestial worlds. As a poet his intellect is suffused with their light and his imagination is bathed in it; they are steeped in the brilliances of a communion with a higher law, another order of existence, another meaning behind Nature and terrestrial things. But in addition he possesses the intellectual equipment possible in his age and can speak with a subtle beauty and perfect melody the tongue of the poetic intelligence. He is a seer of spiritual realities, much more radiantly near to them than Wordsworth, has, what Coleridge had not, a poetic grasp of metaphysical truths, can see the forms and hear the voices of higher elemental spirits and natural godheads than those seen and heard by Blake, while he has a knowledge too of some fields of the same middle realm, is the singer of a greater and deeper liberty and a purer and nobler revolt than Byron, has the constant feeling of a high spiritual and intellectual beauty, not sensuous in the manner of Keats, but with a hold on the subtler beauty of sensible things which gives us not their glow of vital warmth and close material texture, but their light and life and the rarer atmosphere that environs them on some meeting line between spirit and body. He is at once seer, poet, thinker, prophet, artist. In his own day and after, the strangeness of his genius made him unintelligible to the rather gross and mundane intellectual mind of the nineteenth century; those who admired him most, were seized only by the externalities of his work, its music, delicacy, diffusely lavish imaginative opulence, enthusiasm, but missed its inner significance. Now that we are growing more into the shape of his ideas and the forms of his seeing, we can get nearer to the hidden heart of his poetry. Still high-pinnacled as is his flight, great as is his work and his name, there is in him too a limitation which prevents the perfect self-expression that we find only in the few supreme poets.

This was due to the conditions under which the evolution of his poetry had to take place and to the early death which found him at the time when it was rounding towards the full orb of its maturity." (26: 140-42)

Shelley

"He is in revolt too against the law of earth, in arms against its dominations and powers, and would substitute for it by some immediate and magical change the law of heaven; but so he fails to make the needed transition and reconciliation and his image of the thing to be remains too ideal, too fine and abstract in spite of the beauty of the poetical forms he gives it as its raiment or atmosphere. Heaven cannot descend to take possession of the gross, brute and violent earth he sees around him, therefore he carries up the delivered earth into a far and ideal heaven. Something of the same excess of another light than ours surrounds and veils his intercourse with the spirit in Nature. He sees her earthly forms in a peculiar radiance and light and through them the forms and spirits of his ideal world. He has not Wordsworth's distinctness and intimate spiritual communion with Nature as she is on earth; the genii of

the worlds of dream and sleep cluster too thickly round all that his waking eye seizes. He tries to let them in through the force of crowding images, brilliant tossings aside of the lucent curtain, *tiraskariṇī*, which veils them from us: but they remain half-hidden in their means of revelation. The earth-nature is seen in the light of another nature more than in its own, and that too is only half visible in the mixed luminosity, "burning through the vest that hides it." Tradition governs very largely his choice of rhythms, but wonderfully melodious as is his use or conversion of them to the mould of his spirit, one feels that he would have done better to seek more often for self-formed movements. Shelley is the bright archangel of this dawn and he becomes greater to us as the light he foresaw and lived in returns and grows, but he sings half concealed in the too dense halo of his own ethereal beauty." (26: 144-45)

"As with Wordsworth and Byron, so too we find Shelley and Keats standing side by side, but with a certain antinomy. They are perhaps the two most purely poetic minds that have used the English tongue; but one sings from the skies earthwards, the other looks from earth towards Olympus. Keats is the first entire artist in word and rhythm in English poetry, – not grandiose, classical and derived like Milton, but direct and original in his artistry, he begins a new era. His astonishing early performance leaves us wondering what might have been the masterpieces of his prime, of which even *Hyperion* and the Odes are only the unfulfilled promise. His death in the beginning of his powers is the greatest loss ever suffered by human achievement in this field. Alone of all the chief poets of his time he is in possession of a perfect or almost perfected instrument of his native temperament and genius, but he had not yet found the thing he had to say, not yet seen what he was striving to see. All the other high things that interested his great equals, had for him no interest; one godhead only he worshipped, the image of divine Beauty, and through this alone he wished to see Truth and by her to achieve spiritual delight and not so much freedom as completeness. And he saw her in three of her four forms, sensuous beauty, imaginative beauty, intellectual and ideal beauty. But it is the first only which he had entirely expressed when his thread was cut short in its beginning; the second he had carried far, but it was not yet full-orbed; towards the third and highest he was only striving, "to philosophise he dared not yet", but it was from the first the real sense and goal of his genius.

On life he had like the others – Byron alone excepted – no hold; such work as *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, in which he followed the romantic tendency of the time, was not his own deeper self-expression; they are wonderful richly woven robes of sound and word and image curiously worked and brocaded, but they clothe nothing. The Odes, where fulfilment of imaginative beauty rises out of a higher sensuous seeking and satisfaction to an admirable sweetness, fullness, largeness and opulence and admits intimations of the ideal goddess, are almost all of them among the scanty number of the chief masterpieces in this high and deliberate lyrical form. But the real soul of Keats, his inner genius, the thing he was striving to bring out of himself is not to be altogether found even here; it lay in that attempt which, first failing in *Endymion*, was again resumed in *Hyperion*. It was the discovery of the divine Idea, Power and living norm of Beauty which by its breath of delight has created the universe, supports it and moves towards a greater perfection, inspires the harmonies of inward sight and outward form, yearns and strives towards the fullness of its own self-discovery by love and delight. Not yet in possession of his idea, he tries to find and to figure it in *Endymion* by sensuous images of a rich and dim moonlit dream with a sort of allegory or weft of

symbols behind the words and thoughts, but his hand is still inexpert and fails in the execution. In *Hyperion* the idea is clearer and in bolder relief, but it is misconceived under a too intellectual, external and conventionally epic Miltonic influence, and in his second version he turns not quite happily to a renewal of the form of his first attempt. He has found a clue in thought and imagination, but not quite its realisation in the spiritual idea, has already its imaginative, sensuous, something of its intellectual suggestion, but not yet what the spirit in him is trying to reveal, its mystically intellectual, mystically sensuous, mystically imaginative vision, form and word. The intimation of it in his work, his growing endeavour to find it and the unfulfilled promise of its discovery and unique fullness of expression are the innermost Keats and by it he belongs in spirit to

these prophetic, but half-foiled singers of the dawn. He lives more than any other poet in the very temple of Beauty, traverses its sculptured and frescoed courts with a mind hued and shaped to her forms and colours and prepares, but is never permitted, to enter the innermost sanctuary. The time had not yet come when these spiritual significances could be more than hinted. Therefore Keats and Shelley were taken before their powers could fully expand, Byron led far out of the path, Blake isolated in his own splendour of remoteness, Coleridge and Wordsworth drawn away to lose the poet and seer in the mere intellectual mind. All wandered round their centre of inspiration, missed something needed and stopped or were stopped short. Another age had to arrive which worshipped other and lesser godheads." (26: 145-47)

"…whether we compare it with the inspirations from which it turned or with the inspiration which followed and replaced it, it is a depression, not a height, and without being either faultily faultless or splendidly null, as epochs of a too self-satisfied intellectual enlightenment tend to appear to be in the eyes of the more deeply thinking ages, it fails to satisfy, unlike the Roman Augustan, the French grand century, or even in its own kind the English Augustan. It leaves an impression of a too cramped fullness and a too level curiosity. It is a descent into a comfortable and pretty hollow or a well-cultured flatness between high, wild or beautiful mountain ranges behind and in front a great confused beginning of cliff and seashore, sands and rocks and breakers and magic of hills and sea-horizons. There is much in this work to admire, something here and there to stimulate, but only a little that lifts off the feet and carries to the summits of the poetic enthusiasm.

The descent from the uncertain but high elevations of the first romantic, half spiritual outbreak is very marked, baffling and sudden. This is not in the nature of a revolt, an energetic audacity of some new thing, – except for a moment in Swinburne, – but a change of levels, a transition to other more varied but less elevated interests, the substitution of a more curious but less impetuous movement. The rich beauty of Keats is replaced by the careful opulent cultivated picturesqueness of Tennyson, the concentrated personal force of Byron by the many-sided intellectual robustness and energy of Browning, the intense Nature poetry and the strong and grave ethical turn of Wordsworth by the too intellectually conscious eye on Nature and the cultured moralising of Arnold, the pure ethereal lyricism of Shelley by Swinburne's turgid lyrical surge and all too self-conscient fury of foam-tossing sound, and in place of the supernatural visions of Blake and Coleridge we have the mediaeval glamour and languorous fields of dream of Rossetti and Morris. There is a considerable gain, but a deep loss; for this poetry has a more evolved richness, but in that greater richness a greater poverty. The gain is in fullness of a more varied use of language, a more conscious and careful art, a more informed and varied range of thought and interest; but the loss is in spiritual substance and the Pythian height of inspiration. There is a more steady working, but with it a clogged and heavier breath; a wealth of colour and nearer strain of thinking, but a lower flame of the spirit. This labour is assured and careful enough in its workmanship but, less inspired, it has a paucity of greatness and a too temperate impulsion." (26: 148-49)

The Victorian Period

"It is the most unlovely and uninspiring period of the English spirit. Never was the aesthetic sense so drowned in pretentious ugliness, seldom the intelligence crusted in such an armoured imperviousness to fine and subtle thinking, the ebb of spirituality so far out and low. It was a period of smug commercial middle-class prosperity, dull mechanism, hard utilitarianism and a shoddy liberalism bursting and running over with self-content in its narrow practical rationality, spiritual poverty and intellectual ineptitude. Unteachable, it bore with a scornful complacency or bewildered anger or a listening ear of impervious indulgence the lightning shafts of Arnold's irony, the turbid fulminations of Carlyle, the fiery raids of Ruskin or saw unaffected others of its fine or great spirits turn for refuge to mediaevalism or socialistic utopias. The work of these forerunners was done in a wilderness of intellectual commonness and busy mediocre energy;…" (26: 150)

The Place and Importance of Metre and Rhyme in Poetry

"Metre and rhyme are said to be played out, things of the past, which can no longer be allowed to chain and hamper the great and free movement which the enlarging spirit of poetry demands; as rhyme was in Milton's later view only a dainty trifle which he flung aside for the organ harmonies of his blank verse, so metre itself is a petty thing, half ornament, half fetter, which has to be flung aside for some nobly self-governed democratic anarchy that is to develop from this new type. That is a theory of very doubtful validity. In the hands of most of its exponents it seems to be in practice nothing but a licence for writing prose in variously cut lengths, prose breaking off at the end of a clause or in the middle of it to go on refreshed in the line below, – I have seen even a line of free verse consisting of a majestic solitary pronoun, – and that is more an eccentric method of printing than a new rhythm. But without accepting the theory in its intolerant entirety one can appreciate the motive which moved the greater masters and more skilful craftsmen of this form, if form it can be called, to make the innovation. There is something large and many-sided and constantly mutable in the life, thought and spirit of today which needs, to express it sympathetically, vast and flowing movements or on the contrary brief, sudden and abrupt paces or the alternation of these and intermediate and variant lengths and turns: there is something at the same time densely full and singularly and minutely subtle in the modern thinking mind which is with difficulty accommodable by the restricted range of subtleties, variations and fullnesses of any given poetic measure. Why not then break away from all the old hampering restrictions and find a new principle of harmony in accordance with the freedom, the breadth and largeness of view, the fineness of feeling and sensation of the modern spirit, some form which shall have the liberty of prose and yet command the intensified heights and fluctuations and falls of the cadence of poetry? There is no reason why not, if the thing can be done, – the proof of these things lies in the execution; but it may be doubted whether the method used is the right method. At any rate it has not been fully justified even in the hands of its greatest or most skilful exponents. It is used, as in Whitman, to give the roll of the sea of life or the broad and varying movements of the spirit of humanity in its vigorous experience and aspiration, or, as in Carpenter, to arrive at the free and harmonious accession of the human intelligence to profound, large and powerful truths of the spirit, or, as in certain French writers, to mould into accurate rhythm the very substance and soul and characteristic movement of soul-states, ideas or objects described and seen. These are things that need to be done, but it remains to be seen whether they cannot be done in the recognised and characteristic movement of poetry, rather than in a compromise with prose cadences. The genius of poetic measure walking in the path opened by the ancient discovery of cadenced beat and concentrated rhythm has not yet exhausted itself, nor is there any proof that it cannot accommodate its power to new needs or any sign that it can only survive in an arrested senility or fall into a refined decadence." (26: 162-63)

Walt Whitman

"Whitman's aim is consciently, clearly, professedly to make a great revolution in the whole method of poetry, and if anybody could have succeeded, it ought to have been this giant of poetic thought with his energy of diction, this spiritual crowned athlete and vital prophet of democracy, liberty and the soul of man and Nature and all humanity. He is a great poet, one of the greatest in the power of his substance, the energy of his vision, the force of his style, the largeness at once of his personality and his universality. His is the most Homeric voice since Homer, in spite of the modern's ruder less elevated aesthesis of speech and the difference between that limited Olympian and this broad-souled Titan, in this that he has the nearness to something elemental which makes everything he says, even the most common and prosaic, sound out with a ring of greatness, gives a force even to his barest or heaviest phrases, throws even upon the coarsest, dullest, most physical things something of the divinity; and he has the elemental Homeric power of sufficient straightforward speech, the rush too of oceanic sound though it is

here the surging of the Atlantic between continents, not the magic roll and wash of the Aegean around the isles of Greece. What he has not, is the unfailing poetic beauty and nobility which saves greatness from its defects – that supreme gift of Homer and Valmiki – and the self-restraint and obedience to a divine law which makes even the gods more divine. Whitman will remain great after all the objections that can be made against his method or his use of it, but the question is whether what served his unique personality, can be made a rule for lesser or different spirits, and whether the defects which we see but do not and cannot weigh too closely in him, will not be fatal when not saved by his all-uplifting largeness. A giant can pile up Pelion and Ossa and make of it an unhewn chaotic stair to Olympus, but others would be better and more safely employed in cutting steps of marble or raising by music a ladder of sapphires and rubies to their higher or their middle heavens. Personality, force, temperament can do unusual miracles, but the miracle cannot always be turned into a method or a standard." (26: 165-66)

The Genius of Shakespeare and the Way Ahead

"Shakespeare is still – though need he be always? – immeasurably the largest name in English poetry; but still, however preeminent his genius, there remain greater things to be seen by the poet than Shakespeare saw and greater things to be said in poetry than Shakespeare said, – and here we have an indication of the way on which they lie and of the gates which open to their hiding-place and own home of light and self-revelation." (26: 191)

The Poetry of A.E.

"What the others suggest or give us in more or less luminous glimpses, he casts into concentrated expression from a nearer spiritual knowledge, – as when he strikes out in a brief verse the living spiritual perception of the universal and infinite source of love, –

We bade adieu to love the old,
We heard another lover then,
Whose forms are myriad and untold,
Sigh to us from the hearts of men.

He lives on the spiritual plane to which so much of this poetry is an indistinct or a less distinct aspiration, and his whole self-expression is bathed, perhaps rendered sometimes a little remote and unseizable by its immergence, in an unusual light, the light of the spirit breaking through the veils of the intelligence in which it has to find its means of speech. This is not the frank marriage and close unity of the earth and heavens of which Whitman and Meredith speak, but a rare, high and exclusive pinnacle of the soul's greater sight." (26: 203-04)

"I have spoken in the beginning of the Mantra as the highest and intensest revealing form of poetic thought and expression. What the Vedic poets meant by the Mantra was an inspired and revealed seeing and visioned thinking, attended by a realisation, to use the ponderous but necessary modern word, of some inmost truth of God and self and man and Nature and cosmos and life and thing and thought and experience and deed. It was a thinking that came on the wings of a great soul rhythm, *chandas*. For the seeing could not be separated from the hearing; it was one act. Nor could the living of the truth in oneself which we mean by realisation, be separated from either, for the presence of it in the soul and its possession of the mind must precede or accompany in the creator or human channel that expression of the inner sight and hearing which takes the shape of the luminous word. The Mantra is born through the heart and shaped or massed by the thinking mind into a chariot of that godhead of the Eternal of whom the truth seen is a face or a form. And in the mind too of the fit outward hearer who listens to the word of the poet-seer, these three must come together, if our word is a real Mantra; the sight of the inmost truth must accompany the hearing, the possession of the inmost spirit of it by the mind and its coming home to the soul must accompany or follow immediately upon the rhythmic message of the Word and the mind's sight of the Truth. That may sound a rather mystic account of the matter, but substantially there could hardly be a more complete description of the birth and effect of the inspired and revealing word, and it might be applied, though usually on a more lowered scale than was intended by the Vedic Rishis, to all the highest outbursts of a really great poetry. But poetry is the Mantra only when it is the voice of the inmost truth and is couched in the highest power of the very rhythm and speech of that truth. And the ancient poets of the Veda and Upanishads claimed to be uttering the Mantra because always it was this inmost and almost occult truth of things which they strove to see and hear and speak and because they believed themselves to be using or finding its innate soul rhythms and the sacrificial speech of it cast up by the divine Agni, the sacred Fire in the heart of man. The Mantra in other words is a direct and most heightened, an intensest and most divinely burdened rhythmic word which embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and the presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things and with its truth and with the divine soul-forms of it, the Godheads which are born from the living Truth. Or, let us say, it is a supreme rhythmic language which seizes hold upon all that is finite and brings into each the light and voice of its own infinite." (26: 217-18)

The Five Suns of Poetry – Truth, Life, Beauty, Delight and Spirit

"An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry.…

…Therefore will poetry most find itself and enter most completely into its heritage when it arrives at the richest harmony of these five things in their most splendid and ample sweetness and light and power; but that can only wholly be when it sings from the highest skies of vision and ranges through the widest widths of our being.

These powers can indeed be possessed in every scale, because on whatever grade of our ascent we stand, the Spirit, the divine Self of man is always there, can break out into a strong flame of manifestation carrying in it all its godheads in whatever form, and poetry and art are among the means by which it thus delivers itself into expression. Therefore the essence of poetry is eternally the same and its essential power and the magnitude of the genius expended may be the same whatever the frame of the sight, whether it be Homer chanting of the heroes in god-moved battle before Troy and of Odysseus wandering among the wonders of remote and magic isles with his heart always turned to his lost and far-off human hearth, Shakespeare riding in his surge of the manifold colour and music and passion of life, or Dante errant mid his terrible or beatific visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, or Valmiki singing of the ideal man embodying God and egoistic giant Rakshasa embodying only fierce self-will approaching each other from their different centres of life and in their different law of being for the struggle desired by the gods, or some mystic Vamadeva or Vishwamitra voicing in strange vivid now forgotten symbols the action of the gods and the glories of the Truth, the battle and the journey to the Light, the double riches and the sacrificial climbing of the soul to Immortality. For whether it be the inspired imagination fixed on earth or the soul of life or the inspired reason or the high intuitive spiritual vision which gives the form, the genius of the great poet will seize on some truth of being, some breath of life, some power of the spirit and bring it out with a certain supreme force for his and our delight and joy in its beauty. But nevertheless the poetry which can keep the amplitude of its breadth and nearness of its touch and yet see all things from a higher height will, the rest being equal, give more and will more fully satisfy the whole of what we are and therefore the whole of what we demand from this most complete of all the arts and most subtle of all our means of aesthetic self-expression.

The poetry of the future, if it fulfils in amplitude the promise now only there in rich hint, will kindle these five lamps of our being, but raise them up more on high and light with them a broader country, many countries indeed now hidden from our view, will make them not any longer lamps in some limited temple of beauty, but suns in the heavens of our highest mind and illuminative of our widest as well as our inmost life." (26: 222-25)

Truth

"Truth, as she is seen by us in the end, is an infinite goddess, the very front and face of Infinity and Aditi herself, the illimitable mother of all the gods. This infinite, eternal and eternally creative Truth is no enemy of imagination or even of free fancy, for they too are godheads and can wear one of her faces or one of her expressive masks, while imagination is perhaps the very colour of her creative process, her births and movements are innumerable, her walk supple and many-pathed, and through all divine powers and universal means she can find her way to her own riches, and even error is her illegitimate child and serves, though wantonly, rebelliously and through many a giddy turn, her mother's many-formed self-adaptive world-wide aim. Now it is something of this infinite Truth which poetry succeeds in giving us with a high power, in its own way of beauty, by its own opulent appointed means." (26: 229-30)

Truth and the Essence of the Approach of Poetry, Philosophy, Science and Religion to Truth

"The difference which separates these great things of the mind is a difference of the principal, the indispensable instrument we must use and of the appeal to the mind and the whole manner. There is a whole gulf of difference. The philosopher sees in the dry light of the reason, proceeds dispassionately by a severe analysis and abstraction of the intellectual content of the truth, a logical slow close stepping from idea to pure idea, a method difficult and nebulous to the ordinary, hard, arid, impossible to the poetic mind. For the poetic mind sees at once in a flood of coloured light, in a moved experience, in an ecstasy of the coming of the word, in splendours of form, in a spontaneous leaping out of inspired idea upon idea, sparks of the hoof-beats of the white flame horse Dadhikravan galloping up the mountain of the gods or breath and hue of wing striking into wing of the irised broods of Thought flying over earth or up towards heaven. The scientist proceeds also by the intellectual reason but with a microscopic scrutiny which brings it to bear on an analysis of sensible fact and process and on the correct measure and relation of force and energy as it is seen working on the phenomenal stuff of existence, and joins continually link of fact with fact and coil of process with process till he has under his hand at least in skeleton and tissue the whole connected chain of apparent things. But to the poetic mind this is a dead mechanical thing; for the eye of the poet loves to look on breathing acting life in its perfected synthesis and rhythm, not on the constituent measures, still less on the dissected parts, and his look seizes the soul of wonder of things, not the mechanical miracle. The method of these other powers moves by the rigorously based and patiently self-assured steps of the systematising intelligence and the aspect of Truth which they uncover is a norm measured and cut out from the world of ideas and the world of sense by the eye of the intellectual reason. The brooding philosopher or the discovering scientist cannot indeed do without the aid of a greater power, intuition, but ordinarily he has to bring what that nearer more swiftly luminous faculty gives him into a more deliberate air under the critical light of the intelligence and establish it in the dialectical or analytical way of philosophy and science before the intellect as judge. The mind of the poet sees by intuition and direct perception and brings out what they give him by a formative stress on the total image, and the aspect to which he thrills is the living truth of the form, of the life that inspires it, of the creative thought behind and the supporting movement of the soul and a rhythmic harmony of these things revealed to his delight in their beauty. These fields and paths lie very wide apart, and if any voices from the others reach and claim the ear of the poetic creator, they must change greatly in their form and suit themselves to the warmth and colour of his atmosphere before they can find right of entry into his kingdom.

The meeting is not here at the base, but on the tops. The philosopher's reasoning intelligence discovers only a system of thought symbols and the reality they figure cannot be seized by the intelligence, but needs direct intuition, a living contact, a close experience by identity in our self of knowledge. That is work not for a dialectical, but a bright revelatory thinking, a luminous body of intuitive thought and spiritual experience which carries us straight into sight, into vision of knowledge. The first effort of philosophy is to know for the sake of pure understanding, but her greater height is to take Truth alive in the spirit and clasp and grow one with her and be consciously within ourselves all the reality we have learned to know. But that is precisely what the poet strives to do in his own way by intuition and imagination, when he labours to bring himself close to and be one by delight with the thing of beauty which awakes his joy. He does not always seize the very self of the thing, but to do so lies within his power. The language of intuitive thinking moves always therefore to an affinity with poetic speech and in the ancient Upanishads it used that commonly as its natural vehicle. "The Spirit went abroad, a thing pure, bright, unwounded by sin, without body or sinew or scar; the Seer, the Thinker, the Self-born who breaks into being all around us, decreed of old all things in their nature from long eternal years." "There sun shines not nor moon nor star nor these lightnings blaze nor this fire; all this world is luminous only with his light." Are we listening, one might ask, to the voice of poetry or philosophy or religion? It is all three voices cast in one, indistinguishable in the eternal choir. And there is too and similarly a pure intuitive science which comes into the field when we enter the ranges of the psychical and spiritual being and can from there work for the discovery of greater secrets of the physical or at least of the psycho-physical world. Indian Yoga founds itself on that greater process, and there, though as in all true science the object is an assured method of personal discovery or living repetition and possession of past discovery and a working out of all the thing found, there is too a high final intention to hold the truth, the light found in our inner power of being and turn it to a power of our psychical self, our spirit, our self of knowledge and will, our self of love and joy, our self of life and action. This too, though not the same thing in form, is akin to the higher work of poetry when it acts, as the ancients would have had it consciously act, as a purifier and builder of the soul.

The initial function of religion again is to make clear the approaches of the soul to the Highest, to God. And it does that at first by laying on the mind a scheme of religious knowledge or guiding creed and dogma, a taming yoke of moral instruction or purifying law of religious conduct and an awakening call of religious emotion, worship, cult, and so far it is a thing apart in its own field, but in its truly revealing side of intuitive being and experience we find that the essence of religion is an aspiration and adoration of the soul towards the Divine, the Self, the Supreme, the Eternal, the Infinite, and an effort to get close to and live with or in that or to enjoy in love and be like or one with that

which we adore. But poetry also on its heights turns to the same things in ourselves and the world, not indeed with religious adoration, but by a regarding closeness and moved oneness in beauty and delight. The characteristic method and first field of all these things is indeed wide apart, but at their end when they come into their deepest spirit, they begin to approach each other and touch; and because of this greater affinity philosophy, psychic and spiritual science and religion are found in the ancient Indian culture woven into one unity, and when they turn to the expression of their most intimate experience, it is always the poetic word which they use." (26: 231-34)

"The steps of Poetry rise to these heights on her own side of the mountain of the gods. Poetry comes into being at the direct call of three powers, inspiration, beauty and delight, and brings them to us and us to them by the magic charm of the inspired rhythmic word. If it can do that at all perfectly, its essential work has been done. It is in its beginning concerned with close and simple natural things and, when it grows more subtle, still it has only to create a power of beauty, move the soul with aesthetic delight and make it feel and see, and its function seems at an end. The kind does not seem to matter, and it has nothing to do primarily or directly, nor at any time in a set formal will taking that as its function and aim, with the presentation of intellectual concepts to the reason or with truth of science or with moral betterment or the working out of religious aspiration, not often even with so near a thing to it as religious emotion and love. But yet because of that greater affinity we see it actually doing what is an equivalent to these things by its own power, in a strange and beautiful mould, with an indirect and yet subtly direct touch. The poet too brings out sometimes as if by accident, sometimes with a conscious intention the same essential truths as the philosopher or the man of religion. An instance or two will be sufficient to show the approximation and the difference. Religion brings us a command to love our neighbour as ourselves and even our enemies, a thing impossible to our normal nature, a law honoured with the consent of the lips and universally ignored in the observance. A few only seeking perfection in spiritual experience discover in it the natural rule of our real and our highest being, quite possible if we can only get some abiding realisation of that secret oneness which is the foundation of the law of universal love. Then, not seeking this at all but only poetic delight or, if you are so inclined, the criticism of life, we listen to Creon's fierce reproach to Antigone that in her refusal to hate the national enemy she stands unnaturally apart from the mind and heart of all her people and hear suddenly start out the high and proud reply of one lonely and doomed but inflexibly true to her nature, her soul's will under the shadow of a cruel death, "Not to join in hate, but to join in love was I born!" The Athenian poet intended no moral instruction, calls up no religious emotion into his line, is concerned only with a crucial situation in life, the revolt of natural affection against the rigid claim of the law, nation, State. It is a simple cry of the voice of nature and life, yet there breathes behind it a greater thought which is not so far from the truth underlying religious teaching and spiritual experience. The poet, his eyes fixed on life, shows us as if by accident the seed in our normal nature which can grow into the prodigious spiritual truth of universal love. He has to do it in his own way in the mould of poetic beauty and delight, and if we judge by

such instances, we shall say that so only he has to do it, to cast as if casually the seed of the beauty and delight of some high mood of life and nature into the mind and pass on leaving it to its work on the soul's reflecting emotional experience, perhaps hardly himself knowing what he has done since he is absorbed in sight and satisfied with the joy of beautiful creation.

And yet actually we find that we cannot quite set these limits or they are not regarded by poets of a high order. The poet of the Gita has the conscious intention of laying the form of unity on the soul of the hearer and moving him to seek the full experience. "He is the greatest Yogin who, come happiness by that or come grief, sees wherever he turns his eyes all equally in the image of his self." That is something high, grave, couched in the language of the inspired reason, uplifted in the original by a sweet and noble diction and rhythm, religious and philosophical in its strain and yet poetical, because it adds to the fundamental idea the visualising and bringing home of the spiritual experience, the sustaining emotion of the thing felt and a touch of its life. And in the much older Yajur Veda we find breaking out with a different, a more moved and less reflective voice the same truth of experience, the same touch on the soul, "Where I am wounded, make me firm and whole. May all creatures gaze on me with the eye of the Friend, may I gaze on all creatures, may we all gaze on all with the eye of the Friend." There poetry and religious emotion become powerfully fused and one in the aspiration to the heart's perfection and the loving unity of all life. The same uniting alchemy and fusion can take place between truth of philosophy and poetic truth and it is continually found in Indian literature. And so too all the old Rig Veda, all the Vaishnava poetry of North and South had behind it an elaborate Yoga or practised psychical and spiritual science, without which it could not have come into birth in that form. Today much of the poetry of Tagore is the sign of such a Sadhana, a long inheritance of assured spiritual discovery and experience. But what is given whether directly or in symbol or in poetic image is not the formal steps of the Sadhana, but the strongly felt movement and the living outcome, the vision and life and inner experience, the spirit and power and body of sweetness and beauty and delight. The tracing of close and too meticulous bounds round the steps of poetic truth or turning of its wide continental spheres into some limiting magic circle seems therefore to have no real foundation. One may almost though not quite say that there is nothing in infinite Truth that the poet cannot make his material, even if it seems to belong to other provinces of the mind, because all forms of human experience approach each other on their sides of intuition and inner life and vision and all meet in the spirit. The condition, the limitation is only in the way and manner, – but that means enormously much, – the necessity of the purely poetic way of seeing and the subjection of the thing seen to the law of poetic harmony and moved delight and beauty." (26: 234-37)

The Three Things Always Present in the Utterance of a Poet

"First there is a force of inspired seeing which gives us the appeal of some reality of self or mind or world, whether in this material field or the other planes of universal existence or of our own being to which imagination is one of the gates, a seeing which brings to us the power of its truth and the beauty of its image and gives it body in the mind by the word. Then there must be the touch, presence, breath of the very life, not the outward only, but the inward life, not an imitation by force of speech or the holding up of a mirror to some external movement or form of Nature, but a creative interpretation which brings home to us as much as may be of what she is or things or we are. And again that must carry in it and arouse in us an emotion of its touch on the soul, not the raw emotion of the vital parts, – though that

comes in in certain kinds of poetry, – but a spiritual essence of feeling to which our inner strands can vibrate. The intellectual, vital, sensible truths are subordinate things; the breath of poetry should give us along with them, or it may even be apart from them, some more essential truth of the being of things, their very power which springs in the last resort from something eternal in their heart and secrecy, *hṛdaye guhāyām*, expressive even in the moments and transiences of life. The soul of the poet, and the soul too of the hearer by a response to his word, enters into some direct contact through vision and straight touch and emotion, possesses and feels at its strongest by a union in our own stuff of being, a moved identity. A direct spiritual perception and vision called by us intuition, however helped or prepared by other powers,

can alone avail to give us these things. Imagination is only the poet's most powerful aid for this discovery and interpretative creation, fancy a brilliant opener of hidden or out-of-the-way doors. The finding of a new image is itself a joy to the poet and the hearer because it reveals some new significant correspondence or sheds a stronger disclosing light on the thing seen and makes it stand out and live more opulently, luminously, with a greater delight of itself in the mind. The poet having to bring home something, even in things common, which is not obvious to surface experience, avails himself of image, symbol, whatever is just, beautiful, meaningful, suggestive. His fictions are not charming airy nothings, but as with every true artist significant figures and creations which serve to bring very real realities close to the spirit, and their immortality is the immortality of truth." (26: 237-38)

The Aim of Poetry

"To throw light on the self of things in some power and beauty of it is after all the native aim of poetry, and that can be done entirely by this greatest intuitive mind, for it can bring near or going beyond itself actually reach the vision of identity, that seeing of our whole self and the self of the world which is the last object and the highest spirit of all our mental powers and seekings. The poetry which will accomplish that will be able to see, though in another way than that of philosophy and religion, the self of the Eternal, to know God and his godheads, to know the freedom and immortality which is our divinest aim, to see in the delight of a union in beauty the self of the Infinite, the self of Nature and the whole self of man. But so to see the self is to meet the spirit in everything and the spirit reveals to us the inner and the inmost truth of all that comes from it, life and thought and form and every image and every power. Much has been done by the art of rhythmic self-expression; much remains to be done. To express

these greatest things and to gather up all that man has come and is yet coming to see and know and feel in a new and greater light and give to him the universal spirit and power of beauty and delight behind all this existence is a work that will open to poetry a larger territory and the perfect greatness of its function. A beginning of such an endeavour we have seen to be the noblest strain in recent work; the possibility of a refreshed and long continued vitality and a hardly exhaustible fount of inspiration lies in that direction. The Veda speaks in one of its symbolic hints of the fountain of eternal Truth round which stand the illumined powers of thought and life. There under the eyes of delight and the face of imperishable beauty of the Mother of creation and bride of the eternal Spirit they lead their immortal dance. The poet visits that marvellous source in his superconscient mind and brings to us some strain or some vision of her face and works. To find the way into that circle with the waking self is to be the seer-poet and discover the highest power of the inspired word, the Mantra." (26: 240)

Sentiment

"Passion, direct feeling, ardent emotion, sincerity of sensuous joy are chilled by the observing eye of the reason and give place to a play of sentiment, – sentiment which is an indulgence of the intelligent observing mind in the aesthesis, the *rasa* of feeling, passion, emotion, sense thinning them away into a subtle, at the end almost unreal fineness." (26: 245)

The Realm of the Future Poetry – The Breath of Greater Life

"..now the mind of man is opening more largely to the deepest truth of the Divine, the Self, the Spirit, the eternal Presence not separate and distant, but near us, around us and in us, the Spirit in the world, the greater Self in man and his kind, the Spirit in all that is and lives, the Godhead, the Existence, the Power, the Beauty, the eternal Delight that broods over all, supports all and manifests itself in every turn of creation. A poetry which lives in this vision must give us quite a new presentation and interpretation of life; for of itself and at the first touch this seeing reconstructs and reimages the world for us and gives us a greater sense and a vaster, subtler and profounder form of our existence. The real faces of the gods are growing more apparent to the eye of the mind, though not yet again intimate with our life, and the forms of legend and symbol and myth must open to other and deeper meanings, as already

they have begun to do, and come in changed and vital again into poetry to interpret the realities behind the veil. Nature wears already to our eye a greater and more transparent robe of her divine and her animal and her terrestrial and cosmic life and a deeper poetry of Nature than has yet been written is one of the certain potentialities of the future. The material realm too cannot for very much longer be our sole or separate world of experience, for the partitions which divide it from psychic and other kingdoms behind it are wearing thin and voices and presences are beginning to break through and reveal their impact on our world. This too must widen our conception of life and make a new world and atmosphere for poetry which may justify as perhaps never before the poet's refusal to regard as unreal what to the normal mind was only romance, illusion or dream. A larger field of being made more real to man's experience will be the realm of the future poetry." (26: 250-51)

What the Future Poetry May Do for Us – Provide the Breath of Greater Life

"To know other countries is not to belittle but enlarge our own country and help it to a greater power of its own being, and to know the other countries of the soul is to widen our bounds and make more opulent and beautiful the earth on which we live. To bring the gods into our life is to raise it to its own diviner powers. To live in close and abiding intimacy with Nature and the spirit in her is to free our daily living from its prison of narrow preoccupation with the immediate moment and act and to give the moment the inspiration of all Time and the background of eternity and the daily act the foundation of an eternal peace and the large momentum of the universal Power. To bring God into life, the sense of the self in us into all our personality and becoming, the powers and vistas of the Infinite into our mental and material existence, the oneness of the self in all into our experience and feelings and relations of heart and mind with all that is around us is to help to divinise our actual being and life, to force down its fences of division and blindness and unveil the human godhead that individual man and his race can become if they will and lead us to our most vital perfection. This is what a future poetry may do for us in the way and measure in which poetry can do these things, by vision, by the power of the word, by the attraction of the beauty and delight of what it shows us. What philosophy or other mental brooding makes precise or full to our thought, poetry can by its creative power, imaging force and appeal to the emotions make living to the soul and heart. This poetry will present to us indeed in forms of power and beauty all the actual life of man, his wonderful and fruitful past, his living and striving present, his yet more living aspiration and hope of the future, but will present it more seeingly as the life of the vast self and spirit within the race and the veiled divinity in the individual, as an act of the power and delight of universal being, in the greatness of an eternal manifestation, in the presence and intimacy of Nature, in harmony with the beauty and wonder of the realms that stretch out beyond earth and its life, in the march to godhead and the significances of immortality, in the ever clearer letters and symbols of the self-revealing mystery and not only in its first crude and incomplete actualities; these actualities will themselves be treated with a firmer and finer vision, find their own greater meaning and become to our sight thread of the fine tissue and web of the cosmic work of the Spirit. This poetry will be the voice and rhythmic utterance of our greater, our total, our infinite existence, and will give us the strong and infinite sense, the spiritual and vital joy, the exalting power of a greater breath of life." (26: 251-53)

Beauty and Delight – The Greatest Godhead for a Poet

"THE LIGHT of truth, the breath of life, great and potent things though they are, are insufficient to give poetry the touch of immortality and perfection, even a little of which is enough to carry it safe through the ages, unless the soul and form of delight and beauty take possession of the seeing of truth and give immortality to the breath and body of the life. Delight is the soul of existence, beauty the intense impression, the concentrated form of delight; and these two fundamental things tend to be one for the mind of the artist and the poet, though they are often enough separated in our cruder vital and mental experience. These twin powers meet, make a consonance of the perfect harmony of his work and are the first deities he serves, all the others only group themselves about them, strive to be admitted to the soul of delight and the privilege of beauty and have to make themselves acceptable to them before they can mix with them in a compelling and attracting oneness. For the poet the moon of beauty and delight is a

greater godhead even than the sun of truth or the breath of life, as in the symbolic image of the Vedic moon-god Soma, whose plant of intoxication has to be gathered on lonely mountain heights in the moonlight and whose purified juice and essence is the sacred wine and nectar of sweetness, *rasa*, *madhu*, *amṛta*, without which the gods themselves could not be immortal. A lightest trifle, if it manages to get itself saturated with this sweetness of poetic delight and beauty, will be preserved for its sake, while the highest strenuous labour of the thinking mind and the most forceful assertion of the life-power, if deprived of or deficient in this subtlest immortalising essence, may carry on for a time, but soon drops, grows old, sinks into the gulf of oblivion or has at most a lifeless survival and belongs to the dead history of literature, not to its eternal present. But beauty and delight, whatever form it takes, – for we may speak here of the two as one, – has an unaging youth, an eternal moment, an immortal presence." (26: 254-55)

The Worship of Beauty and Delight in Ancient Cultures

"The imperative instinct for beauty and the aesthetic demand which set that among the first needs and was not satisfied with anything else if this were neglected or put second in importance, are now things that are almost lost, nowhere general to the human mind, but once they were the sign of the poetic and artistic peoples and the great ages of art and poetry and supreme creation. The ancient communities who created those fine many-sided cultures which still remain the fountain-head of all our evolving civilisation, had the instinct for beauty, the aesthetic turn of the temperament and formation of the mind almost, it would seem, from the beginning, planted in their spirit and their blood, colouring their outlook so that even before they got the developed intellectual consciousness of it, they created instinctively in the spirit and form of beauty and that is quite half the secret of the compelling and attractive power of the antique cultures. The earliest surviving poetry of ancient India was philosophical and religious, the Veda, the Upanishads, and our modern notions tend to divorce these things from the instinct of delight and beauty, to separate the religious and the philosophic from the aesthetic sense; but the miracle of these antique writings is their perfect union of beauty and power and truth, the word of truth coming out spontaneously as a word of beauty, the revealed utterance of that universal spirit who is described in the Upanishads as the eater of the honey of sweetness, *madhvadam puruṣam*; and this high achievement was not surprising in these ancient deep-thinking men who discovered the profound truth that all existence derives from and lives by the bliss of the eternal spirit, in the power of a universal delight, Ananda. The idea of beauty, the spontaneous satisfaction in it, the worship of it as in itself something divine, became more intellectually conscious afterwards, was a dominant strain of the later Indian mind and got to its richest outward colour and sensuous passion in the work of the classical writers, while the expression of the spiritual through the aesthetic sense is the constant sense of Indian art, as it is also the inspiring motive of a great part of the later religion and poetry. Japan and China, more especially perhaps southern China, for the north has been weighted by a tendency to a more external and formal idea of measure and harmony, had in a different way this fusion of the spiritual and aesthetic mind and it is a distinguishing stamp of their art and culture. The Persian had a sort of sensuous magic of the transforming aesthesis born of psychic delight and vision. Ancient Greece did all its work of founding European civilisation by a union of a subtle and active intelligence with a fine aesthetic spirit and worship of beauty. The Celtic nations again seem always to have had by nature a psychic delicacy and subtlety united with an instinctive turn for imaginative beauty to which we surely owe much of the finer strain in English literature. But there these spontaneous miracles of fusion end and in the mind of later peoples who come in and take possession with a less innate, a more

derivative culture, the sense of beauty works with a certain effort and is clogged by many heavier elements which are in conflict with and prevent the sureness of the aesthetic perception. There is in their cruder temperament and intelligence a barbaric strain which worships rudely the power and energy of life and is not at home with the delight of beauty, an ethical and puritanic strain which looks askance at art and beauty and pleasure, a heavy scholastic or a dry scientific intellectual strain which follows after truth with a conscientious and industrious diligence but without vision and fine aesthesis. And the modern mind, inheritor of all this past, is a divided and complex mind which strives at its best to get back at the old thing on a larger scale and realise some oneness of its many strands of experience, but has not yet found the right meeting-place; and it is besides still labouring under the disadvantage of its aberration into a mechanical, economical, materialistic, utilitarian civilisation from which it cannot get free, though it is struggling to shake off that dullest side of it for which a naked and unashamed riot of ugliness could be indulged in without any prickings of the spiritual conscience but rather with a smug self-righteousness in the hideous, the vulgar and the ignoble. The day when we get back to the ancient worship of delight and beauty, will be our day of salvation; for without these things there can be neither an assured nobility and sweetness in poetry and art, nor a satisfied dignity and fullness of life nor a harmonious perfection of the spirit.

An insufficiently profound and intimate perception of the real deep soul of poetic delight and beauty is the first obstacle to a recovery of the old strong soundness of the aesthetic sense and spontaneity of the aesthetic impulse. This comes from the peculiar character of the modern intelligence and its want of harmony between our internal selves and our external experience; there is little spontaneous joy of their meeting, an active labour to assimilate, but no happy, deep or satisfied possession either of self or life, a continual seeking but no repose in the thing found, a feverish restlessness without home and abiding-place." (26: 255-57)

The Two Things of Our Nature in Which the Spirit of Man Can Base Itself

"The spirit of man can make its home in either one of two things, the depths of our self arrived at through vision of self-knowledge, through power of self-mastery or through ecstasy, or a profound, a glad and satisfied acceptance of the truth, the delight and beauty of the world and life, of existence and experience. And either of these things can help too to bring in the other, – possess the inner self and life can become happy and illumined by a full sense of its hidden significance, or get hold of the complete delight and beauty of life and the world and you have then only a thin layer of shining mist to break through to get also at the self and spirit behind it, the eater of the honey of sweetness who is seated in the soul of man and extends himself through the universe." (26: 257)

The Surface Approach of the Modern Mind

"The ancient peoples had in a very large measure this foundation of satisfaction and harmony, took the greatest interest in the reality of the inner self, as once in India and China, the Atman, the Tao, and life and the world as its field of expression and self-experience or, like the Greeks, felt at once the naturalness and profundity of human existence and gave to it an immediate and subtle aesthetic response. The modern mind on the contrary looks little into our deepest self, takes little interest in sounding that depth and has hardly any confidence in its reality, and concentrates not on the truth and delight and beauty of life, but upon the stress of its results and circumstances, which in themselves have only an incidental and no satisfying and harmonious meaning, and on the agitating or attractive turmoil of the mind excited by their contact or their siege.* This difference results in a fundamental difference of aesthesis. The pure aesthetic spirit ought to be left free, trusted in, made master of its own action and creation and it will then create with greatness and beauty, in a calm and satisfied ecstasy, and yet safely harmonise its action with the other spiritual powers of our existence, the need of the life-soul, the insistent seeking

of the thought-mind, the demand of the active will and the senses. But we now make the aesthetic sense and intelligence a servant of these other powers; it is condemned to serve first and foremost our external interest in life or our interest in thought or in troubled personality or the demand of the senses or passions and bidden to make them beautiful or vivid to us by an active aesthetic cerebration and artistic manufacture of the word or a supply of carefully apt or beautiful forms and measures. The secondary things are put in the first rank, the primary, the one thing needful has to get in as best it can to give some firm base to the creation. This aesthesis aided by the vast curiosity of the modern intelligence has done some great and much interesting work, but it arrives with difficulty at the readily fused harmonies and assured stamp of the perfect way of spiritual creation." (26: 257-58)

** This is the result perhaps of an ill-assimilated Christian influence intervening on the external vitalism of the Teutonic temperament and on Latin intellectualism, and bringing in new needs and experiences which disturbed the mind and emotions without possessing the soul with peace or arriving at a harmony of spiritual emotion and spiritual self-knowledge.*

The Truth of the Presence of a Profound Intrinsic Delight and Beauty in All Things and the Work of a Poet

"There is a profound intrinsic delight and beauty in all things and behind all experience whatever face it wears to the surface mind, which makes it to a spirit housed within us other than its first appearance, makes it, that is to say, no longer a thing exciting mental interest, pain, pleasure, but rather a revelation of the truth and power and delight of being and our feeling of it a form of the universal Ananda of the old philosophical thinkers, the calm yet moved ecstasy with which the spirit of existence regards itself and its creations. This deeper spiritual feeling, this Ananda is the fountain of poetic delight and beauty. It springs from a supreme essence of experience, a supreme aesthesis which is in its own nature spiritual, impersonal, independent of the personal reactions and passions of the mind, and that is why the poet is able to transmute pain and sorrow and the most tragic and terrible and ugly things into forms of poetic beauty, because of this impersonal joy of the spirit in all experience, whatever its nature. And as, therefore, the subject of the poet is all that he can feel of the infinite life of the spirit that creates in existence and all that he can seize of the infinite truth of God and Nature and our own and the world's being, so too what he brings out from his subject is all that he can pour into speech of his vision of eternal and universal beauty, all that he can express of the soul's universal delight in existence. That is what he has to reveal, and to make others share in, to render more expressive and firmly present to them what experience they have of it and help the race towards its greater fullness in the soul of man and embodiment in our mind and life. This Ananda is not the pleasure of a mood or a sentiment or the fine aesthetic indulgence of the sense in the attraction of a form, superficial results and incidents which are often mistaken for that much deeper and greater thing by the minor poetic faculty, the lesser artistic mind, but the enduring delight which, as the ancient idea justly perceived, is the essence of spirit and being and the beauty which all things assume when the spirit lives in the pure joy of creation and experience.

The universality of this delight and beauty does not mean that we can take whatever we will straight from life and experience, just as it is, and by making it precise and vivid through word and image or dressing it in imaginative colour achieve poetic effect and beauty. That is the theory by which a great deal of our modern endeavour at poetry seems to be guided, as it is the ruling method of inferior poets and the mark too of the lesser or unsuccessful or only partially successful work of greater writers. The error made is to confuse the sources of poetic delight and beauty with the more superficial interest, pain and pleasure which the normal mind takes in the first untransmuted appeal of thought and life and feeling. That in its first crude form or a little deepened by sensitiveness of emotion and a reflective intelligence is the response to existence of the natural mind, the only instrument of the majority, and what it is apt to expect from the poet is that this is what he too shall give to the

world and only think it more profoundly, feel it more sensitively, live it with a greater excitement and find for it beauty of word and attraction of rhythm. The poet has in him a double personality, a double instrument of his response to life and existence. There is in him the normal man absorbed in mere living who thinks and feels and acts like others, and there is the seer of things, the supernormal man, the super-soul or delight-soul in touch with the impersonal and eternal fountains of joy and beauty who creates from that source and transmutes by its alchemy all experience into a form of the spirit's Ananda. It is easy for him, if the demand of his genius is not constant or if he is not held back by a natural fineness of the poetic conscience, to subject this deeper and greater power to the lower and general demand and put it at the service of his superficial mental experience. He has then to rely on the charm and beauty of word and form to save the externality of his substance. But the genius in him when he is faithful to it, knows that this is not his highway of perfection nor the thing his spirit gave him to do; it is a spiritual transmutation of the substance got by sinking the mental and vital interests in a deeper soul experience which brings the inevitable word and the supreme form and the unanalysable rhythm. The poet is then something more than a maker of beautiful word and phrase, a favoured child of the fancy and imagination, a careful fashioner of idea and utterance or an effective poetic thinker, moralist, dramatist or storyteller; he becomes a spokesman of the eternal spirit of beauty and delight and shares that highest creative and self-expressive rapture which is close to the original ecstasy that made existence, the divine Ananda.

This rapture, the Platonic divine possession and enthusiasm, is born not of mental, but of soul experience, and the more the surface mind gets into the way, the more this divine passion is weakened and diluted by a less potent spirit. The surface mind is powerfully attracted by the stir of the outward passion and excitement, the stress of immediate thought, life and action, hastens to embody it in speech or in deed and has no leisure to transmute life into those greater abiding values of which the soul in its depths is alone capable. But the higher faculties are given us as keys to a deeper experience; the seer, the poet, the artist, the children of the spirit's light and intuition are only true to themselves when they live in the depths of the soul, refuse to be hurried away by the surface call of mind and life and wait rather for their own greater voices. The poetry which insists on an external effectiveness, on immediate thought and life and experience, may seize very powerfully the ear of the moment, but is singularly frail in its affectation of power and even if it has strength of body, is hollow and null inside; it fails because it is concerned with immediately vital things perhaps, but not with that which is immortal. That is just why patriotic poetry, war poetry or poetry of the occasion and the moment are so difficult to write greatly and, although it would seem that these things are among the most dynamic and should move most easily to powerful utterance, are oftenest poor in poetic substance and inferior in value." (26: 258-61)

The Law of the Working of Poetic Delight and Beauty

"..this Ananda, this delight, this aesthesis which is the soul of poetic beauty works like other things, like poetic truth or the poetic breath of life, on different levels, in different provinces of its action, with the same law that we have observed in the rest, of the emergence of a richer and profounder face of itself the more it gets inward and upward from the less to the more occult powers of its revelation. This finer soul of delight throws itself out on the physical mind and being, takes up its experiences and turns them by its own innate and peculiar power into things of beauty, fuses into itself the experiences of the life soul and transmutes to beauty their power and passion in the surge of its poetic ecstasy, takes up all life and form into the reflective thought-mind and changes them in the beauty and rapture of thought discovering and embodying new values of soul and Nature and existence. And in all its working there is felt its own essence of an intuitive delight which acts in these moulds and gets into them whatever it can of its own intimate and eternal delight

values. But when that intuitive mind self-finding, self-seeing, self-creating in a higher power of light and vision than is possible on the intellectual or other levels gets out into full play, and now there is some sign of this emergence, then we come nearer to the most potent sources of universal and eternal delight and beauty, nearer to its full and wide seeing, and its all-embracing rapture. This inner mind is the first native power of the self and spirit dropping its lower veils and the very life and aesthesis of the spirit in its creation is a life of self-experiencing spiritual delight and a luminous Ananda.

The beauty and delight of such a greater intuitive inspiration, a poetry of this spiritual Ananda making all existence luminous and wonderful and beautiful to us may be one of the gifts of the future. It is that of which we stand in need and of which there is some promise in the highest strains that we have now begun to hear. This change will mean that poetry may resume on a larger scale, with a wider and more shining vision the greater effect it once had on the life of the race in the noble antique cultures." (26: 263-64)

The Creative Principle and the Creation of Ancient Cultures and People

"Ananda, the joy of the spirit in itself carrying in it a revelation of the powers of its conscious being, was to the ancient Indian idea the creative principle, and ancient poetry did thus creatively reveal to the people its soul and its possibilities by forms of beauty and suggestions of power in a way we have to a great extent lost by our later pettier use of this always great art and medium. One might almost say that ancient India was created by the Veda and Upanishads and that the visions of inspired seers made a people. That sublime poetry with its revelation of godhead and the joy and power of life and truth and immortality or its revelation of the secrets of the self and the powers of its manifestation in man and the universe and of man's return to self-knowledge got into the very blood and mind and life of the race and made itself the fountain-head of all that incessant urge to spirituality which has been its distinguishing gift and cultural motive. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana revealing to it in forms of noble beauty and grandiose or beautiful

or telling types of character the joy of its forms of life, the significance of its spiritual, ethical and aesthetic ideals, the powers and dangers of the human soul, its godheads and its titanisms have played a great and well-recognised formative part second only to religion and the stress of religio-social training in the life of the Indian peoples. And even later the religious poetry of the Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shaktas has entered powerfully into the life of the nation and helped to shape its temperament and soul-type. The effect of the Homeric poems in Greece, the intimate connection of poetry and art with the public life of Athens sprang from a similar but less steep height of poetic and artistic motive. The epic poems revealed the Hellenic people to itself in the lucid and clear nobility and beauty of an uplifting of life and an aesthetic sense of the humanity and divinity of man; the later art and poetry interpreted to Athens her religious ideas, her thought, her aesthetic instincts, the soul of grandeur and beauty of her culture." (26: 364-65)

The Task of the Future Poetry

"The human mind is opening to an unprecedented largeness of vision of the greatness of the worlds, the wonder of life, the self of man, the mystery of the spirit in him and the universe. The future poetry must seek in that vision its inspiration, and the greater its universality of joy in existence, the more it seeks through intuitive sight and aesthesis the deepest fountains of poetic delight and beauty, the more it will become powerfully creative of a greater life for the race. The modern poet is perfectly right in a way in breaking down in whatever direction the bounds erected by the singers of the past around their magic palace and its grounds; he must claim all things in heaven or earth or beyond for his portion: but that care for a fine poetic beauty and delight which they safeguarded by excluding all or most that did not readily obey its law or turn to fair material of poetic shaping, he must preserve as jealously and satisfy by steeping all that he finds in his wider field in that profoundest vision which delivers out of each thing its spiritual Ananda, the secret of truth and beauty in it for which it was created; it is in the sense of that spiritual joy of vision, and not in any lower sensuous, intellectual or imaginative seeing, that Keats' phrase becomes true for the poet, beauty that is truth, truth that is beauty, and this all that we need to know as the law of our aesthetic knowledge. He is right too in wishing to make poetry more intimately one with life, but again in this sense only, in going back to those creative fountains of the spirit's Ananda from which life is seen and reshaped by the vision that springs from a moved identity, – the inmost source of the authentic poet vision. The beauty and delight of all physical things illumined by the wonder of the secret spiritual self that is the inhabitant and self-sculptor of form, the beauty and delight of the thousand-coloured, many-crested, million-waved miracle of life made a hundred times more profoundly meaningful by the greatness and the sweetness and attracting poignancy of the self-creating inmost soul which makes of life its epic and its drama and its lyric, the beauty and delight of the spirit in thought, the seer, the thinker, the interpreter of his own creation and being who broods over all he is and does in man and the world and constantly resees and shapes it new by the stress and power of his thinking, this will be the substance of the greater poetry that has yet to be written. And that can be discovered only if and so far as the soul of man looks or feels beyond even these things and sees and voices the eternal and knows its godheads and gets to some close inward touch of the infinite ecstasy which is the source of the universal delight and beauty. For the nearer we get to the absolute Ananda, the greater becomes our joy in man and the universe and the receptive and creative spiritual emotion which needs for its voice the moved tones of poetic speech." (26: 266-67)

The Movement of Man Towards the Spirit – The Fifth Sun of Poetry

"The one thing that man sees above the intellect is the spirit, and therefore the developed intellect of the race, if it is at all to go forward, must open now to an understanding and seeing spirituality, other than the rather obscure religionism of the past which belonged to the lower levels of the life and the emotion and which has had its bounds broken and its narrownesses condemned by the free light of intellectual thought: this will be rather an illumined self-knowledge and God-knowledge and a world-knowledge too which transmuted in that greater light will spiritualise the whole view and motive of our existence. That is the one development to which an accomplished intellectualism can open and by exceeding itself find its own right consummation. The alternative is a continual ringing of changes in the spinnings of the intellectual circle which leads nowhere or else a collapse to the lower levels which may bring human civilisation down with a run to a new corrupted and intellectualised barbarism. This is a catastrophe which has happened before in the world's history, and it was brought about ostensibly by outward events and causes, but arose essentially from an inability of the intellect of man to find its way out of itself and out of the vital formula in which its strainings and questionings can only exhaust itself and life into a full illumination of the spirit and an enlightened application of the saving spiritual principle to mind and life and action. The possibility of such a catastrophe is by no means absent from the present human situation. On the one hand the straining of the intellect to its limits of elasticity has brought in a recoil to a straining for unbridled vital, emotional and sensational experience and a morbid disorder in the economy of the nature and on the other there have come in, perhaps as a result, perturbations of the earth system that threaten to break up the mould of civilisation, and the problem of the race is whether a new and greater mould can be created or instead a collapse and decadence intervene and a recommencing of the circle. The hope of the race in this crisis lies in the fidelity of its intellect to the larger perceptions it now has of the greater self of humanity, the turning of its will to the inception of delivering forms of thought, art and social endeavour which arise from those perceptions and the raising of the intellectual mind to the intuitive supra-intellectual spiritual consciousness which can alone give the basis for a spiritualised life of the race and the realisation of its diviner potentialities. The meaning of spirituality is a new and greater inner life of man founded in the consciousness of his true, his inmost, highest and largest self and spirit by which he receives the whole of existence as a progressive manifestation of the self in the universe and his own life as a field of a possible transformation in which its divine sense will be found, its potentialities highly evolved, the now imperfect forms changed into an image of the divine perfection, and an effort not only to see but to live out these greater possibilities of his being." (26: 269-70)

A Powerful Aid to the Above Movement – The Voice of a New Deeper Intuitive Poetry

"This poetry will speak of new things and of old things in a new way and with a new voice, not by any exclusion or diminution of its province, but by a great heightening above, a great intimacy within, a great enlargement and wideness around, a vision of inmost things and therefore a changed vision of the world and life and the untold potentialities of the soul's experience. It will restore to us the sense of the Eternal, the presence of the Divine which has been taken from us for a time by an intellect too narrowly and curiously fixed on the external and physical world, but it will not speak of these things in the feeble and conventional tones of traditional religion, but as a voice of intuitive experience and the rhythm and chant of the revelation of an eternal presence. The voice of the poet will reveal to us by the inspired rhythmic word the God who is the Self of all things and beings, the Life of the universe, the Divinity in man, and he will express all the emotion and delight of the endeavour of the human soul to discover the touch and joy of that Divinity within him in whom he feels the mighty founts of his own being and life and effort and his fullness and unity with all cosmic experience and with Nature and with all creatures. The note which has already begun and found many of its tones in Whitman and Carpenter and A. E. and Tagore will grow into a more full and near and intimate poetic knowledge and vision and feeling which will continue to embrace more and more, no longer only the more exceptional inner states and touches which are the domain of mystic poetry, but everything in our inner and outer existence until all life and experience has been brought within the mould of the spiritual sense and the spiritual interpretation. A poetry of this kind will be in a supreme way what all art should be, a thing of harmony and joy and illumination, a solution and release of the soul from its vital unrest and questioning and struggle, not by any ignoring of these things but by an uplifting into the strength of the self within and the light and air of its greater view where there is found not only the point of escape but the supporting calmness and power of a seated knowledge, mastery and deliverance. In the greatest art and poetry there should be something of the calm of the impersonal basing and elevating the effort and struggle of the personality, something of the largeness of the universal releasing and harmonising the troubled concentrations of the individual existence, something of the sense of the transcendent raising the inferior, ignorant and uncertain powers of life towards a greater strength and light and Ananda. And when art and poetry can utter the fullest sense of these things, it is then that they will become the greatest fortifiers and builders of the soul of man and assure it in the grandeur of its own largest self and spirit." (26: 270-71)

The Higher Office of Poetry

"To embellish life with beauty is only the most outward function of art and poetry, to make life more intimately beautiful and noble and great and full of meaning is its higher office, but its highest comes when the poet becomes the seer and reveals to man his eternal self and the godheads of its manifestation." (26: 274)

The Mantra

"A supreme, an absolute of itself, a reaching to an infinite and utmost, a last point of perfection of its own possibilities is that to which all action of Nature intuitively tends in its unconscious formations and when it has arrived to that point it has justified its existence to the spirit which has created it and fulfilled the secret creative will within it. Speech, the expressive Word, has such a summit or absolute, a perfection which is the touch of the infinite upon its finite possibilities and the seal upon it of its Creator. This absolute of the expressive Word can be given the name which was found for it by the inspired singers of the Veda, the Mantra. Poetry especially claimed for its perfected expression in the hymns of the Veda this name. It is not confined however to this sense, for it is extended to all speech that has a supreme or an absolute power; the Mantra is the word that carries the godhead in it or the power of the godhead, can bring it into the consciousness and fix there it and its workings, awaken there the thrill of the infinite, the force of something absolute, perpetuate the miracle of the supreme utterance." (26: 313)

Three Elements of Poetic Creation and Creation by the Word

"Three Elements of Poetic Creation

Poetry, or at any rate a truly poetic poetry, comes always from some subtle plane through the creative vital and uses the outer mind and other external instruments for transmission only. There are three elements in the production of poetry; there is the original source of inspiration, there is the vital force of creative beauty which contributes its own substance and impetus and often determines the form, except when that also comes ready made from the original sources; there is, finally, the transmitting outer consciousness of the poet. The most genuine and perfect poetry is written when the original source is able to throw its inspiration pure and undiminished into the vital and there takes its true native form and power of speech exactly reproducing the inspiration, while the outer consciousness is entirely passive and transmits without alteration what it receives from the godheads of the inner or the superior spaces. When the vital mind and emotion are too active and give too much of their own initiation or a translation into more or less turbid vital stuff, the poetry remains powerful but is inferior in quality and less authentic. Finally, if the outer consciousness is too lethargic and blocks the transmission or too active and makes its own version, then you have the poetry that fails or is at best a creditable mental manufacture. It is the interference of these two parts either by obstruction or by too great an activity of their own or by both together that causes the difficulty and labour of writing. There would be no difficulty if the inspiration came through without obstruction or interference in a pure transcript – that is what happens in a poet's highest or freest moments when he writes not at all out of his own external human mind, but by inspiration, as the mouthpiece of the Gods.

The originating source may be anywhere; the poetry may arise or descend from the subtle physical plane, from the higher or lower vital itself, from the dynamic or creative intelligence, from the plane of dynamic vision, from the psychic, from the illumined mind or Intuition, – even, though this is the rarest, from the Overmind widenesses. To get the Overmind inspiration is so rare that there are only a few lines or short passages in all poetic literature that give at least some appearance or reflection of it. When the source of inspiration is in the heart or the psychic there is more easily a good will in the vital channel, the flow is spontaneous; the inspiration takes at once its true form and speech and is transmitted without any interference or only a minimum of interference by the brain-mind, that great spoiler of the higher or deeper splendours. It is the character of the lyrical inspiration, to flow in a jet out of the being – whether it comes from the vital or the psychic, it is usually spontaneous, for these are the two most powerfully impelling and compelling parts of the nature. When on the contrary the source of inspiration is in the creative poetic intelligence or even the higher mind or the illumined mind, the poetry which

comes from this quarter is always apt to be arrested by the outer intellect, our habitual thought-production engine. This intellect is an absurdly overactive part of the nature; it always thinks that nothing can be well done unless it puts its finger into the pie and therefore it instinctively interferes with the inspiration, blocks half or more than half of it and labours to substitute its own inferior and toilsome productions for the true speech and rhythm that ought to have come. The poet labours in anguish to get the one true word, the authentic rhythm, the real divine substance of what he has to say, while all the time it is waiting complete and ready behind; but it is denied free transmission by some part of the transmitting agency which prefers to translate and is not willing merely to receive and transcribe. When one gets something through from the illumined mind, then there is likely to come to birth work that is really fine and great. When there comes with labour or without it something reasonably like what the poetic intelligence wanted to say, then there is something fine or adequate, though it may not be great unless there is an intervention from the higher levels. But when the outer brain is at work trying to fashion out of itself or to give its own version of what the higher sources are trying to pour down, then there results a manufacture or something quite inadequate or faulty or, at the best, "good on the whole", but not *the* thing that ought to have come.

2 June 1931

Creation by the Word

The word is a sound expressive of the idea. In the supra-physical plane when an idea has to be realised, one can by repeating the word-expression of it, produce vibrations which prepare the mind for the realisation of the idea. That is the principle of the Mantra and of japa. One repeats the name of the Divine and the vibrations created in the consciousness prepare the realisation of the Divine. It is the same idea that is expressed in the Bible, "God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light." It is creation by the Word.

6 May 1933" (27: 5-7)

The Process of Poetic Creation

"Creative Power and the Human Instrument

A poem may pre-exist in the timeless as all creation pre-exists there or else in some plane where the past, present and future exist together. But it is not necessary to presuppose anything of the kind to explain the phenomena of inspiration. All is here a matter of formation or creation. By the contact with the source of inspiration the creative Power at one level or another and the human instrument, receptacle or channel get into contact. That is the essential point, all the rest depends upon the individual case. If the substance, rhythm, form, words come down all together ready-formed from the plane of poetic creation, that is the perfect type of inspiration; it may give its own spontaneous gift or it may give something which corresponds to the idea or the aspiration of the poet, but in either case the human being is only a channel or receptacle, although he feels the joy of the creation and the joy of the *āveśa, enthousiasmos*, elation of the inrush and the passage. On the other hand it may be that the creative source sends down the substance or stuff, the force and the idea, but the language, rhythm etc. are formed somewhere in the instrument; he has to find the human transcription of something that is there in diviner essence above; then there is an illumination or excitement, a conscious labour of creation swift or slow, hampered or facile. Something of the language may be supplied by the mind or vital, something may break through from somewhere behind the veil, from whatever source gets into touch with the transcribing mind in the liberating or stimulating excitement or uplifting of the consciousness. Or a line or lines may come through from some plane and the poet excited to creation may build around them constructing his material or getting it from any source he can tap. There are many possibilities of this nature. There is also the possibility of an inspiration not from above, but from somewhere within on the ordinary levels, some inner mind, emotional vital etc. which the mind practised in poetical technique works out according to its habitual faculty. Here again in a different way similar phenomena, similar variations may arise.

As for the language, the tongue in which the poem comes or the whole lines from above, that offers no real difficulty. It all depends on the contact between the creative Power and the instrument or channel, the Power will naturally choose the language of the instrument or channel, that to which it is accustomed and can therefore readily hear and receive. The Power itself is not limited and can use any language, but although it is possible for things to come through in a language unknown or ill-known – I have seen several instances of the former – it is not a usual case, since the *saṁskāra* of the mind, its habits of action and conception would normally obstruct any such unprepared receptiveness; only a strong mediumistic faculty might be unaffected by this difficulty. These things however are obviously exceptional, abnormal or supernormal phenomena.

If the parts of a poem come from different planes, it is because one starts from some high plane but the connecting consciousness cannot receive uninterruptedly from there and as soon as it flickers or wavers it comes down to a lower, perhaps without noticing it, or the lower comes in to supply the continuation of the flow or on the contrary the consciousness starts from a lower plane and is lifted in the *āveśa*, perhaps occasionally, perhaps more continuously higher for a time or else the higher force attracted by the creative will breaks through or touches or catches up the less exalted inspiration towards or into itself. I am speaking here especially of the overhead planes where this is quite natural; for the Overmind for instance is the ultimate source of intuition, illumination or heightened power of the planes immediately below it. It can lift them up into its own greater intensity or give out of its intensity to them or

touch or combine their powers together with something of its own greater power – or they can receive or draw something from it or from each other. On the lower planes beginning from the mental downwards there can also be such variations or combinations, but the working is not the same, for the different powers here stand more on a footing of equality whether they stand apart from each other, each working in its own right, or cooperate.

29 April 193

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Human creation comes from the vital planes into the physical – but there is often enough something more behind it than is expressed – it gets altered or diminished in the human physical transcription.

9 March 1933" (27: 7-9)

Sources of Poetry and the Joy of Poetic Creation and the Essence of Inspiration

"Joy of Poetic Creation

Poetry takes its start from any plane of the consciousness, but, like all art, one might even say all creation, it must be passed *through* the vital, the life-soul, gather from it a certain force for manifestation if it is to be itself alive. And as there is always a joy in creation, that joy along with a certain *enthousiasmos* – not enthusiasm, if you please, but an invasion and exultation of creative force and creative ecstasy, *ānandamaya āveśa* – must always be there, whatever the source. But where the inspiration comes from the linking of the vital creative instrument to a deeper psychic experience, that imparts another kind of intensive originality and peculiar individual power, a subtle and delicate perfection, a linking on to something that is at once fine to etheriality and potent, intense as fire yet full of sweetness. But this is exceedingly rare in its absolute quality, – poetry as an expression of mind and life is common, poetry of the mind and life touched by the soul and given a spiritual fineness is to be found but more rare; the pure

psychic note in poetry breaks through only once in a way, in a brief lyric, a sudden line, a luminous passage. It was indeed because this linking-on took place that the true poetic faculty suddenly awoke in you, – for it was not there before, at least on the surface. The joy you feel, therefore, was no doubt partly the simple joy of creation, but there comes also into it the joy of expression of the psychic being which was seeking for an outlet since your boyhood. It is this inner expression that makes the writing of poetry a part of sadhana.

29 May 1931

Essence of Inspiration

There can be inspiration also without words – a certain intensity in the light and force and substance of the knowledge is the essence of inspiration.

18 June 1933" (27: 9-10)

The Working of Inspiration

"Inspiration is always a very uncertain thing; it comes when it chooses, stops suddenly before it has finished its work, refuses to descend when it is called. This is a well-known affliction, perhaps of all artists, but certainly of poets. There are some who can command it at will; those who, I think, are more full of an abundant poetic energy than careful for perfection; others who oblige it to come whenever they put pen to paper but with these the inspiration is either not of a high order or quite unequal in its level. Again there are some who try to give it a habit of coming by always writing at the same time; Virgil with his nine lines first written, then perfected every morning, Milton with his fifty epic lines a day, are said to have succeeded in regularising their inspiration. It is, I suppose, the same principle which makes gurus in India prescribe for their disciples a meditation at the same fixed hour every day. It succeeds partially of course, for some entirely, but not for everybody. For myself, when the inspiration did not come with a rush or in a stream, – for then there is no difficulty, – I had only one way, to allow a certain kind of

incubation in which a large form of the thing to be done threw itself on the mind and then wait for the white heat in which the entire transcription could rapidly take place. But I think each poet has his own way of working and finds his own issue out of inspiration's incertitudes.

26 January 1932

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Merciful heavens, what a splashing and floundering! When you miss a verse or a poem, it is better to wait in an entire quietude about it (with only a silent expectation) until the true inspiration comes, and not to thrash the inner air vainly for possible variants – like that the true form is much more likely to come, as people go to sleep on a problem and find it solved when they awake. Otherwise, you are likely to have only a series of misses, the half-gods of the semi-poetic mind continually intervening with their false enthusiasms and misleading voices.

11 July 1931" (27: 10-11)

Rhythmic Sound and the Power of the Vedas and Upanishads

"The Veda, the Upanishad, the Mantra, everywhere owe half their power to the rhythmic sound that embodies their inner meanings.

6 December 1936" (27: 18)

Greatness of Poetry

"It must be understood however that the greatness of poetry as poetry does not necessarily or always depend on the level from which it is written. Shelley has more access to the inner Mind and through it to greater things than Milton, but he is not the greater poet.

19 October 1936" (27: 21)

Higher Mind and the Inner Mind

"When I say that the inner Mind can get the tinge or reflection of the higher experience I am not speaking here of the "descent" in Yoga by which the higher realisation can come down into the inferior planes and enlighten or transform them. I mean that the Higher Mind is itself a spiritual plane and one who lives in it has naturally and normally the realisation of the Self, the unity and harmony everywhere, and a vision and activity of knowledge that proceeds from this consciousness but the inner Mind has not that naturally and in its own right, yet can open to its influence more easily than the outer intelligence. All the same between the reflected realisation in the mind and the automatic and authentic realisation in the spiritual mental planes there is a wide difference. October 1936" (27: 21)

Overmind Rhythm and Inspiration

"The poetic value or perfection of a line, passage or poem does not depend on the plane from which it comes; it depends on the purity and authenticity and power with which it transcribes an intense vision and inspiration from whatever source. Shakespeare is a poet of the vital inspiration, Homer of the subtle physical, but there are no greater poets in any literature. No doubt, if one could get a continuous inspiration from the overmind, that would mean a greater, sustained height of perfection and spiritual quality in poetry than has yet been achieved; but it is only in short passages and lines that even a touch of it is attainable. One gets nearer the overmind rhythm and inspiration in another line of Wordsworth –

a mind . . .
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone

or in a line like Milton's

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

One has the sense here of a rhythm which does not begin or end with the line, but has for ever been sounding in the eternal planes and began even in Time ages ago and which returns into the infinite to go sounding on for ages after. In fact, the word rhythm is only part of what we hear; it is a support for the rhythm we listen to behind in "the Ear of the ear", *śrotrasya śrotram.* To a certain extent, that is what all great poetry at its highest tries to have, but it is only the overmind rhythm to which it is altogether native and in which it is not only behind the word-rhythm but gets into the word-movement itself and finds a kind of fully supporting body there.

P.S. Lines from the highest intuitive mind-consciousness, as well as those from the overmind, can have a mantric character – the rhythm too may have a certain kinship with mantric rhythm, but it may not be the thing itself, only the nearest step towards it. 10 July 1931

The Mantra

The *mantra* as I have tried to describe it in *The Future Poetry* is a word of power and light that comes from the Overmind inspiration or from some very high plane of Intuition. Its characteristics are a language that conveys infinitely more than the mere surface sense of the words seems to indicate, a rhythm that means even more than the language and is born out of the Infinite and disappears into it, and the power to convey not merely the mental, vital or physical contents or indications or values of the thing uttered, but its significance and figure in some fundamental and original consciousness which is behind all these and greater. The passages you mention from the Upanishad and the Gita have certainly the Overmind accent. But ordinarily the Overmind inspiration does not come out pure in human poetry – it has to come down to an inferior consciousness and touch it or else to lift it by a seizure and surprise from above into some infinite largeness. There is always a mixture of the two elements, not an absolute transformation though the higher may sometimes dominate. You must remember that the Overmind is a superhuman consciousness and to be able to write always or purely from an overmind inspiration would mean the elevation of at least a part of the nature beyond the human level. 22 June 1931" (27: 25-27)

"Obviously, the Overmind and aesthetics cannot be equated together. Aesthetics is concerned mainly with beauty, but more generally with *rasa*, the response of the mind, the vital feeling and the sense to a certain "taste" in things which often may be but is not necessarily a spiritual feeling. Aesthetics belongs to the mental range and all that depends upon it; it may degenerate into aestheticism or may exaggerate or narrow itself into some version of the theory of "Art for Art's sake". The Overmind is essentially a spiritual power. Mind in it surpasses its ordinary self and rises and takes its stand on a spiritual foundation. It embraces beauty and sublimates it; it has an essential aesthesis which is not limited by rules and canons; it sees a universal and an eternal beauty while it takes up and transforms all that is limited and particular. It is besides concerned with things other than beauty or aesthetics. It is concerned especially with truth and knowledge or rather with a wisdom that exceeds what we call knowledge; its truth goes beyond truth of fact and truth of thought, even the higher thought which is the first spiritual range of the thinker. It has the truth of spiritual thought, spiritual feeling, spiritual sense and at its highest the truth that comes by the most intimate spiritual touch or by identity. Ultimately, truth and beauty come together and coincide, but in between there is a difference. Overmind in all its dealings puts truth first; it brings out the essential truth (and truths) in things and also its infinite possibilities; it brings out even the truth that lies behind falsehood and error; it brings out the truth of the Inconscient and the truth of the Superconscient and all that lies in between. When it speaks through poetry, this remains its first essential quality; a limited aesthetical artistic aim is not its purpose. It can take up and uplift any or every style or at least put some stamp of itself upon it. More or less all that we have called overhead poetry has something of this character whether it be from the Overmind or simply intuitive, illumined or strong with the strength of the higher revealing Thought; even when it is not intrinsically overhead poetry, still some touch can come in. Even overhead poetry itself does not always deal in what is new or striking or strange; it can take up the obvious, the common, the bare and even the bald, the old, even that which without it would seem stale and hackneyed and raise it to greatness. Take the lines:

I spoke as one who ne'er would speak again
And as a dying man to dying men.

The writer is not a poet, not even a conspicuously talented versifier. The statement of the thought is bare and direct and the rhetorical device used is of the simplest, but the overhead touch somehow got in through a passionate emotion and sincerity and is unmistakable. In all poetry a poetical aesthesis of some kind there must be in the writer and the recipient; but aesthesis is of many kinds and the ordinary kind is not sufficient for appreciating the overhead element in poetry. A fundamental and universal aesthesis is needed, something also more intense that listens, sees and feels from deep within and answers to what is far behind the surface. A greater, wider and deeper aesthesis then which can answer even to the transcendent and feel too whatever of the transcendent or spiritual enters into the things of life, mind and sense."

26 April 1946 (27: 27-29)

An Example of Shelly's Perfect Poetry Without an Overhead Touch

"We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. This is perfect poetry with the most exquisite melody and beauty of wording and an unsurpassable poignancy of pathos, but there is no touch or note of the overhead inspiration: it is the mind and the heart, the vital emotion, working at their highest pitch under the stress of a psychic inspiration. The rhythm is of the same character, a direct, straightforward, lucid and lucent movement welling out limpidly straight from the psychic source. The same characteristics are found in another short lyric of Shelley's which is perhaps the purest example of the psychic inspiration in English poetry:

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not, –
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

We have again extreme poetic beauty there, but nothing of the overhead note." (27: 36)

Poetical Perfection Versus Poetical Greatness

"..poetical perfection is not the same thing as poetical greatness. Virgil is perfect at his best, but Catullus too is perfect at his best: even, each has a certain exquisiteness of perfection, each in his own kind. Virgil's kind is large and deep, that of Catullus sweet and intense. Virgil's art reached or had from its beginning a greater and more constant ripeness than that of Catullus. We can say then that Virgil was a greater poet and artist of word and rhythm but we cannot say that his poetry, at his best, was more perfect poetry and that of Catullus less perfect. That renders futile many of the attempts at comparison like Arnold's comparison of Wordsworth's *Skylark* with Shelley's. You may say that Milton was a greater poet than Blake, but there can always be people, not aesthetically insensitive, who would prefer Blake's lyrical work to Milton's grander achievement, and there are certainly things in Blake which touch deeper chords than the massive hand of Milton could ever reach. So all poetic superiority is not summed up in the word greatness. Each kind has its own best which escapes from comparison and stands apart in its own value." (27: 39-40)

"By aesthesis is meant a reaction of the consciousness, mental and vital and even bodily, which receives a certain element in things, something that can be called their taste, Rasa, which passing through the mind or sense or both, awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste, Bhoga, and this can again awaken us, awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of the spirit's delight of existence, Ananda. Poetry, like all art, serves the seeking for these things, this aesthesis, this Rasa, Bhoga, Ananda; it brings us a Rasa of word and sound but also of the idea and, through the idea, of the things expressed by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual image of their form, quality, impact upon us or even, if the poet is strong enough, of their world-essence, their cosmic reality, the very soul of them, the spirit that resides in them as it resides in all things. Poetry may do more than this, but this at least it must do to however small an extent or it is not poetry. Aesthesis therefore is of the very essence of poetry, as it is of all art. But it is not the sole element and aesthesis too is not confined to a reception of poetry and art; it extends to everything in the world: there is nothing we can sense, think or in any way experience to which there cannot be an aesthetic reaction of our conscious being. Ordinarily, we suppose that aesthesis is concerned with beauty, and that indeed is its most prominent concern: but it is concerned with many other things also. It is the universal Ananda that is the parent of aesthesis and the universal Ananda takes three major and original forms, beauty, love and delight, the delight of all existence, the delight in things, in all things. Universal Ananda is the artist and creator of the universe witnessing, experiencing and taking joy in its creation. In the lower consciousness it creates its opposites, the sense of ugliness as well as the sense of beauty, hate and repulsion and dislike as well as love and attraction and liking, grief and pain as well as joy and delight; and between these dualities or as a grey tint in the background there is a general tone of neutrality and indifference born from the universal insensibility into which the Ananda sinks in its dark negation in the Inconscient. All this is the sphere of aesthesis, its dullest reaction is indifference, its highest is ecstasy. Ecstasy is a sign of a return towards the original or supreme Ananda: that art or poetry is supreme which can bring us something of the supreme tone of ecstasy. For as the consciousness sinks from the supreme levels through various degrees towards the Inconscience the general sign of this descent is an always diminishing power of its intensity, intensity of being, intensity of consciousness, intensity of force, intensity of the delight in things and the delight of existence. So too as we ascend towards the supreme level these intensities increase. As we climb beyond Mind, higher and wider values replace the values of our limited mind, life and bodily consciousness. Aesthesis shares in this intensification of capacity. The capacity for pleasure and pain, for liking and disliking is comparatively poor on the level of our mind and life; our capacity for ecstasy is brief and limited; these

tones arise from a general ground of neutrality which is always dragging them back towards itself. As it enters the overhead planes the ordinary aesthesis turns into a pure delight and becomes capable of a high, a large or a deep abiding ecstasy. The ground is no longer a general neutrality, but a pure spiritual ease and happiness upon which the special tones of the aesthetic consciousness come out or from which they arise. This is the first fundamental change.

Another change in this transition is a turn towards universality in place of the isolations, the conflicting generalities, the mutually opposing dualities of the lower consciousness. In the Overmind we have a first firm foundation of the experience of a universal beauty, a universal love, a universal delight. These things can come on the mental and vital plane even before those planes are directly touched or influenced by the spiritual consciousness; but they are there a temporary experience and not permanent or they are limited in their field and do not touch the whole being. They are a glimpse and not a change of vision or a change of nature. The artist for instance can look at things only plain or shabby or ugly or even repulsive to the ordinary sense and see in them and bring out of them beauty and the delight that goes with beauty. But this is a sort of special grace for the artistic consciousness and is limited within the field of his art. In the overhead consciousness, especially in the Overmind, these things become more and more the law of the vision and the law of the nature. Wherever the overmind spiritual man turns he sees a universal beauty touching and uplifting all things, expressing itself through them, moulding them into a field or objects of its divine aesthesis; a universal love goes out from him to all beings; he feels the Bliss which has created the worlds and upholds them and all that is expresses to him the universal delight, is made of it, is a manifestation of it and moulded into its image. This universal aesthesis of beauty and delight does not ignore or fail to understand the differences and oppositions, the gradations, the harmony and disharmony obvious to the ordinary consciousness: but, first of all, it draws a Rasa from them and with that comes the enjoyment, Bhoga, and the touch or the mass of the Ananda. It sees that all things have their meaning, their value, their deeper or total significance which the mind does not see, for the mind is only concerned with a surface vision, surface contacts and its own surface reactions. When something expresses perfectly what it was meant to express, the completeness brings with it a sense of harmony, a sense of artistic perfection; it gives even to what is discordant a place in a system of cosmic concordances and the discords become part of a vast harmony, and wherever there is harmony, there is a sense of beauty. Even in form itself, apart from the significance, the overmind consciousness sees the object with a totality which changes its effect on the percipient even while it remains the same thing. It sees lines and masses and an underlying design which the physical eye does not see and which escapes even the keenest mental vision. Every form becomes beautiful to it in a deeper and larger sense of beauty than that commonly known to us. The Overmind looks also straight at and into the soul of each thing and not only at its form

or its significance to the mind or to the life; this brings to it not only the true truth of the thing but the delight of it. It sees also the one spirit in all, the face of the Divine everywhere and there can be no greater Ananda than that; it feels oneness with all, sympathy, love, the bliss of the Brahman. In a highest, a most integral experience it sees all things as if made of existence, consciousness, power, bliss, every atom of them charged with and constituted of Sachchidananda. In all this the overmind aesthesis takes its share and gives its response; for these things come not merely as an idea in the mind or a truth-seeing but as an experience of the whole being and a total response is not only possible but above a certain level imperative.

I have said that aesthesis responds not only to what we call beauty and beautiful things but to all things. We make a distinction between truth and beauty; but there can be an aesthetic response to truth also, a joy in its beauty, a love created by its charm, a rapture in the finding, a passion in the embrace, an aesthetic joy in its expression, a satisfaction of love in the giving of it to others. Truth is not merely a dry statement of facts or ideas to or by the intellect; it can be a splendid discovery, a rapturous revelation, a thing of beauty that is a joy for ever. The poet also can be a seeker and lover of truth as well as a seeker and lover of beauty. He can feel a poetic and aesthetic joy in the expression of the true as well as in the expression of the beautiful. He does not make a mere intellectual or philosophical statement of the truth; it is his vision of its beauty, its power, his thrilled reception of it, his joy in it that he tries to convey by an utmost perfection in word and rhythm. If he has the passion, then even a philosophical statement of it he can surcharge with this sense of power, force, light, beauty. On certain levels of the Overmind, where the mind element predominates over the element of gnosis, the distinction between truth and beauty is still valid. It is indeed one of the chief functions of the Overmind to separate the main powers of the consciousness and give to each its full separate development and satisfaction, bring out its utmost potency and meaning, its own soul and significant body and take it on its own way as far as it can go. It can take up each power of man and give it its full potentiality, its highest characteristic development. It can give to intellect its austerest intellectuality and to logic its most sheer unsparing logicality. It can give to beauty its most splendid passion of luminous form and the consciousness that receives it a supreme height and depth of ecstasy. It can create a sheer and pure poetry impossible for the intellect to sound to its depths or wholly grasp, much less to mentalise and analyse. It is the function of Overmind to give to every possibility its full potential, its own separate kingdom. But also there is another action of Overmind which sees and thinks and creates in masses, which reunites separated things, which reconciles opposites. On that level truth and beauty not only become constant companions but become one, involved in each other, inseparable: on that level the true is always beautiful and the beautiful is always true. Their highest fusion perhaps only takes place in the Supermind; but Overmind on its summits draws enough

of the supramental light to see what the Supermind sees and do what the Supermind does though in a lower key and with a less absolute truth and power. On an inferior level Overmind may use the language of the intellect to convey as far as that language can do it its own greater meaning and message but on its summits Overmind uses its own native language and gives to its truths their own supreme utterance, and no intellectual speech, no mentalised poetry can equal or even come near to that power and beauty. Here your intellectual dictum that poetry lives by its aesthetic quality alone and has no need of truth or that truth must depend upon aesthetics to become poetic at all, has no longer any meaning. For there truth itself is highest poetry and has only to appear to be utterly beautiful to the vision, the hearing, the sensibility of the soul. There dwells and from there springs the mystery of the inevitable word, the supreme immortal rhythm, the absolute significance and the absolute utterance." (27: 40-45)

The Power Behind the Genius and Its Two Ways of Acting

"In a certain sense all genius comes from Overhead; for genius is the entry or inrush of a greater consciousness into the mind or a possession of the mind by a greater power. Every operation of genius has at its back or infused within it an intuition, a revelation, an inspiration, an illumination or at the least a hint or touch or influx from some greater power or level of conscious being than those which men ordinarily possess or use. But this power has two ways of acting: in one it touches the ordinary modes of mind and deepens, heightens, intensifies or exquisitely refines their action but without changing its modes or transforming its normal character; in the other it brings down into these normal modes something of itself, something supernormal, something which one at once feels to be extraordinary and suggestive of a superhuman level. These two ways of action when working in poetry may produce things equally exquisite and beautiful, but the word "greater" may perhaps be applied, with the necessary qualifications, to the second way and its too rare poetic creation." (27: 46)

Psychic and Overhead Inspiration

"The psychic has two aspects – there is the soul principle itself which contains all soul possibilities and there is our psychic personality which represents whatever soul-power is developed from life to life or put forward for action in our present life-formation. The psychic being usually expresses itself through its instruments, mental, vital and physical; it tries to put as much of its own stamp on them as possible. But it can seldom put on them the full psychic stamp – unless it comes fully out from its rather secluded and overshadowed position and takes into its hands the direct government of the nature. It can then receive and express all spiritual realisations in its own way and manner. For the tone of the psychic is different from that of the overhead planes, – it has less of greatness, power, wideness, more of a smaller sweetness, delicate beauty; there is an intense beauty of emotion, a fine subtlety of true perception, an intimate language. The expression "sweetness and light" can very well be applied to the psychic as the kernel of its nature. The spiritual plane, when it takes up these things, gives them a wider utterance, a greater splendour of light, a stronger sweetness, a breath of powerful authority, strength and space." (27: 84-85)

Action of the Psychic in Ordinary Life

"In ordinary life also there is no doubt an action of the psychic – without it man would be only a thinking and planning animal. But its action there is very much veiled, needing always the mental or vital to express it, usually mixed and not dominant, not unerring therefore; it does often the right thing in the wrong way, is moved by the right feeling but errs as to the application, person, place, circumstance. The psychic, except in a few extraordinary natures, does not get its full chance in the outer consciousness; it needs some kind of Yoga or sadhana to come by its own and it is as it emerges more and more "in front" that it gets clear of the mixture. That is to say, its presence becomes directly felt, not only behind and supporting, but filling the frontal consciousness and no longer dependent on or dominated by its instruments – mind, vital and body, but dominating them and moulding them into luminosity and teaching them their own true action." (27: 86)

There is Truth Behind a Poetic Creation

"The truth behind a poetic creation is there on some plane or other, supraphysical generally – and from there the suggestion of the image too originally comes; even the whole transcription itself can be contributed from there, but ordinarily it is the mind's faculty of imagination which gives it form and body. Poetic imagination is very usually satisfied with beauty of idea and image only and the aesthetic pleasure of it, but there is something behind it which supplies the Truth in its images, and to get the transcription also direct from that something or somewhere behind should be the aim of mystic or spiritual poetry. When Shelley made the spirits of Nature speak, he was using his imagination, but there was something behind in him which felt and knew and believed in the truth of the thing he was expressing – he felt that there were forms more real than living man behind the veil. But his method of presentation was intellectual and imaginative, so one misses the full life in these impalpable figures. To get amore intimate and spiritually concrete presentation should be the aim of the mystic poet. 16 November 1933" (27: 88-89)

Difference Between a Symbol and an Allegory

"There is a considerable difference between symbolism and allegory; they are not at all the same thing. Allegory comes in when a quality or other abstract thing is personalised and the allegory proper should be something carefully stylised and deliberately sterilised of the full aspect of embodied life, so that the essential meaning or idea may come out with sufficient precision and force of clarity. One can find this method in the old mystery plays and it is a kind of art that has its value. Allegory is an intellectual form; one is not expected to believe in the personalisation of the abstract quality, it is only an artistic device. When in an allegory as in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* the personalisation, the embodiment takes first place and absorbs the major part of the mind's interest, the true style and principle of this art have been abandoned. The allegorical purpose here becomes a submerged strain and is really of secondary importance, our search for it a by-play of the mind; we read for the beauty and interest of the figures and movements presented to us, not for this submerged significance. An allegory must be intellectually precise and clear in its representative figures as well as in their basis, however much adorned with imagery and personal expression; otherwise it misses its purpose. A symbol expresses on the contrary not the play of abstract things or ideas put into imaged form, but a living truth or inward vision or experience of things, so inward, so subtle, so little belonging to the domain of intellectual abstraction and precision that it cannot be brought out except through symbolic images – the more these images have a living truth of their own which corresponds intimately to the living truth they symbolise, suggests the very vibration of the experience itself, the greater becomes the art of the symbolic expression. When the symbol is a representative sign or figure and nothing more, then the symbolic approaches nearer to an intellectual method, though even then it is not the same thing as allegory. In mystic poetry the symbol ought to be as much as possible the natural body of the inner truth or vision, itself an intimate part of the experience. 16-18 November 1933

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Lord, what an incorrigible mentaliser and allegorist you are! If the bird were either consciousness or the psychic or light, it would be an allegory and all the mystic beauty would be gone. A living symbol and a mental allegorical symbol are not the same thing. You can't put a label on the Bird of Marvel any more than on the Bird of Fire or any other of the fauna or flora or population of the mystic kingdoms. They can be described, but to label them destroys their life and makes them only stuffed specimens in an allegorical museum. Mystic symbols are living things, not abstractions. Why insist on killing them? Jyoti has described the Bird and told you all that is necessary about him – the rest you have to feel and live inside, not dissect and put the fragments into neatly arranged drawers. 8 August 1936" (27: 89-90)

Mystic Symbols

"The lake [*in a poem*] is not a lake but a symbol; the swan is not a swan but a symbol. You can't expect the lake merely to ripple and do nothing else or the swan simply to swim and eat and do nothing else. It is as much a symbol as the Bird of Fire or the Bird of the Vedic poet who faced the guardians of the Soma and brought the Soma to Indra (or was it to a Rishi? I have forgotten) – perhaps carrying a pot or several pots in his claws and beak!! for I don't know how else he could have done it. How is he to use his symbol if you do not make allowances for a miraculous Swan? If the swan does nothing but what an ordinary swan does, it ceases to be a symbol and becomes only a metaphor. The animals of these symbols belong not to earth but to Wonderland. 13 March 1936" (27: 91-92)

Mystic Poetry

"To the mystic there is no such thing as an abstraction. Everything which to the intellectual mind is abstract has a concreteness, substantiality which is more real than the sensible form of an object or of a physical event. To him, consciousness is the very stuff of existence and he can feel it everywhere enveloping and penetrating the stone as much as man or the animal. A movement, a flow of consciousness is not to him an image but a fact. What is to be done under these circumstances? The mystical poet can only describe what he has felt, seen in himself or others or in the world just as he has felt or seen it or experienced through exact vision, close contact or identity and leave it to the general reader to understand or not understand or misunderstand according to his capacity. A new kind of poetry demands a new mentality in the recipient as well as in the writer." (27: 93)

A Poet has the Right to Philosophise

"It may be noted that the greater romantic poets did not shun thought; they thought abundantly, almost endlessly. They have their characteristic view of life, something that one might call their philosophy, their world-view, and they express it. Keats was the most romantic of poets, but he could write "To philosophise I dare not yet"; he did not write "I am too much of a poet to philosophise." To philosophise he regarded evidently as mounting on the admiral's flag-ship and flying an almost royal banner. Spiritual philosophic poetry is different; it expresses or tries to express a total and many-sided vision and experience of all the planes of being and their action upon each other. Whatever language, whatever terms are necessary to convey this truth of vision and experience it uses without scruple, not admitting any mental rule of what is or is not poetic. It does not hesitate to employ terms which might be considered as technical when these can be turned to express something direct, vivid and powerful.…

I am justifying a poet's right to think as well as to see and feel, his right to "dare to philosophise"." (27: 94-95)

" "Two birds, companions, seated on one tree, but one eats the fruit, the other eats not but watches his fellow" – that has an illumining spiritual clarity and concreteness to one who has had the experience, but mentally and intellectually it might mean anything or nothing. Poetry uttered with the spiritual clarity may be compared to sunlight – poetry uttered with the mystic veil to moonlight. But it was not my intention to deny beauty, power or value to the moonlight. Note that I have distinguished between two kinds of mysticism, one in which the realisation or experience is vague, though inspiringly vague, the other in which the experience is revelatory and intimate, but the utterance it finds is veiled by the image, not thoroughly revealed by it. I do not know to which Tagore's recent poetry belongs, I have not read it. The latter kind of poetry (where there is the intimate experience) can be of great power and value – witness Blake. Revelation is greater than inspiration – it brings the direct knowledge and seeing, inspiration gives the expression, but the two are not always equal. There is even an inspiration without revelation, when one gets the word but the thing remains behind the veil; the transcribing consciousness expresses something with power, like a medium, of which it has not itself the direct sight or the living possession. It is better to get the sight of the thing itself than merely express it by an inspiration which comes from behind the veil, but this kind of poetry too has often a great light and power in it. The highest inspiration brings the *intrinsic* word, the spiritual mantra; but even where the inspiration is less than that, has a certain vagueness or fluidity of outline, you cannot say of such mystic poetry that it has no inspiration, not the inspired word at all. Where there is no inspiration, there can be no poetry.

10 June 1936

Spiritual Poetry

The spiritual vision must never be intellectual, philosophical or abstract, it must always give the sense of something vivid, living and concrete, a thing of vibrant beauty or a thing of power. An abstract spiritual poetry is possible but that is not Amal's manner. The poetry of spiritual vision as distinct from that of spiritual thought abounds in images, unavoidably because that is the straight way to avoid abstractness; but these images must be felt as very real and concrete things, otherwise they become like the images used by the philosophic poets, decorative to the thought rather than realities of the inner vision and experience.

28 May 1937

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Spiritual imagery is perfectly free. Occult imagery usually fixes itself to a system of symbols, otherwise it can't be understood even by the initiates. But spiritual imagery is usually simple and clear.

26 January 1937" (27: 98-99)

The Poet, the Yogi and the Rishi and the Prophet

"It is quite natural for the poets to vaunt their *métier* as the highest reach of human capacity and themselves as the top of creation; it is also natural for the intellectuals to run down the Yogi or the Rishi who claims to reach a higher consciousness than that which they conceive to be the summit of human achievement. The poet indeed lives still in the mind and is not yet a spiritual seer, but he represents to the human intellect the highest point of mental seership where the imagination tries to figure and embody in words its intuition of things, though that stands far below the vision of things that can be grasped only by spiritual experience. It is for that the poet is exalted as the real seer and prophet. There is too, helping the idea, the error of the modern or European mentality which so easily confuses the mentalised vital or life being with the soul and the idealising mind with spirituality. The poet imaging mental or physical beauty is for the outer mind something more spiritual than the seer or the God-lover experiencing the eternal peace or the ineffable ecstasy. Yet the Rishi or Yogi can drink of a deeper draught of Beauty and Delight than the imagination of the poet at its highest can conceive. (*The Divine is Delight.*) And it is not only the unseen Beauty that he can see but the visible and tangible also has for him a face of the All-Beautiful which the mind cannot discover. (10 November 1934)

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You seem almost to say that the poet is necessarily not a seer or Rishi. But if the mere poet is not a Rishi, the Rishi after all can be a poet – the greater can contain the less, even though the less is not the greater. (11 November 1934)

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A Rishi is one who *sees* or discovers an inner truth and puts it into self-effective language – the mantra. Either new truth or old truth made new by expression and intuitive realisation.

He [*Ramana Maharshi*] has experienced certain eternal truths by process of Yoga – I don't think it is by Rishi like intuition or illumination, nor has he the mantra. 10 February 1936

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A Rishi may be a Yogi, but also he may not; a Yogi too may be a Rishi, but also he may not. Just as a philosopher may or may not be a poet and a poet may or may not be a philosopher.

Poetic intuition and illumination is not the same thing as Rishi intuition and illumination. 11 February 1936

The Poet and the Prophet

Essentially the poet's value lies in his poetic and not in his prophetic power. If he is a prophet also, the intrinsic worth of his prophecy lies in its own value, his poetic merit does not add to that, only it gives to its expression a power that perhaps it would not have otherwise.

7 November 1934" (27: 102-03)

The Phenomenon of Genius

"I never heard of anyone getting genius by effort. One can increase one's talent by training and labour, but genius is a gift of Nature. By sadhana it is different, one can do it; but that is not the fruit of effort, but either of an inflow or by an opening or liberation of some impersonal power or manifestation of unmanifested power. No rule can be made in such things; it depends on persons and circumstances how far the manifestation of genius by Yoga will go or what shape it will take or to what degree or height it will rise. 28 July 1938

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Of course it is quite possible to be an idiot and a genius at the same time – one can, that is to say, be the medium of a specialised and specific force which leaves the rest of the being brute stuff, unchanged and undeveloped. Genius is a phenomenon *sui generis* and many anomalies occur in its constitution by Nature. 13 February 1936" (27: 104-05)

Difference Between Experience and Imagination

"But is it necessary to say which is which?* It is not possible to deny that it was an experience, even if one cannot affirm it – not being in the consciousness of the writer. But even if it is an imagination, it is a powerful poetic imagination which expresses what would be the exact feeling in the real experience. It seems to me that that is quite enough. There are so many things in Wordsworth and Shelley which people say were only mental feelings and imaginations and yet they express the deeper seeings or feelings of the seer. For poetry it seems to me the point *is* irrelevant.

27 May 1936" (27: 106-07)

* Someone said to the correspondent, in regard to a certain poem: "This may not be an experience at all; who knows if it is not an imagination, and how are we to say which is which?" – Ed.

How the Yogi Sees the Outward Events and Persons and Causes

"…the eye of the Yogin sees not only the outward events and persons and causes, but the enormous forces which precipitate them into action. If the men who fought were instruments in the hands of rulers and financiers, these in turn were mere puppets in the clutch of those forces. When one is habituated to see the things behind, one is no longer prone to be touched by the outward aspects – or to expect any remedy from political, institutional or social changes; the only way out is through the descent of a consciousness which is not the puppet of these forces but is greater than they are and can compel them either to change or disappear.

17 July 1931" (27: 109)

The Illusion of Realism

"I am afraid your correspondent is under the grip of what I may call the illusion of realism. What all artists do is to take something from life – even if it be only a partial hint – and transfer it by the magic of their imagination and make a world of their own; the realists, e.g., Zola, Tolstoy, do it as much as anybody else. Each artist is a creator of his own world – why then insist on this legal fiction that the artist's world must appear as an exact imitation of the actual world around us? Even if it does so seem, that is only a skilful make-up, an appearance. It may be constructed to look like that – but why must it be? The characters and creations of even the most sternly objective fiction, much more the characters and creations of poetry live by the law of their own life, which is something in the inner mind of their creator – they cannot be constructed as copies of things outside.

30 January 1933" (27: 112-13)

Knowledge of Technique and Intuitive Cognition

"As for the technique, there are two different things, the intellectual knowledge which one applies, the intuitive cognition which acts in its own right, even if it is not actually possessed by the worker. Many poets for instance have little knowledge of metrical or linguistic technique and cannot explain how they write or what are the qualities and elements of their success, but they write all the same things that are perfect in rhythm and language. Intellectual knowledge of technique helps of course, provided one does not make of it a mere device or a rigid fetter. There are some arts that cannot be done well without some technical knowledge, e.g. painting, sculpture.

14 May 1936" (27: 117)

"Art for Art's sake? But what after all is meant by this slogan and what is the real issue behind it? Is it meant, as I think it was when the slogan first came into use, that the technique, the artistry is all in all? The contention would then be that it does not matter what you write or paint or sculpt or what music you make or about what you make it so long as it is beautiful writing, competent painting, good sculpture, fine music. It is very evidently true in a certain sense, – in this sense that whatever is perfectly expressed or represented or interpreted under the conditions of a given art proves itself by that very fact to be legitimate material for the artist's labour. But that free admission cannot be confined only to all objects, however common or deemed to be vulgar – an apple, a kitchen pail, a donkey, a dish of carrots, – it can give a right of citizenship in the domain of art to a moral theme or thesis, a philosophic conclusion, a social experiment; even the Five Years' Plan or the proceedings of a District Board or the success of a drainage scheme, an electric factory or a big hotel can be brought, after the most modern or the still more robustious Bolshevik mode, into the artist's province. For, technique being all, the sole question would be whether he as poet, novelist, dramatist, painter or sculptor has been able to triumph over the difficulties and bring out creatively the possibilities of his subject. There is no logical basis here for accepting an apple and rejecting the Apple-Cart. But still you may say that at least the object of the artist must be art only, – even if he treats ethical, social or political questions, he must not make it his main object to wing with the enthusiasm of aesthetic creation a moral, social or political aim. But if in doing it he satisfies the conditions of his art, shows a perfect technique and in it beauty, power, perfection, why not? The moralist, preacher, philosopher, social or political enthusiast is often doubled with an artist – as shining proofs and examples there are Plato and Shelley, to go no farther. Only, you can say of him on the basis of this theory that as a work of art his creation should be judged by its success of craftsmanship and not by its contents; it is not made greater by the value of his ethical ideas, his enthusiasms or his metaphysical seekings.

But then the theory itself is true only up to a certain point. For technique is a means of expression; one does not write merely to use beautiful words or paint for the sole sake of line and colour; there is something that one is trying through these means to express or to discover. What is that something? The first answer would be – it is the creation, it is the discovery of Beauty. Art is for that alone and can be judged only by its revelation or discovery of Beauty. Whatever is capable of being manifested as Beauty, is the material of the artist. But there is not only physical beauty in the world – there is moral, intellectual, spiritual beauty also. Still one might say that Art for Art's sake means that only what is aesthetically beautiful must be expressed and all that contradicts the aesthetic sense of beauty must be avoided, – Art has nothing

to do with Life in itself, things in themselves, Good, Truth or the Divine for their own sake, but only in so far as they appeal to some aesthetic sense of beauty. And that would seem to be a sound basis for excluding the Five Years' Plan, a moral sermon or a philosophical treatise. But here again, what after all is Beauty? How much is it in the thing itself and how much in the consciousness that perceives it? Is not the eye of the artist constantly catching some element of aesthetic value in the plain, the ugly, the sordid, the repellent and triumphantly conveying it through his material, – through the word, through line and colour, through the sculptured shape?

There is a certain state of Yogic consciousness in which all things become beautiful to the eye of the seer simply because they spiritually are – because they are a rendering in line and form of the quality and force of existence, of the consciousness, of the Ananda that rules the worlds, – of the hidden Divine. What a thing is to the exterior sense may not be, often is not beautiful for the ordinary aesthetic vision, but the Yogin sees in it the something More which the external eye does not see, he sees the soul behind, the self and spirit, he sees too lines, hues, harmonies and expressive dispositions which are not to the first surface sight visible or seizable. It may be said that he brings into the object something that is in himself, transmutes it by adding out of his own being to it – as the artist too does something of the same kind but in another way. It is not quite that however, – what the Yogin sees, what the artist sees, is there – his is a transmuting vision because it is a revealing vision; he discovers behind what the object appears to be the something More that it is. And so from this point of view of a realised supreme harmony all is or can be subject-matter for the artist because in all he can discover and reveal the Beauty that is everywhere. Again we land ourselves in a devastating catholicity; for here too one cannot pull up short at any given line. It may be a hard saying that one must or may discover and reveal beauty in a pig or its poke or in a parish pump or an advertisement of somebody's pills, and yet something like that seems to be what modern Art and literature are trying with vigour and a conscientious labour to do. By extension one ought to be able to extract beauty equally well out of morality or social reform or a political caucus or allow at least that all these things can, if he wills, become legitimate subjects for the artist. Here too one cannot say that it is on condition he thinks of beauty only and does not make moralising or social reform or a political idea his main object. For if with that idea foremost in his mind he still produces a great work of art, discovering Beauty as he moves to his aim, proving himself in spite of his unaesthetic preoccupations a great artist, it is all we can justly ask from him – whatever his starting point – to be a creator of Beauty. Art is discovery and revelation of Beauty and we can say nothing more by way of prohibition or limiting rule.

But there is one thing more that can be said, and it makes a big difference.

In the Yogin's vision of universal beauty all becomes beautiful, but all is not reduced to a single level. There are gradations, there is a hierarchy in this All-Beauty and we see that it depends on the ascending power (vibhuti) of consciousness and Ananda that expresses itself in the object. All is the Divine, but some things are more divine than others. In the artist's vision too there are or can be gradations, a hierarchy of values. Shakespeare can get dramatic and therefore aesthetic values out of Dogberry and Malvolio, and he is as thorough a creative artist in his treatment of them as in his handling of Macbeth or Lear. But if we had only Dogberry or Malvolio to testify to Shakespeare's genius, no Macbeth, no Lear, would he be so great a dramatic artist and creator as he now is? It is in the varying possibilities of one subject or another that there lies an immense difference. Apelles' grapes deceived the birds that came to peck at them, but there was more aesthetic content in the Zeus of Phidias, a greater content of consciousness and therefore of Ananda to express and with it to fill in and intensify the essential principle of Beauty even though the essence of beauty might be realised perhaps with equal aesthetic perfection by either artist and in either theme.

And that is because just as technique is not all, so even Beauty is not all in Art. Art is not only technique or form of Beauty, not only the discovery or the expression of Beauty, – it is a self-expression of Consciousness under the conditions of aesthetic vision and a perfect execution. Or to put it otherwise there are not only aesthetic values but life-values, mind-values, soul-values, that enter into Art. The artist puts out into form not only the powers of his own consciousness but the powers of the Consciousness that has made the worlds and their objects. And if that Consciousness according to the Vedantic view is fundamentally equal everywhere, it is still in manifestation not an equal power in all things. There is more of the Divine expression in the Vibhuti than in the common man, *prākṛto janaḥ*; in some forms of life there are less potentialities for the self-expression of the Spirit than in others. And there are also gradations of consciousness which make a difference, if not in the aesthetic value or greatness of a work of art, yet in its contents value. Homer makes beauty out of man's outward life and action and stops there. Shakespeare rises one step farther and reveals to us a life-soul and life-forces and life-values to which Homer had no access. In Valmiki and Vyasa there is the constant presence of great Idea-Forces and Ideals supporting life and its movements which were beyond the scope of Homer and Shakespeare. And beyond the Ideals and Idea-Forces even there are other presences, more inner or inmost realities, a soul behind things and beings, the spirit and its powers, which could be the subject-matter of an art still more rich and deep and abundant in its interest than any of these could be. A poet finding these and giving them a voice with a genius equal to that of the poets of the past might not be greater than they in a purely aesthetical valuation, but his art's contents-value, its

consciousness-values could be deeper and higher and much fuller than in any achievement before him. There is something here that goes beyond any considerations of Art for Art's sake or Art for Beauty's sake; for while these stress usefully sometimes the indispensable first elements of artistic creation, they would limit too much the creation itself if they stood for the exclusion of the something More that compels Art to change always in its constant seeking for more and more that must be expressed of the concealed or the revealed Divine, of the individual and the universal or the transcendent Spirit.

If we take these three elements as making the whole of Art, perfection of expressive form, discovery of beauty, revelation of the soul and essence of things and the powers of creative consciousness and Ananda of which they are the vehicles, then we shall get perhaps a solution which includes the two sides of the controversy and reconciles their difference. Art for Art's sake certainly – Art as a perfect form and discovery of Beauty; but also Art for the soul's sake, the spirit's sake and the expression of all that the soul, the spirit wants to seize through the medium of beauty. In that self-expression there are grades and hierarchies – widenings and steps that lead to the summits. And not only to enlarge Art towards the widest wideness but to ascend with it to the heights that climb towards the Highest is and must be part both of our aesthetic and our spiritual endeavour.

17 April 1933" (27: 119-23)

Poetic Rhythm

"How can rhythm be explained? It is a matter of the ear, not of the intellect. Of course there are the technical elements, but you say you do not understand yet about them. But it is not a matter of technique only, – the same outer technique can produce successful or unsuccessful rhythms (live or dead rhythms). One has to learn to distinguish by the ear, and the difficulty for you is to get the right sense of the cadences of the English language. That is not easy, for it has many outer and inner elements.

8 September 1938" (27: 125)

Rhyme and Inspiration

"Some rhyme with ease – others find a difficulty. The coming of the rhyme is a part of the inspiration just like the coming of the form of the language. The rhyme often comes of itself and brings the language and connection of ideas with it. For all these things are quite ready behind somewhere and it is only a matter of reception and transmission – it is the physical mind and brain that make the difficulty.

2 February 1934" (27: 155)

The Difference Between a Song and a Poem

"The real difference between a poem and a song is that a song is written with a view to be set to musical rhythm and a poem is written with the ear listening for the needed poetic rhythm or word-music. These two rhythms are quite different. That is why a poem cannot be set to music unless it has either been written with an eye to both kinds of rhythm or else happens to have (without especially intending it) a movement which makes it easy or at least possible to set it to music. This happens often with lyrical poetry, less often with other kinds. There is also this usual character of a song that it is satisfied to be very simple in its content, just bringing out an idea or feeling, and leaving it to the music to develop its unspoken values. Still this reticence is not always observed; the word claims for itself sometimes a larger importance. 4 July 1931" (27: 160)

Popular Verse and Developed Poetry

"…I hardly fancy that the true native spirit or bent of English metre is to be sought or can be discovered in

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall

and is lost in

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight.

Popular verse catches the child ear or the common ear much more easily than the music of developed poetry because it relies on a crude jingle or infantile lilt – not because it enshrines in its movement the true native spirit of the tongue. I hold it to be a fallacy to think that the real spirit and native movement of a language can be caught only in crude or primitive forms and that it is disguised in the more perfect work in which it has developed its own possibilities to their full pitch, variety and scope. It is as if one maintained that the true note and fundamental nature of the evolving soul were to be sought in the earthworm or the scarabaeus and not in the developed human being – or in the divinised man or Jivanmukta." (27: 162)

Conceit

"When an image comes out from the mind not properly transmuted in the inner vision or delivered by the alchemy of language, it betrays itself as coin of the fancy or the contriving intellect and is then called a conceit.*

26 August 1931

*

Conceit means a too obviously ingenious or far-fetched or extravagant idea or image which is evidently an invention of a clever brain, not a true and convincing flight of the imagination. E.g. Donne's (?) comparison of a child's small-pox eruptions to the stars of the milky way or something similar: I have forgotten the exact thing, but that will serve.

This hill turns up its nose at heaven's height,
Heaven looks back with a blue contemptuous eye –

that's a conceit.

O cloud, thou wild black wig on heaven's bald head
would be another. These are extravagant specimens." (27: 166)

* This sentence was extracted for separate publication from a letter given in full on *pages 505-06. – Ed.*

Grades of Perfection in Poetry

"All perfection is not necessarily inevitability. I have tried to explain in *The Future Poetry* – very unsuccessfully I am afraid – that there are different grades of perfection in poetry: adequateness, effectivity, illumination of language, inspiredness – finally, inevitability. These are things one has to learn to feel, one can't analyse.

All the styles, "adequate", "effective", etc. can be raised to inevitability in their own line.*

The supreme inevitability is something more even than that, a speech overwhelmingly sheer, pure and true, a quintessential essence of convincingly perfect utterance. That goes out of all classifications and is unanalysable. Instances would include the most different kinds of style – Keats' "magic casements", Wordsworth's [*lines on*]Newton and his "fields of sleep", Shakespeare's "Macbeth has murdered sleep", Homer's descent of Apollo from Olympus, Virgil's "Sunt lachrimae rerum" and his "O passi graviora".

16 September 1934" (27: 185-86)

* This item is composed of parts of three letters that were typed together and revised by Sri Aurobindo in that form. This sentence is from a letter reproduced in full on page 191. – Ed

The Difference Between Rama and Krishna

"The bottom reason for the preference of Rama or Krishna is not sectarian but psychological. The Northerner prefers Rama because the Northerner is the mental, moral and social man in his type, and Rama is a congenial Avatar for that type; the Bengali, emotional and intuitive, finds all that very dry and plumps for Krishna. I suspect that is the whole mystery of the choice. Apart from these temperamental preferences and turning to essentials, one might say that Rama is the Divine accepting and glorifying a mould of the human mental, while Krishna seems rather to break the human moulds in order to create others from the higher planes; for he comes down direct from the Overmind and hammers with its forces on the mind and vital and heart of man to change and liberate and divinise them. At least that is one way of looking at their difference.

March 1932" (27: 204-05)

The English Bible

"The English Bible is a translation, but it ranks among the finest pieces of literature in the world.

27 February 1936" (27: 206)

The Highest Planes Not So Accommodating

"With your silent consciousness, it should be possible to draw from the highest planes with the slightest pull.

The highest planes are not so accommodating as all that. If they were so, why should it be so difficult to bring down and organise the supermind in the physical consciousness? What happy-go-lucky fancy-web-spinning ignoramuses you all are. You speak of silence, consciousness, overmental, supramental etc. as if they were so many electric buttons you have only to press and there you are. It may be one day but meanwhile I have to discover everything about the working of all possible modes of electricity, all the laws, possibilities, perils etc., construct modes of connection and communication, make the whole farwiring system, try to find out how it can be made fool-proof and all that in the course of a single lifetime. And I have to do it while my blessed disciples are firing off their gay or gloomy *a priori* reasonings at me from a position of entire irresponsibility and expecting me to divulge everything to them not in hints – but at length. Lord God *in omnibus*!

29 March 1936" (27: 212-13)

Development of Sri Aurobindo's Style

"To manufacture your style, you will hardly deny that your enormous reading contributed to it.

Excuse me! I never manufactured my style; style with any life in it cannot be manufactured. It is born and grows like any other living thing. Of course it was fed on my reading which was not enormous – I have read comparatively little – (there are people in India who have read fifty times or a hundred times as much as I have) only I have made much out of that little. For the rest it is Yoga that has developed my style by the development of consciousness, fineness and accuracy of thought and vision, increasing inspiration and an increasing intuitive discrimination (self-critical) of right thought, word form, just image and figure.

29 October 1935" (27: 215)

The Process of Overmental Transformation

"In the process of overmental transformation what I have observed is that the Overmind first takes up the illumined and higher mind and intellect (thinking, perceiving and reasoning intelligence) into itself and modifies itself to suit the operation – the result is what may be called a mental Overmind – then it lifts these lower movements and the intuitive mind together into a higher reach of itself, forming there the Overmind Intuition, and then all that into the Overmind Gnosis awaiting the supramental transformation." (27: 257)

On Writing Savitri

> "We have been wondering why you should have to write and rewrite your poetry – for instance *Savitri* – ten or twelve times.

That is very simple. I used *Savitri* as a means of ascension. I began with it on a certain mental level, each time I could reach a higher level I rewrote from that level. Moreover I was particular – if part seemed to me to come from any lower level, I was not satisfied to leave it because it was good poetry. All had to be as far as possible of the same mint. In fact, *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own Yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative. I did not rewrite *Rose of God* or the Sonnets except for two or three verbal alterations made at the moment.

29 March 1936" (27: 272)

The Bird of Fire

> "About that bird, it is true that "one can only see"; but if not more than one can see, don't others need a bit of explanation? To *what region* does it belong? Is it any relation of the Bird of Fire with "gold-white wings" or the Hippogriff with a face "lustred, pale-blue-lined"?

All birds of that region are relatives. But this is the bird of eternal Ananda, while the Hippogriff was the divinised Thought and the Bird of Fire is the Agni-bird, psychic and tapas. All that however is to mentalise too much and mentalising always takes most of the life out of spiritual things. That's why I say it can be seen, but nothing said about it." (27: 294)

An Evolution from the Inconscient Need Not Be a Painful One

> "The passage running from "It was the gate of a false Infinite" to "None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell" [*pp. 221-27*] suggests that there was an harmonious original plan of the Overmind Gods for earth's evolution, but that it was spoiled by the intrusion of the Rakshasic worlds. I should, however, have thought that an evolution, arising from the stark inconscient's sleep and the mute void, would hardly be an harmonious plan. The Rakshasas only shield themselves with the covering "Ignorance", they don't create it. Do you mean that, if they had not interfered, there wouldn't have been resistance and conflict and suffering? How can they be called the artificers of Nature's fall and pain?

An evolution from the Inconscient need not be a painful one if there is no resistance; it can be a deliberately slow and beautiful efflorescence of the Divine. One ought to be able to see how beautiful outward Nature can be and usually is although it is itself apparently "inconscient" – why should the growth of consciousness in inward Nature be attended by so much ugliness and evil spoiling the beauty of the outward creation? Because of a *perversity* born from the Ignorance, which came in with Life and increased in Mind – that is the Falsehood, the Evil that was born because of the starkness of the Inconscient's sleep separating its action from the secret luminous Conscience that was all the time within it. But it need not have been so except for the overriding Will of the Supreme which meant that the possibility of Perversion by inconscience and ignorance should be manifested in order to be eliminated though being given their chance, since all possibility has to manifest somewhere. Once it is eliminated the Divine Manifestation in Matter will be greater than it otherwise could be because it will gather all the possibilities involved in this difficult creation and not some of them as in an easier and less strenuous creation might naturally be. 15 January 1937" (27: 304)

Savitri – Not for the General Reader – The Mystic's Way of Writing

"But if I had to write for the general reader I could not have written *Savitri* at all. It is in fact for myself that I have written it and for those who can lend themselves to the subject-matter, images, technique of mystic poetry.

This is the real stumbling-block of mystic poetry and specially mystic poetry of this kind* The mystic feels real and present, even ever-present to his experience, intimate to his being, truths which to the ordinary reader are intellectual abstractions or metaphysical speculations. He is writing of experiences that are foreign to the ordinary mentality. Either they are unintelligible to it and in meeting them it flounders about as in an obscure abyss or it takes them as poetic fancies expressed in intellectually devised images. That was how a critic in *The Hindu* condemned such poems as *Nirvana* and *Transformation*. He said that they were mere intellectual conceptions and images and there was nothing of religious feeling or spiritual experience. Yet *Nirvana* was as close a transcription of a major experience as could be given in language coined by the human mind of a realisation in which the mind was entirely silent and into which no intellectual conception could at all enter. One has to use words and images in order to convey to the mind some perception, some figure of that which is beyond thought. The critic's non-understanding was made worse by such a line as: "Only the illimitable Permanent, Is there". Evidently he took this as technical jargon, abstract philosophy. There was no such thing; I felt with an overpowering vividness the illimitability or at least something which could not be described by any other term and no other description except the "Permanent" could be made of That which alone existed. To the mystic there is no such thing as an abstraction. Everything which to the intellectual mind is abstract has a concreteness, substantiality which is more real than the sensible form of an object or of a physical event. To me, for instance, consciousness is the very stuff of existence and I can feel it everywhere enveloping and penetrating the stone as much as man or the animal. A movement, a flow of consciousness is not to me an image but a fact. If I wrote "His anger climbed against me in a stream", it would be to the general reader a mere image, not something that was felt by me in a sensible experience; yet I would only be describing in exact terms what actually happened once, a stream of anger, a sensible and violent current of it rising up from downstairs and rushing upon me as I sat in the veranda of the guest-house, the truth of it being confirmed afterwards by the confession of the person who had the movement. This is only one instance, but all that is spiritual or psychological in *Savitri* is of that character. What is to be done under these circumstances? The mystical poet can only describe what he has felt, seen in himself or others or

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* This and the next five paragraphs were published separately in 1946 in a slightly different form. They are reproduced in that form on pages 93- 97 of the present volume. – Ed.

in the world just as he has felt or seen it or experienced through exact vision, close contact or identity and leave it to the general reader to understand or not understand or misunderstand according to his capacity. A new kind of poetry demands a new mentality in the recipient as well as in the writer.

Another question is the place of philosophy in poetry or whether it has any place at all. Some romanticists seem to believe that the poet has no right to think at all, only to see and feel. This accusation has been brought against me by many that I think too much and that when I try to write in verse, thought comes in and keeps out poetry. I hold, to the contrary, that philosophy has its place and can even take a leading place along with psychological experience as it does in the Gita. All depends on how it is done, whether it is a dry or a living philosophy, an arid intellectual statement or the expression not only of the living truth of thought but of something of its beauty, its light or its power.

The theory which discourages the poet from thinking or at least from thinking for the sake of the thought proceeds from an extreme romanticist temper; it reaches its acme on one side in the question of the surrealist, "Why do you want poetry to mean anything?" and on the other in Housman's exaltation of pure poetry which he describes paradoxically as a sort of sublime nonsense which does not appeal at all to the mental intelligence but knocks at the solar plexus and awakes a vital and physical rather than intellectual sensation and response. It is of course not that really but a vividness of imagination and feeling which disregards the mind's positive view of things and its logical sequences; the centre or centres it knocks at are not the brain-mind, not even the poetic intelligence but the subtle physical, the nervous, the vital or the psychic centre. The poem he quotes from Blake is certainly not nonsense, but it has no positive and exact meaning for the intellect or the surface mind; it expresses certain things that are true and real, not nonsense but a deeper sense which we feel powerfully with a great stirring of some inner emotion, but any attempt at exact intellectual statement of them sterilises their sense and spoils their appeal. This is not the method of *Savitri*. Its expression aims at a certain force, directness and spiritual clarity and reality. When it is not understood, it is because the truths it expresses are unfamiliar to the ordinary mind or belong to an untrodden domain or domains or enter into a field of occult experience; it is not because there is any attempt at a dark or vague profundity or at an escape from thought. The thinking is not intellectual but intuitive or more than intuitive, always expressing a vision, a spiritual contact or a knowledge which has come by entering into the thing itself, by identity.

It may be noted that the greater romantic poets did not shun thought; they thought abundantly, almost endlessly. They have their characteristic view of life, something that one might call their philosophy, their world-view, and they express it. Keats was the most romantic of poets, but he could write "To philosophise I dare not yet"; he did not write "I am too much of a poet to

philosophise." To philosophise he regarded evidently as mounting on the admiral's flag-ship and flying an almost royal banner. The philosophy of *Savitri* is different but it is persistently there; it expresses or tries to express a total and many-sided vision and experience of all the planes of being and their action upon each other. Whatever language, whatever terms are necessary to convey this truth of vision and experience it uses without scruple, not admitting any mental rule of what is or is not poetic. It does not hesitate to employ terms which might be considered as technical when these can be turned to express something direct, vivid and powerful. That need not be an introduction of technical jargon, that is to say, I suppose, special and artificial language, expressing in this case only abstract ideas and generalities without any living truth or reality in them. Such jargon cannot make good literature, much less good poetry. But there is a "poeticism" which establishes a sanitary cordon against words and ideas which it considers as prosaic but which properly used can strengthen poetry and extend its range. That limitation I do not admit as legitimate.

I have been insisting on these points in view of certain criticisms that have been made by reviewers and others, some of them very capable, suggesting or flatly stating that there was too much thought in my poems or that I am even in my poetry a philosopher rather than a poet. I am justifying a poet's right to think as well as to see and feel, his right to "dare to philosophise". I agree with the modernists in their revolt against the romanticist's insistence on emotionalism and his objection to thinking and philosophical reflection in poetry. But the modernist went too far in his revolt. In trying to avoid what I may call poeticism he ceased to be poetic, wishing to escape from rhetorical writing, rhetorical pretension to greatness and beauty of style, he threw out true poetic greatness and beauty, turned from a deliberately poetic style to a colloquial tone and even to very flat writing; especially he turned away from poetic rhythm to a prose or half-prose rhythm or to no rhythm at all. Also he has weighed too much on thought and has lost the habit of intuitive sight; by turning emotion out of its intimate chamber in the house of Poetry, he has had to bring in to relieve the dryness of much of his thought, too much exaggeration of the lower vital and sensational reactions untransformed or else transformed only by exaggeration. Nevertheless he has perhaps restored to the poet the freedom to think as well as to adopt a certain straightforwardness and directness of style." (27: 315-19)

Inconscient and Ignorance Not Metaphysical or Abstract for Sri Aurobindo

"Men have not learnt yet to recognise the Inconscient on which the whole material world they see is built, or the Ignorance of which their whole nature including their knowledge is built; they think that these words are only abstract metaphysical jargon flung about by the philosophers in their clouds or laboured out in long and wearisome books like *The Life Divine*. But it is not so with me and I take my stand on my own feeling and experience about them as Keats did about his own Truth and Beauty. My readers will have to do the same if they want to appreciate my poetry, which, of course, they are not bound to do." (27: 324-25)

Ashwapati's Yoga

"Aswapati's Yoga falls into three parts. First, he is achieving his own spiritual self-fulfilment as an individual and this is described as the Yoga of the King. Next, he makes the ascent as a typical representative of the race to win the possibility of discovery and possession of all the planes of consciousness and this is described in the second book: but this too is as yet only an individual victory. Finally, he aspires no longer for himself but for all, for a universal realisation and new creation. That is described in the Book of the Divine Mother." (27: 330)

Goethe and Shakespeare

"Goethe certainly goes much deeper than Shakespeare; he had an incomparably greater intellect than the English poet and sounded problems of life and thought Shakespeare had no means of approaching even. But he was certainly not a greater poet; I do not find myself very ready to admit either that he was Shakespeare's equal. He wrote out of a high poetic intelligence, but his style and movement nowhere come near the poetic power, the magic, the sovereign expression and profound or subtle rhythms of Shakespeare. Shakespeare was a supreme poet and, one might almost say, nothing else; Goethe was by far the greater man and the greater brain, but he was a poet by choice, his mind's choice among its many high and effulgent possibilities, rather than by the very necessity of his being. He wrote his poetry, as he did everything else, with a great skill and effective genius and an inspired subtlety of language, but it was only part of his genius and not the whole." (27: 367)

Homer, Shakespeare, Vyasa and Valmiki – A Comparison

"When I said there were no greater poets than Homer and Shakespeare, I was thinking of their essential poetic force and beauty – not of the scope of their work as a whole, for there are poets greater in their range. The Mahabharata is from that point of view a far greater creation than the Iliad, the Ramayana than the Odyssey, and either spreads its strength and its achievement over a larger field than the whole dramatic world of Shakespeare; both are built on an almost cosmic vastness of plan and take all human life (the Mahabharata all human thought as well) in their scope and touch too on things which the Greek and Elizabethan poets could not even glimpse. But as poets – as masters of rhythm and language and the expression of poetic beauty – Vyasa and Valmiki are *not inferior*, but also not greater than the English or the Greek poet. We can leave aside for the moment the question whether the Mahabharata was not the creation of the mind of a people rather than of a single poet, for that doubt has been raised also with regard to Homer." (27: 367-68)

Vyasa and Some Other Poets

"I am not prepared to classify all the poets in the universe – it was the front bench or benches you asked for. By others I meant poets like Lucretius, Euripides, Calderon, Corneille, Hugo. Euripides (*Medea, Bacchae* and other plays) is a greater poet than Racine whom you want to put in the first ranks. If you want only the very greatest, none of these can enter – only Vyasa and Sophocles. Vyasa could very well claim a place beside Valmiki, Sophocles beside Aeschylus. The rest, if you like, you can send into the third row with Goethe, but it is something of a promotion about which one can feel some qualms. Spenser too, if you like; it is difficult to draw a line.

Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth have not been brought into consideration although their best work is as fine poetry as any written, but they have written nothing on a larger scale which would place them among the greatest creators. If Keats had finished *Hyperion* (without spoiling it), if Shelley had lived, or if Wordsworth had not petered out like a motor car with insufficient petrol, it might be different, but we have to take things as they are." (27: 369-70)

The Author of the *Bhagavad Gita*

"Sri Krishna is not supposed to have written anything. The Gita is part of the Mahabharata which is attributed to the sage Vyasa, the contemporary of Krishna. But in its present form the Mahabharata seems to be of later origin and many scholars say that the Gita was composed afterwards by someone and put into the Mahabharata.

In any case whoever wrote it was a great Yogi and certainly received his inspiration from Krishna." (27: 372)

Rabindranath Tagore

"Tagore has been a wayfarer towards the same goal as ours in his own way – that is the main thing, the exact stage of advance and putting of the steps are minor matters. His exact position as a poet or a prophet or anything else will be assigned by posterity and we need not be in haste to anticipate the final verdict. The immediate verdict after his departure or soon after it may very well be a rough one, – for this is a generation that seems to take a delight in trampling with an almost Nazi rudeness on the bodies of the Ancestors, especially the immediate ancestors. I have read with an interested surprise that Napoleon was only a bustling and self-important nincompoop all whose great achievements were done by others, that Shakespeare was "no great things" and that most other great men were by no means so great as the stupid respect and reverence of past ignorant ages made them out to be! What chance has then Tagore? But these injustices of the moment do not endure – in the end a wise and fair estimate is formed and survives the changes of time.

Tagore, of course, belonged to an age which had faith in its ideas and whose very denials were creative affirmations. That makes an immense difference. Your strictures on his later development may or may not be correct, but this mixture even was the note of the day and it expressed a tangible hope of a fusion into something new and true – therefore it could create. Now all that idealism has been smashed to pieces by the immense adverse Event and everybody is busy exposing its weakness, but nobody knows what to put in its place. A mixture of scepticism and slogans, "Heil-Hitler" and the Fascist salute and Five-Year Plan and the beating of everybody into one amorphous shape, a disabused denial of all ideals on one side and on the other a blind shut-my-eyes and shut-everybody's-eyes plunge into the bog in the hope of finding some firm foundation there, will not carry us very far. And what else is there? Until new spiritual values are discovered, no great enduring creation is possible. 24 March 1934" (27: 385-86)

Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus

"Plato was a great writer as well as a philosopher – no more perfect prose has been written by any man. In some of his books his prose carries in it the qualities of poetry and his thought has poetic vision. That is what I meant when I said it was poetry. 3 January 1937

…I tried to read Aristotle but found him dry and abstract.

I always found him exceedingly dry. It is a purely mental philosophy, unlike Plato's. 9 October 1933

…I find Plotinus very interesting.

Yes. Plotinus was not a mere philosopher, – his philosophy was founded on yogic experience and realisation. 11 October 1933" (27: 522)

Augustus Caesar and Leonardo da Vinci

"Augustus Caesar organised the life of the Roman Empire and it was this that made the framework of the first transmission of the Graeco-Roman civilisation to Europe – he came for that work and the writings of Virgil and Horace and others helped greatly towards the success of his mission. After the interlude of the Middle Ages, this civilisation was reborn in a new mould in what is called the Renaissance, not in its life-aspects but in its intellectual aspects. It was therefore a supreme intellectual, Leonardo daVinci, who took up again the work and summarised in himself the seeds of modern Europe.

29 July 1937" (27: 525)

George Bernard Shaw

"Harris' attack on Shaw's literary reputation may have been serious, there was a sombre and violent brutality about him which makes it possible; but his main motive was to prolong his own notoriety by a clever and vigorous assault on the mammoth of the hour. Shaw himself supplied materials for his critic, knowing well what he would write, and edited this damaging assault on his own fame,* a typical Irish act at once of chivalry, shrewd calculation of effect and whimsical humour. I should not think Harris had much understanding of Shaw the man as apart from the writer; the Anglo-Saxon is not usually capable of understanding either Irish character or Irish humour, it is so different from his own. And Shaw was Irish through and through; there was nothing English about him except the language he wrote and even that he changed into the Irish ease, flow, edge and clarity – though not bringing into it, as Wilde did, Irish poetry and colour." (27: 535)

* *Harris's biography of Shaw, edited and published by Shaw himself after Harris's death. – Ed.*

Music and Poetry

"I do not know what to say on the subject you propose to me – the superiority of music to poetry, – for my appreciation of music is bodiless and inexpressible while about poetry I can write at ease and with an expert knowledge. But is it necessary to fix a scale of greatness between two fine arts when each has its own greatness and can touch in its own way the extremes of aesthetic Ananda? Music, no doubt, goes nearest to the infinite and to the essence of things because it relies wholly on the ethereal vehicle, *śabda* (architecture by the by can do something of the same kind at the other extreme even in its imprisonment in mass); but painting and sculpture have their revenge by liberating visible form into ecstasy, while poetry though it cannot do with sound what music does, yet can make a many-stringed harmony, a sound-revelation winging the creation by the word and setting afloat vivid suggestions of form and colour, – that gives it in a very subtle kind the combined power of all the arts. Who shall decide between such claims or be a judge between these godheads? 26 April 1933" (27: 680-81)

Supramental Beauty

"What is the meaning of Supramental Beauty? Is it the perception of the Divine as the All-Beautiful and All-Delight?

No, that you can get on any plane, and it becomes easy as soon as one is in contact with the higher Mind. Beauty is the special divine Manifestation in the physical as Truth is in the mind, Love in the heart, Power in the vital. Supramental beauty is the highest divine beauty manifesting in Matter.

19 February 1934" (27: 699)

Art, Beauty and Ananda

"Art is a thing of beauty and beauty and Ananda are closely connected – they go together. If the Ananda is there, then the beauty comes out more easily – if not, it has to struggle out painfully and slowly. That is quite natural.

14 December 1936

*

Beauty is Ananda taking form – but the form need not be a physical shape. One speaks of a beautiful thought, a beautiful act, a beautiful soul. What we speak of as beauty is Ananda in manifestation; beyond manifestation beauty loses itself in Ananda or, you may say, beauty and Ananda become indistinguishably one.

14 March 1933" (27: 699-700)

Beauty, Ananda and Spiritual Realisation

"Beauty is not the same as delight, but like Love it is an expression, a form of Ananda, – created by Ananda and composed of Ananda, it conveys to the mind that delight of which it is made. Aesthetically, the delight takes the appearance of Rasa and the enjoyment of this Rasa is the mind's and the vital's reaction to the perception of beauty. The spiritual realisation has a sight, a perception, a feeling which is not that of the mind and vital; – it passes beyond the aesthetic limit, sees the universal beauty, sees behind the object what the eye cannot see, feels what the emotion of the heart cannot feel and passes beyond Rasa and Bhoga to pure Ananda – a thing more deep, intense, rapturous than any mental or vital or any physical rasa reaction can be. It sees the One everywhere, the Divine everywhere, the Beloved everywhere, the original bliss of existence everywhere, and all these can create an inexpressible Ananda of beauty – the beauty of the One, the beauty of the Divine, the beauty of the Beloved, the beauty of the eternal Existence in things." (27: 700-001)

Love, Beauty and Ananda

"Love and Beauty are powers of Ananda as Light and Knowledge are of Consciousness. Force is inherent in Consciousness and may be called part of the Divine Essence. Ananda is always there even when Sachchidananda takes on an impersonal aspect or appears as the sole essential Existence; but Love needs a Lover and Beloved, Beauty needs a manifestation to show itself. So in the same way Consciousness is always there, but Knowledge needs a manifestation to be active, there must be a Knower and a Known. That is why the distinction is made between Ananda which is of the essence and Beauty which is a power or expression of Ananda in manifestation. These are of course philosophical distinctions necessary for the mind to think about the world and the Divine. 4 November 1935" (27: 701)

Beauty and Truth

"Is it not true that Beauty and Truth are always one – wherever there is Beauty there is Truth too?

In beauty there is the truth of beauty. What do you mean by Truth? There are truths of various kinds and they are not all beautiful.

10 September 1933" (27: 703)

Beauty in Women

> "Many Asiatics could not appreciate the beauty of European models or actresses, who are so lacking in modesty according to their conceptions.

Modesty is not part of physical beauty, that is a mental-vital element. As for physical beauty, different races have different conceptions. Indians and Europeans like curves, Chinese detest them in a woman.

> An intellectual would find beauty only in an intellectual woman; an emotional person would call a woman beautiful only if she has refined tender feelings; for a Gandhian a woman would be beautiful only if she spins eight hours a day or works for Harijans.

That has nothing to do with beauty in the ordinary sense as it is beauty of intellect or beauty of character or beauty of spinning and Harijanising." (27: 706)

Creative Activity Subordinate to One's Spiritual Life

"Nirod, Nolini and Sahana are all wrong in laying down a rule of that kind for my conduct. I do not base my action on mental rules which have to be applied to every case. It is a still greater error to suppose that because I (or the Mother) do something in the case of one person or another, we are bound to do it for everybody and to complain of our not doing it as "making a difference". All that belongs to the ignorance and clamour of the vital egoistic nature and has nothing to do with spiritual life.…

The spiritual life and one's own inner psychic and spiritual change should be the first preoccupation of a sadhak – poetry or painting is something quite subordinate and even then it should be done not to be a great poet or artist but as a help to the inner sadhana. It is time that everyone got away from the vital view of things to the psychic and spiritual on which alone can stand Yoga and the spiritual life." (27: 724-25)

Reading Newspapers

"These things depend on oneself and one's own conditions – there can be no general rule. It is true I read newspapers, but Mother never does unless her attention is called to a particular item. I dare say if Anilbaran stopped reading papers for a year, it might be very good for him. One has to see what is one's necessity for the sadhana. If the newspapers disperse the mind or externalise the consciousness too much, they should be avoided. If on the other hand one is dawdling over the sadhana and having no particular inner endeavour one can read newspapers – it is no worse than anything else. On the other hand if the newspapers do not affect the formed or forming inner consciousness in any way (by dispersion, lowering, externalisation etc.) one can read them. I read the newspapers mainly because I have to see what events are happening which might any day have an effect on my work etc. I don't read for the interest of reading. 9 July 1936" (27: 732)

Dance and Sadhana

"Dance alone with rhythm and significance can express something of the occult or of the Divine as much as writing or poetry or art – why should it not and why should there be anything in it condemnable?

17 July 1933

*

To feel the vibration and develop from it the rhythm of the dance is the right way to create something true; the other way, to understand with the mind and work out with the mind only or mainly, is the mental way; it is laborious and difficult and has not the same spontaneous inspiration.

28 April 1932" (27: 739)

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

READY-REFERENCE CALENDAR

For ascertaining any day of the week for any given time from 1800 to 2050 inclusive

COMMON YEARS, 1800 TO 2050										Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1801	1829	1857	1885	1914	1942	1970	1998	2026													
1807	1835	1863	1891	1925	1953	1981	2009	2037		4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1818	1846	1874	1903	1931	1959	1987	2015	2043													
1802	1830	1858	1886	1915	1943	1971	1999	2027													
1813	1841	1869	1897	1926	1954	1982	2010	2038		5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3
1819	1847	1875	1909	1937	1965	1993	2021	2049													
1803	1831	1859	1887	1921	1949	1977	2005	2033													
1814	1842	1870	1898	1927	1955	1983	2011	2039		6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1825	1853	1881	1910	1938	1966	1994	2022	2050													
1805	1833	1861	1889	1907	1935	1963	1991	2019	2047												
1811	1839	1867	1895	1918	1946	1974	2002	2030		2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1822	1850	1878	1901	1929	1957	1985	2013	2041													
1800	1823	1851	1879	1913	1941	1969	1997	2025													
1806	1834	1862	1890	1919	1947	1975	2003	2031		3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1
1817	1845	1873	1902	1930	1958	1986	2014	2042													
1809	1837	1865	1893	1911	1939	1967	1995	2023													
1815	1843	1871	1899	1922	1950	1978	2006	2034		7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1826	1854	1882	1905	1933	1961	1969	2017	2045													
1810	1838	1866	1894	1917	1945	1973	2001	2029													
1821	1849	1877	1900	1923	1951	1979	2007	2035		1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1827	1855	1883	1906	1934	1962	1990	2018	2046													
LEAP YEARS, 1804 TO 2048											29										
1804	1832	1860	1888		1928	1956	1984	2012	2040	7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1808	1836	1864	1892	1904	1932	1960	1988	2016	2044	5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1812	1840	1868	1896	1908	1936	1964	1992	2020	2048	3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1816	1844	1872		1912	1940	1968	1996	2024		1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1820	1848	1876		1916	1944	1972	2000	2028		6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1824	1852	1880		1920	1948	1976	2004	2032		4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	6	1	3
1828	1856	1884		1924	1952	1980	2008	2036		2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
Monday	1	Tuesday	1	Wednesday	1	Thursday	1	Friday	1	Saturday	1	SUNDAY	1
Tuesday	2	Wednesday	2	Thursday	2	Friday	2	Saturday	2	SUNDAY	2	Monday	2
Wednesday	3	Thursday	3	Friday	3	Saturday	3	SUNDAY	3	Monday	3	Tuesday	3
Thursday	4	Friday	4	Saturday	4	SUNDAY	4	Monday	4	Tuesday	4	Wednesday	4
Friday	5	Saturday	5	SUNDAY	5	Monday	5	Tuesday	5	Wednesday	5	Thursday	5
Saturday	6	SUNDAY	6	Monday	6	Tuesday	6	Wednesday	6	Thursday	6	Friday	6
SUNDAY	7	Monday	7	Tuesday	7	Wednesday	7	Thursday	7	Friday	7	Saturday	7
Monday	8	Tuesday	8	Wednesday	8	Thursday	8	Friday	8	Saturday	8	SUNDAY	8
Tuesday	9	Wednesday	9	Thursday	9	Friday	9	Saturday	9	SUNDAY	9	Monday	9
Wednesday	10	Thursday	10	Friday	10	Saturday	10	SUNDAY	10	Monday	10	Tuesday	10
Thursday	11	Friday	11	Saturday	11	SUNDAY	11	Monday	11	Tuesday	11	Wednesday	11
Friday	12	Saturday	12	SUNDAY	12	Monday	12	Tuesday	12	Wednesday	12	Thursday	12
Saturday	13	SUNDAY	13	Monday	13	Tuesday	13	Wednesday	13	Thursday	13	Friday	13
SUNDAY	14	Monday	14	Tuesday	14	Wednesday	14	Thursday	14	Friday	14	Saturday	14
Monday	15	Tuesday	15	Wednesday	15	Thursday	15	Friday	15	Saturday	15	SUNDAY	15
Tuesday	16	Wednesday	16	Thursday	16	Friday	16	Saturday	16	SUNDAY	16	Monday	16
Wednesday	17	Thursday	17	Friday	17	Saturday	17	SUNDAY	17	Monday	17	Tuesday	17
Thursday	18	Friday	18	Saturday	18	SUNDAY	18	Monday	18	Tuesday	18	Wednesday	18
Friday	19	Saturday	19	SUNDAY	19	Monday	19	Tuesday	19	Wednesday	19	Thursday	19
Saturday	20	SUNDAY	20	Monday	20	Tuesday	20	Wednesday	20	Thursday	20	Friday	20
SUNDAY	21	Monday	21	Tuesday	21	Wednesday	21	Thursday	21	Friday	21	Saturday	21
Monday	22	Tuesday	22	Wednesday	22	Thursday	22	Friday	22	Saturday	22	SUNDAY	22
Tuesday	23	Wednesday	23	Thursday	23	Friday	23	Saturday	23	SUNDAY	23	Monday	23
Wednesday	24	Thursday	24	Friday	24	Saturday	24	SUNDAY	24	Monday	24	Tuesday	24
Thursday	25	Friday	25	Saturday	25	SUNDAY	25	Monday	25	Tuesday	25	Wednesday	25
Friday	26	Saturday	26	SUNDAY	26	Monday	26	Tuesday	26	Wednesday	26	Thursday	26
Saturday	27	SUNDAY	27	Monday	27	Tuesday	27	Wednesday	27	Thursday	27	Friday	27
SUNDAY	28	Monday	28	Tuesday	28	Wednesday	28	Thursday	28	Friday	28	Saturday	28
Monday	29	Tuesday	29	Wednesday	29	Thursday	29	Friday	29	Saturday	29	SUNDAY	29
Tuesday	30	Wednesday	30	Thursday	30	Friday	30	Saturday	30	SUNDAY	30	Monday	30
Wednesday	31	Thursday	31	Friday	31	Saturday	31	SUNDAY	31	Monday	31	Tuesday	31

NOTE: To ascertain any day of the week, first look in the table for the year required and under the months are figures which refer to the corresponding figures at the head of the columns of the days below. For Example:- To know on what day of the week 15th Aug., 1872 fell, look in the table of years for 1872, and in a parallel line under August is figure 4, which directs to column 4 in which it will be seen that August 15 fell on Thursday.

CONVERSION FACTORS

CONVERSION FACTORS

Abbreviation	Prefixes		for instance
		Mile (m) $\frac{1}{1000}$ of unit	
Metre-m	kilo (K)-1000 times unit		100 centimetres = 1 metre
Gramme-gm	hecto (h) - 100 times unit	centi (c) $\frac{1}{100}$ of unit	100 milligramme = 1 gramme
Litres-1	deca (dal) - 10 times unit	deci (d) $\frac{1}{10}$ of unit	100 litres = 1 hectolitre

Length

1 inch = 25.4 millimetres (mm)
1 foot = 30.48 centimetres (cm)
1 yard = 0.9144 metre (m)
1 mile = 1.6093 kilometres (km)
1 millimetre = 0.0328 inch.
1 centimetre = 0.0328 foot
1 metre = 1.094 yards
1 kilometre = 0.62137 mile

Centimetres		Inch
2.540	1	0.394
5.080	2	0.787
7.620	3	1.181
10.160	4	1.575
12.700	5	1.969
15.240	6	2.362
17.780	7	2.756
20.320	8	3.150
22.860	9	3.543

Metres		Yards
0.914	1	1.094
1.829	2	2.187
2.743	3	3.281
3.658	4	4.374
4.572	5	5.468
5.486	6	6.562
6.401	7	7.655
7.315	8	8.749
8.230	9	9.843

Kilometres		Miles
1.609	1	0.621
3.219	2	1.243
4.828	3	1.864
6.437	4	2.485
8.047	5	3.107
9.656	6	3.728
11.265	7	4.350
12.875	8	4.971
14.484	9	5.592

Volume

1 inch^3 = 16.387 centimetres^3
1 foot^3 = 28.316 decimetres^3
1 pint^3 = 0.568 litre
1 imperial gallon = 4.546 litres
1 centimetre^3 = 0.0610 inch^3
1 decimetre^3 = 0.035 feet^3
1 litre = 1.76 pints
1 litre = 0.220 Imperial gallon

Litre		Gallons
4.546	1	0.220
9.092	2	0.440
13.638	3	0.660
18.184	4	0.880
22.730	5	1.110
27.276	6	1.320
31.822	7	1.540
36.368	8	1.760
40.914	9	1.980

Weight

1 ounce = 28.349 gm.
1 pound = 0.4536 kg.
1 stone = 6.350 kilogrammes
1 cwt = 50/80 kilogrammes
1 ton = 1.016 metric tonnes
1 gramme = 0.03527 ounce
1 kilogramme = 2.205 pounds
1 kilogramme = 0.158 stone
1 kilogramme = 0.01968 cwt
1 metric tonne = 0.09842

Kilograms		Pounds
0.454	1	2.205
0.907	2	4.405
1.361	3	6.614
1.814	4	8.819
2.268	5	11.023
2.722	6	13.228
3.175	7	15.432
3.629	8	17.637
4.082	9	19.872

Area

1 sq. inch = 6.4516 sq. cm.
1 sq. yard = 0.8361 sq. metre
1 sq. mile = 2.589 sq. kilometres
1 acra = 4047 sq. metres
1 sq. centimetre = 0.155 sq. inch
1 sq. metre = 1.1960 sq. yards
1 sq. kilometre = 0.386 sq. mile
1 hectare = 10.000 sq. metres
1 hectare = 2.471 acres

Sq. Metres		Sq. Yards
0.836	1	1.196
1.672	2	2.392
2.508	3	3.588
3.345	4	4.784
4.181	5	5.980
5.017	6	7.176
5.853	7	8.372
6.689	8	9.568
7.525	9	10.764

Easy Conversion

Metres into yards
add one-tenth
Yards into metres
deduct one-tenth
Kilometres into miles
multiply by 5 and divide by 8
Miles into kilometres
multiply by 8 and divide by 5
Litres into pints
multiply by 7 and divide by 4
Pints into litres
multiply by 4 and divide by 7
Litres into gallons
multiply by 2 and divide by 9
Gallons into litres
multiply by 9 and divide by 2
Kilograms into pounds
divide by 9 and multiply by 20
Pounds into by kilograms
divide by 20 and multiply by 9

Double conversion Tables : The central figures represent either of the two columns besides them, as the case may be Exemple : 1 kilometre = 0.621 mile and one mile = 1.609 kilometres.

The Resurgent India Trust

The fundamental object of this Trust is to work for an integral resurgence of India so that it may assume its rightful place among the community of nations and, by its powerful example and spiritual influence open for humanity the way leading to the establishment of a divine life on earth which will be the supreme fulfilment of the ages long promises and pronouncements of the forthcoming kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

To assume its true position and fulfil its true role in the community of nations India must find back and manifest her soul which, at present, is completely covered up by an overwhelming commercialism which has spread everywhere and which has arisen out of the onslaught on it of the Western spirit of shortsighted utilitarianism. Individually one can fight it by becoming conscious of one's inner being or – better still – psychic being and letting it become conscious of India's soul and interested in knowing and serving it. The individuals who become conscious of India's Soul and its Mission will become the backbone of a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the spiritual knowledge to save India and the world.

The Resurgent India Trust has been established by just such a group of people who having become conscious of India's Soul have acquired a living faith in its divine destiny and cannot help intensely loving it in spite of all the contrary surface appearances. This Trust hopes to become a powerful instrument of the expression of theirs and their countless other brothers' and sisters' faith and love for India.

It is believed that the most important thing for India – the one which when set right will automatically lead to the dissolution of most of its present problems and difficulties – is to recover the true sense of pride in its great culture, its glorious past and its supreme achievements. Therefore this Trust ardently seeks to awaken Indian people to the truth of their present condition and their great past and thus contribute to the forces leading to the recovery of their lost faith and pride – lost due to over one thousand years of subjugation to the rule of foreign invaders and the still continuing hold of their alien ideas on Indian minds – in the majesty, greatness and invincibility of their spiritual culture.