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The ONE who is the Eternal, the Atman,  
He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,  
He is all in all, He alone is.

## MATRI VANI

( Replies to letters from different people at different times. )

116.

Mataji said : He should keep his mind free from cares and worries and be ever full of inner joy—this is the important thing ! He should invoke God with his mind and heart and voice, in whatever way and by whatever words that come to him easily. Why only mornings and evenings ? At every moment ! For this is indeed the unfailing panacea for every kind of trouble. HE is the Supreme Father, Mother, Friend and Beloved, all in one. All names and forms as well as the nameless and the formless are His. Therefore one should make use of any means or device that may aid one to sustain at all times in one's heart and mind the remembrance of Him and thereby to find peace.

117.

There is no need for him to do penance. The atonement has already been accomplished by his readiness to make amends. Tell him not to cause worry to anyone by worrying himself. Keeping one's mind concentrated on God puts an end to all worries and anxieties.

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\*The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in Ananda Varta, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 281.

## 118.

Do not keep concealed within yourself what weighs on your mind. If you write it all to me freely and frankly, your heart will be unburdened even more. Father, why have you kept it suppressed within yourself for such a long time? To confide it to this body (*Mataji*) brings relief, does it not? Truly, this body belongs to all; for this reason it behaves and speaks as far as possible so as to fulfil the needs of the people with whom it deals at any particular time.

When the worship of an image or any other puja is performed according to the rites laid down in the Shastras—as accepted by all Brahmana priests—and when *Kumari Puja* forms part of the ceremonial as prescribed by the Shastras, then the priests and others concerned must be allowed to have their say according to what they feel to be right. Write this to him! But of course, when this body plays with its friends, little girls or boys, it does not pay attention to the injunctions of the priests—the child may be of any caste! The other day—did you not see that the little girl taken as a focus for the worship was certainly not the daughter of a Brahmana; yet the person who performed the Puja offered clothes, food and everything else exactly as it should be done, did he not? To this body everyone and everything is equal.

## 119.

Write to him to make his mind sound and vigorous as that of a wise and brave man. To allow the mind to be in this unhealthy state will not do. What is there to be afraid of? Ever remember that God IS—may His Will be done. HE is everyone's very own and has full claim on those whom He has created, to direct them according to His free and absolute Will; whatever He does is all-beneficent.

## 120.

One may well say: What harm can there be in doing Kirtan, Japa, meditation, etc. together with others? But to feel the attraction of company constitutes an obstacle. This will naturally bring about unsteadiness. Moreover if a desire lurks or arises in one to be the head or leader of the congregation, it is also harmful. This holds good in the case of both women and men.

If however you ask this body for advice, it will tell you to stay quietly in one place and practise *sadhana* as a sincere and earnest aspirant and first of all to fill your own emptiness ; then the treasure you have accumulated will of its own accord seek an outlet and thus communicate itself to others. Whereas if you start distributing right from the beginning by serving and giving spiritual instructions to others, you will soon be empty yourself and repentance is bound to follow. Of course, if serving and teaching is your aim, then it is quite a different matter. But if you want to attain to perfection your method of proceeding is not right, for it creates obstacles. This body maintains that you should abide by whichever of the two paths you prefer. To change one's mind again and again will not lead anywhere. Whatever one does must be done one-pointedly. Having turned away from worldly enjoyment and started advancing towards the Goal of human life, one should endeavour to arrive at Self-realisation.

## MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(25)•

Someone declared that *Vedanta* and *Bhakti* were two entirely different doctrines or lines of approach.

*Mataji* : Where doctrines are, there differences and disputes will of necessity exist. But this state is not the one that marks the end of difference and identity (*bhedabheda*). Some maintain that the conception of Radha-Krishna is completely *vedantic* ( non-dualistic ), for Krishna cannot be without Radha, nor Radha without Krishna—they are two in one and one in two.

*Question* : It is said that God's Eternal *Lila* (play) is based on duality.

*Mataji* : To say it is based on duality is also to say it is within Oneness ; some advocate this opinion.

*Question* : What is the actual significance of the terms † *dhāma*, *līla*, *parikara* ?

*Mataji* : They say that even in the midst of this *Lila* Oneness remains unimpaired. The idea of *Lila* implies the enjoyment of it, whereas in *Vedanta*

\* The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in *Ananda Varta*, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 243.

† *Dhāma*, *Lila*, *Parikara*.

*Dhāma* = abode i.e. Plane of Divine Life and Activity.

*Līla* = Sport i.e. Divine Play.

*Parikara* = Companions, etc.

These are technical terms used in Vaishnavite literature dealing with the philosophy of Divine Love and the manner of its fulfilment on a Divine or Supernatural Plane of Existence. This Plane itself is known as *Dhāma* which corresponds to the Christian conception of "Kingdom of God."

*Līla* is the Divine Play which aims at giving Joy and Bliss to the lovers of God in the manner and to the extent consistent with the nature of that love. All the lovers of God, of all denominations and varieties, participate, according to the nature of each individual and the measure of his capacity, in the Divine Joy actualised in the *Lila* concerned.

duality is out of question. Although the doctrine of *Bhakti* seems founded on duality, yet here also there is nothing but oneness. If one does not see things through the spectacles of the *Bhakti*, this cannot be grasped. Seen from his angle of vision it appears thus.

Suppose when giving initiation the Gurn instructs the disciple to practise the formal worship of *Radha-Krishna* and to regard himself as the servant and *Radha-Krishna* as his Master. By regularly engaging in worship and service of this kind, the following development may take place :

(1) First of all one feels that the room in which the worship is being performed has to be kept pure and undefiled. Before eating, the food has to be consecrated to the Lord, and He has also to be worshipped with lights, incense, etc. (*Arati*). As one continues day after day to carry out these acts of worship, one begins to question : 'Is my Lord as small as this little image ? Does He dwell only in my prayer-room and nowhere else ?' By performing His service one gradually comes to feel that all is His. This feeling grips one and spreads like an infectious disease. Someone once said : "Do not venture near Anandamayī Ma, there are small-pox germs with Her." (Laughter) Single-minded devotion engenders deep thought, which expresses itself in action. The Lord's light descends on the devotee, His power awakens in him and as a result profound inner inquiry blossoms forth.

(2) Then follows a stage where it happens that one may have a vision of the Lord ; for instance, while scrubbing the vessels used for the Puja ; or one lies asleep and sees Him standing near one's bed. Look, at first one believed the Lord to be present in one's prayer-room, but by and by one is able to perceive Him here and there. At a further stage it is not anymore in particular places, but wherever one turns one's eyes : He is seen sitting on the trees, standing in water, He is perceived within animals and birds. However even here one's vision of Him is not uninterrupted.

(3) Then comes a time when the Lord does not leave one anymore ; wherever one may go, He is ever by one's side and His Presence constantly felt.

(4) What now is the next stage like ? The shape, the species, the appearance of the tree itself is also the Lord. At an earlier stage one perceived Him within all objects, but now He is not seen *within* the objects anymore, for

there is nothing but He alone. Trees, flowers, the water and the land—everything is the Lord and only He. Every form, variety and manifestation, whatever exists is He, there is none beside Him. It may occur that a sadhaka continues in this state for the rest of his life.

(5) If everything is the Lord and nothing but He, then one's body must also be He—He, the One Existence. In this state, when one is absorbed in *dhyana* (meditation), worship or service become impossible, for He alone IS, one no longer exists apart from Him. What do the *Vedantists* say? "There is only one Brahman without a second." Nevertheless for some who have attained to this condition the relationship between the Lord and His servant remains and is felt thus: He is the Whole and I am part of Him, and yet there is only the One Self (*Ek Atma*). If the *Brahman* is described as the splendour of Krishna's body—why should one object? Verily, everything is identical, undivided. To realize this means that one has been merged completely into the Ocean of Oneness.

(6) After this has been accomplished one can again do *puja* and service, for the relationship between Master and servant persists. Mahabir said: "He and I are one; but He is the whole and I am part of Him, He is the Master, I am His servant." One experiences Wholeness as well as the status of the Lord's servant. When the One Self has been realized, why should there be any objection to continuing in the spirit of: 'He is the Master, I am His servant'? At first one was serving in order to attain to one's Goal. After Realization it is He, the One, who serves. In this state everything becomes service—call it Liberation, call it *Parabhakti*, call it what you will.

The spiritual Teacher gives instruction. For Him doing or not doing *japa* is exactly the same. Calling Him 'World-teacher', how can one still find fault with Him?

*Question*: After having realized the Oneness of all, due to what need or imperfection does it become necessary again to worship a particular deity?

*Mataji*: In that state there is no need.

*The Questioner*: But then it can surely not be real service or worship!

*Mataji*: You may call it anything. The point is this: Sukadeva was a liberated being; why then did he relate the *Srimad Bhagavata*? What



reply have you to this ? The need or imperfection that prompted one to serve and worship at the initial stage, has no place here.

The Vedantists discard one thing after another, saying "not this, not this ! (*neti, neti*)". Indeed you see a beautiful flower and a few days later it has become earth : therefore what they say is perfectly true. What is subject to change will most certainly change. On the other hand, if expressed in the terms of those who believe in the reality of Name and Form, one may say : 'All names are Thy Name, all forms Thy Form'. Here Name and Form are also true. Yet, it may be argued that it is the world which is bound by evolution and change and that by persevering in the practice of discrimination one finally becomes established in the One Reality. When one perceives only the One Ocean—nothing but water, and cannot see oneself as separate from the All, it indicates that one has dived into the Ocean and been fully immersed in it. Nevertheless if outwardly or inwardly even as much as a hair has remained dry, it signifies that complete immersion has not yet occurred. Just as when a seed has been fried it can never sprout again, so when one has realized Oneness one may do anything ; it does no longer contain the seed of Karma and where this seed is not present, there all form and variety are but THAT. Look, by intense devotion as well as by the discrimination of Vedanta one has arrived at the One Essence. Does 'to merge into IT' then mean to become as a stone ? Not so indeed ! Form, variety, manifestation are nothing but THAT.

According to each person's particular path, the colouring or flavour peculiar to it will of course be preserved, yet what is attained is the One THING as such, in which no doubt, no uncertainty can survive. In fact what is there to be attained ? We ARE THAT—eternal Truth. Because we imagine that it has to be experienced, realized, it remains apart from us. On some levels this point of view is valid, but on others it is not. The Eternal ever IS. What is styled "the veil of ignorance" signifies continual motion. Motion means change, incessant transformation. Yet again no change takes place where there is non-action in action. For such an one duality does not exist—who then eats and what can he eat ? In this state how can there be theories or disputes ? If some one argues that since a certain person speaks he cannot have attained to this state—what do I speak and to whom and who is he ? This is so when full Realization has come about.

By explaining it to others one then feels one has come to understand it oneself, but essentially one has not understood that state. If one had one would have to ask : Have you reverted to ignorance ? The perfect man has realized both being able to understand and being unable to understand. From the point of view of the world he who is in bondage is bound. But where the vision of THAT is, there the knowledge of ignorance and the knowledge of Knowledge stand revealed before one in their fullness and no distinction between knowledge and ignorance can possibly arise. Actions such as eating, etc. have now become actions in inaction. Whether one still does *Puja* or not, what difference does it make ? To know and not to know in their entirety are now contained within one. But to understand this state is very difficult. It is easy to comprehend a particular line or level. But here there is no question of stability or non-stability and therefore even instability is no shortcoming either. However if the very slightest attachment has remained this sublime state cannot be reached. By selling imitation goods people may become rich. Why are imitation goods purchased at all ? This is the wonder of it ! But by using the things the deception will come to light and then one will again search for the genuine article.

Having realized the One Self and that there is nothing outside of it, one knows that the image one has worshipped is THAT in a certain form. Having found Reality one perceives It in this particular guise : the deity I worshipped is none else but the One Self, the Brahman without a second. When one has dived down into the depth of the sea, He is known to be that water in one form. The aspirant who advances along the path of *Bhakti* will, when he has attained to the vision of his Master, become a true servant. The two methods of "not this, not this" and "this is Thou, this is Thou" lead to the One Goal. By proceeding in the one direction it is reached and by taking the other direction it is also reached. Those who follow the path of surrender to the Divine Energy (*Shakti*) and those who worship the image of *Shiva*, both must finally attain to the One *Shakti*, the One *Shiva*. Those who advance along the line of Vedanta will find that ice is water, that there is no form, but only the formless ; whereas the Bhakta comes to realize that his Beloved is but the Brahman—everyone has his own method of approach. Equality, Oneness must come and become a permanent state. Having achieved it, if someone says : "I am renouncing liberation, I am giving up the worship of my "*Ishta*"—even though he

may give it up, nothing will be lost, for in this condition there is no room for giving up or retaining. It may be asked why there cannot be one and the same path for all ? Because He reveals Himself in an infinite variety of ways and forms—verily, the One is all of them. So there is no 'why'. Quarrel and dispute exist merely on the way. With whom is one to quarrel ? Only while still on the way is it possible to have differences of opinion and disputes.

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# The Divine Degrees

ACCORDING TO THE SUFI ABD AL KARIM AL JILI

*Miss Silburn*

In 'abd al-Karīm al-Jilī's celebrated book 'al-in Sān-al Kamīl, "Universal Man", the author deals with the divine Degrees in chapters IV to IX. These are Divine Nature, Oneness, Unity and Divine Obscurity (the non-manifested Reality of God). Since these Degrees show some similarity to the phases of the Paramashiva of the Trika System we propose briefly to describe certain of their aspects while leaving to others the task of establishing a comparison between the two metaphysics.\*

The Essence of Allāh is God Himself, that by which He is: the Absolute Reality, God subsisting by Himself, being neither the subject nor object of any Knowledge. It is unknowable to the creature: "Therefore one cannot conceive of It by any logical thought, any more than one can understand It from any traditional reference, because one can only understand a thing by its relation to another thing, which gives it position, or by a negation, therefore its opposite. Now there exists in the whole of life no relation

in which to place the Essence, nor any attribution of origin that applies to It, consequently nothing that can deny It, and nothing that can be its opposite... Its premordial source is not reached by any decision of Science, nor can any silence suppress It, and no limits, however slender or incommensurable, can enclose It...( Chapter I, page 6 ).

"Yet", Titus Burkhardt tells us (P.8), "the Essence is recognizable at each degree of Reality in this sense that It is the inmost Reality of all Knowledge. God knows Himself by Himself within Himself without any inner distinction, and He knows Himself by Himself in the Universe according to ever varying relative modes." and Jilī sings :

"I know therefore that His Essence cannot be grasped.

It is far from Thee that someone probes Thee,

Far from Thee that someone is unconscious of Thee...O bewilderment :"( p.25).

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\*We give here some extracts from an incomplete French translation by Titus Burkhardt of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jilī's 'L Homme universel', Algiers 1953. Collection. 'Soufisme'. All Nos. of chapters and pages given belong to the above translation.

And further on (chapter V) : "Know that the Essence ( *adhhat* ) signifies the Absolute Being stripped of all authority, relations, properties and aspects. It is not that all these are situated outside the Absolute Being, on the contrary, all these aspects and what they imply are contained in Him. They are not found there either individually or connectedly, but are in essence the Absolute Being. The latter is the pure Essence in which neither names, nor attributes, nor relations nor connexions, nor anything else manifests. As soon as something is manifested there, the appearance in question must be attributed to that which sustains this manifestation and not to the pure Essence because the principle of the Essence is precisely the synthesis of the universal and individual realities, of the apportionings and the connexions : a synthesis that is at the same time their subsistence and the cause of their disappearance under the influence of the Essence's Oneness. When one sees in This a quality or a name or no matter what attribute, it is always from a similar standpoint that this quality exists and not in the Essence as Such."

*On the Divine Nature (Godheadness)—*

The supreme affirmation of the Essence is that of Godheadness ( *al-ulūhiyah* ) and is characterized by Its

non-exclusiveness. "It is that which synthesizes all affirmations and governs all qualities ( Chapter IV ).

This is how al-Jīlī describes It : ' Know that the divine Nature which embraces all the realities of Being and holds them in their respective degrees is called Godheadness, And I mean by "realities of Being" ( *haqāic alwujūd* ) both the principles that condition the different states of manifestation ( *mawzāhir* ), and what manifests there; that is to say, God ( *al-hāqq* ) and the created thing ( *al-Khālq* ) together. Godheadness therefore signifies what totalizes the divine aspects as well as all the stages of existence and assigns to all things what comes to them from the divine Being. The name Allāh designates the Ruler of this highest estate, which can only belong to the Absolute Essence. (p.35).

Godheadness is superior to Oneness because It gives to the realities of existence and of non-existence what comes to them of Reality and excludes nothing, whilst Oneness is a Reality contained in the total of the Realities of Being. "This is why the name Allāh is the supreme name, superior to the name al-ahad, the One."

"Oneness is the most exclusive affirmation of the Essence by Itself, while Godheadness is the supreme affirmation of the Essence Itself and of others than Itself.

“It is for this reason that the Initiates have not access to the state of Oneness (*al-ahadiyah*), whereas access to Knowledge of the Divine Nature (*al-ulūhiyah*) is not forbidden them, for Oneness is the pure Essence, in which no quality appears and with greater reason no creature; consequently there can be no possible correlation between It and the created, no matter how it may be viewed .....(p.41).

Godheadness, on the contrary, unites such contrasts as the eternal and the transitory, God and His creature, the existent and the non-existent: “Thus it is that the contrasts appear in Divine Nature for It gives to each thing, to all that It encircles, the reality it has. God appears in His Godheadness in His most perfect and highest estate; In His purely universal affirmations and in His noblest names. On the other hand the contingent appears in it in all its kinds and according to all its changes and possible aspects, appearances and disappearances. As to the Divine Being (*al-wujūd*) He reveals Himself there in all the completeness of His hierarchy, in His unitive aspects that join the creature to God as well as in His separative aspects.....

“This cannot be known by the reason nor conceived of by thought; only he who has attained to divine intuition can enjoy the pure taste of this total revelation, which is called Divine Unveiling (*al-tajallī al-ilahī*), and this is an object of bewilderment to the most perfect among the Initiates.....God reveals Himself in this state by means of completeness and integration.

“The Perfect Ones in their participation in this revelation are distinguished by their capacity to transmute integral into discriminative perception with regard to the way in which the Great, the Exalted One Himself approaches them and in proportion to what traces appear to them, within their limits, of the Infinite Plenitude (*al-Kamāl*).

*On Divine Obscurity, the Obscure Cloud—(al-'amā).....*

This divine Obscurity is the Essence's primal state, free of all connexions, as It is before creation\*. It is the Reality of Realities that cannot be qualified as the Divinity or the creature, being pure Essence, unconnected with any divine or creative degree, so-

\* But al-Jili precisely states that if a manifestation always proceeds from a state of non-manifestation, then here it is merely a question a non-temporal, purely primary principle, for Allah is too sublime to have between Himself and His creation any temporal relation. (p. 58).



God in His greatness, cannot  
   compare Himself.  
 It fills the Intelligent with dismay  
 At their inability to grasp what, for  
   them, is obscurity.  
 It is the Divine Self, not because It  
   allows darkness,  
 But because It brings light, if under-  
   stood aright.  
 Other than the unknowable Oneness,  
 Or the knowable Oneness of the Many,  
 Ungraspable of Itself, screened from  
   all sight.  
 'This is called Divine Obscurity.'  
   (Chap. IX—p. 54 sqq.)

*On Oneness (al-ahadiyah)*

Oneness appears as the undifferentiated, the absence of all aspects, of all qualities.

"The word Oneness designates the revelation of the Essence in which neither names, nor qualities, nor any trace of their effects appear. It is therefore a name for the Essence when considered as above all comparisons, either divine or creaturely.

"Now there exists for Oneness, in the whole of the Cosmos, no place of manifestation more suitable than thyself when thou sinkest into thine own essence forgetting all connexions, and thou layest hold of thyself freed from all thine aspects.....It is in this state

that man becomes the most perfect place in the whole of existence for the manifestation of Oneness. It is the first descent (*tanazzul*) of the Essence from the darkness of the Cloud (*al-amā*) towards the light of revelations, and also the first of all Its revelations, because of its purity, and absence of all attributes, names, connexions or analogies; for all is contained in the mode of non-manifestation (*bātin*)."

*On Unity (al-wahidiyah)*

Unity is the chief aspect of the Divine Nature. It is the revelation of the Essence which follows that of Oneness. The Essence appears as attribute and the attribute as the Essence, so that each divine attribute shows itself as the determinative essential of each of the others.

This is what al-Jīlī says :

"Unity is a revealing of the Essence,  
 Which appears as a synthesis because  
   of the differentiation of its qualities,  
 All in It is uniform and differentiated  
   at the same time.  
 Wonder at the Multiplcity that is  
   essentially One !  
 In It this one and that one are the  
   very same,  
 And that which goes away is as that  
   which comes.  
 It is the divine Reality (*al-haqiqah*)  
   of the Many



Contained in the Unique (*al-wahdah*)  
without dispersal.

Through It is to be found the source  
of each thing

And in this respect the negative is  
the same as the affirmative.

Its complete form is that of the spirit  
of Discrimination,

And the manifold variety of attri-  
butes (appearing in it) is like that of  
the Verses (in the Sacred Book).

Then in the same chapter al-Jili  
compares Divine Nature, Oneness and  
Unity :

“The way in which Oneness (*al-ahadiyah*) Unity (*al-wahidiyah*) and Divine Nature (*al-uluhiyah*) differ from one another consists in this that in Oneness, nothing of the names or attributes, are manifested; It relates to the pure Essence in its immediate Reality, while in Unity names and qualities and their activities are manifested, but only in regard to the Essence, not in a separative manner, so that each one is the essential determinative of

the other. In Godheadness, names and attributes are manifested there according to what is peculiar to each one ... However Oneness appears in the Divine Nature according to the demands of the law of Unity, so that It embraces in Its revelation the law of all revelations, and gives to everything that is Real that which comes to it of Reality.

“...It is for this that Oneness is superior to Unity, because It is the pure Essence, and that Godheadness is superior to Oneness since It gives to It its Reality.....Its superiority to Oneness is as the superiority of the whole to the part, whilst the superiority of Oneness to other revelations of the Essence is as that of the root over the branches. With regard to the superiority of Unity over the rest of the revelations is as that of unity over separation.”

al-Jili concludes this chapter thus :  
“Search for these significations within thyself and meditate on them” (Chap. VI. p 46 sed).

# Religion And Science

*Lama Anagarika Govinda Acharya, Arya Maitreya Mandala*

“On a planet more than a thousand million years old it is hard to believe—as do Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Buddhists—that the most important event has occurred within the last few thousand years, when it is clear that there were great civilisations before that event. It is equally difficult to doubt that many events as significant for humanity will occur in the future. In that immeasurable future the destiny of humanity dwarfs that of the individual. If our planet was created a few thousand years ago to end a few years or a few thousand years hence, it is conceivable that the main purpose to be worked out on it is the salvation and perfection of individual human beings. No religion which accepts geology can regard such a purpose as being but subsidiary. If we define religion as our attitude to the universe as a whole, the new time-scale will make us humbler as individuals, but prouder as a race.” (J.B.S.Haldane, “Possible worlds”)

It certainly is true that the destiny of the individual appears to be utterly insignificant in view of the vastness of the universe and the immeasurable fu-

ture destiny of humanity. But where does the notion of the immensity and harmony of such a universe and of the eternal destiny of humanity spring up? Certainly not in the human race as such or as a whole, but in single individuals in moments of higher vision on or through persistent concentration of their mind upon problems detached from the interests of daily life. And is it thinkable that an individual as a momentary, insignificant phenomenon should be able to grasp (or to invent) the vastness and harmony of the universe, and to perceive time-spaces of many thousand million years (as in astronomy), if it were not linked up with something that outlasts the existence of the individual and even the human race, and which at every moment goes beyond the confines of individual consciousness? The individual, therefore, is more than its momentary form of appearance. It is the meeting-place of the perishable and the imperishable, the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, of which neither can be experienced (or, in fact, can, exist) without the other. If salvation or perfection is possible at all, it can only take place in the individual and

not in the 'human race', the very concept of which is the creation of, and only exists in, the individual mind.

Whether the salvation or perfection of individual human beings was the main purpose to be worked out on this planet or not, the fact that this is the only goal worthy of the human mind to strive for, cannot be denied. Whatever the purpose of our planet may be (if one can speak of a 'purpose' at all), there is no other way left to the individual human being, than to develop all its inherent qualities to the highest possible state of perfection.

The attainment of this state of 'salvation', however, implies the overcoming of all narrow individual limitations and the recognition of super-individual realities within one's own mind. Thus salvation, if we agree to define this term with Julian Huxley as the achievement of harmony within ourselves as well as with the world around us, and as "an extension of our narrow core to include in a single grasp ranges of outer experiences and inner nature",—this salvation or enlightenment, as we might call it, is no more an exclusively individual concern. It is the most universal experience the human mind can attain, and from the very outset it demands a universal attitude; for he who strives for personal salvation, without regard for his fellow-

beings, has already deprived himself of the most essential means for the realisation of his aim. Whether we are able to liberate others or not, if we are not ready to contribute to the best of our capacity towards this aim, we have no chance of progressing on the way of salvation. This is not a philosophical, but first and foremost a psychological question, a question of our practical attitude towards life.

As there are no absolute individuals and no rigid boundary lines between one form of life and the other,—because each centre of consciousness influences, penetrates and thus partakes in the other,—it is clear that each form of life is intrinsically connected with all others, a fact which becomes more and more obvious to the individual in the course of spiritual progress. The more man liberates himself from the illusion of being a separate entity, the more he experiences himself as the totality of all that exists, and it is in this experience that he no more thinks of liberating 'himself' but the 'whole world' which has become conscious in his mind. This is the Great Way, the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle.

A religion which accepts such an outlook is neither impressed by geological time-scales nor by astronomical figures in the measurement of interstellar space, nor can it regard the perfec-

tion of individual human beings as subsidiary in view of the immensity of such time and space dimensions. On the contrary: that such discoveries were possible and that the human mind was able to grasp such immensities, proves that individual human beings are indeed capable of higher development.

Furthermore, the Buddhist conception of time and space is really an anticipation of the discoveries of modern science. The Buddhists never thought that the advent of Gotama Buddha was the first of such events in the history of the world,—as Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans thought with regard to their respective religious leaders. Just as there have been Enlightened Ones in the past, so there will be enlightened beings in the future. There is no limit in both directions. And similarly with regard to space, the Buddhist never confined his universe to this terrestrial world, but admitted the possibility of innumerable worlds. True to Indian tradition, he was accustomed to think in dimensions which even in this our scientific age arouse an almost superstitious and primitive fear in the average western mind.

Indian thinkers never lost their sense of proportion. They neither overestimated the importance of man in relationship to the universe, nor did

they underestimate his value, as modern science is inclined to do in the face of those newly discovered spatial and temporal dimensions. Even the scientist is apt to be impressed by size and duration, as if any particular value were inherent in them or attached to these properties. He feels small and insignificant in the vastness of space and time, because he forgets that these properties are the creation of his own mind. And even if they could exist independently of him, would it not be even more astonishing and significant (and pointing towards a higher value) that a mere 'speck of dust', like man, should be able to conceive and to contemplate the enormous dimensions and qualities of the sun, or even of innumerable solar systems? I very much doubt that the sun of any other of those gigantic celestial bodies, if they were gifted with consciousness, would be able to be aware of man. Man, probably, is as much bigger than the atom as the sun is bigger than man.

Thus, man takes a middle position in the scale of dimensions, and apparently it is this position which enables him to be aware of the microcosmos as well as of the macrocosmos. The 'smallness' of man, therefore, is no proof of inferiority but perhaps a positive advantage, and the same may hold good with regard to his shortlivedness.

A thousandfold longer life would perhaps imply a slowing down of his rhythm of consciousness, which would result in a lesser degree of sensibility and alertness, while a considerably shorter life might deprive him of that relative stability which is necessary for comprehending causal connections on a bigger scale.

At any rate it is futile to attach any value to size or duration as such, because the smallest fractions of time and space hold as many wonders and incomprehensible infinities as the biggest solar systems and spiral nebulae. And, after all, we could just as well regard smallness as a criterium of perfection. By reversing one's standpoint and by seeing the world from the other end, we become aware of the relativity of our habitual notions, theories, and unshakable 'facts', which we mistake for 'eternal truths'.

There are many spiritual exercises—especially among Tibetan aspirants of yoga—which “aim at destroying habitual notions accepted by routine and

without personal investigation. The object is to make one understand that other ideas can be put in their place. It is hoped that the disciple will conclude that there cannot be any absolute truth in ideas derived from sensations which can be discarded while others, even contradictory to them, take their place.” (David-Niel, “With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet”, p. 253).

The doubting of theories was a characteristic feature of Buddhism from its very beginning. The Buddha himself said, that he held no theories, neither about this world nor about the next, neither about God nor soul. Thus Buddhism, even in this respect, has forestalled science, of which Haldane says that it “owed its wonderful progress very largely to the habit of doubting all theories, even those on which one's action is founded.” (Op. cit. p. 224).

But it must be said that doubt, as much as faith, must be founded on discrimination and insight: without these positive qualities no creative progress is possible.

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