

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.*)

150.

Man's life must be oriented towards finding Himself.
To find one's Self means to find God.

The day that is gone will never return. Do not waste
precious time.

151.

It behoves a human being to aspire solely at the
realization of Truth. To be regularly engaged in the practices
and techniques into which one has been initiated by the Guru
is the path to Enlightenment. One's prayers and petitions
should be addressed to God and to God alone.

152.

Throughout the twenty-four hours abide in the
awareness of the Presence of God. ~~Then only can there be~~
hope of Realization. Who can foresee at what moment He
may choose to reveal Himself? This is why one must ever
keep wide awake.

*The Bengali original appeared in Ananda Varta Vol. VII,
No. 1. page 1

153.

Conditioned by the tendencies brought over from former births everyone is searching for a way. To embrace the most excellent and to abandon what is merely pleasing to the senses is man's duty. Real Truth brings peace and the highest bliss.

154.

Why speak of Self-realization (*Atma Darshana*) in the future ? It is here and now — only the veil that hides it has to be destroyed. What is meant by 'destroyed' ? That which in any case is doomed to destruction is to be destroyed. When the veil falls to pieces THAT which eternally IS shines forth — the ONE Self-luminous.

155.

You are imperfect, something is lacking in you, this is why you feel the desire for fulfilment. "Body"* signifies that which slips away, which is continually changing. If there is no want, no desire then the kind of body that is ever in the process of perishing does not persist. Thus after God-realization one can no longer speak of such a body — for the Self stands revealed.

156.

There is only one book and everything is contained in it. Once it has been mastered nothing else remains to be

* The Bengali word for "body" is "*shorir*" and the verb "*shora*" means to move on, to slip away.

studied. *Sadhana* has to be practised for the sole purpose of discovering one's own true wealth.*

157.

The activity of the mind that distracts man and takes him away from the remembrance of God is called wrong thinking. Endeavour to cultivate whatever will prevent your mind from harbouring that type of thought.

All your burdens are borne by God. Be convinced of this and ever try to abide in sincerity and cheerfulness.

158.

Towards Self-realization is the only direction in which to advance ; all the rest is vain and leads to suffering.

159.

Man's relationship with the MOTHER of all is eternal, for nothing exists but the ever familiar ONE SELF.

160.

The sovereign and universal remedy is the contemplation of God. At all times to think only of Him and to serve Him is essential for every human being.

*Another pun : the Bengali for "own wealth" is "*Svadhan*", pronounced like "*Sadhana*"

THE LADY ALL IN WHITE

(AN ALLEGORICAL TALE)

RICHARD LANNOY

Be vacant, and you will remain full,

Be worn, and you will remain new.

Clay is moulded into vessels,

And because of the space where nothing exists

We are able to use them as vessels.

When all in the world understand beauty to be

beautiful, then ugliness exists.

Three quotations from the Tao Te Ching.

There once was a great city in which there lived a master artist whose fame spread to the four corners of the world. Indeed it was the reputation of the Master which shed lustre and renown upon the fair name of this city. Notorious for his mysterious and secluded habits, the Master was so esteemed by the population that he required no patron to support him, nor the official backing of the government. Whatever work he executed he did solely for his own delight, or at least for purposes known only to himself. Few people had visited him and none dared to consider themselves his intimate friends. Had it not been for the quality of profound compassion that pervaded his entire creative work the Master would have been mistaken for one of those obscure artists who live a remote life, aloof from the affairs of the world.

His paintings, masterpieces of an unsurpassable creative invention, had for subject the images of all types of people,

the humble, the eminent, the rich, the poor, scholar, craftsman, peasant and poet. He never shrunk from the most tragic elements of life, whereas at the same time, in all his work, even portraits of the forlorn, the forgotten, those in the most pitiful misery, there was a great reverence for life and a strangely pervasive feeling of joy. Though some of his imagery frightened people, its mood could evoke happiness and laughter as well as grief. All recognised that this was creative genius with energy and scale for exceeding the limitations of lesser men.

Mystery enveloped the figure of the Master, but it was observed that those few who were known to have seen him, though silent or reserved in their manner of reporting the occasion, frequently bore an expression of excitement or even of elation on their faces when questioned.

In the kind of circles where such matters are discussed with considerable vigour, not to say authority, there was one old man, held in great respect by people whose judgment was never for a moment questioned, who could speak of the Master with more knowledge than most would dare to boast. One day, while speaking to a gathering of his friends, this old man caused considerable commotion with some news he was eager to impart.

"Listen friends", he said, "when I arrived in the Master's house I was ushered into a room such as I have never seen before. The Master was standing in the middle of a bare space, for this huge room contained no decoration of any kind, there was not a single piece of furniture and the walls were of plain white. Yet it was a noble room most nobly proportioned. The Master did not turn to look at me but

was gazing with a deeply abstracted air at the sole object in all that bare space—a large white canvas—upon which there was no sign or trace of work commenced. He was silent for some while, a silence that was positively uncomfortable in such a setting. But I had ample time to overcome my amazement and realise that the Master was not as it were caught in a moment of absent minded reverie, but in his concentration on that empty canvas there was a purposefulness, something unutterably stark, something I can best express as both serene and kind.

“After several minutes of total silence he slowly turned to me and said that this empty canvas had for a long time been a source of constant interest and preoccupation. He told me that he had several times completed a picture on this very canvas but had stripped it down and started afresh. People had not evinced any particular enthusiasm for the works he had already produced on it. Therefore he had set himself the task of creating once again on the spotless white a totally new picture and might continue to do for as long as his powers endured. But more of his project I could not persuade him to divulge.”

As it so happened, in the weeks following this incident many conflicting rumours flew around the city concerning the progress of the new picture, until once again the old man was able to give his friends a more reliable account of what had happened. It appears that the Master, normally in the habit of selecting his models for painting from among the people, had decided that for once he would not proceed as usual. After prolonged concentration he had formed in his mind's eye a subject so sublime, so perfect, that it must be an act of pure

creation. Standing before the white expanse of his canvas he was inspired to produce an image of spotless purity. Now it was known that the Master hitherto had worked slowly, building, altering, rebuilding from his palette, images of detailed subtlety requiring considerable time for completion. On this occasion, the old man reported, alone in his house, the Master had awoken as from a deep trance, and in a single gesture had created on the white canvas the perfect form of a fabulous being, not an imaginary fantasy vague in outline, but palpably and with incomparable loveliness, the portrait of a "Lady All in White."

Soon after this news became widely talked about in the city the Master himself invited a number of people to visit him. They had returned from their visits mystified and stirred by the new work. One of them said: "He summoned me to him and said, 'my friend, you see on this canvas the figure of a lady dressed all in white. Now you may wonder why she alone appears on such an expanse of canvas, but I must tell you that this picture is but scarcely begun. In the first moment of creation I have, indeed, drawn the most important and central theme, but I can't leave this picture as it stands now. So I am asking you to let as many people as possible know about this new work. I want those who are really interested to come themselves and look at the Lady All in White. I want to try and break down the gulf that seems to have kept people away from here. I believe that this picture could become a more meaningful part in the daily life of the people. I intend to incorporate within the picture's design various groups of people. And for this I am asking friends here so that I may put them into my picture. If I can persuade them to drop their self-consciousness by