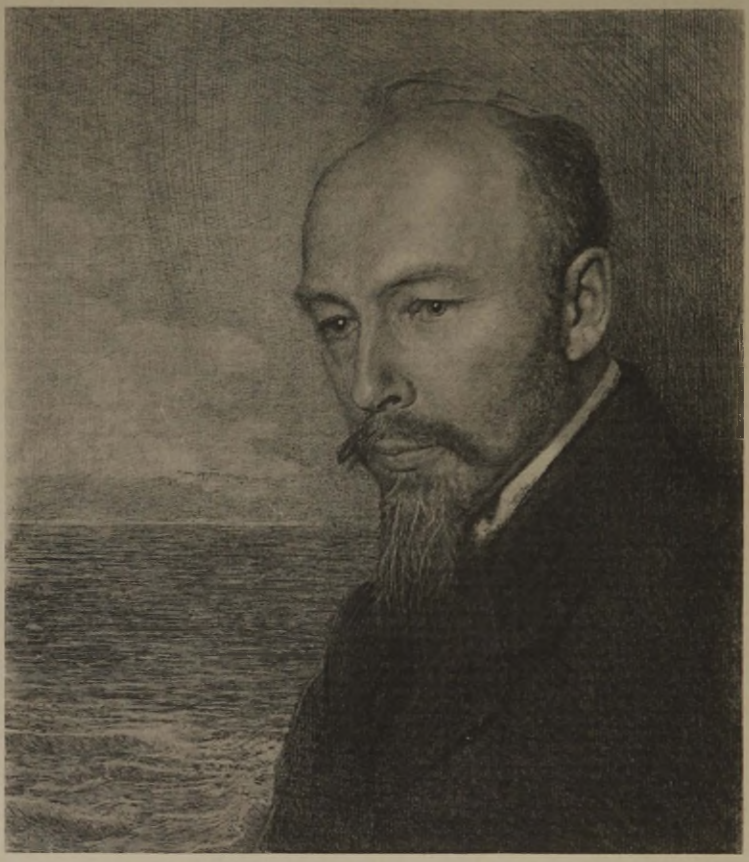
THE TRAVEL DIARY OF A PHILOSOPHER

IN TWO VOLUMES

*

Volume

1



COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

From an etching by Emma Löwenstamm

THE TRAVEL DIARY OF A PHILOSOPHER

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BY

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

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TRANSLATED BY
J HOLROYD REECE

VOLUME ONE

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE fact that no translation, by its very nature, can be perfect imposes the duty of choosing the best compromise upon the translator. This raises immediately all the problems which face the translator. In the case of an original text which is written in verse or which belongs to an age antecedent to that of the translator, he may rightly avail himself of every liberty. A passage of verse may be rendered in a line if by that means the rhythm, the cadence, the vowel values can be preserved. He may equally employ a whole sentence to convey the meaning of the shade of a single word which is not susceptible of direct translation. In the case of philosophic prose, the prose moreover not only of a contemporary but of a writer who himself possesses a vast technical vocabulary in the language of the translator, all such freedom is denied. The author of the original text exacts precision above all in the rendering of his thought, and in this connection it is my privilege to give the reader an assurance which, had I been dependent on my efforts alone, would be impossible. Count Keyserling, who writes and lectures with ease in English, has worked upon my translation for many weeks, with the result that he himself is satisfied that the text which follows here is the accurate rendering of his meaning to such an extent that in so far as any differences of meaning exist between the original and the translation, they are alterations or revisions made personally by the author.

As far as the problem of conveying the meaning is concerned, therefore, my labour and the burden of responsibility are indeed light, and it is only fair to allow the reader an insight into the nature and extent of my indebtedness by saying that in many cases I had so far failed to seize the intention of the author that there are entire passages in the English text from the pen of the author.

The compromise to which my labours therefore appear to be confined is the problem of making a match between the meaning of the author's text and the requirements of English prose. Count Keyserling defined in no equivocal manner the conditions which I had to satisfy. He wrote to me:

'An meinem Reisetagebuch habe ich volle sieben Jahre gear-

beitet, und es steht kein Wort und kein Komma darin, dessen Sinn und Ort nicht genau bedacht wären. Niemand wird dem Übersetzer je verzeihen, der seine Arbeit nicht mit der unbedingten Ehrfurcht vor dem Originaltext und mit der absoluten Hingebung an eine grosse Sache geleistet hätte, welche Carlyle Goethe genenüber bewies.' He then enjoined me to translate 'strikt wörtlich, Wort für Wort, und Komma für Komma,. Bringen Sie unter garkeinen Umständen ein 'und' an, das nicht im Originaltext stände (jedes von Ihnen gesetzte 'und' habe ich ausstreichen müssen), halten Sie sich peinlich genau an meine Kommata, Semikolons und Punkte, ziehen Sie unter garkeinen Umstanden Sätze zusammen, die ich getrennt habe und bedenken Sie überall, dass Sie es in mir mit einem strengen, dynamischen, konzentrierten Geist zu tun haben, der nicht die leiseste Verdünnung und Entspannung des Styls verträgt. Bedenken Sie weiter, dass die Uebersetzung der deutschen Musik in englische, von der wir damals mündlich sprachen, doch nur so zu verstehen sein kann, dass mein genauer Takt, mein Rythmus, meine Melodie nun englisch erklänge, nicht dass irgend etwas anderes an seine Stelle gesetzt werden dürfte. Insofern bitte ich, meine Korrekturen als endgültige Verbesserungen aufzufassen.'

Conditions of such stringency reduce of necessity the scope of corrections, which even a distinguished stylist could attempt, to a negligible minimum, while they offer to the English reader simultaneously an absolute guarantee that the present volumes suffer in no way from the interposition of the style or personality of the translator between the thought of the author and its English equivalent.

If, in the circumstances, I frankly acknowledge the consciousness of much which is unorthodox in style, in grammar, in punctuation, and if I confess even to coining words, not to mention the liberty of attaching a special meaning to certain words and phrases whose recurrence alone will make them clear to the reader, I will have demonstrated at any rate that the faults of the translation are mine.

My friend, Lyle D. Vickers, has removed innumerable blemishes both in my manuscript and in the proofs in the course

of weeks of watches far into the small hours of the night which he kept faithfully from the beginning to the end of my work, and only those who have laboured likewise can appreciate the whole-hearted and unforgettable devotion such service entails.

Another debt it is a pleasure to record is the assistance I have had from Mr. R. G. Curtis, who has typed with incredible speed and accuracy two complete versions of the some quarter of a million words in these two volumes. The printers, too, have lessened my difficulties considerably by their great care and accuracy of composition. Finally, if there be any virtue in my work, I dedicate my labour to her, but for whose infinite kindliness and encouragement in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, this translation would never have seen the light of day.

J. HOLROYD-REECE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING was born on the 20th day of July 1880. Until the age of fifteen he was educated at home at the family estates, Koenno and Raykŭll in Esthonia, by tutors, and then went in succession to a Russian school in Pernau, thence to Dorpat. Later he went to Heidelberg, where following in his grandfather's footsteps he studied geology. In 1902 he took the German equivalent of his B.A. in Vienna, and it is about this period that he began his studies for his future vocation as a philosopher. He read Houston Chamberlain's *Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, and he met the author, whose friendship encouraged him to pursue his philosophical studies. In 1905 Count Keyserling wrote his *Gefüge der Welt*, and it was while he wrote this book that he first conceived the ideal of personal perfection as opposed to that of professional efficiency.

In the year 1911 he started on his journey round the world, the outcome of which is the *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, but a great many experiences fall into the period 1903–1911, which no doubt influenced considerably the formation of his outlook.

In 1903 he left Vienna to live in Paris. Using Paris as his headquarters he frequently visited England, and his stay in France was largely devoted to reading and studying and also to a certain amount of journalistic activity. He displayed a very great admiration for Flaubert, under whose influence he contributed a series of articles to a Munich newspaper. It is said of Count Keyserling that he acquired much distinction as a *causeur*, but this elegant accomplishment in no way interfered with the serious study of Kant, Schopenhauer, and F. A. Lange. By this time, too, he had made a number of friends, one of them being A. Wolkoff-Mouromtzoff, the Russian painter and art critic, who, according to Count Keyserling, exercised a considerable influence upon him. He also became intimately acquainted with Simmel and Bergson, but the human influence to which Count Keyserling feels himself most indebted is the influence of his women friends.

In 1905 he lost his fortune temporarily in the Russian

revolution and lived for two years in the belief that he was penniless. From 1906 to 1908 he made Berlin his headquarters, but his stay was interrupted by various travels, especially by his journey to Greece. During his Berlin visit he wrote *Unsterblichkeit.*

In 1907 he gave a series of lectures in Hamburg, which have been published since under the title of *Prolegomena zur Naturphilosophie.*

He inherited his father's estates in 1908 and thereupon took up his residence there, that is to say, in Rayküll in Esthonia. Here he spent a good deal of his time in the capacity of farmer looking after his estates, but he devoted much time to correspondence with Bergson, Simmel, Walther Rathenau, Max and Alfred Weber, Boutroux, F. C. S. Schiller, Bertrand Russell, Lord Haldane, Arthur Balfour, and Benedetto Croce. To this period also belong various essays now published in book form under the titles of *Philosophie als Kunst* and *Wiedergelburt.*

Count Keyserling started out on his journey round the world in the year 1911, and the period from 1912 to 1918 has been devoted to the writing of it. The book as a matter of fact was written in 1914; the proofs of volume 1 had already been passed for press and were in the possession of his publisher when the war broke out, leaving the author in possession of the proofs of volume 2 without any means of returning them to his publisher. Count Keyserling's estates being on Russian soil, he had no opportunity of communicating with Germany. During the war years, however, he devoted a great deal of time to going over his MSS., and the latter portion of volume 2 was entirely re-written.

His object in writing this book was to find a means of self-expression. This desire was so strong in him that at one time he almost decided to retire into one of the Korean monasteries.

The war itself made little effect on Count Keyserling. He watched the world's crisis from his retreat in Rayküll, using those four years of enforced solitude for meditation and self-culture.

In 1918 a second crisis occurred in his worldly affairs, for as a result of the Russian revolution he was deprived of his

estates and his fortune. He had to begin anew, to live entirely by his work as a refugee on German soil. In 1919 he married a granddaughter of Bismarck.

According to his autobiography, Count Keyserling used to feel that his thoughts and his writings were ahead of his own day and that for this reason he would not be in any way representative of his age. The extraordinary success of the *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* in Germany, however, has disproved this, a fact quickly seized upon by his publisher Otto Reichl, at whose suggestion and at the invitation of the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig von Hessen, he opened the School of Wisdom in Darmstadt in 1920.

The meaning and aim of this school can be gathered from the English prospectus, issued by the Society for Free Philosophy, Darmstadt, Paradeplatz 2, whose scope is to support the School materially. Its particular teachings, which aim at nothing else than a regeneration of mankind on the new basis created by the War, are embodied in Count Keyserling's book *Schoepferische Erkenntniss*, published in 1922. He is now the head of a large movement of spiritual renewal, and he spends most of his time as a lecturer and public speaker.

Although the world at large regards Keyserling as a philosopher, he feels himself in his activity at Darmstadt rather in the capacity of a statesman or field-marshal. Those who have never met him and are about to read his Travel Diary, should be reminded of the fact that the most remarkable qualities of Count Keyserling are to be found less in his writings than in his life, that is to say in the man himself.

INTRODUCTION

THIS volume should be read like a novel. Although a considerable part consists of elements created in me by the external stimulus of a journey round the world, and although it contains many objective descriptions and abstract commentaries which might well have been written separately, this book in its entirety represents, nevertheless, an inwardly conceived and inwardly coherent work of fiction, and only those who regard it as such will understand its real meaning. Concerning this meaning I will say nothing in advance. It will be revealed to those who are prepared to follow the wanderer willingly through his many moods and transformations, never forgetting that facts as such never are an object to me, but only a means of expressing their significance, which exists independently of them. They must not take offence when they find that observations on the cultures of foreign places alternate with personal introspection, that precise descriptions follow upon poetic re-creations; that many, perhaps most, of my descriptive passages do justice rather to potentialities than to facts; above all, my readers must not be led astray by the contradictions necessarily imposed on me by a change of point of view or mood which I have sometimes forborne to explain in so many words. Those who are prepared to read my book in this spirit will, I hope, before they reach the end, have caught a glimpse not so much of a philosophy possible in theory, but rather of an attitude of soul and mind capable of attainment in practice, in which many an ominous problem will appear to be solved from the beginning, irreconcilable contradictions will pass away, and a newer and fuller significance will be revealed.

To assist the reader who is concerned chiefly with the recognition of specific details I have added an extensive index, in order to save him a laborious search for the various passages which have reference to similar problems.

Thus I wrote in June 1914. My book was to have appeared in the autumn of that year. War was declared and, as a result, until Esthonia was occupied by German troops,

every means of communication between my publisher and myself was cut off. He had in his possession the first volume ready to go to press and I was left with the proofs of the second. In spite of the long interval of time which has elapsed I am publishing my diary on the whole unaltered. In so far as the book owes its existence to an oriental attitude of mind, it belongs altogether to the 1911–14 period of my creative efforts, and for this reason any attempt to rewrite it from a different point of view could only have detracted from its merits. Only the last two sections – America and Rayküll – have not only been altered during the war, but rewritten almost entirely. I found this step necessary in order to complete my undertaking. In 1914 I was so much influenced by the East that I was unable to express myself adequately as a Westerner; as a result, certain relevant passages lacked clarity and conviction; in order to round off and to complete the whole in accordance with my conception, in order to give in the 'Finale' the living *Fazit* of my digressions round the world – for this task I was altogether too close to my object. To-day I believe I have done as much towards this end as my faculties permit. The long, oppressing period of horror came to benefit at least one creative effort.

PART ONE: TO THE TROPICS

THE TRAVEL DIARY OF A PHILOSOPHER

I

BEFORE THE START

WHY should I still go travelling? – My wandering days lie behind me; past are the times in which the mere acquisition of material enriched me inwardly. In those days inward growth coincided with the expansion of the surface; I was mentally in the position of the child whose body must grow primarily before one can speak of development in any other sense. However, no child, no matter how vital it may be, grows indefinitely. At one time or another, every one reaches the critical stage, at which he can go no further in the former sense, and the question presents itself: whether he is to stagnate entirely or to transfer his development into a new dimension. And, since life, wherever it is not exhausted, is incapable of stagnation, the necessary change of dimension takes place automatically at a certain age. Every individual, as he becomes mature, strives after greater depth and involution from the very same motives which in his earlier years directed his efforts to expansion and enrichment. If I stop to compare the kind and the degree of my present power and desire for experience with that of a previous period, I notice one fundamental difference: in earlier days every new impression, every new fact entered into my growing individuality as an integral factor, and my individuality grew in proportion to the quantity of facts it took in. Through every new experience I gained a new means of expression; every new point of view strengthened my consciousness of self, and therefore it was not senseless if I lived in the hope, as it were, of snatching from without what spurred me on from within, though it had not yet revealed itself to me. By the time that my organs grew stronger I had learnt to control them better; when new formations within my being became less frequent and the soul of the whole came to manifest itself in every particular more and more, my interest in particulars began to wane proportionately. It had never been more than preliminary, one may almost say, a pretext to me. To-day no fact as such troubles me any

more. I am not fond of reading, I hardly need my fellow-men, and I am tending more and more towards the life of a hermit, in which shape I can doubtlessly fulfil my destiny better than in any other. There is no help for it: I am a metaphysician and can be nothing else (no matter what else I may undertake, be it successful or not), and this means that I am seriously interested only in the world's potentialities, not in its actualities. As a matter of habit and partially as a form of self-discipline, I keep up with the progress of the natural sciences, I go on studying the peculiarities of those who cross my path, or I read the books in which they have expressed themselves, but all this concerns me no more. What, then, is the explanation of the deeply rooted instinct which bade me travel round the world – an instinct no less imperious than the one which in earlier days bade me move, in unfailing sequence, from clime to clime, to maintain the equilibrium of my precarious health by external means? It is not curiosity: my antipathy towards all 'sight-seeing,' in so far as it does not bear any relation to my inner aspirations, has steadily increased. Nor is it in pursuit of any search, for there is no longer any particular problem which my being could take really seriously. The impulse which drives me into the wide world is precisely the same as that which drives so many into monasteries: the desire for self-realisation.

Some years ago, when I determined to live at Rayküll, I imagined that I needed the world no longer. And indeed I would not have stood in need of it had I conceived my goal to be the ripening of ideas which had already begun to shoot in me, for their development is nowhere less endangered than in seclusion, which is poor in, or barren of, external stimulus. But I expected more than that of Rayküll. I had hoped that its seclusion would help me to that ultimate self-realisation, thanks to which the thoughts which would come to me might appear as the pure expression of metaphysical reality; I had hoped that there I would grow beyond all accidental fetters of time and space. This hope was disappointed. I had to recognise, that although in my solitude I became more and more 'myself,' it was not in the metaphysical but in the em-

pirical sense, and that was the precise opposite of what I aimed at. I had to recognise that it was too early for me to renounce the world. For most mortals personality may signify the greatest of blessings: it is the tragedy of tragedies for the metaphysician that he cannot ever entirely overcome his own individuality. Keats says of the poet: 'The poetical nature has no self – it is everything and nothing; it has no character – a poet has no identity – he is continually in for and filling some other body.' He might have added that the poet ought above all to be selfless in this sense, and that only in so far as he succeeds in this, is he capable of fulfilling his calling. The same is true in a higher degree and in a far profounder sense of the metaphysician: the relation of the metaphysician to the poet is comparable with the relation of the poet to the actor. The comedian presents, the poet creates; the metaphysician anticipates in his mind every possible representation and creation. Therefore he must never look upon any form as final, never feel himself identical with anything or anyone; the centre of his consciousness must coincide with that of the world; he must look upon every separate appearance from God's point of view. This is especially so where his own individuality and his own philosophy are concerned. Rayküll did not favour this process of interiorisation. I, like so many others, began to regard the possibilities of the world as being exhausted by some purely personal formula, to treat private and accidental peculiarities as necessary attributes of Being. I began to become 'Personality.' And thus I recognised how wise Pythagoras and Plato had been in extending their wanderings right into the later stages of their mature manhood. The inevitable process of crystallisation must be averted as long as possible; as long as possible Proteus must remain Protean, because only men with a Protean nature are called to the priesthood of metaphysics. I therefore determined to return to the world.

How far does the world help towards the self-realisation which I desire? We are usually told that the world hinders it. It helps him whose nature possesses the corresponding qualities, by forcing his soul continually to ever-new formations.

Since I grew up impressions as such do not really mean anything to me; my mind does not gain by the mere acquisition of new material. But then again, my psychical being as a whole now reacts differently according to the circumstances in which it finds itself, and these differences open up to me vistas of realities which have hitherto been hidden from me. To the immutable, once he has reached maturity, the world can, of course, be of no use; the more he sees, experiences and learns, the more superficial does he become, because he has to understand many aspects of reality with organs which have, so to speak, been trained to observe only one particular angle of it, which must needs lead him to receive false impressions. Such a man would do well to remain in his own sphere. On the other hand, the supple individual, who is transformed by new surroundings in accordance with their peculiarities, can never experience enough, for he gains profundity from every metamorphosis. By feeling in his own body and soul how limited every form is in general, what sensations each experience gives him in particular, how one is linked to another, the centre of his consciousness gradually sinks to the bottom where Being truly dwells. When he has cast anchor there, he is no longer in danger of placing an exaggerated value on any single phenomenon; he will understand instinctively all special experience from the point of view of its universal significance. A God lives thus from the beginning, by virtue of his nature. Man slowly approaches the same condition by passing through the whole range of experience.

I therefore begin my journey round the world. Europe has nothing more to give me. Its life is too familiar to force my being to new developments. Apart from this, it is too narrowly confined. The whole of Europe is essentially of one spirit. I wish to go to latitudes where my life must become quite different to make existence possible, where understanding necessitates a radical renewal of one's means of comprehension, latitudes where I will be forced to forget that which up to now I knew and was as much as possible. I want to let the climate of the tropics, the Indian mode of consciousness, the Chinese code of life and many other factors, which

I cannot envisage in advance, work their spell upon me one after the other, and then watch what will become of me. When I shall have perceived all the co-ordinates, I ought also to have determined their centre. I ought then to have passed beyond all accidents of time and space. If anything at all will lead me to myself, a digression round the world will do so.

2

THE MEDITERRANEAN

Now all external connection with what binds me ordinarily has been cut off. No news, no letter will reach me. The feeling of freedom is bliss. Of course, in the sense in which the majority understand the word, few men are less dependent than I. I have no outward profession, no family to worry about, no duties to rob me of my time. I can do or leave undone what I will. But in my sense I would be free only if I were also unfettered by all psychic ties, if I could awake each morning as a *quasimodogenitus* – and as yet I fail to achieve this end without a certain measure of violence. The mental relationship within which a man lives confines his being not only inwardly, it is simultaneously an ever-present external world to him, and this external world can become so importunate that consciousness, especially there where it imagines that it represents the innermost being, in fact only reflects the former and therefore fails to get beyond the reflection of external circumstances. The position is rendered even worse in the case of apparently favoured mortals by the creations which they themselves give to the world. The effect of their own efforts forms a new network of relationships, which naturally interest their originators and often occupy them pleasantly, but inevitably lead them astray from the essential. Strange to say, many mentally active people appear to see an aim worth striving for in precisely that which I regard as a catastrophe. No matter how they may interpret their behaviour, they are content to be the exponents of, or mere factors in, given

conditions and relations. They feel no impulse to live beyond the ready-made world in that more real sphere where significance is the primary reality and all facts are reborn as symbols. Thus they are satisfied to be heads of schools and mental leaders; thus they venerate in their individuality or in their systems (which in principle comes to the same thing) man's highest possession. I, on the other hand, see in the highest conceivable idea only abstract representation; in the best possible system only a rigid skeleton, in all facts only a chemical precipitate, so to speak, and in all individuality only an expression or a means of expression of that which alone possesses unqualified value. For this reason I cannot content myself with being a factor or an exponent, I cannot see a final aim in representing an idea or in developing one. The ultimate problem is not that of placing new phenomena into the world or of preserving and continuing old ones, however useful it may be in the penultimate sense. Our aim must be to recognise or to present in given phenomena, whether they be invented or discovered, that which, being unformed in itself, conditions from within all formations. How can a man succeed in this who has given up his being entirely to any one finite creation? I do not think I have ever given myself up altogether to one, not even to my own creation. Never, as far as I know, have I felt myself to be identical with my individuality or with my work. From my youth up I have progressively broken with the man of yesterday and rejected every completed piece of work just as the pistil rejects the ripe anther. But I am not yet sufficiently free inwardly to disregard all externals. My consciousness is caught again and again in psychic fetters and I need to expend deliberate effort to tear myself away, and sometimes my power to do so fails me. Moreover, the necessary exertion becomes constantly greater because the network of relationships to which I belong, ideally speaking, grows daily, and becomes ever denser and more confused. At times I feel something like fear lest I should be entangled after all. Therefore, when all other means fail me, I employ a mechanical device: I take the train and leave my world until I have become so estranged from it that I can

envisage it as a whole and regain my mastery of it. I know that many men, and by no means the worst among them, would disapprove of such measures; one should be strong enough, they say, to exist without any such artificial devices. Yes! one should be, but what if one is too weak? Is one to give up an attainable goal because one cannot reach it by the shortest path? Is one to dissipate the little power that one possesses in order to conquer something which is not an end in itself, but only a means and one which can easily be attained by a slight digression? I confess that in relation to my soul I am a convinced Jesuit, or, expressed more accurately and in a less offensive way: I regard it as a mistake to treat psychic conditions with any more respect or deference than those of external nature. This deficiency of character – if it be such – is, after all, an external factor, not my real ego, and to the outer world I owe no reverence. In fact, instead of being troubled that I should have to apply external means, I am content to find that my soul is sufficiently naïve to react so energetically and so rapidly to such simple methods as the mechanical exclusion of impressions and the like.

Women reckon with their fundamental weakness as they do with any fact that is self-evident. They regard a man who is unable to excite love as clumsy, unless perchance love means nothing to him. Thereby they show not only a superior knowledge of the race but also a profounder understanding of life than most philosophers possess. Soul is nature and must be treated and judged as such; its processes are not primarily related to any spiritual values. This fact, of course, allows us to draw more than one conclusion in practice. It is not necessary to escape its dictates: if one wishes, it is possible by imagination to graft the highest values upon any natural condition; thus passion has been hallowed in marriage, and murder in the High Court of Justice, and that is right and just. Whatever alternative a man may choose depends upon the aims which he has set himself. My own forbid me, for the present, to continue in any particular shape or form. Therefore I must also not take them too seriously.

3

THE SUEZ CANAL

THE air that flows about me gives a mighty stimulus to my imagination. In the blue-grey moonlit night the violet-coloured desert seems to reach beyond the horizon in the East; above me, at a terrifying height, far higher than I have ever seen them before, the stars glitter in their courses, and high, high above them their vault is spread. Space here seems incredibly immense and almost becomes spaceless. I am overcome by a kind of *horror vacui*. I feel as if this dead world cried for life; like the djinn in the bottle which imprisoned him, I feel impelled to grow out of the shell of my body until the emptiness around me shall be filled. And behold! from the travails of my soul, before me, above me, between heaven and earth, finite and yet all penetrating, I see a tremendous figure in the process of materialisation, the figure of One whose body is like unto a thunder-cloud, whose being is the tension of violence held in check. But a little while ago and He was not there. Yet as soon as He is there He becomes the centre of the world. He, the all too personal, is the soul of this impersonal universe! Therefore the meaning of this great silence is only the suspense of our breath before the storm and this deep and solemn stillness is nothing but the prelude to catastrophe. What would happen if He who is above us should give way to burning wrath? In the desert the Samun rises and the sandstorm carries away the dunes.

This is the God to whom the people of the desert pray. He is not Allah, nor Jahveh. He is none of the historical Gods, who from dark beginnings have, thanks to cumulative inheritance, risen from minor potentates to be the Prince of Heaven. But He is at the root of all of them, He continues to live in all of them as an ancestor continues to live in His distant descendants. And occasionally He appears again in His own intrinsic form. When the languished tribes of Israel believed themselves to be chastened in the wilderness, it was He whom they saw threatening above them. When the Bedouins hide themselves before the Samun, it is He before whose terror they quail.

It is the God of the Desert. Wherever imaginative man penetrates into the universe which surrounds him, it brings forth spirits and gods. The creatures thus born into the world appear different according to the peculiarity of the parents; sometimes the maternal, and at other times the paternal, blood predominates. In Greece the gods took after the paternal strain, the maternal one can hardly be discerned; it would almost seem as if it mattered little who they were. In the case of the gods of the desert it was the mother who gave them their character. Irresistibly and apparently inevitably the expanse of sand generates the offspring of violent despots. This dead universe calls for life, this rigid equilibrium cries for arbitrariness, as the stillness hankers after the storm. I doubt whether the tribes of the desert possess much power of imagination: how simple, how almost needy are the characteristics of their divinities! Yet the smallest seed implanted into heaven by the desert unfolds itself in an immense apparition, so that the simplest form, like the pyramid, gains greatness by its mere dimensions.

The straight Suez Canal, this immense work of human hands, which cleaves the desert so cruelly in twain, fits marvellously into its natural surroundings. This canal too is the product of an arbitrary act, a fate imposed upon the desert by a superior will. Here man has indeed created like a god.

4

THE RED SEA

A LARGE portion of my travelling companions consider that the heat has brought them nigh unto perdition. What lack of imagination! It is true that in the North such intensity of heat might become dangerous, for there it would be unnatural. Under otherwise constant conditions an excessive rise in temperature explodes the balance of the elements which constitute a given climate, and since our bodies exist in relation to their surroundings, such disintegration might easily destroy

their organisms. But here the heat belongs necessarily to everything else – its absolute degree is not too high; anybody sufficiently imaginative should therefore rejoice at it, at any rate at first, for the passage of time weakens our adaptability; but at the beginning the unusual factor of the experience acts as a stimulus and for this reason I would not be surprised if during the first month I should only experience the positive element of this tropical climate.

How beautifully everything belongs together here: the climate, the colours, the outlines, the animals, the sea! Every time when I sight a new being I feel as if a foreboding had come to be realised: an animal in these latitudes must look just as it does and not otherwise. Imaginative syntheses of this kind no doubt include many a Hysteron-Proteron, but the mere recognition of this fact does not solve the question. There really does seem to be a necessary connection between all the component elements of a world, so that the knowledge of some of them should enable one in some degree to foresee the others. I have often, when visiting the zoological gardens, drawn correct conclusions from the mere nature of an unfamiliar animal of its home, even in cases where I lacked all previous knowledge. Such deductive combinations succeed with ease if one has a sufficient idea of the general character of the country and the peculiarities of the type to which the animal in question belongs. In this way the Chinese stag, for instance, can easily be recognised, in fact it would be possible in principle to construct the particular animal *a priori* if one knows 'Stag' sufficiently and if one is familiar with Chinamen in their own surroundings.

But for all that, it *is* very hot. I feel as if the hottest days of August were upon me. Slowly my consciousness withdraws from my limbs, which find ample occupation by their changed surroundings, and it remains in serene contemplation of the Erythraic coast.

5
ADEN

THE black Continent possesses the greatest creative power of any in the world. Whatever has its origin in Africa remains African for ever in mind and spirit. In the museum the gorilla stands out against his native background, the zebra and the ostrich conjure the breath of dried-up steppes into the sweetest spring landscape, but the inhabitants of Africa have saturated the country into which they have been transplanted with their own soul to such an extent that the white man there sings nigger tunes in order to give vent to his feelings. To know this it is not essential to have lived in Africa. And yet, unless I had gone on shore at Aden, I would scarcely have realised to what a degree this apparent abstraction, this 'Africa,' is a reality. Here the rocky landscape and man, the expanse of sand, the huts of rushes and the vultures, the dromedaries and the burdens which they bear, form one single thundering major chord. There is something absolutely fundamental about this chord and yet each simple note of which it is composed rings out so pure and clear in harmony with the others that each tone which one happens to notice most at any given moment seems to be the key to the chord. Their harmony is almost exaggerated; it is so great that its elements are almost denied all chance of existence: there is no such thing as individual peculiarity here. On the other hand, the hyperindividual significance of everything is so manifest and so powerful that the general similarity does not appear as being stereotyped, but on the contrary impresses us as the highest type – like the type in Greek art – for which reason all repetition produces the effect of rhythmic sequence.

The naked negroes look magnificent. Sculpture in all seriousness would be meaningless here. Among us Europeans the body is usually a heavy inert mass, and it is the function of the artist to give expressive values to its substance. For this very reason he means so much to us. In Africa natural form creates, in me at any rate, a greater inner elation than most works of art. There are only very few sculptors who have

done better work than Nature, who have realised in a higher degree than she has the possibilities of the human form. Most of them have fallen far, far short of their model, especially in regard to its artistic complex, that is to say, the suggestive power of their creation. Only the very highest art has the significance which our æsthetes would have us ascribe to all forms of art. Shall I pronounce it? Artists owe the enormous esteem in which they are held to a circumstance which, although it may continue to exist for ever, does not detract from its accidental nature. The sculptor owes it to the fact that our body, thanks to its having been clothed throughout many centuries, has lost the power of manifesting its innate expressive values, for which reason we regard it as a revelation when an artist realises it in his creations. The poet owes it to the fact that most people have lost almost all their sensitivity and must be shown an alien sensation, which awakens a sympathetic echo in their souls, in order to feel.

All men whom I have seen here are beautiful. The negroes, especially in their bodies; the Arabs, who gallop past me again and again through the sandy streets on their noble steeds, in their characteristic heads! These men are as fair as animals; their bodies are equally expressive. The reason is that they all seem typified. Beauty is never an expression of the individual: its idea includes the perfection of those tendencies of form whose expression marks the outlines of the race. Therefore, in attaining beauty something becomes perfected, which is more than individual. Here lies the reason of her compelling universal character, from everybody's point of view, provided they are alive to similar tendencies of form; for every limited possibility is only capable of one supreme form of realisation. It is impossible to conceive a higher degree of harmonious and general perfection of the human body than that which Greek art has revealed to us; this is why we call its creations absolutely beautiful! From this point of view alone, on the other hand, can the objective character of æsthetic judgments be understood fully: be they related to natural forms, their artistic representations or be they mere arabesques: the whole of nature is ruled by an identical mechanism and an identical

stereometry, so that proportions, presupposing creation to be what it is, are conceivable everywhere which embody an objective optimum. In such judgments the question of subjectivity does not arise. In the case of types of national beauty (just as in the case of specific styles of art) this objectivity is limited to a narrower sphere; it has a meaning only for those who admit certain premises whose validity may be subject to discussion. But once these premises are admitted, then taste no longer plays any part. The negroes of Aden possess perfect beauty because the type of their race gains perfect expression in them.

From the above it is evident that beauty in the sense of bodily perfection can never be symbolic for an individual. Not one of the magnificent brows of these Arabs conceals an even approximately comparable intelligence. It was not for nothing that Socrates was the ugliest of Greeks – it is not without reason that we are surprised to find intelligence in a perfectly beautiful woman. Physical beauty and individual significance do not only belong to different dimensions, they are antagonistic in so far as, everywhere in nature, where the type predominates, the individual suffers accordingly. Beauty in its real sense is always superindividual, that is to say, typified beauty, and a type is generally violated by strong individualities. The truth of this statement is most apparent in only partially developed peoples such as the Germans and the Russians; in their case the important individuals differ physically from the ideal of the race far more than any member of the average population. It is least noticeable in completely crystallised nations like the British. That the latter statement, however, does not give my fundamental assertion the lie, is proved by the fact that the original individual belonging to a completely developed race is almost without exception less original than in the case of incompletely developed ones. Modern England will not produce a Shakespeare.

6

THE INDIAN OCEAN

How very northern I am, in spite of all! This sea is more vast and profound than any which I ever crossed – and yet it fails to create the effect upon me which the ocean usually does. The soft, almost sickly colours do not allow my consciousness to receive an impression of grandeur. As I look upon the expanse with its pink undertones, I can only think: this is the pasture and the playground of the dolphin.

The reason is: I am a Northerner. There is no actual greatness in sheer physical expanse: unless it suggests a corresponding heightening of the observer's self-consciousness, it does not signify greatness, and whether or not it causes such a process to be set up, depends upon personal factors. Generally speaking, magnificent views of nature such as the mountains, the desert and the sea (I do not mention the sky at night because we are too familiar with it, for which reason it has almost no significance in the sense in which I mean) give a sense of exaltation to every human being. In the face of such a spectacle our hearts begin to forbode that the limit of our temporal nature does not necessarily limit our being and that it somehow depends upon us whether our being is finite or infinite. The immense forces which we behold outside ourselves, and which we are yet forced to regard as in some sense belonging to us, destroy – just as passion does from within – the armour of our prejudices. Quite unconsciously our ego expands; we then recognise our individuality as an insignificant portion of our true selves; we feel ourselves to be greater, more generous and noble – but also less important and more mean, which in this case comes to the same thing. The only factor which in these typical effects varies in each instance with the special circumstances is its degree. Would an Indian dream of the gods which the vision of the Himalayas quite naturally creates in his soul when he beholds the shimmering icebergs of the North Sea? – Probably he would shiver too much, he would become godless by reason of the excessive cold. I, on the other hand, strive in vain in the Indian Ocean to recall the sensations which

the Atlantic and the North Sea have created in me so often. The oppressive closeness, the mildness and sweetness of my surroundings, are incompatible to my mind with the elements of grandeur. Their effects dull my nervous system. And just as though I were a woman, I am honestly interested only in the details in the midst of all this vastness; so, for instance, I delight to-day in the curves which the fishes describe in their whizzing flight from wave to wave.

Yes, indeed, I am a Northerner. Once more Proteus stands at the extremity of his confines; the Indian Ocean is incapable of being the North Sea for him. However easy it be to find a new centre for my psycho-physical being, it is difficult to change its elements. It is a process that becomes possible only through the gradual passage of time. Do I not resemble the criminal who fails time after time to escape from his prison? Again and again I imagine that I have escaped from my personality, and again and again I am caught up in its meshes. I have to recognise, whether I like it or not, that there are certain factors in me which are not subject to my volition; that I, however free I may appear to be, as a phenomenon am only a factor in the structure of the world.

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CLOTHES are said to lack significance? Creatures who are in the habit of walking about in a dressed condition carry with them their own picture mirrored in their consciousness, and for them their clothes are no less essential than their body. I fancy that the great men are rare (just as the fools are many) who have not at one time or another found their own external style and then been true to it. The divine gift of vanity brought many a good thing in its wake. Anyone who has brought his costume and his nature into harmony satisfies not only his personal and æsthetic requirements, not only his consideration for his fellows – he has found in fact a means of expression for himself. Why does a sensitive person change his clothes before joining the social throng of his fellows? Because in changing his garments he changes the man within them. And in the same way the discovery of an external style renders the inner being free. No

one is really without vanity, nor should he be; every one looks at himself in the glass. For this reason he behaves with much less embarrassment if his appearance corresponds with his being. By this I do not wish by any means to deny the justification of fashion, quite on the contrary: for the large majority it will always furnish the best possible means of expression, because the majority do not possess the peculiarities of distinction, and because fashion as a rule does complete justice to the general requirements of its followers. And the same is true of the distinguished individual whose greatness depends on the perfection of his type, a Castiglione or an Edward the Seventh. If, however, an artist with an abnormal structure of the skull should fail to wear a flowing mane, he would lose his personal style and for this reason sacrifice a portion of his expressive ability. – How do I come to make this observation? This evening there is a fancy-dress ball on board which I am compelled to attend, whether I like it or not.

There is after all much to be learned from masquerading. Not, of course, in the case of the comedian, where appearance and real nature belong anyhow to two different planes, but especially in the case of people who have little or no talent for acting. In the latter case appearance and reality, in spite of every desire to the contrary, remain in harmony and the result can lead to nothing short of revelation. I do not suggest that because a man looks at his best in the costume of the eighteenth century, it is thereby proved that the spirit of this age is the spirit of its wearer, but it is true that his fancy dress (which after all is only a method of clothing yourself with a certain purpose) assists in expressing certain traits of his being which in the ordinary course of events remain in the background. In this way the process of dressing-up can not only heighten or lessen the man's power of expression: it can indeed bring about self-realisation. A lessening of expressive power is the usual result because the natural expression is normal to the majority. His fancy dress reveals what the man is, amongst other things, not what he is essentially; it alters, as it were, the centre of his being. The same process brings about a heightening of the expressive power in those individuals

whose calling and surroundings only permit them, in the ordinary course of their lives, to convey but a part of themselves. Such people are in their fancy dress more, or in a better sense, themselves than they are otherwise in their 'real' existence. The most interesting case is the extreme instance of that mentioned last – the case where the man is not himself at all in everyday life and is born for the first time at the fancy-dress ball. There is no doubt that many a man does not fit either into his age or into his profession or into the world that gave him birth. Their 'reality' is, regarded metaphysically, only a semblance. Thanks to a mask such people sometimes find their own truth. I see in front of me two men of the world who are wearing the costumes of apaches, and I am almost prepared to swear that it is not their present simulation but their habitual mode of life which is expressive of their comedy in the eyes of God.

And this reminds me of James Moriers' immortal Hadji-Baba of Ispahan, in which he describes in an inimitable fashion the Eastern power of permutation. Grand Vizier to-day, to-morrow a barber and the day after ascetic, and yet entirely at home in each of these parts. The instability of every situation in oriental life makes it easier there not to take any of its forms too seriously. Accordingly their judgment of values differs in proportion. A man is regarded always as being what he represents, wherefore his behaviour assumes an importance which the modern Westerner can scarcely comprehend. How could it be otherwise? If appearance is not really taken seriously, then its semblance must be hypostatised. We Westerners believe instinctively in the divine preordination of a man's external position in life, and for this reason we consider form of less account than they do in the East; on the other hand, where form appears to us to be a necessity, we credit it with a metaphysical reality. The nobleman must play the part of noblemen in every situation in life and so on and so forth. – On the other hand, what we conceive to be possible in America proves that fundamentally we are not as unwise as we appear: we do not transplant our demands over there. Even the nobleman who was luckless on this side of the water may earn his

living on the other as a waiter; there even he will accept douceurs and tips without a flicker of the eyelids.

A research student whose profession causes him to travel through the length and breadth of India and who appears to be a distinguished connoisseur of the country and of the people, proposed to me that I should join him; I would thereby gain a profounder insight into the life of the Indians. The curious position in which I am placed makes me smile: in case I accepted this piece of good luck I would sacrifice the whole purpose of my journey. What do the facts as such concern me? And if they did, would I travel for their sake? Specialists have been everywhere before me; their discoveries are at every one's disposal. The observations which I could make would undoubtedly be of less value than those made by men who are specially qualified for such tasks. It would be clearly waste of energy and time for me to do what others can do better. Young and talented people are fond of asserting that man must be capable of everything. However, man is *not* capable of everything and the small achievements which he may call his own suffer by the diffusion of his attention. It is curious that politicians of all human types, although they are the least thoughtful metaphysically, are the only variety who understand how to differentiate between their person and the brains they make use of. They alone are not concerned who executes a piece of work, provided it is well done. The philosopher, however, blushes at the mere possibility that his mind might not be omniscient and instead of increasing his own powers to the utmost by a correct judgment of himself and by undertaking only what his nature is fitted for, and by employing minds better suited to tasks which are alien to his nature, he spoils his own work by his illusion that he represents the Almighty *in propria persona*. This protective gesture of vanity is comprehensible in insignificant people; the philosopher is an organiser on the vastest of scales; he could afford to be less fettered in mind. Well, as far as I am concerned myself, in so far as I am free I can only claim to be so since yesterday. To think of all the enterprises that I have undertaken since the early days of my adolescence! Passage of time makes one more

wise. To-day I trust other eyes better than my own when precise observation is at stake; whenever the impressionability of the experimentalist may cause an experiment to lose in power of conviction, I substitute my nervous system by that of a more robust nature; if a logical chain is to be construed in order to link recognised premises to a fact which is guessed at, I leave the task, whenever possible, to better logicians than myself, and all intuitions which concern specialists I pass on to them as suggestions whenever they seem to me to be worth considering. As far as my own person is concerned, I confine myself to penetrating into the significance of things. And in this connection the agglomeration of too many facts is not a help but a hindrance. The basic tones of a world can be perceived in a few chords by anyone capable of listening to them at all. Too much music confuses the ear.

The necessity of limiting the subject of one's consideration is theoretically recognised by everybody, but very few people seem to know that the tool, the Ego, also requires limitation; this is especially true of the impressions to which the Ego is exposed; for this reason people like myself are so often apostrophised as cranks, egoists and eccentric individualists. I, for instance, am considered on board to be haughty because I retire whenever and as far as possible from the company of my fellow-travellers, whereas the real explanation is that I can only exercise my specific mental powers in complete seclusion. If I am to do the work which has been set me, my nervous system must be perfectly in tune, my attention disengaged and my mind free. These conditions on their part also involve other conditions. It may well be that such considerations detract from one's merits as a human being in the course of time, but this objection is of no significance; for a mental worker must be sufficiently unselfish to bear the risk of any possible injury to himself. He must – let me describe the position by an extreme and mythical instance – be ready to forfeit his eternal bliss, if an unholy life can help him to a profounder recognition. He must live for his problem in the same way as the good mother lives for her child. Unfortunately it is not true that all forms of perfection lie in the

same direction; the perfection of a work of art demands different conditions from the perfection of personal existence. Now, whenever the choice has to be made between a mediocre realisation of one's self in life and an important one in one's work, the latter is always to be preferred. A profound recognition discovered and expressed by an imperfect being may benefit the whole of humanity. To place human perfection in this sense above everything else, as is usually the case, is a proof not only of the most primitive form of egoism but also of a fundamental misconception. Who lives literally 'unto himself,' and who could do so? No one. There is no difference in the sight of God between the man who strives after personal perfection or the man who lives for his work or for his fellows or for his children. Everyone aims at something beyond the individual. For even that which probably survives death, that ego whose immortality the Christian postulates, is not to be found in human personality: it is its fruit to which it only gives birth.

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I HAVE actually counted twenty-three different nationalities amongst the passengers. One ought to suppose therefore that my fellow-travellers present anything but a homogeneous impression. However, the precise reverse is true; the various individuals hardly differ from one another, if I disregard external similarities or their innermost life and judge them from the point of view of their tangible character alone.

This is the result of simply being together for fourteen days in the not even closely restricted space of an ocean liner. I wonder whether there was any difference whatever between Noah, his lions and his sheep towards the end of their journey during the flood? – Each individual as a phenomenon is only as much as he is able to express, and he becomes greater or lesser, thus or different in accordance with the traits which are accepted by his surroundings: this explains the immense power of milieu. The milieu of Paris, for instance, enlarges every mind which is in any way congenial to it. It is possible to understand there what one would never have arrived at oneself

and such understanding awakens new ideas. In Paris, whose cultured circles are mentally the most agile in the world, this process of development takes place with such rapidity that thought is never actually at rest and with a sudden impetus one is lifted up from one level to another, reaching a height one could never have attained in other surroundings. For this reason minds which have been trained in great capitals – such as ancient Athens, Florence, Alexandria, Rome, Paris – are always superior to those that have developed in the provinces. – Conversely the herding together for a long period on a steamer results in such banalisation that ultimately the difference between man and beast disappears. In such surroundings only the most banal traits (that is to say, the very traits which fine personalities ignore both in themselves and in others from a feeling of tact) make themselves felt, and since a man's immediate surroundings continually present him with their likeness he becomes so conscious of them that in the end he himself becomes transformed in accordance with the conception that his surroundings have of him. – The milieu of an ocean liner appears to me like the best possible caricature of the 'World,' that mighty institute for indigence. I am anything rather than hostile to the world; every one, no matter who he be, must remain in touch with his fellows if he is not to cripple his mentality, and perhaps contact with so-called society is the best means to this end. The manners and customs of social life force one to pay attention to people whom one might otherwise disregard; the average human element predominates and finds expression in a form which makes it appear acceptable. It is precisely men who are mentally lonely, philosophers, who should be men of the world if they mean to prevent fatal retrogression in their development. But there is an immense difference between retaining contact and visiting this world, and becoming its victim. To become its victim always involves serious mental impoverishment. There is, however, one exception and that is the type of man whom I would call the representative type. There are men, above all there are women, who throw away their lives in the most senseless fashion and yet do not deteriorate in the process; in

fact, it seems to develop them. The type that I refer to reached its perfection in the eighteenth century. Is a mode of life conceivable, more empty than that of the great ladies of those days? Real love was unknown to them, they had no serious interests of any kind; the whole of their existence was spent in tittle-tattle. And yet many among them were profound and their profundity was not impeded by their form of life; on the contrary, it gave them a means of expression. It gave a soul to their esprit and to their art of living. And for this reason the frivolity of this period occasionally gives an impression of gravity and profundity which strikes us as being strange and makes one dream.

Milieu. While I am on the subject I would like to pursue a course of thought, odd though it is, which from time to time reappears in my consciousness. In accordance with the surroundings in which one happens to be, different traits gain predominance; should this not be equally true in the case of one's own surroundings, of that which most people identify with the word: myself? To my mind the differences of character between a child, a man and an octogenarian are nothing but the reflex action of their surroundings. A child of profound self-consciousness anticipates the wisdom of old age, and the octogenarian who is unfettered in his spirit can remain young to the hour of his death: I sometimes explain this to myself by thinking that a different set of peculiarities are manifested according to physical coincidences. The nerves of an old man cannot react as those of a child and vice versa. The same is undoubtedly true of men and women if I regard their differences from the standpoint of the metaphysical self. The ascertained facts of heredity would appear to suggest that every individual contains in a latent form all the peculiarities of his ancestors; and which of these peculiarities are able to manifest themselves depends entirely on circumstances. If an individual – as such, the bearer of the inheritance of his whole ancestry – assumes the shape of a woman, then the manly traits cannot find expression and vice versa. This shows how ridiculous it is to demand feminine virtues of a man, or to reproach a woman with her insufficiency of masculine quali-

ties. It is conceivable that the entity which as a man resulted in Cæsar Borgia, might have found her corresponding feminine expression in the character of a sister of mercy. Why should I not consider further possibilities? – The damp heat removes all my inhibition. I am beginning to feel quite indifferent to my critical powers of perception; I feel tempted to surrender myself completely to the sway of unlimited possibilities. – Suppose there be such a thing as Heaven and a continued existence after death: this form of existence, as it is represented universally in the mythologies of all nations, seems quite inconceivable as long as one assumes that men remain after death what they were before. But would it be impossible to regard 'Heaven' as the kind of inward milieu, in which the negative, the evil and destructive qualities fail to find expression, in exactly the same sense as the feminine potentialities are inexpressible in masculine organisms? On *a priori* grounds there is nothing to be said against this. Only, of course, life in Heaven could not in those circumstances represent a final phase. The boat once more passes through a crowd of rosy-tinted jelly-fishes whose umbrella-like bodies flap to and fro helplessly in the midst of the rushing waters. How would it be if I were to express myself through the physical medium of such a creature? Most of what constitutes the human soul would no doubt remain unmanifested; only a small fraction of my being could show itself. But this fraction would presumably be one which is incapable of expression in human form.

PART TWO: CEYLON

7

COLOMBO

WHAT becomes of me on the green island of Lanka? Every hour I am sensible of a change in me. I feel that in this hothouse air it is futile to work, to wish, to strive; nothing succeeds but what happens of its own accord. And an incredible number of things do happen here by themselves, more than I had ever thought possible. In fact everything within me is happening of its own accord. My volition wanes irresistibly. I am transformed into a gentle, soft creature who enjoys life without ambition and without any creative desire.

The whole of my life has turned into a process of vegetation. But of course this latter concept appears to be true only when drawn from the flora of the tropics, not from that of northern latitudes. There vegetating implies a minimum of life – a form of existence barely sufficient unto itself. Here it implies a maximum. These plants which rise overnight from the earth to the sky resemble gods in their vitality. In Ceylon, as elsewhere, vegetating signifies a form of existence which proceeds without effort, but then effort is superfluous here: everything succeeds without it. Here vegetating becomes the form of all life, even of mental life; the mind becomes rampant, like tropical plants. Already I realise in myself that the mental life of tropical man is comprehensible only from the botanical point of view. His images blossom forth like flowers, wildly, luxuriantly, confusedly, without effort and without the supervision of the gardener, and are therefore irresponsible. It is in this way, no doubt, that we should explain the history of Indian mythology: the stern teaching of the sages of the North-West could not survive for long in the southern districts; its simplicity soon began to develop into aimless exuberance. Thousands of gods sprang from the fruitful soil like mushrooms after rain. Hindooism in its boundless richness can only be understood as a vegetative process.

Nobody identifies himself with a phenomenon which is self-evident; no one centres his self-consciousness in the mere

processes of physiological change, in the circulation of his blood. We only recognise as belonging to our nature what somehow depends on our own determination. Thus no Westerner who wishes to be taken seriously would count the material and external world to himself, but he would lay claim in the above sense to the psychic world, the sphere of thought and imagination. On this natural connection those typically Western philosophies are based, in which Being appears identified with thought, volition or action. In the tropics – I feel it already – it does not occur to one to judge psychic phenomena by a different standard from physical ones; it never enters one's head to take them seriously metaphysically. Everything that happens in me, develops in me as the plants develop out there. It is not I who think, but something thinks in me, it is not I who wish, but something wishes in me. Actually this is what happens everywhere, but in Ceylon, where nature does everything essential, claiming with emphasis for herself all that belongs to her, so that man shall not misunderstand himself, everyone becomes conscious of this truth. For the most mediocre native, Buddha's doctrine of cognition must be a matter of course, while the most cultured European only very exceptionally perceives its truth. The latter is conscious of action precisely where the Oriental recognises inaction; he necessarily inclines to count a portion of external nature unto himself.

The Maya-doctrine, the teaching which proclaims the unreality of the world, is typical of the tropics in the same sense in which naturalism is typical of northern countries. In the north, where man must enter ceaselessly into nature in order to maintain its processes, nothing is more natural to him than to take the latter seriously. If he gives way to these tendencies and makes a system of the views to which they lead, a conception of the world results, according to which man is contained completely within the boundaries of his own psychic processes. If, on the other hand, the processes of nature are assumed as a matter of course, if the mind does not need to concern itself with them in any way, then it is equally natural not to take any phenomena seriously. Moreover, since the

impulse of the will is so small that the wish fails to become father to the thought, all appearances are naturally regarded in such a way that concrete events mean nothing but pretence and make-believe. But this outlook signifies – exactly as its opposite, namely naturalism – no more than a passage *à la limite*, and is for this reason well in accordance with human nature. The significant point to observe here is the following: that the two extremities of the pole harmonise in the position they assume towards the absolute, for they both deny it completely. Naturalism does so because the vivid consciousness of the processes of nature makes their perpetuation into another world seem superfluous; Buddhism does the same for opposite reasons. Everything man can become conscious of in the concrete belongs to nature; wherever nature is felt to be unreal, consciousness turns away, as it were, from its possible content; it becomes more and more empty, till at last nothing remains. In this way the Buddhist of Ceylon regards nothingness as the background of semblance; the world holds no more than that for him. Such a conception can hardly be realised in Europe. Since I am staying in Ceylon I too am beginning to find this point of view tenable.

The doctrine of Maya has been compared with philosophies which in Europe represent the unreality of the world. Such a comparison cannot be made even superficially; all European illusionists, in so far as they can be regarded as honest, were anæmic theorisers who attached greater weight to logical argument than to experience: no Occidental can really believe in Maya. And yet there are minds among us who are justified in sharing the Buddhistic attitude to life. The man whose culture is ancient finds it more and more difficult to realise himself in any form at all; his thoughts, his emotions, his actions mean nothing in relation to himself; he does not and he cannot identify himself with them. Such an attitude is equivalent to that of the Buddhist. But here its consequences are precisely reversed. The condition of the Buddhist is a happy one, for he longs for nothing more than to escape from his particularised existence; the condition of the modern European is tragic, for he is consumed by a passion for exist-

ence; he regards himself as impotent in so far as he fails of self-realisation. To deny existence absolutely, that saving grace of the Buddhistic nihilist, is an impossibility to the vital European. Therefore precisely the same circumstance which made the teaching of Buddha take root in Ceylon, caused at home the success of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's doctrine of the superman is not an expression of greatness, but an expression of the desire for greatness, perhaps the most pathetic expression of that desire which has ever been known.

8

KANDY

THE landscape which unfolds before the traveller, as the spiral of the mountain railway carries him from the oppressive heat of Colombo to the cooler regions of Kandy, is nothing short of magical. The richness of the flora is overwhelming everywhere, but it has its own marked peculiarities at every level, so that the eye, when it looks far down from the heights, beholds not one but many forms of nature, which are either sharply defined, one against the other, or else pass gradually into one another. Perfect beauty abounds everywhere, that beauty which falls to the lot of everything, in which meaning and expression are one. And then Kandy! This peaceful lake encircled by dark green hills, surrounded by trees which blossom like flowers, and embedded between the richest pastures – this lake with its uncertain misty tints in which the brilliant sunshine is reflected only as an echo, looks like a moonstone against a background of dark velvet. When I arrived I was so thrilled that I immediately started for a long walk, and when I returned, feeling weary, I thought, as I reclined in a comfortable arm-chair on my shaded balcony: thou art in paradise. Here even thy boldest expectations have been exceeded, here thy most unlimited wishes are fulfilled; now thou shouldst be completely happy.

Am I? It is ungrateful of me, but I am not. I am not happy precisely because every wish seems to be fulfilled, and in fulfil-

ment all longing is neutralised, and without longing the life that I mean ends. I feel as if my innermost possibility of life were cut off; I have never been in an atmosphere whose suggestive stimulus was less. At the moment it is true that my surroundings stimulate me, but that is not due to them but to the fact that they were strange to me and that their strangeness incites my senses and my mind to enter into ever new relations with new experience. I could imagine that extravagant natures such as those of Gauguin and R. L. Stevenson could find continuous stimulus here, because even superabundance does not satisfy extravagant natures. As far as I am concerned, however, I am convinced that my imagination would soon become paralysed. Here, where everything is fulfilment, the soil for aspiration is lacking.

Longing and fulfilment! Is the normal relation of these two concepts not also the solution of the whole problem, the problem as to why the moderate, not the hot zone has been the scene of all the great actions of the human mind? In a place where everything is at hand, search seems unnecessary, and the ultimate issues have never been found by anyone who was not a seeker; where everything is supplied from outside, there is nothing to give an impulse to the will and slackness has never yet produced heroic action. Idealism cannot flourish where every possibility is realised. For this reason all the original creations from tropical zones bear features which are curiously lacking in spiritual qualities. In the climate of the tropics imagination vegetates, like everything else. No doubt there are occasions when it produces wonderful blossoms, either extravagant in phantasy like the mythology of the gods in folklore, or else oppressively scented like the lyrics of over-refined court poets; every now and again there are products which, like the palm tree, possess strong and powerful outlines. But all these creations, no matter how beautiful they may be, remain in the sphere of nature; they do not emanate from the depths of the mind and the soul, they are not born again of the spirit; they are expressive of spirit only in the sense in which a flower expresses it. Nature, no matter how rich she may be, cannot rise to the heights of spirituality. They can only be

reached by the man who through personal effort rises above the sphere of his origin. The inhabitant of the tropics lacks the necessary impulse because everything possible happens of its own accord; and he lacks the energy to desire the impossible.

His consciousness must be appallingly poor: he is conscious only of what does not happen by itself, and when everything occurs automatically, what remains? He cannot know love either. What we call love is based purely on our power of imagination. Where desire anticipates satisfaction, where representation anticipates reality, that marvellous image is born which becomes richer, more tender and more beautiful in proportion as the distance increases between longing and realisation. For this very reason love in the North has produced blossoms so infinitely more precious than in the south, because in the north the mind loves to dwell in the land of dreams, whereas the south possesses a paramount sense for reality. The further south man lives, the more sensuous, in the animal meaning of the word, does he become and the less active in imagination. The road from longing to fulfilment ultimately becomes so short, that psychic creations are impossible. Experience does not exceed longing and the processes which are born of love in the northern sense become impossible. It appears to be a matter of course in the tropics that those who feel erotic attraction possess each other. When Indian poets speak of longing, they mean the anguish of separated couples who by their separation cease to satisfy themselves; they never mean the longing for the unattainable and for the unseen. In the tropics our longing is unknown.

There is only one form of longing which they can feel and which can remain alive and increase to such a point that finally it appears as a power capable of moving the world: the longing to escape from all superfluity and all abundance. There have been minds in northern countries which have rejected reality, but their motive was never desire for liberation from reality, but dissatisfaction with what it offered. Their negation lacks a really profound motive, their attitude has never therefore become productive on a large scale. In the tropics the longing to be out of the world has proved to be the most creative

impulse. It is this longing alone which has brought the profoundest elements to the surface because the roots of this longing alone really plumb the depths. Indeed, where nothing is left to be desired, superfluity implies limitation in the same sense as does real want in other circumstances; here abundance becomes an obstacle to energetic action, it weakens our sense of life and threatens to strangle self-consciousness. Here it is precisely the powerful mind which is most inimical to the world. It is for this reason that the teachings which seem weakest to us and appear as the excrescence of degeneracy, the teachings which show the worthlessness of existence, are precisely those which possess vigour in the tropics. Spirit seems powerful here only in so far as it tries not to create reality, but to deny it. – The crescent moon is reflected in the lake, in the tops of the palms rumbles the humming of a thousand insects. How I long for Nirvana! How I long for an existence where creation is not over-powerful, where nature does not smother the mind with its luxuriance! How I long for a non-individual, non-defined condition of existence, in which I could be free from all that binds me now, free from joy and sorrow, free from gods and men, and free from myself.

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I AM trying to watch the plants grow; it ought to be possible in Ceylon. The undergrowth literally jumps from the soil; the bamboo shoots upwards to the sky. The whole of creation seems in a constant state of flux; one needs no Heraclitos here in order to make this plain. What a different thing a forest is in the tropics and at home! In the moderate zone 'forest' is a collective concept which embraces in our sense a large number of single trees. Here the forest is the more concrete concept as opposed to the trees, which abstract themselves, as it were, only with difficulty out of the chaotic greenery, and the process of growth is so rapid, so rich, luxuriant and unlimited, and all forms are so interwoven and so inextricably merged into one another, that their outward appearance does not tempt one to formulate a theory of Being: everything is demonstrably in a process of 'becoming,' and beyond this process nothing is to

be found. Every minute that you look about you proves the truth of Buddha's phenomenology.

The latter is undoubtedly the most precise theory of vegetation which has ever been enunciated. In so far as the life of the plant is typical of all life, Buddha has spoken the truth for men also, and that is saying a great deal; all ultimate problems are presented and solved as completely in the plant as in the most highly developed human life and destiny, the problems of freedom, immortality and the ultimate roots of Being. Nevertheless there is something dissatisfying in particularising about man from the nature of plants; one does not wrong his being, but one does injustice to the peculiarities of his nature. In emphasising man's similarity to the plants his essential difference from them is overlooked. While studying the teachings of Buddha I frequently asked myself whether he wished to make plants of men; there is no doubt that he did so. His teaching aims so strongly at the unification of life that the beings who have followed it were bound to develop towards what is common to all. The passivity of the Buddhist has no other significance but that he is a plant-like being.

Since I have been in the tropics I am no longer surprised that Buddha has based his doctrine of salvation on the phenomenology of plant life. Life here is vegetation; body as well as mind vegetates and this vegetation exhausts all the possibilities of physical existence so completely that the question of a possibly higher destiny for man does not arise.

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THE influences of this tropical world have changed my organism sufficiently that I am able to enter into and remain in the Buddhistic consciousness. It is an experience which teaches me much. It is not difficult to do justice to the theory of Buddhism, for its theory is all of a piece with every empyric system of the West; the psychology of Taine, Ernst Mach, William James, the outlook of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Wilhelm Ostwald and even Bergson correspond in fundamentals with the teaching of Buddha, provided each one is regarded from a certain angle and that the measure of common

ground is admitted to be limited in certain directions and to a certain degree. The reason is that all empirical thinkers contemplate action in its actuality. On this assumption the possible results are predestined; in so far as empirical thinkers disagree, disagreement must be traced to differences in perspective and talent. Spencer and Ostwald and Mach would have taught much the same as Bergson did, if their minds had been equally acute, for their intentions were originally the same. The philosophy of Buddha shows the greatest similarity with – of all the Western systems – that of Ernst Mach; both philosophies possess the same advantages and the same weaknesses. The advantages depend on exactitude of observation, and the weaknesses on insufficient profundity of observation. It is conceivable, of course, to see the whole range of reality and possibility condensed in actuality. Acvagosha, the founder of the Mahayana-doctrine, succeeded in doing this six hundred years after Buddha, and Bergson in our day succeeded in doing the same. As a feat of philosophic recognition, regarded from the human point of view, such an achievement must be considered as particularly valuable because the picture which this point of view presents, portrays the peculiar character of the world most completely and with the least possible distortion. But then, Buddha was unable to understand actuality so profoundly, he was unable to contemplate simultaneously that which is and that which is in process of transition; he noticed 'becoming' alone.

It is perfectly intelligible that the abstract minds of scholars are satisfied with an outlook such as that of the Buddhist; a man like Mach felt no metaphysical need, he possessed no religious feeling and he was therefore contented with his phenomenological relativism. A man, on the other hand, who, by powers of recognition, has attained Buddhist results and is moreover in living relation with the universe, will as a rule incline to absolutism; he believes in the absolute in some form or other. This was the case with all the sages of India whose phenomenological outlook agrees in all essentials with that of Buddha; the same is true in the West in the case of Auguste Comte, who even created a religion which was

emotional to the extreme. Fundamentally the same may be said of William James, who believed in a personal God, and also Herbert Spencer, to whom the Unknowable became almost a substance as he grew older. Buddha, on the other hand, founded a religion which is nothing but phenomenological relativism. He did what Ernst Mach would have done if he had announced the result of his analysis of sensations as a gospel. This explains what seems a paradox to the Western observer, what makes the wise Brahmin despise Buddhism and which has hitherto estranged me too. Now, however, I am beginning to understand. Given the physiological assumption which exists for man in the tropics, Buddhism really does mean a gospel or can at any rate mean one.

I need only analyse my own consciousness and how it has been changed in the course of each day. My normal need for action has decreased perceptibly, all my initiative has gone and instead of acting myself I allow events to happen to me. And this gives me the distance to myself normally, which even the most contemplative man in northern countries experiences only rarely. It gives me simultaneously that inner calm which must necessarily precede clear self-recognition. In fact, as I wrote already in Colombo: in the tropics it is not difficult to perceive psychic action objectively. But there is something further: this vegetative action – organic processes resemble vegetation wherever they occur without determination by the ego – is enormously intensive, much more intensive than in northern latitudes; both in body and mind I feel myself to be continuously growing, budding, blossoming and also continually changing and decaying. I have the feeling as if I were being driven onwards restlessly through a ceaseless sequence of births and deaths. The result is twofold: firstly, that I am conscious with extraordinary intensity of the true nature of action which is an endless chain of birth; secondly, I realise that it is impossible for me to look beyond this Samsara; I cannot discover that beyond or outside its instability there is any stability at all. All my consciousness of existence is absorbed by changing formations. On the one hand I do not feel myself identical with these formations, on the other my

consciousness of this non-ego process is so intense that there is no room for an independent ego-consciousness. If I now listen to the teaching of Buddha, from this new basis of experience, according to which there is nothing but a process without beginning and without end, in which unending series of accidents occur, according to which all apparently solid formations are only transitional manifestations in the course of change, according to which, moreover, there is no ego beyond this change, no self-determined soul, no personality, then I recognise in this teaching a marvellously clear conceptual rendering of my own experience. I do not feel estranged any longer by this teaching; in a sphere in which there is no ego-consciousness one cannot demand its continuation. Where no consciousness of immortality underlies experience, one does not long for immortality either. The non-ego doctrine, once you presuppose the physiological basis on which all consciousness rests in the tropics, signifies precisely what the teachings of the ego and its continuation signify subject to European presuppositions. And I now understand very well how the disciples of Buddha could rejoice at a doctrine whose recognition among intellectual Westerners would have produced despair. Man always experiences joy when some one else makes clear to him his own experience.

This recognition removes all the difficulties of the Buddhistic Nirvana concept. The man from the tropics feels himself imprisoned by the non-ego, by an omnipotent nature which fills his consciousness on all sides. As long as he is satisfied with this process he asks no questions, just as no youth full of vigour of life enquired after heaven in the West during the Middle Ages. But when the day comes, as it usually does, on which he tires of his condition and on which he suspects higher possibilities, tropical man can conceive these only in the sense of release from the fetters of nature. He cannot transplant his ideal into her in the sense of a life in heaven, because every conceivable form of life would be identical with the very form of which he is tired; his ideal therefore is of necessity dissolution. What now does he really understand by Nirvana? How can he define this conceptually? He does not

possess an ego-consciousness as opposed to fluctuating nature and for this reason cannot assert that he longs for a higher and positive existence. No more can he assert that he wishes to perish in nothingness, because, the moment that he wishes to escape from the processes of nature, he admits that he does not feel himself being absorbed into them completely. He possesses a very definite feeling of longing to escape from the turmoil of change and decay; he has a definite feeling of longing which is connected with an indefinite expectation for a positive improvement. It is this feeling which in Ceylon I experience myself. But when I try to realise what this feeling means I find that I am no more successful than the Buddhist sage. There is a very good philosophical reason for the fact that Buddha has not taught anything definite concerning Nirvana, that, in fact, he condemned as heresy any attempt at such definition. All that I could say is the following: The longing for Nirvana signifies the longing for relief from the fetters of nature; it is the common human longing for liberation which ultimately underlies all eschatological conceptions. This liberation will be related to a positive idea in a man who has a strong ego-consciousness; he will imagine eternal life or, if he is more thoughtful, like the Brahmin, a condition beyond all individualisation in which, after dispensing with his personality, he would become himself in an even higher degree. But what of him who lacks ego-consciousness? The same effort towards liberation leads him to totally different psychical formations. What he wants is simply to escape from nature; he knows no other longing. Where the consciousness of nature is omnipotent and the ego hardly existent, self-consciousness cannot reach a degree of positive assertion. The longing to get beyond the realm of appearance is the metaphysical experience of the Buddhist. It is his ultimate experience – beyond this he does not question. And if anyone should question further, he only proves that he misunderstands.

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THIS is the third day which I have spent almost exclusively in the atmosphere of the Buddhist church. I have attended

a great many services, have talked to priests and monks and I spent many hours in the cool and homely temple-library up in the Cupola with the beautiful view over the lake. I have studied the Pali texts while the sound of the litanies or the shrill notes of the clarionet, which, accompanied by the beating of drums, calling the faithful to prayer, rose up from the hall beneath. Once more I am made aware that the knowledge of the abstract content of a teaching does not by any means make one know it; there are always surprises in store for the man who realises what they mean in the concrete. No matter whether a church represents the 'pure' doctrine – it is the living expression of its spirit. Even if a church has demonstrably misrepresented its doctrine, this doctrine becomes more apparent in it than in the most perfectly preserved original text, just as even a cripple expresses life better than the best theory of it.

I must confess that the Buddhist priest surprises me by the level to which he attains. I do not mean his mental level but his human one; his type is superior to that of the Christian priest. He possesses a gentleness, a capacity for understanding, a benevolence, an ability to rise above events which even the most prejudiced person would scruple to describe as characteristic of the average Christian priest. The reason for this is undoubtedly the perfect disinterestedness which Buddhism develops in its disciples. In theory it may seem more beautiful to live for others instead of for oneself, but if you take men as they are, active love of their neighbours does not make them more generous but more mean in heart; it is only in exceptional cases that it does not develop into importunity and tyranny. How tactless are all the people who insist on improving their fellows! How narrow-minded are the missionaries! No matter how open-hearted a man be by nature – no matter if the faith he confesses be the most universal in the world – the mere desire for proselytising limits him, for psychologically it always signifies the same thing: the imposition of your own view upon another human being. Anyone who does this is *ipso facto* limited, and anyone who does it continuously or even professionally must needs become more and more limited

from day to day. For this reason meanness, aggressiveness, tyranny, lack of tact and lack of understanding, are typical traits of the Christian and especially of the Protestant priest. A religion such as Buddhism, which teaches the care for personal salvation as the only motive in existence, is incapable of evoking such traits. It would appear that in their place Buddhism should develop the crassest egoism, but this does not happen for two reasons: firstly, personal salvation in Buddhism does not imply the eternal bliss of the individual but, on the contrary, the liberation from the limits of individuality; egoistic desires therefore signify misunderstanding, because beneficence and compassion appear to the Buddhist as virtues whose practice favours and accelerates more than anything else the liberation from the ego. It is this combination of the ideals of disinterestedness and love of your neighbour, then, which has produced that atmosphere which above everything else gives its superiority to Buddhism. I mean the specifically Buddhist form of charity. Charity in the Christian sense means wishing to do good; in the Buddhist sense it means wanting to let every one come into his own at his own level. And this does not imply any indifference to the condition in which another man finds himself, it means that it implies the sympathetic understanding for the positive qualities of every condition. According to the general Indian point of view every man stands precisely on the level to which he belongs, to which he has risen or fallen by his own deserts. Every state therefore is inwardly justified. Of course it would be desirable that every one should reach the highest level, but this cannot be attained by a jump but only by a slow and gradual rise, and each level has its special ideal. Whilst Christianity, as long as it was ascetic, judged the life of the world to be inferior to that of the monk and would have loved to place the whole of mankind at one swoop into the cloister, Buddhism, whose attitude is in principle more inimical to the world than the original Christian attitude and regards the condition of the monk expressly as the highest form of life, nevertheless refrained from condemning the lower states for the sake of the higher ones. Every state is necessary and in so far as it is necessary

it is good. The blossom does not deny the leaf and the leaf does not deny the stalk nor the stalk the root. To be friendly to man does not imply the desire to change all the leaves into blossoms, but it does imply letting the leaves be leaves and understanding them lovingly. This marvellous and superior form of love is written on the most insignificant face of every Buddhist priest. Now I am no longer surprised at the unparalleled veneration which the Buddhist priest enjoys among the people. At first sight it seems paradoxical that the man who is disinterested should enjoy more veneration than the one who actively concerns himself for the benefit of his fellows; in practice this is the same everywhere. Men do not wish to be tutored; he who tries to convince others is at much greater pains to do so than the man who unintentionally and without ulterior motives does for himself what seems right to him. The intentless, selfless, pure life which the Bhikshu leads is, according to Buddhist theories, the highest which a man can lead. Thus he who serves the monks, serves his own ideal.

The atmosphere of this Church is wonderful to me. I have never before been among such peace. And yet I realise more clearly than ever that Buddhism is an impossible religion for Europeans. To be as creative and positive as Buddhism has been among the Cingalese, the spiritual material must differ accordingly – it must differ very considerably from that which we could supply. In our case, we who say yea to the world, who cannot rest, whose whole energy is kinetic, living for our own salvation would immediately develop into crass egoism, general compassion and good intentions would degenerate into the silliest prevention of cruelty to animals business, and the strife for Nirvana would manifest all the evils which dishonesty against oneself inevitably brings in its wake.

Southern Buddhism is undoubtedly only suited to inhabitants of the tropics; one must never forget that. But, once this is admitted, and it is really clear that Buddhism is necessarily related to a gentle and indolent form of nature, then we cannot but admire the formative power which it has evinced. It is almost inconceivable to what a degree Buddhism has ennobled

the masses. I have not yet been in India, but, unless all reports are false, there is no doubt that the effect of the teaching of the Brahmins has not been nearly so beneficial to the lower orders; in fact, their teachings have never fully recognised them. The great deed, socially and politically, of Buddha consists in the fact that he removed the clear-drawn distinction between esoteric and exoteric wisdom, and that, like Christ, he proclaimed a gospel for all. The character of this gospel, as I have already observed, was designed to suit very special circumstances. All traditional accounts agree in saying that, in giving the Hinayana doctrines, which are professed by the Southern Church, Buddha did not reveal the whole of his wisdom, but only such portions thereof as could be beneficial to the less highly developed Southerners. As a teaching, it is really rather elementary and hardly adequate to cultivated minds. But then the wisdom with which it adapts itself to the soul of the people is amazing. In this connection it is superior to the teachings of the Brahmins and to those of Christ. Brahminism did, in fact, develop a special teaching *ad usum populi*, but there the best and profoundest qualities of its teaching were lacking. The Brahmins contented themselves with the conceited assumption that the plebs could never do justice to their doctrines. The message of Christ is indeed addressed to all and sundry, but it is addressed to them lock, stock and barrel, from the angle of an absolute ideal, without any regard for reality. No matter how much the Catholicism of the Middle Ages has attempted to bridge this difficulty, it is a weakness which it is unable to eradicate altogether. The Catholic Church, like the Brahmins, differentiated between a higher and a lower form of truth, and the masses in both cases are the losers. Protestantism, the last attempt to make the pure spirit of the Gospels effective, robbed Christianity, on the one hand, of its formative power (Lutherism), or else it caused a reversion to the religious type belonging to the Old Testament (Calvinism). It is not true that the spirit of Jesus Christ has ever been understood fundamentally by the masses of people who confess His faith. His influence has been everywhere one which has acted from the surface to the centre, and in most

cases it has remained to the last an external manifestation. How glaring is the contrast between the profession of the average Christian and the manner of his life! You do not notice this contrast in Buddhist people. Buddha formulated his teaching in so masterly a manner that it has taken real possession of the souls of those who profess it. By means of simple, easily comprehensible phrases and directions, he embedded the deepest wisdom in the heart of the simple man, so deep that neither superstition nor practical aberration has ever succeeded in repressing the essential Buddhist outlook. Buddhist virtues are the virtues of most Buddhists to an amazingly high degree.

Whence this advantage of the doctrine of Gautama, whence his capacity of giving so effective a form to his profound recognition? It is impossible to analyse genius. And yet I think there is one general consideration of great importance: namely, that Buddha was the offspring of a ruling House.

Talent, brains, intelligence, metaphysical profundity, or the power of religious intuition are neither dependent upon noble birth nor are they their natural attributes. On the contrary, men of noble birth are rarely one-sided enough to develop one special talent to the utmost. In far-sightedness and ability to rule and govern, on the other hand, the aristocrat always has the advantage of the plebeian. He alone stands above every party by nature, is without resentment of any kind, only he has a purely objective relation to the weaknesses of men, for the very reason that he rarely suffers subjectively from these influences. And for this reason he excels, when it is a question of considering men as a whole and doing justice to their collective needs, even the more talented individual of low extraction. The whole teaching of Buddha bears unmistakably the stamp of such a princely mind; he was a typical Kshattrya. In philosophical profundity he was far behind the Brahmins; in fact, he did not attach too much importance to philosophy, like most politicians and military leaders; but, as no one before him in India, he understood and knew men, knew how to do justice to their needs and allow for their weaknesses; and he succeeded in issuing his commandments in such a form that

they resulted not only in a religious but also in a political and social optimum. At this point Buddhism proves itself decidedly superior to Christianity. Buddha, the son of princes, the man above party, gave the world a doctrine which did not negate specially anything in existence (it negates everything which passes away at one fell swoop), and for this reason it could excite no intolerance and lead every one equally along the path of positive good. Christianity was originally a religion of the proletariat; it was in opposition to the favoured classes from the beginning. Prejudice in favour of lives which have failed and resentment against those who are happy belong to the soul, if not to the spirit, of this religion, and it therefore carries, wherever it turns, the seed of disruption. It is of the greatest significance that the religion of peace *par excellence* has caused the greatest discontent. No matter how high-minded its founder was, his mind was not superior to the problems of the world.

How charming is the worship of the Buddhist! When the sun has gone down, the bellman calls the community to prayer; then these gentle brown creatures, with their long, bluish-black glossy hair and their exquisite hands (men and women are scarcely distinguishable) stream into the Dalada Maligawa. All who can afford it, present a candle, and every one carries an offering of blossoming flowers. The kindly priest in his yellow garment stands before the sanctuary in which the tooth of Buddha is enshrined behind the glistening golden door with its precious decorations, and he receives the gifts of the community with an encouraging smile. – Even in Ceylon, where the original teaching exists in all its purity, Buddha is worshipped as God by the people, and he is surrounded by many other mythical creatures – angels, saints, Hindu gods and divinities from the Tamyl Pantheon. Marvellous to relate, however, all these excrescences have failed to divert the significance of the teachings of Buddha, nor have they reduced its power of manifestation. As far as I know the Church has never attempted to oppose the growth of myths. Here the world of appearances is almost insignificant; these people are born with the teaching of Maya. Myths are never taken quite seriously,

and no one concerns himself whether one confirms or contradicts another. Every one knows it: concepts belong to the vegetative life of the mind which grows and buds and blossoms as a matter of course – all essentials belong to a different dimension. The teachings of Buddha apply to all, irrespective of their confession, just as Buddha never attempted to destroy in his disciples their belief in their gods. He only taught them that even the gods, like all appearances, are insubstantial and transitory.

How infinitely more easy it is for the inhabitants of the tropics to evince profound religious thought than it is for one of us! Of course, no concept is necessarily related to its metaphysical reason; Buddhism is right. The Westerner, however, is organised physiologically in such a manner that he cannot recognise this truth without further ado. He is too much entangled in the realm of appearances to attain the necessary distance for judging them. Hence the enormous importance played by dogmas in the history of Christianity. For Christianity as a religion, it was a question of life or death as to which concept a man professed. Excrescences and new developments, which by themselves were insignificant compared with those which have grown up round the doctrines of Buddha without in any way endangering them, have robbed Christianity at times of its very spirit. And for this reason it seemed really essential to fight for the 'true faith' and to demonstrate the relation of the deity to the world in concepts valid by themselves, because our path can only lead to significance through the media of appearances; for this reason again, every appearance which does not express its immediate significance leads the mind into channels where it gets lost. How infinitely better off are the inhabitants of the tropics! They do not need to search for correspondingly exact expression; every form, or none at all, suits them. For, thanks to their mere physiology, they are conscious, as a matter of course, of the very things which, among us, are only revealed to an exceptional mind.

Thanks to this fortunate fundamental trait, tendencies which among Northerners have acted as destructive elements, take

on a beneficent form among the Cingalese: I am thinking of the tendency to fanaticism. This morning I wandered afield and visited a distant and insignificant temple which is hardly ever visited by foreigners; it was inhabited by a real fanatic, a type of such a passionate temperament as I would never have suspected among this gentle, sexless people. At first he was suspicious and cautious, and addressed a series of questions to me, as elementary as Wotan addressed to Mime, or Gurnemanz to Parsifal. Like them, I failed at first to reply; there is no more certain trick of delivering your opponent into the disgrace of ignorance than to enquire after absolutely obvious things, for in the first moment the innocent suspects some distant meaning behind the obvious. This method was particularly successful in my case, because, in my endeavour to enter into the mental processes of my interrogator, I entirely forgot to answer him. When, however, I eventually succeeded in proving that I was not altogether ignorant of Buddhism, his heart went out to me. Yes, he was a fanatic, one who was passionately in earnest in the cause of truth, and who was filled with fury by those who misconstrued the true doctrine. – Did he want to fight against them? – No, what for? What good would it do if the same people professed new concepts? – Did he not intend to influence their souls directly? – Yes, he would like to do that, but could much be gained that way? You had to be prepared for the teaching to be effective, and that was just what his evil contemporaries were not prepared for. Their souls were manifestly too young. It was his conviction that the only method of eradicating error from this world was that every individual who knew the truth should strive with the utmost energy to achieve his personal perfection. This would give an example more effective than any mania for proselytising. – The only way in which this fanatic expressed his outlook was, after all, in the greater intensity which he devoted to his own perfection, and that he suffered his fellow-men a little less gladly.

This discussion with the half-naked man in his yellow garment of penitence taught me a great deal. We conversed in the courtyard of the temple, in the shadow of a bodhi-tree. A

few earnest female ascetics in white robes listened reverently, while a swarm of brown children with gleaming eyes and gaily coloured scarves round their loins thronged inquisitively and noisily about us on all sides.

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I AM already so accustomed to the presence of the monks that I would not like to be without them. There is something so extraordinarily peaceful in the regularity with which they perform their duties. Now they are going with their beggars' bowls into the town to fetch their daily meal; then they go to bathe and to meditate, then they give lessons in holy writ and religion – everything is done at its appointed time. I am beginning, like the Cingalese, to regard these people as a portion of myself. For them they signify the incarnation of their ideal, the living image of what every one ought to be like. There is nothing to which man is more deeply attached than such symbolic images, even there, where they suggest to him, in Goethe's words: 'constant reproach.' These Bhikshu images, however, are not in any way associated in the minds of the Cingalese with the idea of reproach; the teachings of Buddha in their wisdom have obviated from the beginning all possibility of resentment. Even if the monk leads the best of lives, his truth in no way denies that of any other; every one has a right to his own place. How delightful it is to serve an ideal which is so understanding and so generous! Especially since so little is needed to attain to it! – It is usual to consider Buddhism as a pessimistic philosophy, and, according to the strict letter, this is true. Since the letter, especially where we meet with it again and again, undoubtedly permits us to draw conclusions concerning the mind of him who penned it, the possibility cannot be rejected that Buddha himself, at any rate at times, experienced pessimism in our sense of the word. Why else should he have spoken constantly of suffering? For in fact he has made suffering the headstone of the corner in his teaching. – But modern Buddhism lacks every suspicion of pessimism, it transfuses life, quite on the contrary, with the mild glamour of peaceful joy. Nirvana signifies primarily the

same to the inhabitants of the tropics as eternal bliss to the Westerner; almost everything which causes us to regard Buddhism as a pessimistic philosophy is characterised in the consciousness of its disciples as a blessed revelation. But this is not all. It is, above all, the certainty that salvation is not difficult to achieve which secures for the Buddhist of Ceylon so happy and so peaceful an existence. How simple are the rules which must be followed! How little wearying is the life even of those who have, as monks, finally embarked upon the path of salvation! Neither austerity nor efforts which are beyond any man's means are expected of him. As a result, the men in the yellow garments appear, not only joyous, but mostly cheerful as well. It seems to me that the teachings of Buddha have won for tropical men what Luther conquered for the Northerner: the possibility of a blessed existence *in this world*. Buddha, as well as Luther, denied the authority of the Church and declared man responsible; they both taught a doctrine according to which all differences between men are non-existent, in which the inspired mortal is no nearer to his Maker than the simpleton. Both of them have given a halo to everyday life. It is true, of course, that Buddha did not get rid of the monastic orders; in fact, he raised them, on the contrary, to unprecedented importance. But then in India, monastic life does not mean the same as it does with us. It does not represent an abnormal and extraordinary phenomenon, it only makes the condition in which every one lives normally, after he has done his business, appear organised. If I stayed long enough in Ceylon I fancy I too would experience the longing to wear the yellow toga.

Yes, these monks are delightful people. If I consider their peculiarity, I must, however, recognise that in them the *aurea mediocritas* seems idealised, for there is nothing really admirable in them. In Buddhist monasticism the disadvantages of too easy an idealism appear perhaps more prominently than anywhere else. At first this idealisation of mediocrity does in fact sublimate it; it acquires profundity. Lutheran fervour and Buddhist tolerance signify positive conditions which could only be achieved through the medium of such idealisation.

On the other hand, it prevents the approach to a higher level, it causes relaxation, and is opposed to noble strife. This, of course, is the same wherever mankind is offered an ideal whose emulation is not impossible; for only the impossible can be aspired to without the possibility of retrogression. These disadvantages are not so serious in the case of Buddhism as they are in that of Lutherism, because no high form of idealism can exist in the air of the tropics. The disadvantages exist, for all that. It is probable that even among the Cingalese more important types could be produced than actually exist, if only the Bhikshu did not embody their uttermost ideal.

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IN fact, the real difference between Buddhism and Christianity is greater than the theoretical consideration of the rules and regulations, which agree in so many respects in both systems, would allow us to suppose. The essential shade of difference seems to me to have been seized upon by the Chinese statesman, who differentiated Oriental ethics from those of the West by saying that the Oriental teaching commands: Do to no one that which thou wouldest not have done to thee; and the Occidental doctrine says: Do unto others as thou wouldest that they do unto thee. The former is essentially reticent, the latter essentially aggressive. And this is true. The love towards their fellows of the Buddhists differs from the Christian attitude in nothing more than in the fact that it does not aim at any *amor militans*. From our point of view, such love is too lax and cool, and in spite of all its profundity of mind, too reasonable to appear great. This is admitted, but how should active love appear as an ideal to one who does not take seriously the individual with his joys and griefs? The insignificance of the individual is presupposed as a matter of course in the case of the Buddhist, whereas, in the case of the Christian, the fundamental assumption is the inestimable value of the human soul. The general Indian ideal of detachment has found its extreme historical realisation in Buddhism.

Every true sage will personally prefer the Indian ideal, and justifiably so. Anyone whose centre of consciousness is

anchored beyond the stream of phenomena, cannot possibly continue his ideals on the surface. Independence will not make such a man cold or indifferent, because he has risen already on the ladder of life to such a high level that pure giving is for him the highest joy, and his well-wishing no longer requires his dependence. That the whole of India recognises the ideal of the sage as her own is due to the fact that her philosophy of life was thought out and invented by sages. But in Brahmanic India the ideal of detachment is general only in so far as the latter are regarded as the highest type of humanity, and this type should be detached. Those whose life is on a lower level, on the contrary, are taught that they should bind themselves, and that it is only thanks to the shock which is occasioned by the interchange of joy and suffering that they can hope for any form of progress. Buddhism has raised the specific ideal of its sages to be applicable to the generality of men.

Buddha's achievement is the logical consequence of his Anatma theory. If there is no I, if there is no substance beyond the flow of conditions of consciousness, then it is senseless to accept appearances as things of value even temporarily, after the manner of the Brahmins. This shows with rare clarity that erroneous theoretic presuppositions inevitably result in pernicious practical consequences; this is true even if they almost escape notice by themselves, and if the sphere of their effectiveness is considerably reduced by ideas emanating from a different spirit. Buddhism has overlooked in one important direction all differences between men: this has brought them all to one level, and its lofty ideal of charity could not prevent this. Compared with Christians, Buddhists in the mass appear strikingly colourless and lacking in character. The detachment ideal acts as a damper to the vitality of all who are not sages by birth. Average man can perfect himself only by assenting to everything vital in him, by plunging deeply into this life. If he leaps his barriers prematurely, he withers. For this reason the Buddhists of Ceylon are lovable, spiritually cultured, good and sometimes even wise people, but they are never complete.

In this connection Christianity seems undoubtedly superior

to Buddhism. Christianity, too, exercises a levelling influence, but if one ideal should be valid for all, then the Christian ideal of attachment is the more desirable. Christian love is anything rather than superior to this world; its root, its actions, its realisation, are inextricably bound up with it, and since it affirms its link to the soil, it awakens all the spirits of life. And the fundamental Christian commandments of readiness to help, working for the glory of God and for the salvation of the world, keep men in constant tension. This, then, explains the unique efficacy of the Christian faith in relation to the progress of life on earth. Effectiveness does not necessarily imply metaphysical truth, but it does so in this case. If phenomena are taken seriously at all, then the consciousness of the attachment signifies, not only the practical, but also the profounder consciousness as opposed to that of detachment. He who can love in earnest is profounder than the cool sceptic. Only that which is plainly positive has absolute value. Of course, it is possible to be positive and independent simultaneously, but this never applies to a man who is indifferent, for he is negative. The very element which signifies freedom on the highest level of existence expresses itself on a lower one as courage to be dependent, courage to suffer, to sacrifice and to lose. Hence the average Christian who accepts joy and sorrow cheerfully is on the better road than the average Buddhist.

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THUS, Southern Buddhism – to express it in one phrase – signifies the ideal religion of mediocrity. It contains no accelerating motive, it favours no high idealism; it does not raise or make more profound. In the one-sided light of Buddhism the highest form of existence appears as no more valuable than the lowest. Every definite form of life is evil, Nirvana alone offers salvation, and a raising of the human condition in no way leads nearer to Nirvana. Such an outlook on the world gives to a great man, as Buddha was himself, an unique superiority. Nothing is more grandiose than a contempt of life on the part of one who, in the eyes of everybody, embodies the highest value. The small man is not made greater by it. On the other

hand, it does not spoil him, which is what Christianity does, in proclaiming blessed the lowly, and in persuading him that he is more than a great man. Buddhism, imbued by a princely spirit, allows validity to every condition *per se*. The prince remains a prince for him, the servant a servant, before God as much as before men. The empirical differences are without transient significance for him. The prince, as prince, is no nearer to God than the slave, as the Egyptians thought, nor is the latter nearer to Him because he is lowly, as certain Christians would have us believe. Regarded from the angle of the goal, every condition appears to be of equal value. Thus Buddhism cultivates in the soul of the lowly individual a detachment, a superiority, which would otherwise only fall to the lot of favoured mortals. It does not cultivate an atmosphere of cheerful endurance in the hope of eternal reward, as in the case of the suffering Christians, nor Epictetus' Atarania, – nor the cynicism of a Diogenes – both of which are expressions, not of real freedom, but of protection by the armour of reason – but it cultivates the superiority of the *grand seigneur*. I have met again and again with qualities in middle-class Buddhists which I conceived possible only in great men of this world: proof enough of the psychological genius of the son of the Sakyans. – The other day, for purposes of comparison, I re-read Thomas à Kempis, who is regarded as a shining light by the whole of Christianity, and I confess that I felt disgusted. How very inferior is the state of soul which expresses itself in imitation! This grovelling before God, this undignified subordination, this constant fear of doing things badly, this process of torturing oneself for the sake of eternal bliss, has something offensively plebeian in it. And yet Thomas à Kempis possessed without doubt a pure and a noble mind. His outlook had been spoilt by a traditional education which assisted an absurd relation between God and the world as though empirical inferiority possessed metaphysical value by virtue of its inferiority. In distinguished individuals among Christians this heresy had probably done little damage because it never controlled their lives directly, but rather assumed a contrapuntal relation to them; all the more did it reduce the stature of the

man who was small by birth. It has throttled every potential superiority from the beginning, in encouraging men not to rise above their condition; it has, moreover, implanted and ripened in their souls a sort of metaphysical malicious pleasure in the discomfiture of others, a spiritual haughtiness, whose practical climax is the assumption that mediocrity as such has a right to support and comfort. To-day, when this idea is dissociated from eschatological concepts and associated with social ones, its effect is more repulsive than ever and has often filled me with serious apprehension as to the future of Western culture.

Surely it is a matter of tremendous import whether spiritual truths are revealed and fostered by psychological and philosophical 'scientes or nescientes.' Jesus was not less enlightened than Buddha. His consciousness has been excelled in profundity only by very few of the Indian sages, and the significance of his teachings implies a gospel which mankind will never deny. But he lacked in every way the powers of analytical thought, he never found clear concepts in his own mind to account for his knowledge, and it is therefore not surprising that all too many of the teachings which are based upon the letter of his preaching, embody more misunderstanding than revelation. What sort of humility is it on which so much depends? Not subordination and lack of dignity, but pure receptivity towards the influences which emanate from the profoundest depths. In what way ought one to love one's neighbour more than oneself and sacrifice one's ego? Not in the sense that other lives are more valuable than one's own, but in so far as the highest ideal is, like the sun, only to give and not to take. In how far is inferiority to be preferred to greatness? Not in so far as the lowly are more pleasing in the sight of God, but because the latter feel induced to cling to appearances in a lesser degree, and so on. The true, that is to say the objectively correct, significance of Christian teaching has hardly been understood by Christianity up to the present. Christianity has, therefore, given us, apart from treasures of good, also a rich harvest of evil. It has lowered the mental level of the Westerner. The disgusting materialism of our day

is the grandchild of the mediaeval struggle towards heaven; the increasing danger of a dictatorship of the vulgar plebs over finer and mentally superior elements is the immediate consequence of the fact that the poor in spirit have been proclaimed blessed for more than a thousand years. At last they have believed that they alone are of real and intrinsic value, and they are now drawing the practical conclusion from this belief. The religious leaders of India knew the significance of their revelation, and they took every care to prevent misrepresentation. They knew very well how corrupting such misinterpretations may come to be, in view of the essential paradox (from the point of view of the world) of every spiritual truth. And for this reason the average Buddhist, no matter what his faults may be, appears to be the child of a nobler spirit than his brother in the West.

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THE time has come when I turn once more to my body in order to examine what has happened to it in the tropics. I find that it has undergone no unimportant change. The change is similar to that experienced by my soul: my body too has been, if it is permissible to coin a word, buddhified. My reactions to external influences are different now, and I enjoy and suffer in a different form; my needs have changed, and this progressive metamorphosis brings me nearer to the Cingalese every day. I am sure that, if I fell ill, I would have to imbibe other healing draughts than I would at home. In all probability the household remedies of Ceylon would be more beneficial to me than the mixtures of our tropical clinics. At the same time, there is no question of a change in my real centre of gravity. I can therefore doubt no longer that the power of acclimatisation depends entirely upon the degree of one's imagination. The fact that the inhabitants of hot countries flourish better in northern latitudes than vice versa, and that most tropical animals can endure a northern climate fairly well, whereas those from the north rarely survive the tropics for long, is due – if I disregard specific circumstances – to the fact that severer conditions of life inevitably stimulate vitality,

whereas luxuriant conditions can only be supported by those who are trained to them from birth. Animals, too, possess very little free imagination. Man, who possesses it in a sufficient degree, ought to be able to live in any climate and, as a matter of fact, he can. All he must do is to adjust his manner of life to the peculiarities of his surroundings, in order not to upset the biological balance, and anyone possessing imagination acquires this knowledge by instinct. The unimaginative naturally succumb in the process of such experiments. Just as the animal, whose actual mode of being is his only means of expression, withers away in unusual surroundings, no Northerner can assert himself in the tropics if he lacks this power of transformation. In this connection it is interesting to observe that Englishmen flourish pretty well here in spite of the fact that they retain the British mode of life, which, as such, is the most unhealthy that can be imagined for the tropics. The explanation, and at the same time a new proof of it, is the fact that the Britisher possesses, of all Europeans, the most concentrated powers of imagination. For there are two kinds of rigidity: one which is the result of incapacity, and another which implies the utmost tension. The latter variety is well known enough in the case of the Stoics: the sage never loses his equilibrium because he is entirely complete in himself. It would appear that the same must be assumed in the case of men whose bodies take no harm in any latitude, although they do not change. Thanks to centuries of physical culture, the British organism has developed into a world of its own so much that external circumstances affect it only slowly, if at all. And for this reason it is really more important for him to consider his personal tendencies than the climate in which he lives. – This trait of the Englishman is, from a practical point of view, the most advantageous; if for no other reason, for the remarkable simplification of the problem of life which it involves. But he who strives for recognition can thank his Maker that his imagination has not yet become a power of cohesion, but goes on expressing itself in change. Such a man, thanks to the plasticity of his being, is in equilibrium with the world, and his equilibrium is the more reliable in so far as no serious

shock need be catastrophic, which is generally the case in the rigid individual. But above all things, the versatile man alone is capable of perceiving the true significance of his surroundings, because he alone is directly influenced by them and consequently capable of entering into sympathetic relations with them.

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YESTERDAY at sundown I saw birds of the size of eagles, flying in great hordes up the valley; and then I suddenly recognised that they were not birds but – bats. They were flying dogs. – Strange how little surprise one feels in the midst of tropical surroundings at the unexpected! Apparently, our minds are prepared here for the most powerful contrasts, in the same way as our bodies, once accustomed to extremes of light and dark, regard the most curious phenomenon as normal. Would I be surprised if, in the midst of the jungle, I met with a god? Hardly. He could not appear more incredible than so many creatures do, which I behold before me every day. The compass of possibilities is so large in the tropics that one learns to be neither surprised nor appalled. The strongest contrast, speaking objectively, which I have observed so far is the one between the exquisitely blue sea lapping against the palm trees on Mount Lavinia and the dreadful, armoured and evilly black-looking crabs which crawl sideways along the strand in hundreds. No animal would look better in hell, and if I perceived one on a northern shore, I am sure it would call forth the most horrible images in my soul. On those of Ceylon, however, I am delighted by their appearance. Even if I were to imagine them enlarged hundreds of times – as a rule, the surest way of being horrified – they do not look any more gruesome for all that. Thus it is quite probable that the gigantic saurians of the prehistoric world, which, viewed in our own, would spread fear and terror, might, in their natural surroundings, which must undoubtedly have displayed greater contrasts even than the tropical world to-day, have appeared as quaint and amiable creatures.

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TO-MORROW I begin a carriage tour through the interior of Ceylon. I spent the last few days exclusively in observing nature, in order not to enter the jungle without any kind of knowledge of it. I find it extraordinarily difficult to see in the light of the tropics. The excess of light prevents all shading of colours to such an extent that even the most gaily tinted creature seems almost invisible against its coloured background; and thus the forests round Kandy seem to be more lifeless than any which I have seen hitherto.

I succeeded at last to-day, after having turned over hundreds of stones and poked in many rotting tree-stumps, in catching a glimpse of one of those enormous centipedes which inhabit the tropics. They are revolting creatures. Everything in their appearance is opposed to the positive tendencies of human nature; every one of their peculiarities, adapted or transported to the realm of men, would make monsters of us, and I am surprised that primitive Buddhists, who made such admirable use of the scarecrow for furnishing their hell, entirely failed to notice this beast. It is truly a loathsome animal. And yet it could never occur to me to question its right to existence, although this is my first thought when I behold inferior specimens of humanity; these centipedes are perfect in their way. Once the presupposition of this creature is admitted, then it must also be granted that its execution has been admirable.

How do I know that the centipede is perfect? I am unable to give special reasons, but the facts are evident to every one who has the power of placing himself in the position of other beings. There is something very peculiar about this evidence, which is true of all perfection, because it is apparent, within certain limits, even to the most unobservant. No example proves the point better than that of the Englishman. Whenever I meet one of the representatives of this people I am shocked by the contrast between the dearth of their talents, the limitation of their horizon and the measure of recognition which every one of them exacts from me, as from everybody else. Even the more eminent Englishmen (the really eminent remain, as everywhere else, beyond the confines of generali-

sation) can hardly be taken seriously as intellectuals. They affect me like animals who, furnished with a number of unerring instincts, control a certain sector of reality perfectly. For the rest, however, they are blind and incapable. No matter how near to the springs of life they may be, they lack originality to an extraordinary degree. They all think, feel and act alike, there are no surprises in the inner lives of any one of them. However, I am forced to accept the British in exactly the same way as I accept the animals; they represent, as they are, the perfect realisation of their possibilities; they are completely what they might have been. This explains their powers of convincing others, their superiority over the other peoples of Europe (which at present cannot reasonably be contested); it explains also the contagious nature of their peculiarity. They alone are really perfect in their way amongst all Europeans, and to perfection every one bows the knee. The infinitely richer nature of the German has not yet found its form, and on this account he is not accepted anywhere unless there be some compelling reason. The fact that perfection is within the realm of the attainable even for him, is proved, however, by the one and only type of German who has hitherto been perfectly expressed: the Austrian aristocrat. He may not be very efficient, the same thing may be true of him, which is so often true of cows: his breeding for 'form' may have deteriorated his 'capacity.' None the less, he is perfect in his way. For this reason he is accepted everywhere; he is flattered, imitated and admired, and the haughty Englishman is the first to seek intercourse with him.

9

DEMBULL

I AM not likely to forget this first portion of my coach journey through the country. It was a long drive, through silent, primeval forests. It led upwards to a steep, bare mountain, into whose summit rocky temples had been chiselled. Forest was round about me as far as the eye could reach; the extrem-

ities of its out-runners stretched with their tree-tops as far as the outer courtyard of the Temple of Dembull; and the grey top of the mountains looks defiant in the midst of all this greenery. It was the interior of the sanctuary, however, which made the greatest impression upon me. Here a miraculous flora, transplanted, as it were, in the dead stone by the mind of man, covers the ground. Hundreds of gaily coloured Buddhas blossom there peacefully side by side; but in the midst of them, every now and again, just as we find weeds in the centre of a well-tended flower-bed, we meet with a full-blown Hindu god. Thus Nature can never deny herself. Nothing seems less in accordance with the spirit of Him who has overcome the world than such a flora of sculptured saints before which the faithful bow in prayer; Gautama would probably have destroyed them himself. And yet the Cingalese are right; they see no antagonism between this lovely garden and the stern sermon of Buddha. This bed of flowers means nothing but the teaching of the nothingness of existence; it is this teaching itself which is expressed in the language of the tropical zone.

A recumbent Buddha, just chiselled out of the rock, gives the effect of an independent being. He lies there alone, abstracted, solitary amidst his seated counterparts; he is as lonely among them as the bare top of the mountain is in the midst of the greenery. Yet he does not seem to be unique or of a different substance from the rest; it is only in appearance that he possesses a life of his own. It is in this way presumably that Gautama himself regarded his personality. No matter how unique and lonely and omnipotent he may have appeared to his disciples, he knew that it was only on the surface that he was different from them. He had already lived for a long time in the consciousness of those depths where all multiplicity is realised as well as resolved in unity. I dreamed for a long time in front of this vision. As I looked out through the gate over the tree-tops, I beheld hordes of monkeys who pursued, in a silent tight-rope dance, their fodder for the evening meal.

10

TO HABARANE

How poor is the power of receptivity of civilised man! I fail to differentiate all the various zones of the jungle, with the exception of the most coarse and obvious ones, and I think in envy of the elephant who can find his path, in a wild district he has never visited before, as easily as we find our road after consulting a signpost. At home, in the forests of the north, where the eye of the hunter is accustomed to observe delicate shades, I know my way about fairly well; but here I am lost from the beginning. I could not explain why certain birds only appear in this place, and not in another, which does not look very different; nor could I say why at certain spots, and only there, hundreds of butterflies appear. I am blind, that is all. More favoured creatures would recognise the divisions and the structures of the primeval forest with their eyes, just as mine would in the case of St. Petersburg. This is even true of the ocean. As a matter of fact, in cases where the most receptive of men contemplate the magnificence of uniformity, what actually spreads itself before one is an infinitely rich world, no more uniform than the primeval forest. I noticed, during my journey through the Indian Ocean, that the flying fishes rose in masses only from certain places, and after we had passed certain limits they were entirely missing. And again, I observed that there, and only there, jelly-fish reddened the water in hundreds, and that the dolphins could be observed at their graceful games only in certain streaks. I am sure that these facts are connected with the outlines of different conformations. I am too blind, however, to perceive them.

What do we see? Only that which corresponds to our human needs. In the town, on the street and in the field, perhaps we perceive the essentials, and it is possible that we perceive correctly whole countries, such as Holland or Japan, who owe their fundamental character to their inhabitants. But this gauge fails entirely in places where nature has no necessary

relation to man; there, all our schemes and systems are, from nature's point of view, mere folly. How stupid, for instance, is the rubrication which we have adopted in regard to the sky at night! I am rather proud of the fact that up till to-day, although I have gazed upon the starlit sky many a night, I have not yet discovered the Southern Cross. It is true, of course, that I have quite intentionally not allowed anyone to point it out to me. Once it has been shown to me, no doubt the stars in question would have formed the same constellation in my consciousness, just as the unhappy creature to whom the similarity of some rock to Napoleon had been pointed out is condemned for ever to see his image in the mountain. Men always try to impose human connections upon non-human ones. But this much is true, and no one can take it from me: I have not discovered the Southern Cross for myself, which proves that my mind has not yet lost its independence altogether.

II

LAKE MINNERI

In the days of my childhood and adolescence, when I hated books and found all my happiness in observing, hunting and taming animals, this primeval lake would have seemed to me like a paradise on earth. I have spent hours along its shores, and again and again I have sighted new creatures. On sandbanks there lay crocodiles resembling tree trunks guarded by stilt-birds; cow-herons and bitterns fed among the buffaloes; grey- and silver-herons stood on little peninsulas and in the tree-tops. The water was covered with droves of pelicans, kites and eagles were cradled in the air; one of these, which was quite strange to me, silver-white with dark covering feathers, was one of the most beautiful beasts of prey that I ever saw. The snake-necked fisher-birds, however, supplied the key to the picture, and their conventionalised form and heraldic attitude gave a mythical turn to the whole impression.

How delightful it is to be in a world which was finally created

on the fifth day! Here all power is still unbroken, here everything is primeval and true. Among men this is only true of children and of the greatest and rarest individuals; the appearance of most of them tells us nothing of their nature. Animals are always perfect, they are always what they might be; they are the comprehensive expression of their possibilities. It is said, in reply to this, that they are so limited. Of course they are limited, but this does not detract from their value. It is not in this sense that the fact of our lesser limitation is an advantage, but in another sense (lack of limits in itself being no ideal), that we possess various possibilities of perfection instead of only one. In the case of men, perfection also means the highest possible achievement, and perfection necessitates limitation. We regard the man who acts from necessity, by virtue of an inner law, as being on a higher level than the one whose action is dictated by his whims; we value, as the highest thoughts, those whose expression is final. And the same is true of art, and in fact of every expression of life. Thus even in the human realm the ideal lies in limitation, not in independence. The respect in which we differ from animals is not in the ideal, it is in the elements by means of which the ideal is to be realised. If this is so, I do not know why the limitation of animals, which are always perfect in their univocal significance, is quoted as proving how uninteresting they are. On the contrary, it is for this very reason that they are interesting, more interesting than all imperfect human beings. I, for one, would revere as a demi-god the man who as a personality stands on the level on which, as a product of nature, every snake-necked fisher-bird of Lake Minneri stands. I am sure I owe more enlightenment and stimulus to animals than to most men with whom I have had prolonged intercourse. It is too easy to survey men; the number of specimens whose understanding demands an enlargement of our existing concepts is all too rare, whereas the meanest animal requires such an enlargement if his nature is to be fathomed. He who wishes to understand some low sea-creatures must learn to realise in himself a state of consciousness which may conceivably be likened to that of a potentialised stomach, whose ever so strong reactions to specific

stimuli and ever so unusual powers of physical and chemical imagination can never lead, in their final synthesis, to more than a general and uncertain feeling. A crayfish does not represent one, but two or three entities; his consciousness is not centralised in our sense. Anyone who wishes to penetrate the soul of a fox must succeed in experiencing the powers of scent as his central sense and in relating all impressions to this sense, as, in the case of men, they are related to his sense of sight. In the case of a bird the problem is different again, and so on and so forth. This probably explains why most truly great minds have preferred 'nature to human society.' The latter limits, the former liberates and helps us beyond the confines of humanity. And in so doing it raises our consciousness of the true root of things. For at the root all creation is one, and from the root emanate all the forces of evolution.

How exquisitely beautiful is the evening! The lake reflects the last light of the western sky. The screeching of the sea-mews and the many-voiced croaking of the frogs rises to my lodging, and the last pelicans fly majestically towards the forest. In the immediate vicinity is a pack of wild elephants; I have already heard them trampling. My brown host has promised to wake me in case they should come out into the open during the night.

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ONCE more I wandered out into the playground of the animals. I have stalked many a magnificent eagle and caused legions of water birds to flee before me. And every time when I step from the morass into the jungle, the tree-tops become alive with long-tailed monkeys, who jump or almost fly away at my approach.

It is amazing how much one gains during such hours of exclusive observation! Regarded from the angle of the mind, pictures of reality are on the same level as the creations of the imagination; in this respect there is no essential difference between experiences and ideas. He who observes with an open mind is productive for an equally long period; the man who could have noticed everything would have re-created the world

by his own powers. But then the soul needs rich and various diet if it is to flourish and develop, and no brain is creative enough to invent its own requirements in sufficient quantity; for this reason no one can afford to live on his own ideas. External experience is necessary also because the mind is never free as long as it is constantly surrounded by its own products. All those must shrivel who confine themselves within their own worlds, no matter how wide these may be. Their inner life does not grow richer but poorer; they ossify more and more in their peculiarities. I have experienced this myself. During the years which I spent in large cities I had ceased to look about me, because the activities of the towns did not attract my interest. The consequence was that my ideas began to crystallise, and I was in danger of being imprisoned by them. At the age of seven and twenty I was very nearly suffocated within a system I had produced myself. Fortunately I realised the danger I was in before it was too late. Now I force myself to observe, even when I do not feel inclined for it; I cultivate the small rest of curiosity which I have still preserved, and I am grateful for every impression which tears asunder the webs which are woven by my brain.

Yes, one must know how to see. Can I really do it? In the sense and the measure in which I would like to do so, I confess I cannot. Several times I had the intention of describing one or other of the marvels I had seen, and each time I had to recognise that this was beyond me. That means that I have not really seen them. Of course, it is not true that feeling creates the power of expression – creative power and the power to experience belong to different dimensions – but, on the other hand, as I have already said, observation and ideas, regarded from the angle of the mind, are on the same level, so that we only realise perfectly what we might have invented. In my case, I could never invert single phenomena, and therefore I can never perceive them as such outside myself. My imagination leads each individual phenomenon immediately back to its inner cause, and from this point of view, not its reality, but its possibility, so to speak, appears as its essential. That this interpretation of my attitude is correct is proved by

the opposite test which can be applied to my powers of memory. A clever friend suggested years ago that I would have to appear at the Last Judgment with a secretary, because my memory for events was so bad. And I really cannot remember any single event or fable. Conversely, however, I seem to be incapable of forgetting a general connection; I only have a memory for details during moments of productive tension. – How I have struggled against this limitation! Again and again I have tried to acquire an inner relation to some particularised subject, to enter into a single human being, a single picture or a single period, completely and continuously; again and again I gave myself up to the influence of minds who possessed this quality which I lack – it was in vain. And thus I had to content myself with the recognition that it is a mistake to attempt to exceed one's empirical confines. One must see to it how far one can get within them and by their means.

There is still a great deal of uncertainty amongst psychologists and æsthetes concerning the different kinds of our powers of comprehension. Profundity is often assumed in painters, and philosophers are frequently credited with picturesque powers of observation. Such judgments are generally wrong. Anyone who presents perfectly the appearance of things, which is what the great painter or poet does, in fact expresses its spiritual significance – but his soul may be ignorant of it. He who, conversely, can seize the inner meaning, also does justice to appearances – but he does not need to be actually aware of them. The most interesting instance of this kind is Leo Tolstoi. I do not know a more profound presentation of human life than his epic on the great French war, but I know that Tolstoi, as an individual, lacked all philosophical profundity. As in the case of most Russians (and all other young and undifferentiated races) Tolstoi lacked the power of intensive abstraction, the capacity of summing up the particular in the general, which is another definition of profundity. On the other hand, he possessed the eagle eye of the savage. Now if anyone presents appearances which he only beholds without understanding them, and does so perfectly, the thoughtful reader will inevitably regard this representation as possessing

profundity – in fact, he will discover greater depths than he would do in really profounder poets whose vision is less acute.

12

POLLONARUWA

THE remains of past glory have never made such an impression upon me as the ruins of the residence of King Parakrama. This is not on account of their artistic perfections; they are beautiful, but I have seen others more beautiful still. The strength of the impression is due to the fact that I have never hitherto been permitted to see buildings which express the specific beauty of ruins – a beauty which is conditioned by totally different laws than artistic beauty – to such perfection. Ruins exercise a greater magic upon us than well-preserved works of art, not merely because they suggest to our souls, in the image of the past, the idea of transitoriness; nor because the work of art corroded and worn by time stimulates us just as the unfinished work of art does, by inducing the mind to supply what is lacking in reality: the essential magic of ruins is due to the fact that they show human powers of creation as a part of the forces of the cosmos, by which transposition they acquire an infinite background instead of the limited background of one personality or one age. A temple in marble, glimmering in gold, may present the highest measure of human creative effort. When time, however, has left its imprint on the surface, when its contours display the traces of Nature's eternal toil, then such a temple has become her integral component. Many an image of Buddha which is preserved in the cave-temples of Ceylon expresses the soul of the Buddhist community in an ennobled form. But the colossal statues at Gal Vihare, whose surface has long since assumed the character of its surroundings, signify more than that. They are forms of nature, like the cañons, which were hollowed out by gigantic streams in the course of thousands of years; they are like the valleys, carved out by glaciers, and the creative power of the human mind does not seem less but more mighty still when placed by the side of the forces which con-

trol the courses of the stars. The ruins of Pollonaruwa are more magnificent than any which I have seen hitherto, because the nature of Ceylon is incomparable in its creative exuberance, and has done its utmost to magnify their effect. The columns and remains of the temple, which are strewn far and wide throughout the jungle, have themselves become part of the jungle. Plants have substituted the decayed mortar, trees have completed broken cupolas. Enormous daghobas, where preserved, have become the foundation of a new nature. One sees a dead past infused into eternally young life, like a skeleton in living flesh.

My thoughts wander irresistibly to the distant shores of Greece. The Greek landscape cannot bear comparison with that of the tropics, and for this reason Greek ruins are not nearly as effective as those of Ceylon. Undoubtedly the temples of Hellas appeared greater still in their time as perfect human creations, than they do to-day as manifestations of nature. But what the latter in the course of time has failed to do, the spirit of the Greeks achieved beforehand. Every Greek sanctuary was planned originally as part of nature, and in its necessary relation to its surroundings. As a result, the little which has remained seems to be a component part of the landscape so effectually that the total impression only differs from that created in Pollonaruwa in so far as the ruins do not belong to the living realm of nature, but to the dead realm of mountains and the sky. – The living element is more congenial to my temperament than any dead perfection; for this reason the primeval forest means more to me than the Acropolis. On the other hand, the power of the Greek genius has never impressed my consciousness more vividly than in the midst of a landscape which has succeeded in assimilating completely the transfigured image of Gautama.

13

ANURADHAPURA

WHAT wonderful men the old kings who erected the gigantic monuments of Ceylon must have been! These buildings are not memorials to idle riches, nor the whimsical

creations of an uncontrolled imagination. They exhale severe and simple greatness, which, in the midst of tropical luxury, seems almost unnatural. By the side of the rocky fortress of Sigiri, the retreat of the father murderer, Kassyapa, the castles of Europe seem like the toys of children; the mere bath of this robber is a structure resembling one of the royal tombs of Egypt. These daghobas are like natural mountains, and yet it is 'mind' in its highest meaning which gives its character to their contours. But the wonder of wonders of Ceylon is the rock of Mihintale, where Mahinda, the son of King Asoka, the great apostle of Buddhism, spent and ended his days. This retreat – a narrow terrace on the highest point of the mountain, hewn by the hand of an artist out of the rock – is more regal than anything I have yet beheld. It is overshadowed by steep cliffs which descend abruptly to the valley in front of it. Beneath the infinite primeval forest expands, whose holy silence is only interrupted now and again by the trumpetings of elephants. No one but a king could have chosen such an eyrie for his residence. It is impossible to spend even the briefest time in this place without progressing inwardly. Mahinda appears to my imagination in the typical attitude of a contemplating Buddha of enormous proportions, as they used to represent him in stone. It is thus that, immovable and gentle, he must have gazed down upon the blooming life of the valley, like a man who has, out of the fullness of his power, renounced everything.

How well the legend has chosen its words in comparing these rulers with tigers and elephants! That is exactly what they were. The hothouse air of this region does not, as a rule, produce great individuals, to whose development it is unfavourable. The jungle is a thicket, not a forest; and its fauna, in general, is rich and luxuriant rather than important, as regards its individual plants. Every now and again a single tree seems to touch heaven with its crown, but if you look more closely you perceive that this giant is not a single entity: roots shoot downwards from its branches, and where the eye imagines that it beholds a personality, it is confronted in reality with a pedigree. The classical instance of this is embodied in the

holy Bodhi tree of Anuradhapura, which demonstrably grew out of a cutting which King Asoka brought from Buddha-gaya. This oldest tree of history presents itself as a young and slender stripling: the thing which lives and flourishes before my eyes is the latest descendant of the original crown of the tree which dropped its roots down again into the earth. Growth in Ceylon takes place at an almost giddy speed. I have seen shoots twelve months old here of a size which corresponds to about fifteen years' growth in Central Europe. Here trees shoot up like grass. They die, however, equally rapidly: all that really lives here is youth. The same applies to animals and men. From the point of view of type, they are eternally immature; they multiply in terrifying numbers at terrific speed, and one generation succeeds another equally quickly. However, nature, which in Ceylon, as a rule, has neither time nor inclination to create individualities, brings forth occasional specimens none the less. It is as if a brake were put upon the wheel of action. Such an inhibition to fundamental energies results in creatures so enormous, so powerful, as no other clime could produce: the elephant, the rhinoceros, the tiger. And even within the realm of men, this flow of growth has been accumulated once or twice into single personalities; they were men of immense dimensions, who were quite rightly compared in legend with elephants.

Now I understand why, in the early days of our planet, when palm groves still crowned both poles, those gigantic creatures could be created and could exist whose skeletons inspire us with incredulous surprise. Kings like Mahinda, Parakrama Bahu, Dutthagamini, were beings of quite a different kind from the great emperors of the East. The latter were personalities of such power, of such immense force of will, that their greatness seemed independent of external circumstances; they created the conditions which they needed. The great kings of the tropics were not men on a smaller scale; perhaps they were even mightier. But the reason for their existence lay to a lesser extent in themselves, than in nature, of which they were component parts; creatures of their peculiarity could only exist amidst tropical luxuriance. They required an excess of food,

to be supplied to them without any effort on their part, they needed a minimum of material resistance and surroundings which were easily and instantly swayed according to their wish. They could not have existed under any other conditions. The same must have been true, once upon a time, of the saurians. Those giants also were conditioned by their surroundings; they could come into life and flourish only in the midst of a nature which was more rich still than that of the tropics of to-day. In those days the bulk of all created things must have grown and died rapidly – their traces are all gone. In consequence, the rare specimens of the age, who in the midst of this change were destined to endure, grew to proportionately greater dimensions.

The days of such greatness are past. Nature is too poor nowadays to support life on such a monumental scale. To-day cheapness seems more suited to our circumstances, and, as far as mankind is concerned, its under-wood has grown too self-conscious to allow a free road to the individual giant-tree. It may be that this is to the good; I do not know what, *per se*, is more desirable – an indifferent populace which permits the development of great and important individuals, or a higher general standard which only suffers the individual to rise above its own level within very limited confines, and which throttles every offspring of the giant race. I wish it were possible for a high general standard and giants, in the sense of the prehistoric world, to co-exist. Unfortunately, however, intimate laws of nature seem to oppose such a hope. No matter what attitude we adopt, we are forced to choose one of two evils, and I for my part confess that I would gladly sacrifice the whole race of rabbits in order that the contemplation of an atlantosaurus could make me forget once more the pettiness of quaternal existence.

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DURING my wanderings through the ruins to-day, I hit by accident upon a hut which was occupied by a young Englishman, who dwells there, in the midst of hundreds of serpents. He is an eccentric creature which only Albion could produce.

There are plenty of snake-charmers, snake-hunters, and friends of serpents, and in the latter group I may count myself too, for I have always taken special delight in the perfect curves of these creatures. But more intimate contact with reptiles requires a special attitude which by nature is not normal to men, and this can be observed invariably in every Indian snake-charmer. This Englishman, however, lives with the creatures who share his house as if he could not do otherwise, and as if such communion were a matter of course. They represent nothing extraordinary to him: he neither admires them nor does he do business with them, nor do they interest him from a scientific point of view; these writhing creatures signify his natural surroundings. There were enormous pythons and furious-looking hooded snakes in full possession of their venomous stings. He had caught them all himself, and he played about with them in front of me until I began to feel most uncomfortable. The natives declare that he is exempt by virtue of a talisman, but he said himself coolly that a certain amount of dexterity and familiarity with their peculiarities makes cobras quite harmless. It seemed to interest him when I told him that there are effective antidotes to their poison; he himself had never heard of them, and never weighed the question in his mind. He noted down the address of the institution where the serum is prepared, but I doubt whether he will ever make use of it.

The interesting feature of this home of snakes is that the mentality of its curious owner has created the surroundings in which the serpents are innocuous. In the same sense in which lunatics present no danger to both nurse and visitor in a well-conducted asylum. People whose minds are deranged are never really harmless, but in the asylums they are allowed to move about freely, and there they do not, in point of fact, do any damage. Just in the same way, cobras can never be really tame – they are, and will remain, dull, senseless and infuriated creatures, incapable of intelligence or friendliness. Nevertheless, this Englishman handled even the wildest of them without being hurt, and he knew how to calm even those which shook with fury, by placing his hand gently on their heads, in the

time-honoured way, and then pressing their heads down slowly. In fact, in his company even I could wander about amongst these snakes with a minimum of danger. It was an experience which I count among the most important that I have had. In the case of intelligent creatures, such as normal men and women and the higher orders of animals, the enormous influence exercised by methods of treatment and surroundings does not seem very remarkable, because in their case psychic limitations, of which they are conscious as so much objective reality, signify objectively no less than material barriers. Anyone who possesses free powers of choice at all reacts to good and evil generally in a manner best suited to the circumstances. Only obtuse animals and equally obtuse men are not capable of being influenced in this sense. But lunatic asylums and this home of serpents which I visited today prove that a certain degree of influence is still possible where the question of psychic barriers hardly arises. Here the effect is purely objective, here it depends entirely upon the intensity of effect whether a change in behaviour results or not. Thus it is possible to conceive surroundings even for a cobra in which she would be harmless. Now mentally deranged people are much happier in the asylum in which they behave themselves, than outside it. This makes me think that moral superiority must somehow correspond to objective expediency; and the only interpretation I can put upon this is that moral behaviour (I speak of behaviour, not of intention!) is nothing but the natural expression of adaptability. Criminals are, as a rule, very honourable among themselves, and a perfect connoisseur of men can find true servants among the most unreliable people. A contented man is seldom malicious, all of which proves that expediency conditions moral behaviour. If I translate this state of affairs into inner relations, or regard it from an inner point of view, I can deduce that 'moral instinct,' as postulated in the eighteenth century, does exist in so far as psychic well-being is linked to external expediency, and that every one strives after well-being. Such a 'moral instinct' is, of course, in no sense an ethical quality; the serpent has no character; it is only above a certain level of the development

of the soul that the impulses of nature can be subordinated to ethics. (For we also regard psychically abnormal creatures as 'irresponsible.') None the less, ethical aspiration only signifies the spiritualisation of tendencies which, as such, already exist in the snake. Herein is rooted the truth of the conception of paradise. A world could no doubt be conceived in which there is no evil, in so far as there would be no evil intention at the bottom of any action. We Europeans will never create a paradise in spite of all the charity which we wear on our sleeves, because our animal instincts are too strong. The Indian Buddhist world in many ways gives an impression of paradise, because their faith forbids them to harm an animal, and they thus have no antagonistic relation to man. They tolerate man's existence, like one genus tolerates that of another, remembering that there is room for all. In India people are less afraid of a tiger, and justifiably so, than they are in Europe of a stag at rutting time. – Here we are also at the root of the truth, which as such goes back to Plato, with which all Christian mystics are familiar, but whose theory has been most perfected by the Persians, the truth that divine love lives within every one, and that it depends upon externals whether it manifests itself or not. These externals may be inclination to a woman, the influence of appropriate surroundings, or a hard fate, which cause the soul to change – the problem is always that the instrument, 'man,' shall be attuned in such a way that God may play upon it. Of course it is so.

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ONCE more I wander through the gigantic town of ruins, and the great arteries of the palace and its mighty artificial pond. It is evening. Pious pilgrims are playing in front of the Ruang-weli-daghoba. The liturgy is intoned in a well-modulated voice by a monk, and the laity join in the rhythm. The altar is covered with blossoming gifts of flowers. Round about the sanctuary, as far as supplies have been available, the faithful have placed their candles; and now that they have been lit and the twilight has turned to night, they stand out against the stony background like stars against the sky. What deep poetry

lies in this service to the old relics! Here a pious people, led by a more pious ruler, have, in the course of years of toil, raised a mountain above a souvenir, so that it shall never on any account come to harm. The relic in all probability does not really come from Buddha – what does it matter? The important fact is that it shall give content to the worship. The lover often prefers a worthless memento to a precious one, because the one which has no value expresses, in the purest and most unadulterated form, the significance which it has for him.

It is most momentous that this worship of relics has been so highly developed by a faith which attaches least importance to anything transitory. The more transitory a possession is, the more precious does it become to men: in this way Buddha's assurance that he would in every sense cease to exist after his death, has led to the precise opposite of what he intended: his followers cling all the more firmly to that which remained of him. Not only have all his words been preserved faithfully, all his teachings and the legends of his life, but his earthly remains have become the object of a cult, and he himself has been transfigured into a god. Simple folk cannot understand the doctrine of Nirvana in the way in which the enlightened teacher wishes to have it understood. To them, the Nirvana of the Perfected One signifies that, although removed beyond the realm of time, He continues all the more eternally. But, of course, they feel no certainty, for the monks daily teach them the reverse. Prayer therefore assumes, in these holy places, the character of Mass said for departed souls. A sweet melancholy reverberates through the liturgy, like the atmosphere of mourning for a creature dear to us who, we pray, has gone to a better world.

PART THREE: INDIA

14

RAMESHVARAM

As the night began, the Brahmins signed to me to enter the temple. I followed them without knowing what I was to do. There I beheld pilgrims without number, hierophants and temple servitors, round elephants decked out like ikons, and carriages and stretchers gleaming with gold in the light of torches. They were preparing for a procession. And before I knew where I was, I found myself at the head of it. In front of me, elephants, the most trusted bearers of tradition, moved with their dignified motion. Behind me followed the goddess, aloft on her high throne on a precious palanquin. Thus we paced amidst the rattle of drums and the harsh sound of clarionets, in a solemn round until late at night, through the most marvellous cloisters in the world. The walls were lined with the faithful, whom one could behold only when suddenly illuminated by the torches, bowing in fearful reverence.

What a wondrous introduction into the land of India! The Temple of Rameshvaram, on the southern extremity of the peninsula, lies there lonely, in a palm grove surrounded by the sea. It is a building hardly smaller than the largest monasteries of our Middle Ages, and its passages cannot be rivalled for beauty of form and colour anywhere else on earth. This temple is said to have been founded by Rama himself after he had conquered Sita from Ravana. It is considered the second most holy place of Hindustan. Every one who can possibly manage to do so makes the pilgrimage to this place after going to Benares. And indeed, the whole of India seems to be represented here. I can see every colour, every costume, every type, from the dusky Tamyls to the white-skinned men from Kashmir; I find proud Rajputs on the one hand and Sanyassis on the other, whose hair has turned to a mass of felt. Languages and dialects without number resound in the air, a hundred different traditions speak from the different faces; caste rubs shoulders with caste, and prejudice with prejudice. I have never seen such a variety among men before.

What strikes me is that, in spite of the extraordinary differ-

ences among the pilgrims, somehow or other they are the expression of one mind. In what sense? In that of faith? Perhaps that is so, but that is not what I mean; I mean something which I have never seen before. I do not mean the metaphysical consciousness that everything external somehow belongs together inwardly, for, no matter how characteristic it may be of the best type of Indians, in those who are gathered together here – mostly simple, humble folk, incapable of speculation – this quality is probably developed only to a very small degree. What impresses me so much is the existence of a state of consciousness which permits them to perceive realities which are quite beyond the average Westerner. These pilgrims apparently understand the significance of symbols. And in their case it is not a question of holding that childlike belief which expresses the relation of the uneducated Catholic to his cult, nor is it a case of the direct understanding of the cultured individual, in whom *a posteriori* realisation springs out of reflective recognition. These pilgrims seem to perceive the significance of symbols absolutely directly; their souls appear to be affected directly by holy words (mantras). This presupposes a state of consciousness which differs materially from that of the average European. I am not unfamiliar with it. He who can transfer the action of his consciousness from the sphere of material things into the world of mental images, so that he takes these more seriously than material phenomena and sees in them that which is essentially real, will discover that, in the process, he acquires new possibilities of experience. While in the ordinary course of events, conceptual relations gain their significance only in connection with external nature, he now perceives their true significance, which is entirely independent of all externals. And this shows that concepts may have a significance in a double direction: in the usual sense, as pictures or images of objective realities, or else as direct manifestations of a meaning which originally belongs to them. Every one who has gone to religious ceremonies with an open mind will have experienced that their effect varies; some of them do not move us at all, others move us strongly. There seem to be normal forms for the progress of

inner experience, just as there are forms or laws of nature. Certain associations of sounds and concepts seem to correspond, with extraordinary constancy, with certain psychic meanings. No doubt our consciousness must move on a certain level before these underlying laws can be perceived; the modern European, whose soul is in the average condition, feels little enough of this. From his point of view, he is not unjustified in denying them, because to him they do not apply; they do not apply to him in the same sense in which the laws of musical harmony are invalid for an unmusical person. As a rule he will be conscious of the special connection which exists between sounds and psychic realities only in the case of music, and more rarely, in the case of poetry, for in these cases he surrenders himself freely to rhythm and the sequence of mental images, and thus realises what would otherwise be beyond his power of experience; just so, divine services may move him when a severe shock has temporarily transferred the centre of his consciousness. Nevertheless, even he can know that in symbolical actions, which are executed in accordance with ancient tradition, it is not always a question of accidental association between significance and appearance. But, knowing and experiencing are two different things. What most Europeans recognise in theory belongs to the self-evident experience of most pilgrims who have piously gathered together in Rameshvaram. Their faces reveal unmistakably their understanding of the significance of the ceremonies which they attend. If they are told that a certain Mantra is Devata (that a certain association of sounds represents the true body of the deity), that imagining certain images in a certain sequence would really bring about the intended reality, that invocations were truly potent, that spiritual exercises trained the soul, then they would not only believe but also understand; they might understand what was intended. I understand too. I know that psychic phenomena are just as objective as material ones, that mental images can become precisely such an incarnation of metaphysical realities as solid bodies do, and I understand that in principle it is possible everywhere to influence matter through mind. However, what I understand and know

is not of interest. The significant thing is that these simple people possess this knowledge. They are not thinkers whose business it is to understand; they are incapable of anticipating a reality in their minds; they must actually experience, as actually as they eat and sleep; they must, to put it briefly, possess the same relation to psychic realities as the Westerner does to physical ones.

To-day I do not propose to continue these observations, and I do not wish to anticipate experience in imagination. However, I feel driven to express this much: if the normal state of consciousness of the pious Hindu is really such as it appears to me to-day, then a great portion of the most extravagant assertions of their philosophy of ritual (Tantra) may be true. If formulae, ceremonies and incantations are accepted as corresponding directly with their significance, then it is easily possible that they can work 'miracles.' In this case they may really lead to all the results to which, in extreme instances, they are capable of leading. And personally, I hardly doubt that the necessary presuppositions are correct. I behold the pilgrims round about me: they all have the eyes of dreamers, they all look out into the world with curious inattention. On the other hand, they seem to be singularly attentive to conditions which are overlooked by the precise observer of nature. Their true home lies in another world. Is it real? This question is difficult to answer, because the gauge which we would use to answer it does not seem to be applicable now. If psychic phenomena are accepted as being fundamental, and mental images as being the densest form of reality, then dreams and experiences are of equal value, and invention and discovery are equally true. Then, too, there is hardly any difference between lies and truth. From our point of view, we would have to come to the conclusion that the Indians live in unreality, and, as a matter of fact, they generally fail in this world. But this would not solve the problem. Every form of consciousness reveals a different layer of nature. He who dwells in the world of the Hindu is subject to influences and has experiences unknown to others. In his case there are sequences of causation which cannot be demonstrated in other circumstances. And it is perfectly

possible that, from the level at which he lives, the path to the final and profoundest self-realisation in thought is shorter and easier than it is from our level. Thus, I dare say that I have found the key to the problem of the Indian outlook on the world. The Indian regards psychic phenomena as fundamental; these phenomena are more real to him than physical ones. Regarded from the angle of the absolute, this difference of accent makes his position as erroneous as that of those holding the opposite point of view, who believe that physical phenomena alone are real. But just as the Westerner has understood the nature of matter so profoundly because he has valued it too highly, so the Indian has penetrated more deeply into the psychic world than anybody else, because he has not taken any other than psychic phenomena seriously.

15

MADURA

THE Temple of Madura at night causes associations of horror to rise in my soul. When I walk about in the dusky, ill-illumined corridor with its oil lamps, and watch the curious play of shadows emanating from the strange performances of those who pray around greasy lingams, while hordes of bats flap their wings about me and wheel and squeak in the air; while I regard the many-armed gods, whose appearance is so much more terrible in artificial light than by day, I am reminded of the rites of the Phœnicians, which have been described so impressively by Flaubert. I know quite well that nothing terrible is happening. Hinduism, as practised in the holy places of Southern India, is gentle and kind, but its traditional forms bear unmistakable signs of the more savage times in which they were created. Kali demanded human sacrifices, and she really demands them still. And Kali is the spouse of Shiva, to whom the Temple of Madura has been consecrated; and Shiva himself is, from many points of view, terrible enough. I can't help it: all the images are terrifying which are occasioned by the impressions of this night.

But the horror thrills me. Now I can well understand why the earliest forms of worship were terrible and had to be so. I am reminded of the words which Dostoievsky places in the mouth of Dimitry Karamazoff, the primitive man among the brothers: 'What seems disgraceful and dishonouring to the intelligence appears as pure beauty to the heart – so does beauty lie in Sodom? – Believe me, she dwells in Sodom for the majority of men. It is awful that beauty is not only terrible but also mysterious. There the devil wrestles with God – and the battlefield is the human heart.' That is to say, that man regards as beautiful that which enhances his consciousness of life. This result is brought about in primitive creatures only by the ecstasy of the flesh. Only in process of intoxication, lust or cruelty do such people get beyond themselves, only thus do they experience what developed man experiences in the serene contemplation of God. For this reason, the cults of the most deeply religious people are always especially cruel in character during the early stages of the race; at that stage their religious consciousness, as it were, exhausts its passion. Then orgies of lust and cruelty are perpetrated, men enjoy and suffer frantically, life is created and destroyed in wild confusion. And it must be so. Primitive men are profound only in their instincts; only sensual enthusiasm unites them to their substance; they can only experience and express what is deepest in them in instinctive actions. And is this true only of human beings in an undeveloped condition? What is the significance of the cult which has again and again been made of the love of a man for a woman in Europe, and which not infrequently finds expression in the most brutal form – what is it but a reaction against too intellectualised an outlook on the world? How many people are still in need of 'spiritual' drinks, of carnal excitement, of wild sensations, in order to rise to their own levels! They are all still, at any rate with a part of their being, on the level at which orgies and human sacrifice would mean the adequate expression of religious emotion. The Hindus do not need human sacrifice – they are too feminine and gentle – in order to satisfy their lusts for destructions. But the whole of their cult is permeated by the spirit of animal procreation. Here,

for the first time in my life, I behold the display of sexual activity, not regarded as something unclean, but as something holy, as symbolising the divine in nature. There was no obscene association in the minds of the faithful present at the feast of Rameshvaram, who beheld the union of Shiva and Shakti symbolised by puppets. None of the women who bowed before the lingam to-night seemed to differ in their attitude from that of a Spanish nun who prays to the ideal of the Immaculate Conception. Every Hindu devotee reveres sensual love as the image of divine creative force and uses it as the vehicle of pious thoughts of sacrifice. The Shastras teach that man and wife shall never approach each other without thinking that in this way Brahma is acting through them. They are taught to honour each other as divine while they love one another, not in the spirit of carnal enjoyment, but in the sense of God-like pouring-out of Life. Thus animal instincts are sanctified as the expression of divinity.

I have never seen expressions so well adapted to the spirit of fertility as the swaying motion of the dancing girls in the temple during their solemn march round the images of their gods. And as I turned my gaze from the girls to the images, with their curiously exaggerated stylisation, I suddenly became conscious of the identity of the spirit in both appearances. These images are the embodiment of our fundamental instincts, and they are the best possible embodiments. What are our instincts and passions without reference to the spiritual unity, to what we call I, or soul? They are beings by themselves, truly demonic, to whom human form is hardly appropriate. Any one who has not met berserkers or satyrs, embodiments of lust or of the fury of destruction, will know from experience what I mean: such creatures are not human beings; they lie in so far as they represent themselves in human form; they are the personification of the elemental forces of nature. But this applies not only to these images, it applies to all who are possessed entirely by one single passion. It applies to mothers, who are entirely obsessed by their maternal instinct, to brides, to whom their lovers are everything; it applies to the holy men and women whose heart embraces the world in the divine

joy of giving. Every instinctive emotion endows the human face with a new expression which changes its whole character: in the one case it makes of man an animal, in the other it beautifies him, transforms him into a devil, or ennobles him to such an extent that we are right in speaking of a process of transfiguration. The means of expression possessed by physical nature are often insufficient to express these things adequately. The religious suspect behind appearance a special spirit which obsesses man from time to time; the artist feels impelled to create a special body which expresses his own being perfectly; in this way legions of divine images have been fashioned all over the face of the earth. Most of them are not what they ought to be. Aphrodite is not the personification of love, and the Virgin Mary is not personified maternity. Both goddesses are only images of human beings, not independent embodiments of fundamental forces. The mental outlook of the West was too scientific even during the Middle Ages, in order to express irrational forces perfectly. But this is just what the Hindu succeeded in doing. The figures in the Indian Pantheon, in so far as they embody primary forces, are so convincing that I am inclined to believe the seer who told me once that they were the true likenesses of divine reality.

In all probability such men alone are capable of similar creative activity who have not yet been crystallised into intellectual personalities. They must be men who are swayed by a variety of emotions, who are possessed now by one, now by another instinct, without a clear consciousness of the unifying tie. Such beings, regarded from the Atman point of view, are superficial, because they know nothing of their real selves. But it is just for this reason that the profoundest in them can give soul to the surface, in a manner which is denied to the spiritualised. The particular elementary instincts are then condensed into so much substance, and they grow into beings of such terrific power, that it is not surprising if many among us still believe to-day that they are essentially profound. It is in this sense that the Indian Pantheon, although a superficial product, yet possesses profundity. It is so tense and exhaustive an expression of the superficial in man and nature, as could

never have been discovered by a profounder set of human beings.

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I AM not surprised that European visitors find it difficult to do justice to Drawidian art, for none of the usual criteria are applicable in this case. There is perhaps nothing in this temple which can be understood purely with one's reason. There is no unified plan which underlies its structure; no general motive has controlled its execution and decoration, nor is it the expression of some particular mental concept. Its grandeur, its monumental nature, lack symbolic significance; it is the accidental product of rich means. Its castellations seem to have sprung up haphazard like the arms of a coral reef, and its ornamentation resembles wild growth. The best comparison that I can think of is to compare this temple with an agglomeration of buds which grow and jostle each other in extravagant numbers, and the general appearance, which can only be discerned with difficulty, affects us as a freak of nature in the same way as some of those so-called Gothic cathedrals which the climber meets with in the Dolomites in the Tyrol.

But there is a profound significance in this art to anyone who has understood its fundamental motive. It is the highest expression of physical imagination. Yesterday I wrote of the significance of the various Indian divinities, and I said that fundamental instincts were materialised in them in a manner which no other people could rival; and I added that such creations could only emanate from a non-unified psyche which was still essentially composed of many parts and had not yet been condensed into mental unity. The plastic art of the Hindus in its generality signifies the rebirth in imagination of the whole of the unintellectualised forces of life. Hardly anything in life is by nature subject to reason, nor can it be traced to a mental cause. Desires, feelings, sensations, impulses, aspirations, the longing for growth and expansion, and the renunciation of age, are all essentially irrational phenomena, and we rob them of their nature in trying to rationalise them.

This peculiarity of their nature is expressed in Indian art with a unique degree of truth. The Temple of Madura seems to have been created just as a primitive organism grows, without plan, without aim, without self-control, following every impulse blindly, changing suddenly from one phase to another, and only confined within its boundaries by fate. All the better does it express, for these reasons, every one of its moods; it knows nothing of renunciation or prejudice, and stands there, full-blown, full-blooded and full-coloured. The effect of the whole is necessarily imperfect, but its details are generally beautiful. The mastery of the Hindu in detail, as opposed to his insufficiency in great structural concepts, is here given its deepest explanation and reason.

While I was in Ceylon, I spent a great deal of my observation in noting the vegetative character of mental creations in the tropics, and I expressed the assumption that Hinduism also, in its unlimited wealth, should be understood as a vegetative process. I was right in principle, but I did not know then what tremendous potential forces lie within its spirit. Even there, where it possessed tropical men, it preserved, in all the positive phases of its life, a controlling power to a very high degree. That which is absolutely true of Buddhism is true of Hinduism only in so far as it forms the background of its structure. But of course, in this case also, there is no question of free mental creation, but rather animal-like development. Its processes are akin to nature just as much as the vegetative processes we have noted, only they are more active, more self-conscious and more deliberately aimed at a certain goal. An energetic spirit lies at the bottom of its growth, which gives its creations a force and tension which are lacking in those of the Buddhists. I am thinking of the astounding exaggeration which characterises all Indian mythology. In one case a sage drinks up the ocean; in another, a prince holds his nuptials with ten thousand virgins in one night; Gautama has passed through many lakhs of reincarnations before he became Buddha, and Krishna wields millions of arms. I am thinking too of the superabundance of gods which go to make up the Indian Pantheon, of the endlessly varied rules of Tantra ritual, of the excessive number

of words and concepts which are the vehicles of Indian thought – all these are excrescences, they are vegetative, but so fruitful an imagination underlies them, and they are in themselves so vital, that in comparison we think of the bodies of animals rather than of the most luxuriating plants. When I behold the realm of Indian forms, it seems to me as if the imagination of the flesh had created them; as if the imagination of a great poet had invaded the cells of the body, so that the latter is now creative in the same sense as the poet is in the psychic sphere. What would happen if an unlimited imagination were inextricably linked to flesh? – The result would be formations such as are characteristic of Indian mythology. The concept of maternity would be expressed exactly as in the main Gopuram of the Temple of Madura, in an unending series of superstructures of milk-laden breasts; omnipotence would be embodied in thousands of organs, and so on. Thus the body would create if he had the gift of poetry. Thus the spirit of the Hindus did actually create at the height of its power. Its art seems to be totally unintellectualised, without unity and without any need for it, but just for this reason it is more expressive where it tries to express the irrational than anything or anyone else. Hindu art alone has perhaps succeeded in manifesting invisible things in the visible world. In Hinduism the dark creative forces which usually exhaust themselves in the formation of material organs have led to great art. One single dancing Shiva embodies more of the essence of divinity than a whole army of Olympians.

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THE spirit of polytheism takes possession of my receptive soul more and more. I accept, as a matter of course, all forces within and without me as being substantial, and my pantheon becomes richer from hour to hour. My experiences gain correspondingly in colour. In so far as I recognise a special being in every special manifestation, I notice these manifestations more than before, and the quality of my consciousness is gaining in degree. Our universe seems to me to be a coloured chaos of an infinite number of monads, each one of which is

clearly characterised, yet none may be traced to another, nor are any of them governed by identical considerations. On the other hand, however, none contradicts each other. As a matter of fact, I no longer perceive a possible contradiction, for this concept no longer means anything to me. What is one to do with unity, connection and consequence, in a world in which there is nothing but a string of qualities? There is no general denomination for qualities. And thus those problems no longer concern me which are so momentous to the seeker after God: the problems of evil, and of its reconciliation to good, the all too frequent unprofitableness of a virtuous life, and other similar considerations. There are simply good and evil forces, moral and amoral ones. Power is not necessarily connected with love, nor knowledge with good intentions. The individual fate of man, and the general fate of the world, are dependent on the interaction of so many individual variable factors, that even Brahma, in his capacity of mathematician, could hardly understand events in the light of a general formula. The essential point is to keep one's eyes open, to observe as many special phenomena as possible, to facilitate and induce favourable influences, and to obviate, by all the means in one's power, the effectiveness of unfavourable ones. And, thanks be to all the gods, there are rules for this purpose. Again and again they have taught us prayers and rituals which effect this or that, again and again they have given us indications of what we ought to do and leave undone in various circumstances. And as long as one obeys faithfully what the Shastras and Tantras command, and if only one does not fail to consult wise Brahmins in all the decisive moments of life, then life itself seems, in a world permeated by spirits of every kind, hardly more dangerous than it does to the man who does not believe in supernatural forces. Undoubtedly such a life is more interesting. Every moment something is happening, something is to be observed, to be reflected upon, which gives transcendental significance to the most insignificant event. Everywhere forces are at play which in any case are curious. And thus I take greater delight in myself as a believer in gods than I have ever done heretofore. I am richer and more versatile in my

powers of experience and perception. I am no longer surprised that great artists only flourish under polytheism (for the Catholic Church is a polytheistic system, and most great poets, such as Goethe, have, at any rate as artists, subscribed to polytheism). Art can only create something great in circumstances where special phenomena are allowed their right to existence, where the forces of imagination, instead of reducing these phenomena, strive to ennoble and magnify them. Conversely, every artistic nature reveals in its type a trait which defines polytheistic peoples: the un-unified nature of their souls. If Shakespeare had concentrated himself into a deep-rooted intellectual personality, he would never have been able to give a soul to so many men. Monotheism, sooner or later, unless other forces specially oppose the process, takes the place of the richer faith of polytheism. Once the soul has become unified, once a single ego-consciousness has taken the place of multiplicity of instincts, then even the substance of the gods, however diversified hitherto, is condensed into one divinity. And thus order, law and coherence take the place of the original confusion. Simultaneously, however, the universe becomes contradictory; now, when everything is to harmonise, we recognise how little it really is attuned. Moreover, the world becomes poorer in the process, for now that one ideal floats above all creation, those forces which have no positive relation to this ideal are denied, ignored or opposed. And as there are a great number of such forces, nature becomes impeded in its unrestricted growth. The world is stabilised and moralised; everywhere among monotheists, their characters are stronger, their principles firmer, the forms of life purer. On the other hand, their souls are more colourless, more rigid, and more sterile. A friend of mine, formerly a most fortunate Don Juan, had turned into an exemplary husband. I asked him what it felt like. He replied, with a sigh: 'There is much to be said for virtue, but I feel that my nature stagnates; too many of its sides suffer for lack of use; I fear that it is not good for men to live only for one woman.'

Poly- and monotheism are contradictory. The mystic, however, whose consciousness of God is generally so wrongly

called pantheism, is never opposed to polytheism: quite on the contrary, it is in this mental atmosphere that mysticism has developed best, as, for instance, in Europe within the Catholic Church. It is only partially true to assert that the mystic experiences the unity of divinity; his experience lies beyond all enumeration. When he speaks of unity, he refers to something which has neither unity nor multiplicity, and simultaneously possesses both. He calls it unity, because this concept here on earth probably implies both these concepts. In any case, however, he is never a monotheist in the Jewish, Puritanical or Islamic sense, although, of course, many mystics have come from these monotheistic groups. A mystic is a contemplative man, whose life emanates entirely from within, who lives in the essence of things and for that essence alone, whose consciousness has taken root in Atman, and who accordingly is completely truthful and pours out his inmost being without any inhibition. Such a man cannot deny any expression of life. He perceives divine power at work in every one of them, he reveres every expression of life, and any *naïveté*, no matter how it is expressed, is more sacred to him than any phenomenon limited by external form and prejudice. It is therefore self-evident that to Indian consciousness, which is more alive mystically than any other, there is no opposition between animal Hinduism and the clarified wisdom of the Rishi. To him they are both expressions of one and the same thing on different levels. An unprejudiced and truthful primitive man cannot help but regard himself as a multiplicity of instincts; the wise man without prejudice cannot but realise that he is superior to all manifestations. And the experience of both has the same significance. Of course, it would be a mistake to believe (as Indian scholastic teaching would wish to demonstrate) that diversified manifestation is primarily the symbol of one force. Originally it all grew forth like a mass of buds; originally there was no kind of unity at the bottom of the Indian Pantheon. On the other hand, its multiplicity signifies exactly the same as the consciousness of unity in the higher stages. For this reason, the priests are justified metaphysically in declaring all belief in God to be

orthodox and compatible with the Vedas and the Upanishads. From an empirical point of view, a great deal is to be said against their interpretation. The greater portion of all their legends of the gods originated outside the Brahminic tradition, and belong to the folklore of non-Aryan aborigines, which were only absorbed into Brahminism later, where they eventually acquired a significance which undoubtedly they did not possess originally. These facts have probably been recognised and explained correctly by Sir Alfred Lyall. However, the falsification which the Brahmins practised was justified metaphysically. The gods are, and signify really, that which the Brahmins assert. When they teach that a local deity of an obscure tribe is actually a Vishnu-Avatar, and as such one aspect of the one and only Brahma, they express, in a mythological way, a metaphysical truth. There is divine activity in every impulse, every surface derives its soul from the depths, and can thus be regarded as its expression. And in being regarded thus, it becomes profound. Folklore gains depth by the interpretation it receives through wise men, so that, that which originally was finally true only symbolically, becomes true empirically, and to this extent it becomes the expression of the highest knowledge.

Not a single sage of India, not even Buddha, has opposed the popular belief in gods. Most of them, above all Shankara, the founder of radical monism, subscribed to this belief themselves. They were so conscious, on the one hand, of the inexpressibility of divinity, and, on the other, of the infinite number of possible manifestations, that generally they preferred the manifold expression to the simple one. I am reminded of the famous hymn to Mahadevi (from the 5th Matamya of Tshandi) in which she, the goddess, is revered as Ishwara, the highest being, then as Ganga, then as Saraswati, and again as Lakshmi, where in one verse, after declaring that she dwells in all the beings of the world in the form of peace, power, reason, memory, professional competence, abundance, mercy, humility, hunger, sleep, faith, beauty, and consciousness, it is added that she also dwells in every creature in the form of *error*. It seems to me that this multiplicity in its connected form is a better expression

of what the pious Indian means, than any single formula could be, however profound.

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HOW could our clarified concepts do justice to the irrational animal formation of the Indian mind? It is perhaps not an accident that in Sanskrit there are more words for philosophic and religious thought than in Greek, Latin and German put together. The language of primitives, if they are gifted, is richer in descriptions of concrete phenomena than that of more developed people, because primitive men are incapable of making abstractions and therefore require many special expressions, where more developed races can manage with a few general ones. For this reason, the vocabulary of the old Indians (although they were, as a matter of fact, capable of abstractions!) was so rich, and became richer with every generation, because it was found to be impossible, even by means of the most discriminately chosen general expressions, to cope with their excessive wealth of ideas. General concepts are of use only where the object to be recognised is rational or capable of rationalisation, and this is never true of the Indian world. Everything alive in this marvellous country has grown irresponsibly like flesh, quite haphazard and without purpose or decided aim. Not only can we find no fundamental plan in the temples, nor discover a unified and guiding idea within its forms of belief; in India there is also no nation, no spirit of the race, no national consciousness of the people; there are no Hindus in the sense in which there are Germans or Englishmen. Syntheses of this kind can exist only where reason sways the growth of thought, no matter how imperceptibly, where there is a natural tendency towards generalisation and a striving for unity; all these are lacking in Hindustan. Here the most extraordinary manifestations grow aimlessly and in contrast. At times they are sharply and permanently divided, at others they enter upon the most improbable connections. Every form is justified as such, and no attempt is ever made to eradicate its peculiarities; there is room for everything in the world. One should not imagine that Brahminism was the

only motive spirit at the bottom of this infinite variety. To begin with, Brahminism itself is not one single spirit; secondly, it does not animate all manifestations; and thirdly, when it does so animate them, it happens in so undefined a way that no concrete relation is established between special manifestations. There can be no question that Brahmanism gives life to all appearance in the same sense and measure as the spirit of Buddhism does to life in Ceylon.

The unique magnificence of colour in Indian life, which delights my soul more and more from day to day, is due to the Indian indifference to all question of cohesion and uniformity. I have hardly travelled in India as yet, and nevertheless I have seen more variety than anywhere else among men. Stern reason has nowhere and at no time impeded frivolous growths. This is all the more remarkable, as the Hindus are famous for their dialectics, their logical powers and complicated systems. They have found a method and a system for everything, from the art of poetry to the profession of the highwayman, from the method of life which leads to God to the manner in which the nuptial night is to be spent. How is this to be brought into harmony with their irrationality? It harmonises with it in so far as the passion for system is an irrational instinct amongst others, and, like every other irrational instinct, it goes its own way and flourishes irresponsibly. Just as mental images luxuriate wildly, so do their interpretations; and just as gods and spirits multiply, so do the systems of their philosophy. Logic in India has never pretended to establish connections of ultimate validity; it has very wisely recognised its own limitations, and left this problem to mystic intuition. All that it has done is to systematise existing data, or to speculate extravagantly from existing data, or to analyse, even beyond hair-splitting, the data they possess. Their achievements are generally typical of scholastic work, and lack, as a rule, all scientific value. No manifestation of the Indian imagination is less pleasing. Yet it would be unfair to accuse the Indians that they have never striven after the highest aims, or that they have never produced a Parmenides or a Hegel. In logical acuteness the Hindus are not behind the Europeans,

and it would not have been difficult for them to have invented similar systems. They have not done so because, as metaphysicians, they were too profound; because they knew that logical understanding does not plumb the depths. They were never rationalists. Now this is one of the great examples which the Indian people have given to humanity: the gift of intelligence does not necessarily produce rationalism, and a maximum of logical acuteness does not necessarily destroy an unbiased outlook. In India, three fundamental interpretations of the Vedanta-Sutras are regarded as equally orthodox: a monistic, a dualistic and a theistic interpretation. From these three emanate several hundreds of more or less contradictory systems. What does this mean? It means that the Indians are profoundly conscious of the contingency of all products of reason, that they know that it is impossible for any effort of reason to give a true picture of metaphysical reality, and that they all only signify an *à peu près*. Europeans, when they realise something similar, immediately declare war upon reason. The Indians, who are wiser in this respect as well, give reason proportionately greater freedom. No manifestation is to be taken seriously metaphysically, but empirically every one of them has a right to existence. And thus, if it pleases the body, he can create creature after creature, if imagination takes delight in doing so, it can populate the heavens with gods, and even reason is at liberty to flourish.

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I AM sitting at one of the ponds in the interior of the sanctuary and listening to a Brahmin reading from the Ramayana. His assistant interrupts again and again the reading in Sanskrit with chanting explanations in the popular dialect. With glowing eyes and with an intensity which verges upon a trance, the congregation listens to the sacred song. – The great epics, Ramayana, and Mahabharatam, mean to the Hindus approximately what the Book of Kings meant to the Jews: the chronicles of the times in which they were mighty upon earth, and at the same time in constant intercourse with heaven. From the human point of view they therefore mean more to them

than all Shastras. No simple Hindu doubts their historical accuracy, and not many of their scholars do so either. They are fond of referring to episodes from the Mahabharatam for purposes of scientific proof, and it is not rare that heavenly events are quoted in order to explain earthly happenings. The Indians know nothing of history, nor have they any organs for historical truth. Mythology and reality are one and the same thing to them. And thus, legend is judged as reality, and reality transformed to legend, and every time this happens as if it were a matter of course. And not only the dead and the absent are changed, again and again living and present individuals are recognised as Avatars and revered by the mass as gods. For the rest, life takes its normal course. The appearance of a god upon earth does not seem to the Hindus any more extraordinary than the interference in the Trojan War by the Olympians seemed to the heroes of Homer. They believe everything with the same readiness, they accept what is likely just as they accept what is improbable, and they do not take anything specially seriously simply because it is historically true.

It is only here that I succeed in understanding these facts, now that the Hindu mode of consciousness has been revealed to me in the concrete its insufficiencies are obvious: the Hindus do not differentiate strictly between fiction and truth, dream and reality, imagination and actuality, and for this reason it is impossible to rely upon their statements. Their science is inaccurate and their observation lacks precision. But every mode of consciousness has a positive element, and this latter strikes me more and more. While at Rameshvaram I noted down that the attitude in which the accent is placed consciously on the mental image as such, and not on the external object to which it is addressed, generally reveals sides of reality which otherwise would escape notice. This applies also to the attitude thanks to which reality and mythology mingle. How does mythology change reality? Senselessly, or according to some idea? The change is always full of meaning; the significant element of reality is raised in the process of mythical transformation. In this process the essentials become more and

more evident, not necessarily that which seems the most essential in the object, but that which seems the most essential to the poet and his kind. Modern occidental mythology effects this change with almost scientific exactitude; every new metamorphosis shows Goethe more like his own metaphysical self, whereas the Indian has generally only increased the significance of the hero to the people. If I regard these facts in connection with the positive elements in the Indian consciousness, then the problem appears to be nearly solved: the Indian consciousness accepts the significant elements directly as such; it has the same relation to every event as a pious believer has to a religious mystery; or, to give another and more pregnant comparison, he experiences in such a way as the contemporaries of Goethe would have had to experience him, in order to recognise his eternal significance as clearly as we do. And what is valuable, what essential – significance or facts? Significance alone; facts as such are totally irrelevant. Thus, India, with its tendency to producing myths, has, judged from the angle of life, chosen the better part as opposed to precise Europe.

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I DWELL in the state of consciousness in which the battle of Kurukshitra, in which the gods could be seen standing by the side of men, seems as real as that of Sedan. The world which is thus revealed to me – is it not more real than that of the research-student? Is it not real in a far higher sense? The teachings of Indian wisdom irresistibly take possession of my mind, almost without surprise. Significance is the primary, the eternal and the truly real force; that which is called fact is nothing more than its image, unreliable, like everything produced by Maya; the importance of appearance can be gauged only by the degree in which it expresses its significance. Accordingly, the astral world is more real than the physical one, and in turn the realm of ideas more real than the astral world, for in each successive sphere true significance is manifested in an increasingly pure form. Here below we are to ascribe a higher reality to inspired thought than to the events which seem to disprove them, for the things of this world pass away,

whereas their significance remains eternally; and legends are more substantial than all history, because in them significance presents itself in the form of eternal symbols, which will outlive many Kalpas. – Did Krishna really live, did he really deliver the speech which can be read to-day in the Bhagavat-Gita, to Arjuna, before the decisive struggle? Certainly, so far as you believe it. In higher realms, significance exists by itself without any form; as soul, it cannot be perceived by our minds. It finds expression just as you desire yourself; just as you believe, wish or think, it becomes manifest – as god or goddess, as a system of philosophy, as an image of prehistoric times, as legend. It is all left to you. But the more you strive to penetrate into its essence, the more noble are the images which appear to you. – I hold converse with the spirit of this wisdom. It appears to me as Mahaguru, as a great teacher who, gently and kindly, points the way to me. Do not let yourself be deceived by the evil Maya, the goddess of your Western science! Her greatest cunning is that everything she does is proof against the criticism of reason. But that which can be proved is never essential: everything capable of proof vanishes and transforms itself into something which can be proved anew, and deceives the uninitiated concerning its essence in every one of its forms with equal success. Of course, everything we imagine is Maya too, only they have this advantage over the physical world, that they display their peculiarity more honestly, and offer a more pliable medium to significance. How your scholars have misjudged the heart of reality! They have brains, as perhaps no Indian has had them, but instead of using them to seek significance, they waste the precious time of their human existence in studying indifferent unrealities, and think they have achieved heaven knows what, if their results are objective! Of course they are objective, but they are also transitory. And look at my Hindus by comparison. They know nothing of exact research; they do not understand Maya; they fail only too often in this world. On the other hand, their souls are opened wide to all possible influences of eternal significance, and they all wander along the road to liberation. – The guardian of the temple calls to

me: it is time to leave the Atrium. In fact, all the bathers have gone. The lecture on Ramayana has stopped. Only a few naked Yogis persevere in motionless meditation.

16

TANJORE

I HAVE spent many hours to-day watching the dancers in the temple. They moved in front of me to the accompaniment of that strange orchestra which always plays during holy ceremonies, in semi-darkness, and the longer they danced the more did they fascinate me. The story goes that Nana Sahib, after he had ordered the massacre of the English prisoners, sent for four Nautsh girls and watched their flowing movements during the whole night while he sat by without moving a muscle. I used to think that such a choice of relaxation, and such endurance of enjoyment required a special temperament. But to-day I know that mere understanding is sufficient; I too, in the presence of these girls, lost all consciousness of time, and found happiness. The idea underlying these dances has little in common with that which underlies ours. It lacks all great, broad lines, it lacks every composition which may be said to have a beginning and an end. The movements never signify more than a transient ripple on smooth water. Many begin and end with the hands, others flow slowly back into the quiescent, soft bodies, and if by chance a perfect arabesque is achieved, it disappears so rapidly that it only attracts momentary attention and does not lead to a continued tension. The glittering garments veil and soften the mobile play of the muscles; every crude curve is resolved into golden waves, in which their jewels are mirrored like stars. As an art, no matter how mobile it may be, this dance possesses no accelerating motive; for this reason one can watch it ceaselessly. Our dance means a definite, finite formation, which begins and ends in time; the onlooker enters into its play of lines, and in so doing he exerts himself, identifies himself with its meaning, and, when the design is completed, sinks back into himself wearily,

because no one can live outside himself for long. It is impossible to watch the most perfect Western play of movements continuously. In the case of the Nautsh it is different. Their contemplation does not take the onlooker beyond himself into a strange realm, it allows him, on the contrary, to be conscious of his own life; it simply exteriorises the intimate process of his life, as a clock does in moving its hands, and no one tires of this. Every rapid movement sinks back as soon as it has been shown, into the bathos of the calmly flowing stream of life, and this gives us a direct experience of its flow. For the stream of life as such is not felt by us; we do not notice the circulation of our blood; we become conscious of our duration only by means of the small events which, rising again and again to the surface, also set the lower layers of our being into gentle motion. That is exactly what the movements of Indian dancing aim at and achieve. They are just pronounced enough to make man conscious of himself, and to make it easy for him to feel himself alive.

This is the significance of the Indian dance. It is the same significance as underlies all Indian manifestations; only the Nautsh makes it unusually evident. In the plastic art this wealth of form is so confusing that the observer easily overlooks the underlying reason. In both cases it is the dark background of life which by itself is formless, unfathomable and unintelligible. It is not a rational principle or an idea, it is purely circumstantial. Regarded from the angle of the circumstantial basis, everything objective seems accidental, senseless, incoherent, lawless and without a purpose. It may, of course, be real as an appearance. But whoever enquires after its significance will be pointed by the Indians away from all reality into the nameless depths of Being, which sends all formations like bubbles to the surface.

17

CONJEEVARAM

My Tamyl servant is forbidden to enter all the temple precincts which I am permitted to visit. He is a Christian and therefore a pariah; everybody sees this at first glance.

The Indians seem to have a special organ with which they perceive at once the caste of any individual; no matter how cleverly he may attempt to deceive them.

This time a young priest who conducted me through the sanctuaries of Conjeevaram, asked me straight out how it was possible that I permitted myself to be waited upon by an outcast. Was I not at all afraid of defiling myself? I did not know how to reply, for I understand the Indian view of life only too well by now. If psychic factors are primary, if concepts are more real than demonstrable phenomena, if imagination conditions the world of things, then prejudices must mark equally clear boundaries as those which in material nature divide one genus from another. Those who belong to different castes are undoubtedly beings of a different kind, and it would seem of infinite importance with whom one associates, with whom one eats, and careless behaviour can result in infection just as dangerous as contact with the bacilli of typhoid. And this is true quite literally, in fact in a higher degree. Our souls are peculiarly open to infection; every influence penetrates into them and disturbs this original condition. From this it follows that, if a certain psychic equilibrium appears as the only possible condition, just as health appears the only possible state as opposed to illness, then the most energetic means must be employed to resist all influences which could tend to upset it. The whole of cultivated humanity does this, where it is a question of preserving intact the spirit of a school or an army. In India this happens on the largest scale, because there all life is controlled by 'spirits' of this kind. These spirits possess two peculiarities which make them excessively difficult to handle: on the one hand, they tend to unlimited differentiation, on the other, they succumb before the slightest attack of disease. The first-named peculiarity has in the course of time resulted in such a complication of the Indian caste system that an unembarrassed existence is hardly possible for the Hindu; at every turn some prejudice crosses his path. The other is conditioned by a constant atmosphere of *qui vive*, and the unceasing necessity of observing such strict precautions as we would only consider during a virulent visitation of the plague. One

experience, one perception too many for the Hindu, and he is done for. In this way most of those who, for over a thousand years, lent colour to the life of Europe, died out in less than a century. Now in India, the land in which Psyche dominates all reality is conditioned by imagination. If prejudice were to disappear, the caste system, the venerable skeleton of the whole of Indian life, would go too. And these prejudices are often so delicate that they can only live in hothouse air. Until recently, every Brahmin lost his caste if he left India in a ship, and this was justified, because the web of concepts, of imagination and prejudice, which defines the Brahmin, must be destroyed as soon as he steps out of the frame of his inherited tradition. And thus his caste would cease to be.

There is only one path for the Indian which leads beyond the fetters of caste: the path of recognition. Anyone who has realised his identity with Brahma has grown beyond the sphere of manifestation. He who denies the world to gain the highest revelation does not need to concern himself about the world any more. The Sanyassi, the Yogi, the Rishi have no caste prejudice. What wisdom there is in this teaching! Recognition does indeed melt down all natural fetters; he who knows is no longer bound by anything. But only a sage can permit himself the luxury of looking down upon prejudice. He who throws away his prejudices prematurely does not gain his freedom, but rather bars his way to it. Our own times illustrate this truth with terrible clarity. Modern humanity has destroyed the form whose development made our ancestors profound, and since it has not invented any new one to replace the old, men are becoming more superficial and more evil from year to year. The great idea of freedom which humanity proclaims, it does not understand inwardly, and for this reason it brings destruction instead of salvation. *Quod licet Jovi non licet bovi.* It is absolutely indifferent from life's point of view what any condition is worth ideally or theoretically. All that matters is whether it does or does not correspond to a given soul. How infinitely more wise than those who would emancipate our people was the Arab Hajji Ibn Yokhdan, who, after gaining his own revelation, not only refrained from explaining

it to his brethren, but even begged them to be forgiven for having once made an attempt of this kind! 'He begged them for forgiveness,' reports Ibn Tufail, 'for the words which he had spoken unto them, and he assured them that he was entirely of their opinion, and advised them urgently to abide by their accustomed ideas. They were to shut themselves off from all alien influences, and they were to follow the example of their worthy ancestors, and not permit any innovation. There was no way of salvation for those who were weak and who had not learned wisdom. If they emancipated themselves from tradition, their condition could only become worse; they would lose all inner security, they would be cast hither and thither, and probably come to an evil end.' – It seems, however, that the West is finding its way back to a profounder understanding of life. Pragmatism is, after all, nothing but a version, fit for this age, of the wisdom of Hajji Ibn Yokhdan.

18

MAHABALIPURAM (THE SEVEN PAGODAS)

And thus my pilgrimage through the sanctuaries of Southern India has come to the most ideal conclusion. On this bare and empty isle of sand, every rock, almost every stone, has been re-created as a work of art. Sometimes the vast bodies of elephants and bullocks have been chiselled out of great blocks, then again delicate Mandagrams. Monolithic temples crown the heights, and cover every hill, and when the sea rises, its waves roll over exquisite stairs and doorsteps and gradually rise to and break before the slumbering gods. Who were the men who fashioned this world? The sand has blown away their traces. Mahabalipuram must once upon a time, probably thanks to the transient caprice of a rajah, have been one single workshop in which thousands of hands hammered, bored, attempted, improved and rarely perfected, in order suddenly to be deserted again. That is what one suspects, but we know

nothing. To-day only a few poor fishermen and a handful of Brahmins live here; lean sheep wander among the ruins in search of their scanty food.

I sat until late at night in the gateway of the Vishnu Temple, which originally lay in the middle of the land, but is surrounded to-day on three sides by the hungry sea, and I only left it when the rising flood began to wet my feet. They say that five temples have already been swallowed by the sea, and that the days of this one are numbered. My imagination races ahead of time. I see our ancient planet, covered with broken fragments, rolling, cold and dead, through space. And this idea does not make me sad. Transitoriness is the safeguard of eternity. If men and their work were not unique, irreplaceable and irretrievable, their existence would signify nothing. The ending of nothing has never hurt me in my heart of hearts, but how often have I suffered on rediscovering conditions which should have been buried long ago! Will men never understand that duration only means delay whenever it exceeds the span necessary for realisation? Will they never see that it is sacrilege to cling to the past? And that, in so doing, they threaten the life of the eternal? Only small fragments remain of the great art of India. Indian artists, forgetful of destructive forces, have worked chiefly in wood. They knew very well that duration was unimportant. And it pleases me to think that they lived in the spirit of the great doctrine of the Bhagavat-Gita: Toil day and night, but sacrifice beforehand the results of thy work.

19

ADYAR

At the invitation of Mrs. Annie Besant, I have settled for a time in Adyar, the magnificently situated headquarters of the Theosophical Society. No matter what attitude we take to the Theosophical movement, their deserts in revealing the wisdom of the East cannot be denied. It is true that she has transmitted this wisdom in a manner which robs it of a good

deal of its peculiar nature. In accordance with the Western, and particularly the Anglo-Saxon temperament, it often stresses that which is unimportant to the East, to such an extent that the same teaching in theosophy appears in direct opposition of its significance to the Indians. In this way, for instance, the hope of eternal reincarnation is nothing terrible to the theosophist; it is rather a blessed message, for they long, with very few exceptions, for anything rather than an escape out of the world of manifestation. They affirm life in the practical and empirical sense, they wish to rise on the ladder of life, just in the way we advance in this world. All the theosophists whom I have met cling, in crass opposition to the Indians, to individuality. This change of attitude – justified enough by itself, for it is apparently a question of temperament whether one affirms or denies existence – has, of course, a modifying effect upon their doctrine, and undoubtedly to its disadvantage from a philosophical point of view. Firstly because Indian spiritualism has thereby undergone a remarkable metamorphosis in the direction of Anglo-Saxon materialism. In theosophical textbooks so much weight is attached to the forms in which spirit is manifested (which, of course, are material) that most faithful students must come to think that the forms of these manifestations are the essential, and such a view defines the materialist. Moreover, in the hands of the theosophist, the Indian doctrine of the essential independence of the individual, which is heightened from stage to stage, has retreated so considerably, compared with the other, according to which guidance is necessary, that the theosophic religious community, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, is being crystallised more and more into a kind of Catholic church within which faith in authority, readiness to serve, and obedience are the cardinal virtues. But this probably had to be so. Indian wisdom no doubt could not be popularised among Westerners without considerable misinterpretation. The tendency to Catholicism is a characteristic of our day. And, after all, the object of the theosophists is not the continuation of the Indian doctrine: they aim at the triumph of their personal beliefs. They are the disciples of a new religion. It proves

nothing against them if one shows up their scientific errors.

However insufficient the theosophists may be as adepts of Indian wisdom, as philosophers and metaphysicians, in one direction they are doubtlessly its true disciples, namely, as occultists. This fact makes them extremely interesting to me. I have been interested for years in the secret doctrine of antiquity. All the more important documents which are available to non-members of occult societies, I have read, and I have reached the philosophical conclusion that, as far as the facts they assert are concerned, there is much truth in them. It would involve placing very much too high a value on the human powers of imagination if one supposed that men could have invented everything which is reported from 'higher' planes, and it would be opposed to all the rules of criticism if we disregarded altogether the extraordinary consonance of the secret traditions of all peoples and all times, from the earliest days of antiquity to the present day. It would mean an unjustified simplification of the problem, if, without any trace of justification, we should stigmatise as swindlers men who in everyday life are well known to be honest. It is highly probable, in fact it is certain, that there is much which is erroneous that has been handed down in these occult teachings, there is much that is imaginary, there is much phantasmagoria. But anyone who, like myself, takes the trouble to study them seriously, will come to the conclusion that it is not all imaginary; that the possibility of much of it is certain, and the reality probable.

The reality of many a strange phenomenon which, until recently, was considered impossible, has been proved to-day. Only the ignorant can doubt the truth of telesthesia, of action at a distance, of the existence of materialisations, whatever all that may mean. I was quite certain of this before they had been proved; I knew that they were possible in principle, and considered it out of the question that so many unimaginative people could go through extraordinary experiences which coincide so remarkably, without their being based on some real fact. Anyone who seriously concerns himself with the problem of the interaction of the body and the mind, of the substance

and principle of life, will recognise that there is no difference in principle between moving your own hand and moving a distant object. There is also no real difference between affecting your immediate surroundings or some object at a distance. If I can convey thoughts to my neighbour, either by means of words, expressions, a look, or by communicating with him psychically in the technical sense of this term – it is all the same – then this must also be possible in principle in the case of the antipodes, for what is difficult to understand is the power of the mind in influencing matter at all. If this is true anywhere, then the limits of what the mind may effect cannot be discerned, for there are forces which link and permeate all points of the universe. In the same sense, I am quite certain of many things which still await objective proof. In this way I am sure of the existence of levels of reality which correspond with the astral and mental planes of theosophy. Undoubtedly the processes of thought and feeling mean, from a certain point of view, the formation and radiation of forms and vibrations which, although they may not be material in the sense that they escape physical proof, must still be regarded as material phenomena. All appearance is *ipso facto* material; that is to say, it must be understood in accordance with the categories of matter and force; this applies to an idea no less than to a chemical. For the *expression* of an idea – whatever be true of its meaning – belongs in all circumstances to the world of phenomena, and it is its expression which gives it substance, which makes it real and capable of being conveyed. In the case of the spoken or the written word, this material character of mental formations is obvious; but the same is true in so far as they are only conceived, for even subjective mental images are appearances of something which hitherto did not exist in the visible world, and they are therefore real materialisations of which it has already been proved that they can be conveyed, and possess therefore objective reality. Let us suppose now that it is possible to perceive directly the material formations which are created and pass away in the process of thought and feeling: we would thus have arrived at the higher spheres of occultism. It has not yet been proved scientifically that such a

possibility exists in practice. In principle it does exist, and anyone who reads what C. W Leadbeater, for instance, has told us about these spheres, can hardly doubt that he at any rate does feel at home in them, for all the statements which we can control, in so far as they are directly connected with events in our own sphere of life, are in themselves so probable and agree so perfectly with the known nature of psychic phenomena, that it would be much more remarkable if Leadbeater were wrong. Above all, however, I am inclined to accept as probable the assertion of the occultists for epistemological considerations. There is no doubt that the reality which we experience normally is only a qualified section of the whole realm of reality, whose character is conditioned by our psychophysical organism (this is the real significance of the teaching of Kant: 'My world is representation'). And this certainty allows us to draw a further conclusion, namely, that, if we should succeed in acquiring a different organisation, then the merely human barriers and forms would lose their validity. Nature, as we perceive her with our senses and our intellects, is only our 'Merkwelt,' as Uexküll would say.[1] The forms of recognition which have been proved by Kant and his followers, relate only to the structural plan of specific souls.[2] If therefore its boundaries can be moved, it should be possible, not only to enlarge, but to exceed the limitations laid down by Kant. Whether this is *de facto* possible has not yet been ascertained scientifically, but it seems to me to be most significant that the assertions of the occultists correspond from beginning to end with the postulates of criticism: they all teach that the power of increasing experience and experiencing differently is dependent upon the formation of new organs; that the acquisition of powers of clairvoyance is exactly like the acquisition of sight on the part of a blind man, and that the step on to 'higher' planes of reality means nothing but stepping beyond the frame of Kantian experience. In any case, all philosophers, psychologists and biologists would do well to concern themselves at long last seriously with occult literature. I have

[1] Compare his *Innenwelt und Umwelt der Tiere*, Berlin, 1909, J. Springer.
[2] Compare my *Prolegomena zur Naturphilosophie*.

pointed, among the writers who are in question, to Leadbeater, although this clairvoyant does not enjoy general appreciation even among his own group: I did so because I have found his writings, in spite of the frequency of childish traits in them, more instructive than others of their kind. He is the only one whom I know, whose power of observation is more or less on the level of a scientist, and he is the only one whose descriptions are plain and simple. In the ordinary sense of the word he is not talented enough in order to invent what he declares he has seen, nor, like Rudolph Steiner, is he capable of working upon his material in such a way that it would be difficult to differentiate between that which he has perceived and that which he has added. He is hardly intellectually equal to his material. Nevertheless, again and again I meet with assertions on his part, which, on the one hand, are probable, and, on the other, correspond to philosophical truths. What he sees after his own fashion (very often without understanding it) is in the highest degree full of significance. He will, therefore, in all probability have seen something which really exists.

In writing the above I do not in any way wish to defend the system of the theosophists as it exists to-day, nor of any other traditional occult teachings. I have the most serious doubts of the correctness of most of the interpretations which are put upon the observed facts by these systems, and so far as the systems themselves are concerned, I lack every opportunity of testing everything which is not connected with the normal processes of consciousness. I do not know if each plane possesses its own fauna, and I do not know whether there are spirits, elementals or gods, and whether these creatures, if they exist, possess the peculiarities which clairvoyants ascribe to them with tolerable unanimity. It may be; it is certain that nature is much richer than it can possibly appear to our limited consciousness, and an honest man who asserts that he can perceive astral beings is, in all circumstances, more worthy of attention than all the critics put together who deny the possibility of such experience from empirical or rationalistic considerations. Last but not least – not to leave unmentioned the most extreme possibilities – it is certain that ecstatic vision-

aries cannot be comprehended exhaustively by the science of medicine. Such men experience what no 'normal' being could possibly sense, and that their experiences are not merely phantasmagorical is proved conclusively by the fact that 'god-seers' have always stood on a spiritually higher level than most other men, and history has shown that they have embodied, not only the strongest, but also the most beneficent forces. The most obvious objection against these visions of God was already answered by Al Ghazzali. 'There are people,' he wrote, 'who are born blind or deaf. The former have no idea of light and colour, and it is impossible to teach it to them, and the latter have no idea of sound. In the same way, intellectuals are deprived of the gift of intuition: does this justify them in denying it? Those who possess it see the design with the eye of the mind. Of course, one could say to them: communicate to us what you see. However, what is the good if I describe to a man possessed of sight a district which he has never seen? No matter how vivid my description may be, he can never acquire a correct idea of it, and a man who was born blind is still less able to do so.' According to the express evidence of all occultists, a change in the condition of our consciousness is essential before we can experience the supernatural; it appears *a priori* impossible, therefore, to test occult experiences from our present plane of consciousness. We would be entitled to be radically sceptical if two things could be proved: if, firstly, a change in the condition of our consciousness, which is to open new possibilities of experience, were inconceivable in principle; and, secondly, if the means were not enumerated which would lead to this achievement. Neither supposition is true. The existence of different planes of consciousness, implying different possibilities of experience, is a fact. The observation of a dragon-fly differs from that of a starfish; the world of men is richer than that of the octopus. The differences between the possibilities of experience in differently gifted human beings is scarcely less great. The born metaphysician perceives mental realities instantly, whereas their existence can only be deduced by others, and all metaphysicians experience something of this kind. An intelligent man experiences more and

differently than a stupid one; for 'understanding' is just as much a direct perceiving of specific realities as 'seeing,' and the stupid individual cannot understand. Finally, men, as everybody knows, display abilities in a hypnotic condition which are denied to them in their normal wakened state. In fact, there can be no doubt that there are different conditions of consciousness. As to the path which we must follow in order to reach occult experiences, it has been handed down to us with an exactitude which leaves nothing to be desired. Into the bargain, this tradition has been corroborated unanimously by every sect of occultists. Therefore, the second principal objection is also removed. Anyone who wishes to test the assertions of the occultists should undergo the training which is said to develop the organs of clairvoyance. He alone has a right to controvert the soundness of their dicta who has been trained according to their precepts, and then discovered that he can see nothing. If one of us attempts to dispute their statements, it is equally ridiculous as if he wished to test with the bare eye the soundness of observations which an astronomer makes by the aid of his telescope.

The Indians have done more than anyone else to perfect the method of training which leads to an enlargement and deepening of consciousness. And the leaders of the theosophical movement freely confess that they owe their occult powers to the Indian Yoga. I have discussed these questions in detail with Mrs. Besant as well as with Leadbeater. There is no doubt that both of them are honest, and both assert that they possess possibilities of experience, some of which are known under abnormal conditions, most of which, however, are totally unknown; both of them declare that they have acquired these powers in course of practice. Leadbeater, for instance, originally possessed no 'psychic' gifts. As to Annie Besant, there is one thing of which I am certain: this woman controls her being from a centre which, to my knowledge, only very few men have ever attained to. She is gifted, but not by any means to the degree one might suppose from the impression created by her life's work. Her importance is due to the depth of her being, from which she rules her talents. Anyone who is

an adept with an imperfect instrument, achieves more than a clumsy individual does with superior means. Mrs. Besant controls herself – her powers, her thoughts, her feelings, her volitions – so perfectly that she seems to be capable of greater achievements than men of greater gifts. She owes this to Yoga. If Yoga is capable of so much, it may be capable of even more, and thus appears entitled to one of the highest places among the paths to self-perfection.

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I AM taking the rich opportunities offered by the Adyar library in order to complete my knowledge concerning Yoga. If I summarised everything which is contained in the writings of the Indians, together with the Yoga regulations of classical antiquity, of the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Christian Church and modern science – and this is quite possible – then I find that, disregarding the creation of new psychic organs whose processes are still wrapped in darkness, and will presumably remain so, like every creative process which may be facilitated but never realised, that the essential points are these: firstly, and above all, power of concentration must be developed; secondly, the involuntary activity of the mind must be eliminated; thirdly, those processes of the soul must be vitalised whose predominance seems desirable. The goal towards which these systems aspire differs, of course; sometimes magical powers are aimed at, sometimes union with God, identification with the Absolute, or earthly well-being; in this respect they only agree in asserting that Yoga heightens and potentialises life. With regard to its technique, there is divergence in so far as sometimes stress is laid on physical, and sometimes on psychic practices, and that, among these, sometimes the one and sometimes the other are preferred. As far as their significance goes, they are all in complete agreement.

The inner truth of this significance is so obvious that I am surprised that Yoga practice has not long ago been introduced into the curriculum of every educational institution. There is no doubt that the strengthening of all the forces of life is the function of their heightened concentration; and concentration

signifies undoubtedly the technical basis of all progress. In love, in every passion which 'works miracles,' the psychic powers seem concentrated. A strong personality is more collected than a weak one. All progress in recognition depends upon increase of attention; all progress of character depends upon the concentration of various talents round about an ideal centre; and all spiritual progress is conditioned by the spiritualisation of the psychic complex by means of the deepest self, which can only take place by means of increased inwardness, that is to say, increased concentration. Concentration undoubtedly is the way to perfection. If there are means, as Yoga philosophy asserts, of increasing these capacities to a greater extent than any other system, then their application is decidedly advisable. – The value of the second aim of Yoga training, that of silencing the involuntary psychic activity, is equally convincing. Every superfluous activity wastes strength. We have at our disposal so limited a measure of energy that the less we expend uselessly, the more remains for intelligent application. Every ordinary man expends quite irresponsibly much power upon the interplay of automatic psychic processes; in his consciousness one content relieves another aimlessly and at tremendous speed. If it is possible to impede such action, then energy is saved which would otherwise be thrown away; this energy accumulates, and if one learns how to arrest permanently this automatic play of thoughts, just as every one learns to keep his body, which originally is fidgety, in quiescence until the moment it is really needed, then, quite possibly, the accumulated force induces such a change in the organism that it acquires new capacities. The value of learning and controlling quiescence cannot be doubted. All strong minds are marked by the fact that they are not fidgety, that they can relax and contract at will, and that they can give their attention to one problem more continuously than weak minds. They are the masters of their consciousness and not the servants of automatic action; they do not radiate the energy which they have continuously, but they allow it to accumulate until the moment that they need it. Most of the Yoga practices, to use the language of the mystics, serve the purpose of making

the soul quiescent. All meditation consists in controlling consciousness in such a way as to retain it in a motionless position – it is immaterial whether, for this purpose, an external object, an idea, a concept or nothingness, is focused. On the one hand, it is a question of practising concentration, but for the most part it is a question of practising pure quiescence, and I can say, from my own experience, that this apparently stupid and often ridiculed practice is the more important of the two. Quite apart from the fact that in the beginning it requires not a little concentration in order to keep in check one's flow of thoughts, the mere accumulation of force which absolute stillness brings with it creates an increase in one's power of concentration. It is unbelievable how important for our inner growth the shortest periods of meditation are, provided they are practised regularly. A few minutes of conscious abstraction every morning effect more than the severest training of the attention through work. This explains, amongst other things, the strengthening effect of prayer.

The third important consideration of all Yoga practice refers to the vitalisation of desired concepts. The significance of this consideration is not in question, as every one knows that education depends ultimately upon the power of suggestion.[1] Only Yoga philosophy asserts that suggestion is capable of a great deal more than science has proved. They claim that it not only alters one's original psychic equilibrium, but that it adds new elements to it. If only you imagine that you possess a quality which hitherto has not been your own but which you desire, the strength of your desire that you should possess it will create it; if only you imagine long enough that certain organs of your astral body, which are not developed in ordinary men, are developed in you, then they will manifest themselves. In the psychic world, desire really creates all reality. – In principle this is undoubtedly true, and it may be that the Yogi are right in what they assert. What inclines me to accept their statements are the enormous, scarcely credible changes which are brought about in men who energetically practise the

[1] I have treated at length the educative side of suggestion in my book *Schöpferische Erkenntniss*, Darmstadt, 1922.

spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. These practices – invented by a psychologist of the first rank – concern themselves exclusively with the power of imagination. The disciple must experience in imagination what he would experience in reality in case he reached his goal. And eventually he really does become transformed in accordance with his imagined ideal. In fact, the men who have been trained in these practices of meditation (and they are not only Jesuits) all possess in a high degree the qualities which they desire. Now he who practises these spiritual exercises with such iron determination that he acquires unusual powers of concentration and quiescence, will inevitably develop into a human being with capacities which have always been considered as peculiar to members of the Jesuit Order, and which have also justifiably made the laity regard the Jesuits as uncanny: they become virtuosos in will-power, acrobats of versatility, and connoisseurs and influencers of men without parallel. They are Yogis, they have become the masters of their souls, in the same sense as athletes have become masters of their body, and they are proportionately strong. The highest embodiments of the Jesuitical type, whose existence can be proved, constitute an unchallengeable proof of the value of Yoga practice.

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THE reflection upon the Jesuits leads me to consider one of the most misunderstood aspects of Yoga practice. It is the belief that the strengthening or transmuting of the forces of life somehow or other necessarily involves moral and spiritual progress. Yoga practice in itself is something purely technical, like any form of gymnastics, and can be of advantage to anyone, and does not contradict any point of view. It is not true that moral behaviour and ennobling work by themselves are necessary conditions to the attainment of 'occult' powers: they are necessary conditions to spiritualisation, which is something totally different. On the whole, the popular notion is far more correct, which regards the magician as a spiritual cripple, a foolish simpleton who has renounced all humanity in order to attain magical powers. The serious practice of Yoga exercised

with a view to a heightening of existence, and to awakening new psychic forces (not those of spiritualisation) demands such a measure of cutting oneself off from most of what enlarges the soul, that exclusive occupation with Yoga has probably deteriorated spiritually most of those who have subjected themselves to this training. Everything depends in what spirit, in what way, and for what reason Yoga is practised. The Jesuits, for instance, that is to say, Yogis at best, who are not inferior to the greatest Indian Yogis, discipline themselves in the spirit of a presupposed dogma, to unqualified obedience and unconditional refusal to consider their own judgment, by means of artificially evoked moods, for the purpose of becoming the best possible tools for their Church. As a result, they not only fail to attain any independent recognition, but the question of conviction, of metaphysical truth, arises less and less, and they become more and more the selfless organs of that to which they have sworn obedience, organs trained to an incredible degree for playing any part which is meted out to them. Anyone who disciplines himself along the lines of a presupposed faith will become more and more blindly faithful; again, if this discipline is guided by selfish intentions, his egoism will increase accordingly. The fact is that Yoga practices heighten every tendency which its disciple affirms, amongst others also those which are noble and lofty. He who strives after recognition without any prejudice will come nearer to truth by Yoga, and consequently nearer to moral perfection, saintliness and self-realisation. But then he who is concerned with the highest ideals will scarcely develop into a magician on the way. These powers lie in a different direction, and have always been regarded by great saints as undesirable. They belong to that very 'nature' which must be overcome where spiritualisation is aimed at. And since the control of this nature, which ordinarily is not man's province, requires an even more exclusive degree of attention than any earthly interest, it is not in the least astonishing that progress in clairvoyance and similar accomplishments usually goes hand in hand with human retrogression. You should read the writings of Leadbeater or Rudolph Steiner, and see what a 'disciple' has to consider in

order to prevent his soul from evil. Anyone who follows these teachings and is not possessed of a charm must become selfish, even in so far as he was not selfish beforehand. This in itself implies no reproach; the artist, the poet, the thinker, must, to begin with, think of himself and of what is of advantage and disadvantage to his mood, if he is to achieve anything of importance; every one for whom his person is the instrument on which he plays must act in this manner. But the artist, the poet, and the thinker do not assert that they are spiritualising themselves in living in accordance with the requirements of their professions, as the 'spiritual' pupil does. And for this reason it must be emphasised that the knowledge of higher worlds and spiritualisation are not necessarily connected in any way at all. On the contrary, the occultist is, as a rule, an inferior human being, as popular legend has pronounced him to be.

The metaphysical interest of Yoga depends on the fact that, in making man more profound – an increase of potentialities always effects profundity simultaneously – it also makes him progressively universal. Compromises are the products of the surface; if this loses its soul through interiorisation, then all the forces are collected in root feelings, and they bear a radical character. An advanced Yogi is either a lover or a hater, a 'recogniser' or a believer, either extremely selfish or extremely selfless. This explains too the old belief in the two schools of white and black magic, and finally the belief in Ormuzd and Ahriman; this ultimately accounts for the content of truth in the ideas of absolute Good and absolute Evil. At a certain depth of profundity the soul is in fact faced by two apparently equivalent alternatives: the soul may radiate the same elementary force, either positively or negatively. All compromise seems impossible. This position, however, is not the most extreme. It is the most extreme from the angle of the will, for will is blind, but recognition goes beyond this point of view. The wise man realises that the difference between good and evil is fundamentally the same as the difference between life and death, that only positively active forces are backed by life, and that they alone are continually supported by an eternal

well. Anyone who has really understood anything will determine and act accordingly; as Guyau says: 'Celui qui n'agit pas comme il pense, pense imparfaitement.' Our actions are necessarily positive. And thus we perceive, as it were illuminated by lightning, how right the Indians are in assuming that salvation lies in recognition; and at this point we realise, however dimly, the inner cause for the ineradicable faith of humanity in absolute values. These values are always assumed to be positive, for negative absolute values are inconceivable. This is obvious: they signify the exponents of consciousness of that which the mind desires at bottom and ultimately, and the mind desires ultimately to live, that is to say, to pour out his substance in pure spontaneity. At a somewhat higher level – at the level where the will appears in itself to be the *primus movens* – the original impulse is divided into two opposed tendencies. These branch out in their turn; the nearer they approach the surface, the more complex do their interrelations become, they intermingle with utter disregard of character and origin, and ultimately their texture is so intertwined and confused that differentiation seems almost impossible. Thus all superficial formations can be given a positive as well as a negative interpretation, and only on the rarest occasions is a certain judgment possible, whether a specific action is 'evil' or 'good.' Thus all definite life is doomed to death. But life itself knows neither of evil nor of death.

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WHEN I wrote down the above observations, I was not sufficiently clear to what an extent the misunderstanding to which they relate controlled the minds of the theosophists. Since then I have noted that most of them are concerned with the attainment of 'higher' powers, whose possession they regard as a sign of spiritual advancement. They thus prove that their attitude is specifically Western, just where they believe their ideas to be entirely Indian. They are possessed by the truly Western spirit, which desires expansion, which loves the chase after riches and external success; for that is what the strife after the Siddhis means, and nothing else.

It is really true that there is less difference between theosophists who wish to ascend to a higher world, and American prospectors, than between the latter and the ancient Indian Rishis. Expansion of consciousness in the sense of extension implies a purely biological process and no more. The occultist whose organs permit him an insight into hyperphysical spheres is biologically more advanced than the ordinary man, exactly in the sense in which the modern technically trained engineer is biologically further than his ancestor, the primitive agricultural labourer; no doubt such progress is desirable, only it is spiritually meaningless. If the theosophists would recognise their efforts as worldly, nothing whatever could be said against them. I personally sympathise with them altogether, because I find it highly satisfactory that at last a considerable number of men are pursuing occult studies systematically, no matter how erroneous their presuppositions may be. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that their all too simple belief that they are pursuing the road to saintliness, when in fact they are striving for worldly advancement, makes them a little ridiculous.

It is extraordinary that men have not yet realised that progress and spiritualisation belong to different dimensions, in spite of the fact that no great religious teacher, from Buddha and Christ downwards, has failed to warn them before this confusion. I will attempt to account to myself in clear words concerning their true relationship. Spiritualisation signifies self-realisation; it means the penetration of appearances with its utmost significance; it means the ensouling of the former from the utmost living depths, no matter whether one call it Atman, Weltseele, God, principle of life, or anything else. This definition clearly indicates why no biological process as such, no matter how high the level is to which it may lead, can attain to spiritualisation. Progress enlarges the sphere of that which can be transfused by soul; whether this transfusion really takes place is another question. As a rule, as long as progress lasts this does not occur, for, although expansion and a gain in profundity are not mutually exclusive in principle, they are usually so in practice, because no one, unless possessed of the

most exceptional vitality, can develop simultaneously in two different directions. (This explains why the Westerner, who is so enamoured of progress, is the most unspiritual being in the world.) But even after the paroxysm of progress is over, after the desire for stability has changed places with the impulse for evolution, spiritualisation does not take place for a certain period. Naturally: the newly created body is not a suitable means of expression for spirit, for the spirit does not succeed at once in transfusing it. Man remains superficial because he does not know how to penetrate to the living depths of his being, through the unexplored and unknown regions of himself. This also explains why so many prophets have declared as blessed the simple, the poor in spirit, and those who possess blind faith as opposed to higher types of men. Such an attitude is unjustified, because in all circumstances the talented and cultured individual is more than the fool. On the other hand, the former has greater difficulty, owing to his richer and more complicated nature, in finding the path to his depths, than the man who possesses so little that may arrest and hinder him. As a result, it is a fact that spiritualised beings are more frequent amongst simpletons than amongst talented men. This very fact is at the bottom of the truth which makes Christians declare as blessed the weary and heavy-laden, as opposed to happier people. In itself this judgment too is an error, because everything great emanates from joy, and he who lives in the spirit is filled with pure delight. But the unhappy being who has little cause to affirm his external circumstances, finds more easily the path down to his innermost soul than the more favoured mortal, who is tempted to pause at every turn. And for this reason pain and sorrow have proved themselves to be the most reliable guides to God.

What are we to accept, then, as the exponent of spirituality, since an advanced stage of progress is not in question? Perfection. The degree of perfection, and it alone, is the true gauge of spiritualisation. If this means penetration of appearance by its extreme significance, then it also means simultaneously the supreme realisation of its possibilities. I am not the first to realise that perfection is the one thing that we need;

Buddha expressly calls himself the Perfected One, the Chinese 'wise' and 'noble' men have been regarded as such expressly on account of their perfection, and the latter idea has at an early stage become the ideal of the Christian struggle for salvation too. This idea really contains everything; even realising God within oneself does not mean more than realising one's own possibilities perfectly. Thus it becomes evident why the efforts for progress and spiritualisation practically preclude each other: the man who wishes to progress seeks new possibilities, he who seeks God attempts to fulfil those which are already in existence. If realisation by itself is our ideal, then all possibilities are theoretically of equal value. And there is yet another purely critical consideration which proves that perfection is the true spiritual ideal. All spiritual values – beauty, truth, goodness – are characterised by their absolute quality; and no form of scepticism can dispute this. What does that mean? It is possible to doubt the objectivity of a rational concept of the Absolute; it stands or falls with a *petitio principii*, so that little is done for recognition in tracing the beauty of a work of art, for instance, back to its participation in the idea of absolute beauty. A being or an object embodies absolute value when its possibilities are given supreme realisation and perfection. And it must not be supposed that in the word 'supreme,' another *petitio principii* is concealed; it is perfectly possible to speak of 'supreme realisation,' because all concrete possibilities are limited. For every being there is an extreme limit or degree of self-realisation. Once this has been reached, then, as if by magic, absolute values seem to be manifested. If physical possibilities are realised perfectly, we behold beauty; if the possibilities realised are mental and intellectual ones, truth is realised; or if human and ethical ones, then a divine man has been created. Perfection is the spiritual ideal.

Now, the erroneousness of any attempt at progress, where spiritual realisation is the goal, appears quite clearly. Since perfection is the exponent of spirituality, since the degree of the former expresses the degree of the latter, a perfected lower condition is evidently nearer to God than a higher condition in an imperfect state. Perfect physical beauty is of higher

spiritual value than an imperfect philosophy; a perfect animal is more spiritual than an imperfect occultist. The Atman finds complete expression in the lowest form in so far as it is perfect. External barriers do not limit inwardly, because spirituality is a principle which, as such, lacks what I may call any factor for extension. An amœba can express the principle of the world as completely as the multiple personality of Brahma. This principle is the essential and eternal which alone remains alive beyond all creation and decay. Why do we regard so many dicta of ancient sages as profounder than anything which has been pronounced later, although their concrete ideas have been proved erroneous? Because they express perfectly, no matter how imperfect their means were, the principle of that which they intended to convey. Their dicta are essentially true, however erroneous they may be on the surface; therefore, no matter what progress is made in conceptual recognition, they will never be controverted. Thus spiritualisation gains the victory until death. Manifestation upon manifestation has disappeared in the course of the history of Thought, and with it the spirit of all those whose being was entirely contained in their manifestation. But the few who have used the latter only as a means of expression for a profounder significance, the few who have embodied this significance perfectly, they continue to live; and time cannot kill them. And sometimes I believe I know that personal man too can become immortal in this sense. No doubt, his body is pledged to death; his soul also is certain of ultimate disruption. The principle, however, is indestructible. It continues to act objectively, from reincarnation to reincarnation, on both sides of the grave, in some unknown sense. The bearers of this principle change, and they do not guess, or, if so, only faintly, that their essence is eternal. The rare man who succeeds in anchoring his consciousness in true Being, knows himself to be immortal, and death no longer signifies an end to him.

Is progress, in the biological sense, without any relation to spiritualisation? Does the attempt of the theosophists to develop occult forces in them, mean, in their sense, a radical misconception? There is a connection between them, but a

different one from that which the theosophist imagines. Every higher biological level gives to the mind and soul a richer means of expression. This is not meant in the absolute sense, for everywhere in nature a gain is paid for, no matter how cheaply, by losses. Man does not possess many capacities which animals own, and the wise man is often incompetent where the child of this world succeeds. But this much is probably true, that the spirit expresses itself more freely on every higher biological plane, and to this extent, measured by the human standard, he can manifest himself better on each successive level. Therefore, as empirical beings, we have a spiritual as well as a temporal interest in rising on the ladder of creation. It means nothing to us if we seem perfectly spiritualised in the sense of beauty, for only that of which we are conscious concerns us personally, and only that which we have subjectively experienced and understood exists for us. Now our possibilities of experience are unquestionably enlarged and heightened by psychic development. But at this point we have to ask ourselves the question: what is ultimately important – to see or to be? Apparently to be. Recognition is preliminary, it must be transformed in life in order to gain spiritual significance. And therefore the desirability of psychic perfection implies only the necessity of a digression for beings of a special kind, it does not necessarily involve a short cut. Moreover, experience shows that fewer people reach their goal via this digression than without it. This explains once more the spiritual advantage assigned to the simple, and the noticeable lack of spirituality which characterises most psychically talented beings. – What, then, are we to do? The old Indian doctrine points the way which says: 'It is better to follow your own dharma no matter how low it may be, rather than the dharma of another, be it ever so illustrious.' Every being should strive only after his specific perfection, in whatever direction this may lie. He who is destined for action should perfect himself as a man of action, the man gifted artistically should aim at perfect artistry; only he who has been called to saintliness should strive after it, and above all only the born clairvoyant should seek perfection in the form

of the occult. Anyone who aims at a form of perfection which does not correspond with his inner possibilities, loses his time and misses his goal. On the other hand, there is no doubt that, at some time or another, the man who follows his own dharma, no matter whither it lead him, will attain to his aim. And this is true, not only in relation to his spiritual perfection, but also in the biological sense. Every possibility which has been exhausted creates, phœnix-like, new possibilities from within itself. Just as the full fling of youth wakens the capacities for man's estate, so every perfected expression of life, so far as its underlying principle still lives, gives rise to new possibilities. It will remain eternally true what Jesus Christ said, in His mythical manner: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and the rest shall be added unto you.' If you strive only after perfection, biological progress will come of its own accord. This is the only means by which the desire for progress and spiritualisation may be combined. He who seeks progress first will never attain to perfection. It is wonderful how plastically the myth of the transmigration of souls expresses the truth of this relation: the man who has faithfully fulfilled his dharma in a lowly position in life will be reborn in a higher one; he who has entered upon the path of saintliness will gain, through incarnation upon incarnation, more advantageous circumstances. In fact, the man who quite unselfishly strives after spiritualisation can, not only pass through all the ages in one life, he can even find ultimate liberation during his mortal existence (become a Jivanmukta). Of course he can do this. For this liberation consists, quite independently of the accident of life or death, in the at-one-ness of consciousness with the cause of life.

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I AM told a great deal of what happens in other worlds and what they look like. Most of my informants only believe, but some are convinced that they know, and they relate unheard-of experiences as calmly and as professionally as a scientist would dissertate upon his latest discovery. I find myself in a very peculiar position; I do not know how much of their

assertions is true objectively, and I cannot test it; however, I cannot reject their statements as impossible, I cannot even assert their improbability with any assurance, as I lack every means of gauging what can happen in other spheres. Nor do I feel inclined to oppose their statements, for again and again I am informed of things whose inner probability strikes me, and again and again in my heart of hearts I say to myself: yes, of course, it cannot be otherwise, and I really know it myself. But I do not dare to take such a view seriously, since fairy-tales, born of the spirit of man, always seem probable to men, in fact, they seem more probable than events taking place in non-human nature; because, moreover, every living mind longs for the miraculous. For purposes of my own inner reassurance I exclude for a while the man of science in me, and submit with childish openness to my new impressions. I let every story enter into my being, I accept every idea without question, and I am pleased to permit palmists to examine my hand, phrenologists the form of my head, and astrologers the circumstances of my birth.

How rich must be the life of all those who believe in all the ramifications whose existence theosophy affirms! Even vulgarly superstitious people have excited genuine envy in me in frequent moods; for a time I trained myself to accept the superstitions of my temporary surroundings while I was there, because life assumes marvellous colour through the recognition of mysterious relationships. The system of theosophy has the additional advantage that it delights not only the imagination but also the intellect. If it should correspond with truth, then this existence would be justified in a high degree by reason. Personally, of course, it is the excessive rationalism of the theosophic view of the world which gives me pause. Reason usually penetrates so little into the heart of things, everything fundamental is usually so irrational, theories on the whole prove themselves proportionately inadequate as they attempt to deal with fundamentals – is it really possible that such a simple scheme can do justice to the significance of reality? If it were so, personally I would regret it. The question cannot, however, be decided. It is quite feasible

that theosophy is right in spite of my philosophic scruples. Everything does not harmonise in this world. I, however, am at liberty to hope that the theories of theosophy are nothing more than crude allegories.

For the rest, I would not mind being in the position of those who slip at will from one plane of existence on to another; their life must be exceedingly rich in variety. What have I not suffered from the fact that I must always live in the same body, always enter into relations with the world with the same external organism! Those who have learnt to escape from their bodies and to assimilate the pictures of nature with different senses, in a different form, are better off; they can never get tired of their existence. Unfortunately, however, those who pride themselves, with the greatest semblance of justification, on their ability to change their form of existence, suffer from the disease of all specialists: they overestimate the value of their art; they believe that they are nearer to the Atman simply by changing their position, and they assert that every new plane they have climbed to embodies a 'higher' degree of reality. For this reason they are not able to do justice to my question as to whether the statement of Jesus that the first shall be last might be literally true in the sense that every sphere offers special means of expression, thanks to which the man who succeeds best on earth may prove to be helpless in the astral world, in whose lighter air the dreamers, incompetent people in the earthly sense, should find a greater measure of well-being. I strongly incline to the belief that this is so, assuming, of course, what I do not know, namely, that there is an astral world. But I will never believe, unless it should be proved to me, that those whose home is not on earth are, for that reason, more valuable. Either one gift is worth as much as another, or else power of expression on earth determines a man's rank. I personally am firmly convinced that all the main decisions are taken on earth, and that those are mistaken who believe that life after death is more complete. Since I cannot speak from personal experience, I am unable to form an assertive judgment, but I have studied carefully the reports of others, and they entirely support my view. Our much

despised life on earth has the one advantage of offering serious resistance. Substantial formations can only be created out of resistant media, and only where there is resistance can progress take place. In this connection our earthly life provides the richest opportunities. Accordingly, the holy writings of the Indians teach expressly that the incarnation into human life is the most advantageous, so much so that even gods must be born again as men if they are to get beyond divinity; they would remain eternally what they are in their all too fluid world. A man who is enough in earnest can, on the other hand, reach Nirvana directly. I can well imagine that there are people who would be more at home in other worlds than here, but they are the impotent and the weaklings. The man who can express himself clearly is, in the absolute sense, more than the man who merely guesses and stammers. It is not difficult to dream, to guess, and to indulge in feelings and moods. It is only when the word has become flesh that it is realised to perfection, and this realisation succeeds best on earth. I therefore confess, as far as I am concerned, that the more I hear of other possibilities of life, the more decidedly am I in favour of exploiting this one. That which can be achieved in it is so important that it matters little that he who is expressive on earth will fail correspondingly in other spheres. If Odysseus had asked the lamenting shadow of Achilles whether, for the sake of gaining a better life after death, he would undo all he had done in his heroic existence, he would undoubtedly have turned his back upon him in contempt.

Most theosophists do not care for speculations of this kind; they believe, and they want every one to believe, and they are scarcely less inimical to any attempt to criticise their dogma than any other religious sect. This shows how little the fundamental nature of man is altered by even the widest profession of faith! Most theosophists do not recognise that their own form of religion, amongst all the others, can claim only relative validity. (For theosophy is a special religion, in spite of all the statutes of their society, and it must be so in so far as it wishes to be alive at all.) Will men never get beyond the idea that one special faith alone can save them? I am almost afraid that

they will not, for it is too tempting and its apparent truth all too evident. The theory that only the believer can find salvation corresponds probably to facts in so far as no one can hope consciously to survive death unless he is conscious of his immortality, unless, in fact, he has lit the divine spark within him. And since the founder of every religion knows from experience only one means of kindling this light, one cannot reproach him when he proclaims: He who does not believe in me is lost.

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ANCIENT mistakes of humanity are, in all too many instances, not only not eradicated by theosophical beliefs, but they experience new reincarnations. To-day I am especially thinking of the time-honoured overvaluation of diseased conditions. I have been induced to consider them in view of the attitude of the many psychologically and neurologically abnormal people who belong to the Theosophical Society. This overestimation in itself is not estranging, for doubtlessly disease is a positive condition, it represents less a minus in equilibrium than a new form which for many purposes is superior to the normal condition. A little while ago this became very clear to me once more, when (for very good reasons) I imagined that I had been infected by the plague, and the mere idea, as is usual in my case, made me so ill that I thought I was already beginning to die. All self-centred interests vanished, I found myself perfectly free, and all the powers of my soul radiated into unlimited spheres, with the result that my consciousness of reality grew to an intensity which I do not experience normally. The so-called normal consciousness is not its richest form, because it chiefly represents the consciousness of the body. When our living energy animates the latter to the full, then the psychic forces are centred round the same point – undoubtedly the biological optimum – so that the soul only does, desires and recognises whatever suits the requirements of our physical organism. But whenever the body, for no matter what reason, fails as the vehicle of life, or where such a state of affairs has been brought about intentionally, consciousness is enlarged

in every one who possesses the capacity for enlargement. Then the soul lives entirely in its own world, unfettered by physical barriers. Hence the wonderful serenity of so many people who are dying or dangerously ill. Hence the frequent co-existence of a great mind and a weak body. Hence, too, the idea of mortification, of artificial weakening of the body through fasting, waking and chastisement. There is no doubt that violent means of this kind are capable of increasing and enhancing consciousness. In fact, the possibilities in store are far greater in number than those which, as far as I know, are practised by ascetics. In the case of introspective natures, becoming blind leads to very satisfactory results, and such a process has not, as far as I know, ever been practised for this purpose. I was blind once for a certain period after an operation on my eyes, and I must say that this time belongs to the richest in my life; it was so rich that I felt an unmistakable impoverishment when the sight of my eyes returned to me. While I was blind, my mental life was not disturbed by anything foreign or external, and I was therefore able to enjoy its own activity without interruption. I was much more intensely conscious of its activity than usual, for my successive ideas, so hard to lay hold of as a rule, seemed projected, as it were, upon a dark screen, against which they appeared in exquisite plasticity. Moreover, the lack of one important organ does not only sharpen the rest, it gives them new problems, and this changes our whole position in the long run to such a degree that in a short time I entirely lost the consciousness of having lost anything, and I only had the feeling of being related to the world in a new and most interesting form which may resemble that of blind-born animals.

According to facts, the attitude which sees a higher condition in a diseased state is justified enough; at any rate, it must appear so, especially to the theosophists, who see an ideal in the acquisition of abnormal psychic powers, for they are evinced most frequently by pathological natures. Nevertheless, this attitude is fundamentally mistaken. The possession of higher faculties in abnormal conditions *means* nothing, and does not prove the very slightest inner progress. It would

seem as if abnormal qualities are paid for by the loss or modification of normal ones, and where the price has not been excessive, which is usually the case, they have at any rate been acquired unprofitably. Pious souls are often estranged by the incontrovertible moral failings of an admired 'saint'; the unusual faculties of such are all too often not the normal expression of a higher level of existence, but the accidental product of the diseased transference of an average psychic equilibrium. There is only a short step from such 'saints' to the ordinary mediums, most of whom are humanly worthless. It literally needs no art to be serene, detached, hypersensitive or even clairvoyant, in a diseased condition; one need only to cure such higher beings, and they will reveal themselves very rapidly as average men, for this is what they are in essence; this is what they are before God. Of course, nothing can be said against the man who practises magic as his profession, for he must see how he can maintain himself in the condition on which his powers depend. The essential inferiority *per se* says nothing against the performances of psycho-pathological types; the pearl is a product of a disease in the oyster. On the other hand, one should not stamp every abnormally gifted individual who betrays diseased peculiarities as a pathological phenomenon. If Mahomet and St. Francis suffered from attacks of hysteria, something similar may be said of Napoleon and of Cæsar; very complicated mechanisms which work under high pressure are easily deranged occasionally, but this derangement signifies nothing. Cæsar was not essentially an epileptic, but the tremendous mental tension under which he lived found its normal expression for him in this way, and the same may be said *mutatis mutandis* of many of the greatest spiritual heroes. On the other hand, the superstition must be stamped out that miraculous gifts acquired by diseased overexcitement turn their possessors into higher beings. Of course, it is possible that in enlargement of consciousness and its sphere of effectiveness, biological progress may result, but only when the new powers are added to the old ones, not when the new replace the old. Every diseased condition is an absolute evil; only the Siddha may pass as a higher being

who, in other ways, is not less than a normal man, and only he may count as an example.

What I have said here is probably self-evident to all educated Indians, as opposed to most of their European disciples. It is astonishing how correctly they have always estimated these relationships. The teachers of antiquity put down as an essential condition prior to accepting a pupil, that he should have perfect health, an irreproachable nervous system and a robust moral nature. They regarded the natural ability to see ghosts as a symptom of mental disease – not because there are no ghosts, but because their visibility, except when brought about by a careful and professional training, does not signify an enlargement but a pathological displacement of normal consciousness. They only trained the perfectly healthy, and according to tradition only a few of those ever reached their goal, because the nerves of most of the pupils could not stand the strain, for which reason it seemed desirable to discontinue their training. At any rate, no modern movement which is inspired by Indian Yoga should fail to accept the fundamental Indian postulate as their own: the Yogi is essentially healthy; he is the unquestioned master of his nerves; he is always in equilibrium, and normal in every way. – Moreover, they should never lose sight of the fact that the Indian Yogi – who undoubtedly has gone beyond anyone else in this direction – is an enemy of castigation. If he indulges in ascetic practices, this simply means that he leads the life which from experience is the most conducive to spiritual development; but he never mortifies the flesh. He never goes to excesses of fasting or waking or any observance; he keeps to the diet which appears to strengthen and not to weaken his nature, and he cultivates, for the rest, an optimistic, cheerful and positive attitude. – Finally, one thing should never be forgotten: if a man is really, not merely apparently, on a higher biological level of development, he is not necessarily a higher being. Man is biologically more advanced than the animals, but there are idiots and rogues enough among us, and a low man is often far beneath the ape. Thus many of those who have developed abnormal forces are representatives of a higher order of nature,

but they are inferior representatives. It is not well to revere them as gods. If one appraises their being rightly, one does them greater justice; one escapes the danger of hurting one's own soul by blind imitation, nor does one succumb to the temptation of denying or rejecting positive assets for the sake of recognised weaknesses. There is no doubt that not only Buddha and Christ, but also Mahomet, Walt Whitman, Swedenborg, William Blake and lesser men, were biologically more advanced than we are. But they were neither perfect nor omniscient, nor were they free from many serious failings. They were mediocre representatives of a higher species.

Anyone who examines the mass of theosophists closely will find it difficult to suppress a smile at their pretence that they constitute the seed of the new 'race' which is to create the civilisation of the future. The great majority of them are people on a mental level below the average, who incline to superstition; they are neuropathological, and possess the readily spiteful egoism born of the desire for personal salvation which is so characteristic of all who regard themselves as specially chosen. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that history will justify their assumption. In all probability the essence of the teachings which, among other religious communities, are also professed by the Theosophical Society, will soon become the faith of millions. (One must not forget how many of its followers are married!) And the banner beneath which this faith will make its official entry (if this ever happens) depends upon immeasurable and unknown factors; it might be that of the Theosophical Society. What religious community did not in the beginning consist of quite insignificant people? Neither St. Paul nor St. Augustine nor Calvin, nor any other of the shining lights of later Christianity, would ever have associated themselves with Jesus during his lifetime. Eminent individuals can never be disciples; it is physiologically impossible for them. No matter how capable they may be of submitting to an ideal, an institution or an objective spirit, their pride, and not only their pride, but, above all, their inner truthfulness, would prevent them from following a living man,

not as a duly accredited representative, but a man as such. While they behold only a man subject to human failings and weaknesses, they cannot believe in divinity. Even in India, *par excellence* the land of faith, no founder of religion of whom I ever heard has had mentally important disciples during his lifetime. The first who swarm around a new centre of belief are, without exception, poor in spirit and superstitious, for they want above all to be led. Then come worthy men from practical life, generally brought to this pass by women; and only when history has faded into mythology (which, of course, can happen very rapidly in the East), when facts no longer obstruct the process of idealisation, then the first eminent minds follow in the general wake. And thus it can happen that the members of the Theosophical Society of to-day, if fortune is kind to them, will live in history as pioneers.

Anyone who has penetrated into the mechanics of religious history will be careful to refrain from asserting the impossibility of any event. In this case those connections are lacking altogether which reason must postulate in order to be able to construct at all. I have already pointed to the fact that it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the importance of the faithful to his faith. In just the same way it is impossible to judge the significance of an originator by the significance of his ideas. It is well known how rarely human and mental greatness coincide. Not merely a weakling, but a highly dubious individual, may produce ideas capable of moving the world. This relation has been proved correct to a certain degree even in the case of the founders of most religions. No matter how extravagantly legend may praise their all-compelling personality – it is certain that during their lives they could gain generally only an inferior audience; and this proves with tolerable certainty that in the ordinary sense they were not strong personalities, for such enforce recognition. A necessary relationship between the entelechia of an idea and that of the one which gave it birth, exists to so small an extent that, in the case of the founders of several religions, it is not certain whether they ever lived at all. Later myths have always centred round a historical personality, but whether this personality was the

real originator of their ideas is often questionable. Southern Buddhism undoubtedly emanates from Buddha, but the Mahayana doctrine, which underlies Northern Buddhism, only dates back to the first century after Christ; it developed in the frontier districts between India and Central Asia, where Greek and Brahminic ideas intermingled, and its doctrines are so much more akin to Christianity than to the religion of the son of Sakya that we are probably justified in doubting whether these teachings are Buddhistic in anything but name. The original teachings of Jesus are only one element of the Christianity which has conquered the world. His name has become the symbol and the focus of the innumerable tendencies which in fathomless depths have controlled the fortunes of the West; hence his enormous historical importance, which is in no relation to the small degree in which his ideas have been realised up till to-day. And the same thing happens everywhere. Nietzscheism is in many ways directly opposed to Nietzsche, and thousands acclaim the name of Bergson, whereas his real teaching, if they could understand it, would move these followers to anger. A man can rise to the very pinnacle of greatness in the historical sense without having lived at all, without having taught what has conditioned his historical importance, without, in fact, having taught anything at all, without having been important, and so on. The ways of God are inscrutable, we are told. It is certain that the ways of history defy even the most far-reaching examination by the intelligence. No matter how foolish anti-Semitism may be as an outlook on the world, it must for all that have its justification, because the Jews are, and always have been, equally despised all the world over, in the East even more than in the West. And yet, if any people has a right to consider itself as the 'chosen,' it applies to the Jews. Their faith underlies Christianity and Islam, and in this way indirectly rules the world. In spite of all suppression and contempt, the Jewish race has never lost its character, and most of the leaders of intellectual Europe of to-day belong to it. Thus, the Theosophical Society, in spite of the problematical character of many of its leaders, in spite of the unsatisfactoriness of many of its teachings, and in spite of

the inferiority of most of its present members, may still have a great future in store for itself.

I touched earlier on a point which merits closer investigation: the apparent incapacity of most of those (the exceptions are insignificant) who later on have been honoured as all-compelling personalities, to influence their contemporaries directly. All prophets have been scoffed at. This proves, as I have already written, that they did not have the power to act as great personalities do, for these have always been recognised as such during their lifetime, although they have been regularly attacked. On closer examination their insufficiency does not seem particularly remarkable. The power of such minds is manifested in a different sphere from that of the great in the worldly sense, and they cannot affect those for whom their sphere does not exist. Just as the power of an abstract intellect is only felt by anyone who is capable of similar thought, just as genius is only recognised by genius, so even the spiritual giant is helpless when faced by a man who does not possess spirituality. Of course, it can happen that in addition he is powerful in the worldly sense – this was true in a high degree of St. Augustine, Savonarola, Luther and a few others – but as a rule this is not the case, for spirituality demands, on the one hand, and produces, on the other, the more sublimated it becomes, a proportionately frail nature. Spiritual genii without exception demand faith to begin with, whereas worldly genii only do so rarely, knowing that faith will follow upon experience – why? Because the former can only influence souls not attuned to theirs in so far as they meet them half-way; they are, therefore, in the ordinary sense, typically weak. Yet their power is really not in question. This is proved least of all in the immediate conversion which it achieves – the objects of their conversion are rarely to be taken seriously; their power is expressed in the fact that they give significance and direction to actions throughout all time. The ideas of Christianity, accepted first by the lowly who hardly knew any better what they were doing than the men who crucified the Saviour, have penetrated more and more, as history progressed, all manifestation of life. This has happened to such an extent that

everything alive in the West actually goes back to the spirit of Jesus Christ. The same may be said of Buddha and of Mahomet. In the long run spiritual forces have proved themselves to be the strongest everywhere. They manifest themselves in enigmatic ways: it is rarely the authentic words of the enlightened teachers which carry their doctrine through the future; in almost no cases are they original writings, and most of the traditions which relate to them are fables. They act as intangible impulses which, emanating from the master, pass through a thousand minds, through a thousand changes, condensations, misunderstandings, and yet preserve their magic force and give direction to life for evermore. Perhaps Theosophy possesses such an impulse at the present day? Who can say? Time alone can prove it. Theosophy asserts that it is inspired by the 'masters,' omniscient supermen, who direct the fate of the human race from unrecognised seclusion. This belief in the Masters is often laughed at. Why do they hide themselves? Why do they not act in a direct way? Why are none of the great deeds of the human spirit traceable to similar masters? Why do they employ, for the fulfilment of their intentions, such obviously insufficient organs? I do not know whether such masters exist, but beings of their description are certainly possible theoretically. If they are supermen in the spiritual sense, it may be true in extreme measure what has been true of all spiritually great men: they seem powerless in all the lower spheres, they cannot act in them directly, and therefore there is a very good reason why they wish to remain in hiding. The process of elevation must be paid for everywhere in nature: gentle creatures succumb to brutal ones, spiritualised beings to ruffians, and the wise man is incapable of a great deal which the man of the world achieves, etc. On the other hand, however, if there are masters, then what the theosophists assert concerning them cannot be true; they assert that they could do everything, only that they do not do so because, in their incomprehensible wisdom, they find it better to leave it undone. It is quite certain that they are incapable of what we are capable of. God also cannot do that which we are able to perform, otherwise he would not give us

such free rein. Every level of existence has its specific barriers, and these barriers seem all the more remarkable from the point of view of the average man, the more spiritual a being is.

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IT is asserted again and again that the doctrine of reincarnation is not an interpretation, but the direct expression of a demonstrable fact. I cannot test this assertion, and therefore refrain from judgment. None the less, this teaching is a theory, and theories are not facts. I am surprised that no believer in reincarnation has noticed that his belief amounts practically to the same as its opposite, the belief in the divinely ordained 'Einfürallemaligkeit' of every condition of life, such as Confucianism and Lutheran Christianity presuppose. For even the believer in reincarnation does not assert that the same person progresses from incarnation to incarnation (no matter how little this may be clear to the majority of its disciples, most of whom have accepted this belief out of an instinct of self-preservation), but he only asserts that there is an objective connection acting from within, between the various forms and manifestations of life. That is just what Lutherism asserts, only that his doctrine interprets differently the unifying link. For this reason I would be inclined, as a critical philosopher, to assume the same degree of truth in those theories which preclude each other. One theory expresses the same facts kinetically and the other statically.

The kinetic view of the processes of life undoubtedly possesses very great advantages. It justifies existence from the point of view of reason better than any other; it robs life of its hopeless character, and gives us confidence and hope. I would be very much surprised if, sooner or later, this view does not predominate in the West. Nevertheless, now that I know believers in reincarnation from personal contact, I must regard the fact that Western humanity has not held this belief for a few thousand years as possibly its greatest piece of good fortune. For most believers in reincarnation are indolent. No wonder: since they have thousands of years in front of them in order to advance, and since the processes of the world

advance them automatically (for the objective significance of life appears to them as pointing upwards) they see no cause for hurry. They let themselves live, rather than live themselves, they leave until to-morrow what ought to be done to-day; they put their trust invariably in time, which achieves everything. The Christian, on the other hand, who has only got one life before him, one short period whose exploitation irrevocably decides whether he will be saved or whether he must roast for ever, has truly cause to do his utmost with every force at his disposal to achieve instantly what can be achieved, for in another second it may be too late. His idea of the course of the world is horrible, certainly – but how it steels him! How it crushes all sentimentality! How it stirs the spirits of life! How it accelerates development! And what pathos it gives to existence! The whole condensed efficacy of the Westerner, the whole of his strength of will and character, the whole of his defiant courage and manly pride, is due to the fact that his faith has educated him to accepting the greatest responsibility and to take decisions without hesitation. The European (and the Moslem too) represents, as opposed to the Indian, a much more potentialised unity of life; his tension is greater, his vitality superior. He owes this fact in large measure to the belief of his fathers in the last judgment. I am of the opinion that this belief has done its work, and that it can now give way to a wiser principle. From now on, Christianity, if it so please, may become converted to the doctrine of reincarnation, for the qualities which the old faith called to light are now rooted so deeply in our heritage that they will continue without external support. Nevertheless, it is improbable that such a change of ideas will take place without loss. The pathos which depends upon the conviction of the single and decisive character of each life is lost.

But even if the teaching of the transmigration of souls has great possibilities for the future, it is yet to be hoped that it will never play the part which it does to-day in the consciousness of theosophists. Instead of doing what the Indians do, namely, recognising the assumed state of affairs and, for the rest, thinking of something else, they concern themselves

continually with the possibilities of the past and the future. They study their occult pedigree with a vanity which is often revolting; they anticipate with the meanest pettiness their future life; and, as far as the occult is concerned, their curiosity leads them to excesses which, in the realm of manifest phenomena, is rightly regarded as indecent. I must think of Plato, who was also a believer in the transmigration of souls. How much more befitting was the smiling, gentlemanly manner with which he treated great problems than the earthly and clumsy method of the theosophist! He said: 'Of course the soul will be born again – but perhaps this is not so? Who knows? I do not know myself, what I know; it is probably only a manner of speech, this theory, or else a charming fairy-tale which one may or may not believe, according to one's mood.'

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WHAT fascinates me most in the atmosphere of Adyar is its expectation of the Messiah. Among the residents there is a young Indian of whom it is said that the Holy Ghost will one day use him as his vessel. The Masters are said to have revealed this. He is to be The Saviour for the coming age. I have accepted this belief for a few days in order to experience everything, if possible, which it involves, and I confess that I was sorry to surrender it, because it is a joy to live under such a supposition. What an immense background it gives to the most insignificant existence! How it increases self-consciousness! What tension and enthusiasm it bestows upon all forces! I am convinced that, if I could only confess this belief with the whole of my being, I would be ten times more efficient, and, no matter how little foundation there was for it, I would approach my inner goal ten times more quickly. For what does such a belief mean? It makes an ideal objective. The Saviour, as such, never saves, it is the ideal of the faithful which he embodies, which does so. Just as the contemplation of the Cross, or the image of a saint, facilitates and strengthens the concentration of attention upon the divine, so does the ideal turned to flesh, only to a higher degree. Every one has experi-

enced this on a small scale. Looking upwards elevates. No matter whom we have revered and admired, so long as our reverence was serious, even misunderstanding has made us progress. It does not matter what the object is in itself which we revere, but what it means to us. And this explains why unattainable ideals – unattainable, not only because they are transcendental, but because their bearers are distant or dead – have in the long run proved to be the best; their efficacy cannot be modified by empirical failure. This explains, too, why, from a religious point of view, it is a matter of such indifference whether a divine man has ever lived or not. Faith in the religious sense does not mean believing-to-be-true, it means striving after self-realisation by concentrating the powers of the mind upon a given ideal. And the incomparable effect of living divine men (where we can think of them at all) is due to the fact that they made their own ideal incomparably clear to their followers, and thus increased its formative force to a tremendous degree. To this extent the theosophic belief in the Messiah undoubtedly implies a productive quality. It is another question what will happen later on. I do not doubt that the above-mentioned youth, if he lives and no accident happens to him, will become the founder of a religion; many others would do the same, subject to equally strong suggestion. But if his calibre should prove to be too small to resist any criticism, it might have disastrous results. In earlier days, when saviours were, if not daily, at any rate not very rare guests on earth, the power of belief was so strong in men that no running off the rails and no disappointments could do damage to their souls; all the more so, as they were really incapable of being disappointed – they believed in spite of everything and through everything. That was their good fortune: belief is an *a priori* quality, an independent creative power which justifies itself by itself. Modern man does not know such faith. His faith is a tender plant, which may succumb to the slightest wound, and of all sufferers disappointed man is in the worst position, because loss of faith really devitalises. Without faith, full self-consciousness is impossible. Because faith is lacking, so many people hanker to-day after a new religion; they need

an external focus in order to collect their inner forces into one unity, for very few have reached by now that degree of inward independence, which makes them incapable of disappointment without external assistance. The latest and profoundest interpretation of Christ's doctrine, which centres in the teaching that the kingdom of heaven is within us, cannot be traced in general back to a deeper self-consciousness, but rather to the recognition of reason which is winning the race with life. And to this extent the time is not yet past in which religious leaders can help, even in Europe. But, as has been said already, the power of belief to-day is all too weak; if a specific faith which has happily reached maturity is destroyed, it may ruin the very capacity for belief, which would inevitably lead to nihilism and destruction. I therefore contemplate the fate of the new world saviour, who, for the rest, may be certain of my sympathy, like anyone else who calls an accelerating motive into life, not without serious anxiety.

The orthodox theosophists, of course, do not wish to believe that the empirical fact of a saviour does not belong to what is essential in him, any more than the Christians do; they seem to be justified, for doubtlessly it is a matter of import who the man is to whom one gives one's faith. An enlightened mind can still illumine dark existences, a genius of love can soften even hardened hearts, while lesser men are unable to do so, no matter how strong the faith is which they inspire. This, however, does not alter anything of the truth of my assertion. No teacher can give what is not existent in a latent state; he can only waken that which is asleep, he can liberate what is imprisoned and bring to light what has been concealed. This is sufficient to secure the rank which men have always given to him, for it happens all too rarely that an individual becomes conscious of himself without external assistance. Without it, latent forces manifest themselves only exceptionally. But this must never be interpreted in the sense that teachers can give what we do not already possess; they never give anything, they merely set free that which is in us. And anything which exists can, in principle, be brought to light in a thousand ways. Thus men have sought and found themselves in many

ways from the beginning of time. The strongest have succeeded without external help; less strong individuals have needed a little, weak ones a great deal of external assistance; and correspondingly, there are systems of ascetics, from monumental simplicity downwards to such extreme complexity, and systems of religion, with or without intermediaries, based upon authority or on self-determination. Purpose and significance are always the same all the world over. Since the masses are never independent, all religions which aspired to being a gospel for every one have stressed mediation; in modern Hinduism Sri Krishna, and Amidha-Buddha in northern Buddhism, play exactly the same part as Jesus does in Christianity. Similar needs demand similar cures. But it is a superstition to believe that the saviours as such, as definite human beings, are saviours. As personalities, they are only releasers of certain qualities. In most cases, perhaps in all, even this is not true, because their real effectiveness only began long after their death: they were effective as the pure embodiment of their ideal. This, then, brings me back once more to the advantage of unattainable ideals over attainable ones. Schemes which may be idealised by the imagination without possible contradiction are much the most reliable. In the East, with its power of faith, a frail creature, in spite of all his weaknesses, may be honoured as Avatar; this happened quite recently to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the ecstatic saint of Dakshineswar. But it is very doubtful whether this could happen among modern Europeans, even among theosophists. Even Ramakrishna was honoured as a divine man during his lifetime by a very small circle, and it is only now, more than thirty years after his death, that he is beginning to develop into a catholic saint.

On what depends, ultimately and metaphysically, the desire to give ourselves up to something higher than ourselves, our happiness in being allowed to behold the higher Being, and the tremendous inner progression which it brings with it? – It depends on the fact that man sees in what is above him a truer expression of himself than the one which he is able to present himself. Every one feels only too strongly how imperfectly he realises his true being in his appearance. He does

not act in accordance with his self, nor does he think as he intends to, and he is different from what inwardly he feels himself to be. There are, in every individual, with rare exceptions, such disparent talents that he fails, with the forces at his disposal, to transfuse them all with his spirit. Thus, beautiful individuals are generally stupid, great men of action rarely rich in understanding; thus mentally productive natures are only exceptionally capable of perfection as human beings. But every one knows that he is essentially more than what he can express, and he therefore recognises himself better in somebody else's perfection than he does in his own imperfect form. In the same way, we sometimes perceive a truth instantaneously which we would never have found by ourselves, and we say: 'That is really what we meant.' For this reason, too, we feel marvellously uplifted and enlarged in the presence of perfect beauty, for our being finds its finally adequate means of expression only in perfect shape. In this way, weak men feel happy in seeing in the great soul of another, their own natures adequately expressed at last, as it were in a mirror. Anyone who has ever met a great man has said to himself: 'I always knew him.' Of course he did. This, then, is the final explanation of the immense effect which the mere existence of such a man radiates. He shows men what every one could be, what all men are at bottom, in spirit and in truth. And just as the clear expression of that which our consciousness gropes for vainly, not only makes us happy, but also accelerates our progress, so does the anticipated expression of ourselves which a great man means to us, help us all to more rapid self-realisation. This brings us to the root of the recognition that the mere existence of a saint is more beneficent than all the good actions of the world; this explains, moreover, the ultimate significance of a saviour. He gives an example to mankind; this is what Christ too intended. And in so doing, he renders the extremest service which one being can render to another. He shows men their profoundest selves in a mirror; he makes their own ideal clear to them. He embodies it visibly, and thus gives to the creative forces which impel every one towards heaven, the longed-for aim and example. Now they know

whither they are to go, now they know the range of their possibilities. And thus it can happen that the mere existence of one great man who has personally no purpose in external life can give a new direction to the lives of all.

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AND yet, and yet – does humanity still need a saviour? Can he still signify to it that which primarily makes a saviour of him? Is not Ivan Karamazoff's vision of the resurrected Christ and the grand inquisitor, the final reply to this question? – Probably not, in so far as up to the present there is no homogeneous humanity; the majority of men are still at a stage of development which leaves them well suited in principle to the acceptance of a saviour. And such individuals appear still again and again, not only in the East but also in the midst of our world, and they find followers readily. So far, none of them has made a great posthumous career (with the single exception of Mrs. Baker Eddy, who, however, although she has accomplished much, will hardly rise to the level of a world saviour), but the realm of possibilities is incalculable; no Roman, even during Diocletian's days, would have conceived it possible that the whole West would one day profess Christianity. Nevertheless, I feel certain of this much, that the circles who matter, in so far as they are the bearers of historical movement, have no use for a new Messiah. And from this it follows that – unless barbarism overtakes us, as after the collapse of the Roman Empire – no religious founder will, in future, so far as one can see, rise to the position of a world saviour.

I do not want to refer to the technical difficulties which impede such a career, the prestige of scientific criticism, the growing emancipation, the weakening of the power of faith, and the publicity; these could be overcome. What really takes away the ground from beneath the feet of a new Messiah is the increasing tendency of all advanced people to be their own saviours. It cannot be denied that the spirit of Protestantism is gaining the victory. It is highly interesting and characteristic, what is happening to Christ in the course of his most recent development. The historical Jesus is receding into the back-

ground; there is no more talk of objective salvation, and the whole theodicy of the Middle Ages is ignored. What remains is the inner Christ, whom Jesus was the first man to call to life within himself, and whom every one is to make supreme within himself in his own personal way. The man who disregards Christ as an individual will hardly recognise a new saviour. There can be no doubt whatever that the future belongs to these independent spirits. You may judge the fact as you will – I personally am anything rather than blind to the disadvantages of excessive Protestantism: it is beyond question that the 'objective spirit' tends irresistibly to a condition in which the individual, irrespective of all mediation, wishes to decide, personally and directly, about everything which concerns his inner nature and fate. This result could have been foreseen ever since the days of the Reformation; what was begun then will come to be realised eventually. Until this has happened, until it has been proved objectively what this new condition is worth, there is no hope that other tendencies will gain historical significance.

The dreams of the theosophists of a coming saviour of the world will therefore hardly experience realisation. Their Messiah might, however, become the saviour of a sect, and that would be quite sufficient. It would be timely if the idea of a 'world religion' could be dropped once and for all, just as all attempts at generalisation in the concrete, the last remnant of primitive phases of thought, should be abandoned. There could have been world religions – and there still are some today where humanity is not strongly individualised, and where, simultaneously, broad but definitely closed communities exist. But mankind is becoming more and more individualised from day to day; men are getting more and more conscious of their individuality, and take an increasing pride in the personal element. Thus, the idea of universality in all inner questions loses importance and power accordingly, and general formulæ prove themselves to be increasingly insufficient. 'Significance' is revealed to the individual in more and more specialised form, and this is right, for, as Adele Kamm expresses it, God becomes mightier in the process. The Theosophical Society

has attempted to save the idea of universality and make it serviceable for its own purposes by including all religions within its own. Far from strengthening it, this weakens theosophy. So wide a basis cannot exist as a monad; it cannot possibly give an inner form to anyone, which is the real purpose of religious profession. It is true that theosophy does not wish to be a profession of faith, but it relaxes this determination against its will, for it must be one in so far as the movement is to endure, since it would be powerless as a purely scientific organisation. If the hoped-for Messiah comes, then a portion of the Theosophical Society of to-day will no doubt group itself around him. In the meantime, the followers of Annie Besant, Catherine Tingley, Rudolph Steiner and several others are crystallising quietly into separate sects. It is well that it is so. Only in this form can theosophy hope for a future as a concrete manifestation. Of course, the leaders of to-day do not wish it to be true that the grandiose dream of Madame Blavatsky is incapable of permanent realisation. It does not matter that they cling to this idea, for it gives their work the quality of breadth. But sooner or later they will have to recognise that it is mistaken to strive after catholicity, and they will eventually be grateful themselves that nature has prevented them from the execution of their intentions. The Theosophical Society could not effect and signify nearly as much in the form in which it was conceived, as it can and will signify in its actual state.

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OF course, one does not do justice to theosophy by bringing their ideas into necessary relation with the expectation of the Messiah as expressed by its members in Adyar. At the same time, I fear that I am right in any circumstances in what I said concerning the improbability of a world mission for theosophy. It is very well possible that their system corresponds to the real state of affairs in a higher degree than I am able to perceive; it is very probable that some day its spirit (though hardly its letter) will be accepted by the majority of men, for this is already true in a high degree, under a great number of

different names. Theo- and Anthropo- sophy, New Thought, Christian Science, the New Gnosis, Vivekananda's Vedantism, the Neo-Persian and Indo-Islamic Esoterism, not to mention those of the Hindus and the Buddhists, the Bahai system, the professed faith of the various spiritualistic and occult circles, and even the freemasons, all start from essentially the same basis, and their movements are certain to have a greater future than official Christianity. This, however, does not secure theosophy as a living unit. What gives theosophy this position, and what theosophy is to-day, is not its theoretical structure, whose bases are accepted by millions who would refuse to be regarded as theosophists at any price, but it is a particular attitude, interpretation and practical application of it. To-day the word theosophy signifies the special profession of a certain religious order, and I doubt whether a world mission is in store for it. Theosophy as a religion will continue, it will give happiness to many individuals, and content to limited sects, but as a historical movement in life it will never play an important part. I will summarise the most important principles which are opposed to such a possibility.[1]

The first objection to theosophy as a living force pertains to its tendency to occultism. No matter how desirable I consider it that occult forces, in so far as they exist, should be studied as accurately and fully as possible – the advantage derived therefrom will benefit science, not religious life. Supernatural recognition is spiritually no more significant than material recognition, and 'occult science,' as religion or a way to it, which is how most theosophists regard it, is not worth a red cent more than the 'Energism' of Wilhelm Ostwald. Moreover, the possible results of occult research will have far smaller direct effects upon life than its supporters suspect. They dream of a condition in which telepathy will supplant all external means of communication, and in which will-power will render superfluous all physical energy; these dreams represent so many foolish Utopias. No matter to what extent the soul can influence physical phenomena, it will be cheaper and, to this

[1] My essay: Für und wider die Theosophie in my book *Philosophie als Kunst*, Darmstadt, 1922, is supplementary to what follows above.

extent, more to the purpose for centuries, to treat the body, at any rate in all acute cases, with physical means. For the conduct of the normal business of life, its normal forces will not only always be sufficient, but they will always monopolise consideration; or, if not for ever, at any rate so long as men do not alter their being fundamentally. For the hidden spheres of reality, which are supposed to come within the domain of our experience by the education of our psychic organs, do not concern us here; the less we take notice of them the better. We have progressed further than the Middle Ages chiefly because we have lost the belief in mysterious relationships, which proves that their recognition is not progressive. This recognition cannot advance us because it means nothing but a calculation with influences which, if effective at all, are insignificant compared with the normal forces of this sphere, and it actually harms us where originally they cannot be experienced, and everything is sacrificed to bring them within our ken. The man who makes this his aim inevitably retrogresses in his inner being, just as the man who is always thinking of his health. He eventually loses all freedom from bias. We ought to live as straightforwardly as possible, as pluckily, as single-mindedly from within, as unconcerned for everything remote and external, as we can; the more we do this, the stronger and purer do we become. The less a man relies upon alien forces, the more he takes on his own shoulders, the more does nature smile upon him. The ideal is not to take into account all circumstances, but to be anchored so firmly in yourself that all circumstances become indifferent. The occultist constantly squints sideways, forwards and backwards, he is never really at his ease. Therefore he can never be a leader in life, no matter how useful he may prove himself to be as an instrument. Since the strife for psychic development, as already explained, is not beneficial to spiritualisation, but counteracts it, I will hardly be mistaken in registering the tendency of theosophy to occultism on the debit side from the point of view of its possible significance for life.

The second consideration which is connected with the above and which speaks against theosophy, is the externalisa-

tion which the religious impulse inevitably suffers in and by this process. Let us assume that everything is true which theosophy teaches concerning the hierarchy of spirits, the gods, half-gods, masters and the leadership of the human race – it is undoubtedly no good to concern oneself too much about it. All religious belief has only one significance, that of leading to self-realisation; it means the imaginative exposition of being, the mirror of the centre of being in our consciousness. Undeveloped human beings must believe in something external, because they have no other means of focusing their powers, of condensing them to dynamic unity. The developed individual believes in himself – in 'the God in him' – or else he does not believe at all, he simply *is*, for, where the consciousness of being is fully developed, being and belief coincide. The nature of the externals which a man believes in is irrelevant; but since they are only a means and not an end, since religious faith and believing-to-be-true have nothing to do with each other theoretically, and since no importance is to be attached to the existence or non-existence of an object of belief and reality, it is well if this object is as unproven as possible. It is not necessary to go as far as Tertullian, who proclaimed *credo quia absurdum*, but it is certainly of advantage for religion if the question of the existence of the gods is raised as little as possible. In Hinduism this question quite consciously is not put; there, divinities are regarded officially as manifestations of the one highest Unity – apart from this, they may be empirically real or not. The theosophists, however, present the existence of superhuman beings as scientifically proved by their leaders. If they believe in God, they incline to externals; they obey, believe-to-be-true, and pray, in the idolatrous sense, and all real religiosity suffers. It really makes room for superstition, because every belief, in that which is not oneself, is superstition, even if it embody absolute truth *in propria persona*. From this it appears how fatal an error theosophy commits in reawakening ancient polytheism. The theosophists ought to have drawn the opposite conclusion from their discovery that gods really exist (in so far as they have done so objectively) if their object has been the founding of a new religion or giving profundity

to those already in existence. They should have expelled instantly from their Pantheon every god whose existence they have proved scientifically, as being henceforth insignificant religiously. No matter how many gods or higher beings there may be, no matter how great their powers – so far as we are spiritual creatures, intent upon spiritual progress, they do not concern us. And thus New Thought – this word not taken as the denomination of the sect, but as the tenor of all spiritual movements which are originally derived from American New Thought – has undoubtedly developed the teachings of ancient mysticism in a happier sense than Theosophy. New Thought recognises in all mediation only preliminary stages; it rejects all occult knowledge; it denies living value to occult development and to the struggle beyond that which fetters us to this earth, and it stresses solely individual self-realisation in this life. This is, in fact, the only thing we need. No matter how much scientific recognition may gain – the newly awakened interest in occultism signifies, for the religious life of our time, a direct danger, probably the most serious of all, for it threatens to bring about an externalisation which may become much more fatal (because more difficult to oppose) than any which are conditioned by materialism. A proven God, honoured henceforth as a fact, would be a more evil fetish than the golden calf. The more we discover of the hidden forces of nature, the more important does it become to understand that self-realisation alone matters; that it is spiritually quite irrelevant, not only whether we are clairvoyant or blind, but also whether there are gods or not. To-day it is more important than ever to take to heart what Buddha and Christ have said against the workers of miracles: both have emphasised repeatedly that we are not concerned with psychic development, but with something else belonging to a different dimension. All squinting at the supernatural is derogatory. Only those free from bias can advance. And the theosophists are not only not free from bias – it is, as already stated, impossible for them to be so. They are encouraged far too much by their leaders to consider how they can please their Masters, how occult forces are to be dealt with correctly, and how evil influences

can be escaped. For this reason, the average theosophist, no matter how much nearer he may be to truth, is generally spiritually below a devout Christian. I see in New Thought, especially in the shape which Adela Curtis[1] has given to it, really the only religious movement of our time based on mysticism which will prove advantageous to the majority. In this attempt alone there is an intelligent as well as a methodical effort towards inwardness and spiritualisation; in it alone the essentials are recognised; in it alone, as far as I know, there are no psychological mistakes. The movement emanating from Johannes Müller, the Lutheran equivalent of New Thought, is no doubt superior to the latter in philosophical insight, but it lacks accelerating motives, on which alone everything depends if spiritual progress is to be initiated; it does not point a way directly how recognition is to be translated into life. New Thought, from the point of view of the West, has a further advantage over theosophy, an advantage of an empirical and accidental nature, but for this very reason it is likely to cast the decisive vote in favour of its success in the world: it signifies a logically possible evolution of Christianity, and is inspired by it; although based upon the wisdom of the East, it is purely Christian in spirit, and does not employ any, or hardly any, alien concepts. Self-realisation is possible only within the limits of familiar concepts; it is impossible to express oneself perfectly in a foreign language, quite apart from the drawback that in the latter case one has to pay too much attention to the means. (For this reason, neither Buddha nor Christ wished to destroy, but only to 'fulfil' the existing law.) The Indian concepts are alien to us Westerners; most people are incapable – it is just the theosophists who prove this – of acquiring an inner relation to them. Moreover, physiologically we are all Christians, whether our consciousness recognises this or not. Thus, every doctrine which continues in the Christian spirit has a better chance of taking hold of our innermost being than the profoundest doctrine of foreign origin. Personally, I do

[1] See for details her writings, *The New Mysticism*, *Meditation and Health*, *The Way of Silence* (published by the School of Silence, 10 Scarsdale Villas, Kensington, W.).

not believe that Christianity will ever die out. It will continue to exist in the West, in ever new interpretations and incarnations, until the Last Judgment. Nor do I believe in the necessity, and hardly in the possibility, of a new religion. We have in principle got beyond the stage in which we can seriously accept metaphysical forms, and this will appear as soon as a new form shall rule supreme. The best among us are no longer capable of conversion. On the other hand, most of us, and especially the most far-sighted, will continue to be ready to use the traditional mental images as means of expression, because they facilitate self-realisation. The loud cry of our day for a new religion is hardly to be taken seriously; it corresponds generally with a lack of self-recognition. The most advanced will know how to help themselves more and more without professions of faith, and those who feel the need for it will, as before, find, in the old profession, their best medium. Those who demand new forms of belief most noisily are, as far as I can judge, intrinsically a-religious. When they have become more mature, even they will recognise that they are not concerned for a new faith, but for a new formation of being; that such a struggle does not necessarily mean religious strife, and that they will find themselves much more rapidly if they make up their minds to try to express their being in the world of appearance without any side-glances upon God. Much too much is called religion nowadays; anyone who wishes to gain personal importance imagines that, for this reason, he evinces religious feeling. The only struggle for self-realisation which can be called religious aims at the spiritual transfusion of appearance. The man who only wishes to spend his energy to create is simply a strong man, an organiser, possibly a poet, but nothing essentially different and nothing more.

The third, probably the most important, consideration which is opposed to a possible world mission for theosophy in the West is its adhesion to ideals which, from a historical point of view, have ceased to operate. The new saviour is blessed as the 'Lord of Mercy'; the virtues of humility, obedience, readiness to serve, compassion and gentle love, are presented as the supreme virtues. They are perhaps the supreme feminine

virtues, but a historical future awaits masculine virtues only for some time to come. We are already on the point of overcoming compassion, the fatal superstition that making others happy is in itself meritorious, that altruism possesses value in itself, that being attached is a sign of spirituality, and long-suffering is better than the determination to change circumstances – we are on the point of supplanting these ideas by the general recognition that only productive effort is ethically justified: that causing others suffering is better than suffering with others, in so far as the former leads upwards, that non-consideration of the feelings of others is better than consideration of them so far as the former are foolish, and so on. And this is not due to lack of feeling, but because we begin to grow beyond the stage of being conditioned by emotional circumstances, because we are ceasing to identify ourselves with our empirical nature, and only recognise, as absolutely valuable, not what satisfies a given individual, but that which helps him beyond himself irrespective of the pain it costs him. This is the masculine, productive form of humanity, in contradistinction to the feminine, conserving ideals which theosophy represents in their extreme form. Masculine and feminine qualities, however, cannot actualise themselves at once. Western humanity has confessed officially its adherence to feminine ideals for nearly two thousand years, and this was excellent, for it has been tamed more or less only thanks to this education in woman's domain. We Northerners owe our present moral level of civilisation perhaps more to the mediæval worship of the Virgin Mary than to anything else – to this wonderfully poetic variety of Christianity which has grafted the Mother of God as a divinity upon itself. In those days she was not revered as the principle of motherhood, nor as the personification of the eternal feminine, but as a queen, as a great lady, as a *Grande Dame*, who did not permit any fault or offence against court manners. Especially in the thirteenth century, the feminine ideals dominated so completely that anyone familiar with its ideas and not its actions would have every reason for regarding it as a period of effeminacy. In those days Western humanity had, in unconscious self-recog-

nition, fashioned for itself the kind of outlook on the world which was best calculated to ennoble it. To-day it has recognised its real character, like Achilles when Odysseus looked for him among the girls, and it would be dishonest if it continued to think in a feminine way; and it will now find its perfection all the more rapidly, the more it makes up its mind to keep to the masculine way.

And thus, by projection upon the background of theosophy, the significance of our Western peculiarity and the fate of our hemisphere become clearer to me than they ever did before. Our capacity for progress depends on the fact that in us for the first time in human history the masculine principle in all its purity has attained sole control. Since we are progressive, it cannot be but that we become more and more masters of this world: where tradition and progress are rivals, the latter *must* gain the victory, because its principle is superior to empirical accident. In idea, the historical pre-eminence of Roman Catholicism was vanquished the minute the naked spirit of Protestantism was born. Henceforth, this spirit alone will guide events, no matter in what form, either towards good or evil. It is useless to oppose this fate. The completest recognition of the disadvantages which it conditions will not alter it. The idea of absolute autonomy created a power in the world which is mightier than anything which is opposed to it, and which will be effective in spite of all obstacles. If it does not enthrone the theosophical ideal of subordination (to omniscient Masters) it will prevent its further effectiveness, as it has already put an end to Catholic efficacy. (It is significant that most of the leading spirits in all Catholic countries are fanatically anticlerical.) We Westerners are the bearers of this power. We must confess ourselves to its sway. We must recognise that we are essentially men, and that we only wish to be essentially men. All the modern Western apostles with feminine, sentimental ideals strike one as indescribably poor creatures (if they are not women themselves) and this could not be otherwise: in so far as they feel in a feminine way they are inferior types. Everything good which has lately emanated from the West bears the mark of masculine spirit. In this spirit,

and in it alone, we will in future achieve greatness and goodness.

In pointing to the feminine character of theosophy, as opposed to the pronouncedly masculine nature of all the spiritual forces which are the bearers of the modern historical movement, the centre of the problem has been touched upon, as to what the wisdom of the East can and cannot signify for the West. It is a fundamental error to suppose that Theosophy can play a historical part among us: it contains no accelerating motive. It preaches a receptive and expectant attitude towards the higher forces, who in their omniscience direct the fate of humanity, and where the latter has determined upon independent action, events are trampled down regardless of all expectations. The spirit of the West is becoming more masculine, more manly, from epoch to epoch. The Westerner recognises less and less unalterable factors; he accepts voluntarily more and more responsibility, and the idea of predestination loses truth correspondingly from period to period. Theosophy rejects all new creation: the whole future is said to be predestined from eternity; every new manifestation is supposed to be conditioned by previous karma; all events are controlled according to a preconceived plan. The spirit of the West, on the contrary, assumes more and more that no plan binds the creative will, and that every free act implies a new creation. Both these views do not perhaps seem to contradict each other, regarded from the Atman point of view; perhaps they only represent different aspects of the relation existing in the absolute, and mean the same thing. But in the realm of appearances, and for our ideas, they signify the most radical difference which can be conceived: in our world, Providence has literally abdicated in favour of the individual with free powers of determination. Myths frequently offer a more truthful presentation of reality than scientific statements: thus, one can say that God interferes personally always only there where He has no choice, because no one else wishes to take the responsibility, and now that the Western world has become so enamoured of responsibility, He has retired from business altogether. Now man acts as God, with the same supreme right,

and the trend of events proves that this position has not been usurped illegitimately. There, where man has become sovereign, the ideals born of the spirit of dependence lose increasingly in importance and power. A sovereign longs neither for peace nor mercy, neither for comfort nor compassion, for he decides; if he succumbs, he recognises himself alone as guilty and bears the consequences with calm pride. This is the manly way. Women expect, suffer, hope and receive. Accordingly they long for compassion, mercy and peace. For this reason they are right in believing in the superior power of Fate. But a man need not trouble about God or Devil, because his initiative removes him beyond their power. Where one of two individuals has initiative and the other lacks it, the latter will inevitably fall behind in the race. For this reason, all the feminine forms of religion are played out as historically effective factors ever since the masculine spirit awoke.

This is the ultimate and basic reason for the greater efficacy of the West as opposed to the East. The Western spirit now marches forward irresistibly along its path and becomes more self-conscious from day to day. It avows its belief in manliness more decidedly all the time. It took long before this spirit dared to deny the traditional feminine ideals. For a short period it created a form for itself in which this spirit could quite honestly be itself, and simultaneously bow down honestly before these feminine ideals: this was the time of the worship of the Virgin and of the minstrel singers. This form, however, lost its soul ere long. For centuries the Western spirit dragged convictions along with it which were in crying contrast to its intimate desires as well as to its activities. Even to-day perhaps there are not many who confess to themselves that they do not care for peace, nor for release from this vale of tears; that they do not see the highest qualities in compassion and love, and value determined action higher than accepting and suffering in all circumstances. But it is so in truth; and the Westerner is becoming more and more conscious of his actual being – often only after cramp-like crises. The most severe cramp was expressed in Friedrich Nietzsche. It may be that he was the last; that development will henceforward take its course with-

out retrogression. But it is not certain. Every time that I survey the inner fermentation of our time, I am surprised how little clarity men possess concerning their real being and volition. They fumble after new concepts of faith and new forms of it, and they clamour far and near after new ideals. The truth is that they *themselves*, as personally active individuals, have stepped into the shoes of all possible ideals: that the time of external exponents is over, that the foci of the ellipsis are beginning to melt into the centre of a circle, that faith and being are becoming one, and that the hour has come to take self-determination absolutely in earnest. If unconsciously we were not already self-determined, we would not seek for our ideals outside us in vain. For the time being we are, as Hegel would say, in a state of 'unhappy consciousness.' But if we take veracity and the courage of decision and responsibility quite seriously, then, sooner or later, this condition will give way of its own accord to a 'happier' state. When this has happened, it will appear that we will not have to deny any of the old ideals, as Nietzsche has suspected, but that, on the contrary, we will be much more capable than previously of doing justice to them. There are many equivalents for feminine sympathy, feminine love and compassion. Therefore, there is no fear that our culture will suffer by a conscious change of direction towards the masculine.

But of course, the men who make history, who alone are in question as far as its courses are concerned, are only a portion of humanity. It is a mistake to believe that, because the trend of the time is toward increasing masculinity, the feminine element therefore is dying out: this is proved sufficiently clearly by the immense attraction exercised by the religions of the East among us. Many are drawn to them as men are to women; and yet I think that most of them are only attracted as one woman is to another who is possessed of understanding. The more masculine the spirit of the age becomes on the one hand, the more conscious becomes the feminine portion of humanity of its mental characteristics. And it is well that it is so. For thus it becomes more profound in the feminine direction. The feminine disposition is more favourable to

understanding; it is the more profound one in the real sense of the word. The work of understanding will be done best by feminine humanity until the Last Judgment. Our struggle for recognition, which stands alone in history, is not due to the fact that we are by nature wise, but that we are unwise; where knowledge exists already, science does not flourish; we long for light from the blindness of men of action. For this reason it is, in spite of everything, a welcome sign that the spirit of theosophy is penetrating into ever wider circles in the West. Such a process will benefit recognition to the full: as a theoretic teaching of Being, Indian wisdom, whose doctrines are represented by theosophy no matter how much they may be misinterpreted, is beyond the opposition of man and woman; it signifies unquestionably the maximum of metaphysical recognition which has been attained hitherto, and the West will realise this more and more as it advances; what I have described as feminine in it is not this wisdom by itself, but it is the conclusions which Indians and theosophists draw from it for their practical lives. They are conclusions which men cannot make their own, nor do they need to do so. They are not necessary or binding. But women may recognise them. All the more so as there is little danger that feminine ideals will ever again gain predominance among us.

Man and Woman. Perhaps it is well if I take this opportunity to pronounce the ultimate facts of their relationship. We must not linger with the concept of their opposition: as soon as we do so, its truth melts like a cloud – just as probably all thoughts appear true only from a certain distance and within a limited time.

It seems as if the polarity of the sexes were something absolutely real. Regarded more closely and more profoundly, its presupposed meaning, and even the facts, do not hold water. It will not do to see absolute phenomena in the polar co-ordinates as has been the case from Empidocles downward to Schelling and beyond him. What in fact defines the fundamental peculiarity of the feminine as opposed to the masculine? That the former can create only after previous conception. But if this is so, then not only all artists are women, all thinkers

and philosophers (in so far as they need stimulus), but even the manliest of men, the genii of action. For even their life work has always consisted in giving living form to an idea which they had received. It must not be objected that they did not receive, but created, ideas: firstly, this was only very rarely the case, for nearly all historically great individuals were the bearers of pre-existent tendencies, and then it was not a question of creation, where the idea really was their own, but it was rather a case of parthenogenesis, for masculine semen, as such, possesses no evolutionary tendency. God could conceivably be thought of as purely masculine, in so far as He created without previous conception. But He is beyond the sexual opposition, and if we attempt to comprehend His creation we are forced, if we refuse at all costs to grant Him feminine peculiarities, to credit matter with pre-existence as well as all the powers of maternity.

As a matter of fact, sexual polarity is nothing absolute, it signifies a formal scheme within which creative activity moves. We call the varying principle masculine, and the preserving one feminine; the stimulating principle is male, the formative female: it is masculine to act, feminine to possess receptive understanding. Man fashions the appearance, woman embodies the cause. These poles become apparent in the most varying manner, and every individuality contains both in many aspects. Every human being is a synthesis of masculinity and femininity, and can, according to circumstances, appear as male or female. This is not as true as in the case of echinoderms, in whose case the masculine principle can be substituted by chemicals, or in the case of Copepodes and Daphnides, who alter their sex according to the changes of the weather; the power of transmutation appears here, as everywhere in the case of human beings, limited to the psychic sphere. In this realm, however, it manifests itself all the more clearly. As an artist, as a creator and as a creature of understanding, the most masculine man is feminine. We are concerned, therefore, whenever in the history of the world, as to-day, a principle appears to be gaining supremacy, with something less extreme than we imagine: no matter how masculine our culture has

become, the voice of the eternal feminine will remain audible within its sphere.

20

ELLORA

THE mere fact of being transported from the damp and sweltering flat country of Southern India into the clear heights of the mountains calls forth sensations of happiness within me. But here there are marvels to be seen which stimulate me wonderfully. Moods which belong to the days of my youth re-echo in the rocky temples of Ellora. Once again I probe into the dead stone as a geologist, in order to solve the significance of the living.

How eloquent these petrifacts are! – No living spirit of religiosity breathes in the holy caves of Ellora. The echo of the last reverberation, caused once upon a time by divine worship here, has long since died away, and only in rare and long intervals do pilgrims enter the precincts. They serve as a refuge for the shepherd against storms or the glow of the ravaging sun, or occasionally as a caravanserai. And sometimes the Mohammedan inhabitants of the neighbourhood hold their sheep markets here. – But that which is dead continues to live in the stone. The spirit of Faith which hollowed out these mountains, which chiselled cathedrals out of the rock, has found an immortal body in its creation. And the monumental simplicity which it assumed in the depth of the mountains manifests the deepest traits of its nature with incomparable strength.

Three great religions have carved their spirit side by side into the rock: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, the stern sister of the religion of Buddha. The Brahmanic sculptures express the spirit of the Mahabharatam, that mighty epopœ of Hindustan. The same amazing power, the same unlimited wealth of invention, the same creative force of divine luxuriance springs from them. Just as God has intertwined into one necessary Unity the wise and the beautiful and the ugly, the

heavenly and the devilish in His creation, so the monstrous and the exquisite, the repulsive and the attractive, the significant and the nonsensical, the grotesque and the sublime, stand side by side, conditioning each other in the Brahmanic world of form. This creation is so all-embracing that what is missing would seem only to be withheld, and it appears to be rooted so deeply in being that the observer admires and reveres, even when he does not understand, knowing well that he is faced by something beyond his means of comprehension. – And by its side the spirit of the Protestant faith, Jainism and Buddhism! How scanty, how poor they seem! The original power may still be discerned in its Jainistic formation. You feel: here luxuriant spirit has meant to condense itself into simplicity, like the god Shiva, the Dancer, occasionally concentrates himself into an ascetic. Thus poverty still expresses restrained riches, and the simple lines breathe power. But how infinitely less strength they show than those of Brahmanic creation! It is not possible to compress a whole world within the narrow confines of a province. Jainism only signifies a twig, albeit a powerful one, on the gigantic tree of Hinduism. – But now, as to Buddhism! As I stepped from the Temple of Kailas, the cathedral which has been chiselled in all its amazing complexity out of a single rock, into the bare caves which serve the son of Sakya as a sanctuary, I began to shudder. Where has the spirit fled to? I only succeeded by the utmost straining of my attention in realising the connection of this world with what I had seen before, and in perceiving that it too had its root in the original Indian spirit. But how weary, how diseased is he presented here, in this extreme embodiment! To-day I understand for the first time why Buddhism, which was able to conquer the world, could not support itself in India, why all Indians whom I have seen speak contemptuously of Buddhism. To-day for the first time it is clear to me why Gautama, this uniquely great man, this greatest son of the land of India, who was destined to be revered in it as no one else was, did not bring salvation to his people, and is therefore valued less than many lesser men: no matter how great Buddhism may be in itself, it signifies the degeneration of the Indian spirit.

It cannot be denied: in Buddhism the philosophical nation *par excellence* has renounced the tendency to philosophise, the people who delighted most on earth in created forms have capitulated before the ideal of uniformity, the most speculative race who ever existed has sought salvation in empiricism. This could not lead to a good end. Nature refuses to be mocked, to be violated; if she is impeded in good works, she bursts forth all the more as a destructive power. The Indians cannot refrain from philosophising: thus the renunciation of philosophy only brought about that Buddhism became the collective centre for the mental forces all over India which tended to nihilism, superficial scepticism or gross materialism, and these have continuously disintegrated the Buddhistic community from the core to the surface. The Indians cannot all be woven on the same loom. If this is done, they are robbed of the best that is in them; Buddhism has banalised them. The Indians are rich in imagination rather than exact: if they adhere to an outlook on the world based on pure experience, it could only have the result that the creative activity, leading to the formation of myths, should work itself out *terre à terre* and descend from the sphere of the spirit, which is its place, reeking mischief, down into that of matter. Buddha based his theory of recognition on the phenomenon of suffering, and on this he built his doctrine of salvation: no matter how well such a philosophy may justify itself among empiricists, it spoils speculative minds, for they will not be prevented from raising suffering into substance. The psychology of Buddha is the most exact which I know: in the minds of Indians it has developed into a phantasmagoria, as they were not able to escape their natural tendency to interpreting it as a metaphysical theory of being. Buddha's moral rules are of wonderful efficacy where they are followed simply and not pondered over as revelations; if this is done, which is what happened from the beginning with the Indians, then only their unphilosophic spirit appears and deteriorates the thinking and the moral struggle of those who wish to understand them too profoundly. Thus Buddhism proves itself to be a thoroughly abnormal and harmful growth on the tree of the Indian spirit, and the happiest accident

which could fall to the lot of this spirit was to survive his illness. Only a few centuries after the time when Buddhistic kings had raised it by artificial means to its greatest power, original Buddhism had disappeared from India. What was afterwards still called Buddhism in India is really Brahmanism, with all its typical anti-Buddhist traits; its speculative spirit, its ritualism, its metaphysical profundity and the manifoldness of its outer appearance. But even this Brahmanised Buddhism survived only on the borders of Hindustan. The rest of the country was regained by Hinduism. Hinduism alone is the real and all-embracing expression of Indian religiosity, doing justice to all its contents and worth; and this is what the cave-temples of Ellora reveal in their grand monumental script.

The nature of the tie which links religion to the character of a race has never been so clear to me as to-day. It is simply impossible to form a valid judgment concerning the value of a concrete religion if the peculiarity of the soul which is to profess it, is not taken into consideration. The spiritual force of a faith is conceived as so great by most that all other factors, such as race, national characteristics, the original spirit of the people, may be regarded as irrelevant compared with it. The example of India teaches that such a view is incorrect. Buddhism is a wonderful religion, in many ways the highest which exists; India has not gained by its profession: it was incapable of advancing the Indians. In the same way, the profession of the Indian view of life, however unequalled it be in profundity, will never suit the unphilosophical Occidentals, for whom Christianity signifies the most appropriate religion. All indigenous religions have an absolute advantage over imported ones, because they correspond with the national character, and to this extent they represent a medium in which the best and most ideal elements can be expressed intelligently. Of course, the concept 'indigenous' must not be taken in the absolute sense; it would be better to say 'domiciled,' for what has been domiciled for a long period proves thereby either its original or its ultimate appropriateness, because what is inappropriate dies out. Will the triumphal progress of Christianity and

Buddhism be held up against me as proof to the contrary? It is just they who, within certain limits, bear witness to the existence of a necessary link between the character of a people and its profession of faith. Originally, of course, Christianity had nothing to do with the spirit of European peoples; but it became changed to suit their spirit with extraordinary rapidity. Even in the early Middle Ages, the original Eastern spirit of real (not official) Christianity had hardly left any traces in the West; and it became more and more Westernised in every further development. Even the schism between East and West was essentially due to differences in national spirit; the latter factor became absolutely dominant in the territorial division between Protestantism and Catholicism. The more Teutonic blood, the more pronounced was the Protestant sentiment. – And now as to Buddhism. It did not last in India because it did not correspond to the national character. In its original form it has preserved itself only in the tropical zone, in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, where the teaching of Sakya Munis, understood quite literally, supplied the best possible frame of life to an indolent humanity. Among the Northern barbarians Buddhism developed into pure idol-worship. Brahmanic Buddhism (Mahayana doctrine) did in fact conquer China, but it never became a formative power, because its all too speculative nature remained alien to the realistic spirit of the Chinese; it only signified a great deal to artists, and gradually disappeared as a force. Nominally the same Buddhism rules to-day in Japan. But what form has it assumed there? There it resembles Christianity far more than Brahmanism, because the practical, worldly sense of the Japanese people has adapted the foreign teaching to its own requirements. – No, it is impossible to disregard the national character in judging a religion. The only teaching which appears to have proved itself stronger than any other circumstances, is that of Islam. Why this exception? I do not know. I suspect, however, that it is not really an exception, for in Persia, the only Islamic country possessing a mentally active population, the original tendency of the race continues to assert itself in the shape of Sufism and Bahaism.

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UDAIPUR

At the beginning of the performance of a play at the court of princes in India in the Middle Ages, the leader used to step out upon the bare boards and relate to his audience what he saw about him in his mind's eye; his words then called to life corresponding images in their consciousness, and they served as decorations and wings. The public was credited with so much imagination that it was capable of retaining in its mind imaginary surroundings as an ever-present frame of reality. – Udaipur seems to me to have been created by similar evocations, to be real in the same sense. Udaipur seems so improbable in its beauty that I stand in the midst of it, look at it and enjoy it as if in a dream – and yet I can scarcely credit my experience.

The royal castle stands out in the background with a magnificence and grandeur worthy of gods. The people throng the town which slopes upwards on terraces. Proud horsemen gallop along, femininely beautiful lads jokingly lean against the armourer's smithy, and again and again the dark mass of an elephant divides the shimmering turmoil of men. In the gardens, where rare flowers blossom and marble fountains spread refreshing coolness in the hottest part of the day, legendary birds flit about, beautiful as jewels. The lake in which Udaipur is mirrored is peopled by ibises, spoon-bills and marabouts, who are on friendly terms with men; on the shores hinds and gazelles step confidently to meet those bent on pleasure. The islands are decorated with exquisite pavilions which invite to secret joys. Golden gondolas, from which song and the tinkling of cymbals emanate, glide through the waters. And when evening falls, when the sun has died away on the marble of the palaces and the lake has changed from scarlet into purple and then into invisibility, silver bells ring this fairy city to rest.

Here I could only rest, only enjoy, only love and abide in happiness; here it would be ridiculous to want to live otherwise. Such probably was the atmosphere of an Indian *Cour*

d'Amour. Hitherto I have found difficulty in imagining for myself the amorous life of Indian courts as it presents itself in the poetry of their Middle Ages. Their love seemed so unreal in its passive longing, its extravagance without power, its unrest in the midst of security. This 'unreal' something was the reality of this improbable world; here an overdeveloped culture has stepped beyond the frame of nature. Love, as a real art, has never been known in the West. What is described there as 'the art of love' is not art, but diplomacy. The latter was not necessary at the Indian courts of love, for there the purpose was achieved from the beginning; there one possessed for a start what one desired, and inducement and opportunity were lacking which could engender longing for the unknown. Such contentment usually blunts the faculties. In these circles of the most refined sensuous culture, however, where beauty was supreme as an end in itself, it transfigured love to a real art, of a piece with music and poetry. All dramatic elements belonged to the realm of imagination in such love. Imagination had to produce legend and action from itself, suffering as well as obstacles, anxiety and hope; for all real background was lacking; here feelings were awakened and intertwined, as the musician improvises on the lute. And this marvel was possible, became real, because the men of that wonderful period were miraculously refined from the surface to their inmost depth.

This culture belongs to days which are past long ago. But, as I walked through the glittering chambers, the pavilions and the swaying gardens, which once upon a time provided its scenery, I became conscious of its spirit and bitter longing soon filled my heart. How sadly modern society lacks all artistic value! Not that it lacks erotic background – eroticism must be the neutral canvas, the structural web upon which imagination and taste weave pleasing patterns; and these patterns are to-day, where they exist, threadbare and bad. In northern countries they were never good. There it happens too rarely that a man is brought up and formed by women; without training, his erotic faculties do not develop and as woman only exceptionally satisfies higher demands than man makes upon her directly, no progress takes place. Germanic men know, in

matters of love, generally only two things: vice and marriage. But both are equally bad means to erotic culture. Both encourage laxity; both devitalise. Erotic tension, which must never cease if man is to remain at a high level as a sensuous creature, can only be developed and heightened by the kind of intercourse which makes realisation always possible theoretically and always questionable in practice, and such intercourse is offered neither by wives nor prostitutes. In the East to-day, and in the West during the period of classic antiquity, the corresponding feminine type was only to be found amongst courtesans. From the Renaissance onwards this type has separated itself more and more into a definite caste, and since the eighteenth century it coincides with the ideal type of the lady of the great world. The ancient courtesan and the modern Grande Dame are in reality of one spirit, of one being; only the latter stands on a higher level because she is more universal. What do men not owe to intercourse with such women! And how easily one detects it if her exquisite hands have helped to form him! The greater charm (as well physically as mentally and emotionally) which the cultivated Latin evinces as opposed to the Teuton, is chiefly due to the fact that the former, in contrast to the latter, has generally partaken of such education. It is madness, almost a crime against the Holy Ghost, to ban eroticism from life, as the Puritanism of all countries and all times has done: it signifies in reality the fulcrum of human nature. Through the Eros every string of his being can be set in motion, and the deepest reverberations have generally emanated from it. The woman, of course, must understand her métier. She must know how to treat Eros as the canvas, and how to let the threads shoot backwards and forwards until an exquisite pattern has been created; she must know how to force the man to embroider, to invent continually new arabesques and ever more delicate shades and tones. And if she is cultured to perfection, she would even succeed in transforming the diplomat into an artist, in changing the brutality of desire to the longing for beauty. This is what the great ladies of the great periods of Latin culture have done; hence the existence of this very culture. To-day, on the other hand, the feeling for

embroidery has passed away, even in France. Desire, which, after all, is a matter of course, is stressed, underlined and exaggerated again and again; men, instead of becoming brilliant in the presence of women, become coarse. This is inevitable because the women themselves take less and less delight in embroidery, and prefer the naked canvas to the carpet. – How different was all this in mediæval India! Here every charm of uncertainty was lacking; the men possessed the women whom they wooed. The external circumstances were no more favourable to mobility than those of marriage. But just as every now and again there are husbands whose imagination overcomes inertia, so the wonderful men of this period understood how to create, without external means, quite from within themselves, the same erotic culture which prevailed during the best times of Italy and France.

Will anyone be offended because I ascribe the great courtesan and the Grande Dame to an identical type? – I cannot alter the facts. It simply is so, that only women of polygamous tendencies, possessing a wide emotional horizon, women with varied sympathies and many-sided characters, are destined to the position of the queen, of the muse and the sibyl. The virtues of the housewife preclude a wide and grand scale of effectiveness; the woman who aspires to this scale thereby proves that she is not a type of motherhood. It should be recognised at last that 'moral' qualities cannot possibly produce a general denominator for the ideal aspirations of mankind; that some of the highest irreplaceable values are capable of realisation only in opposition to the main lines of morality. One of the few ladies of the great world who to-day approach the type of an Aspasia, asked me once whether I regarded her as unfaithful? Certainly not, I replied to her, for in her case the question of faithfulness did not arise. In order to convey to many the extraordinary qualities which she alone could express in her circle, she had to sacrifice the individual in a certain sense, and she would have sinned sadly if she had sacrificed her highest abilities to moral scruples. It should be recognised at last that no general denominator is conceivable for the ideal aspirations of mankind, unless so abstract a concept

should be chosen that it could embody every possible content. Thus, all aspirations can be traced to the strife for perfection, for this is in fact the significance of all of them. But who does not realise that there are countless forms of possible perfection, and that therefore the apparent unification only means a new version of the problem? As a matter of fact, one kind of perfection can only flourish at the expense of another. The miracles of Greek art would have been uncreated without the disregard and violation of the lowly; the highest culture is possible only in an aristocratic community which, as such, is exclusive. Æsthetic perfection belongs to another dimension than moral perfection, and is not rarely at right angles to it; the ideal of democracy is inimical to culture, that of all-embracing love excludes the manly virtues, and so on. Now the assertion can be made – and this has been done often – that all other ideals are inessential by the side of that of moral goodness; but even subject to this simplified presupposition, an all-embracing concrete ideal is inconceivable; I mean a condition which would bring to perfection everything morally good in mankind. This is obvious in the case of the most superficial realisation of the moral ideal, in the form of ubiquitous practical love of men, for in these circumstances the individual withers ethically; precisely because he acts continually for others, he does not gain profundity for himself; this embodiment has therefore never satisfied any profound human being. But even the highest forms are manifestations no less limited, and could only achieve good at the expense of other possibilities. The monk must kill the profoundly ethical family impulses, renounce friendship, and be indifferent to earthly perfection; in the case, however, of the asceticism within the world, whose idea was created by Protestantism from the recognition of the limitation of the monk's ideal, that inner freedom is never produced which constitutes the loftiest aim of religious progress. It simply is not possible to conceive of a definite state or form which could give perfect expression to everything which is good in mankind, and it is still less possible to imagine a form which would include within itself all that we call ideal. Ideals live at the expense of one another,

just as organisms do. There are higher and lower ideals, just as there are higher and lower animals, but the mysterious link which connects them forbids the eradication of the one for the sake of the other: in the process of battling with what appears to be inferior, we take away the ground from beneath the more valuable element. And then the 'inferior' never fully merits this description: it always contains positive possibilities, which are not contained by higher forms as such. The same is true of eroticism. It is not a higher impulse, and the highest manifestations of which it is capable will not bear comparison in human values with other qualities. Nevertheless, its manifestations are not only beautiful as such, so that it would involve an impoverishment of the world if they disappeared: they are in such intimate, interchangeable relation to other higher qualities, that their existence seems to be absolutely tied to them; artistic culture can only grow and flourish on the background of erotic culture. The puritanical soul appears mean compared with the Catholic one; fanatics of morality are always cripples, non-sensuous natures incapable of religious profundity. As far as I am concerned, I content myself with the discovery of the facts, and I am prepared to forego the desire to resolve in the abstract the contradiction which, no matter what people say, exists in reality; I regard it as uncultured to explain away the peculiar character of this world from rational considerations of doubtful soundness. And I find it most profitable only to ponder the positive elements of appearance. In some sense every tendency leads to good; the perception of this significance in details is the fundamental problem of the art of life; to perceive it in its general relationship is the ultimate aim of human wisdom.

22

CHITOR

As the strategic key to Mewar, as the most important castle of Rajasthan, Chitor only very exceptionally experienced a year without bloodshed before the English came. The

proudest memories of the proud Rajputs are connected with Chitor; and that means that perhaps no place on earth has been the scene of equal heroism, knightliness, or an equally noble readiness to die. Here Badh Singh, the head of the Deolia Pratapgarh, fell in the fight against Bahadur Shah of Guzerat; it was here that Padmani, the beautiful queen for whose sake Ala-Uddin-Khilji stormed the fortress, sought and found death in the flames, together with all the Rajput women, when all hope of victory had vanished, while Bhim Singh died with the whole of his tribe on the walls. Here the bride of Jaimall of Bednor fought side by side with her husband against the legions of the great Akbar. – How strange it is to breathe an atmosphere in India whose essence is historical! The Hindu whom I have met hitherto knows nothing of historical events; life flows along for him like a myth. And his belief in the transmigration of souls, which robs life of the pathos of 'Einmaligkeit' takes away the significance of history. Even I cannot take history as yet quite in earnest. And if Chitor produces a deep impression upon my mind and soul all the same, this happens as it were by a mental detour, which transmutes the historical into the non-historical. The gods whose flowing mental images form the background of all actions in this world do not attach great importance to the question as to whether they will be condensed into 'real' events. They only pay attention to our world where ideal elements experience their highest realisation in reality. In this way they took part once upon a time in the great war between the sons of Kuru and Pandu. Chitor fascinates me in the same way: never has more been preconceived in the realm of ideas than became actual here.

The great days of Indian knighthood are said to have passed. That may be: but its spirit is still alive. When I glance at the Rajputs, I say to myself: given the opportunity and their heroism will be proved once more. Their state of mind and soul to-day is exactly that of our ancestors in the eleventh century, when the Chanson de Roland was on the lips of every one. They are knightly through and through; paladins without falsity, fear or blemish, as noble and as thoroughbred as

only horses are nowadays. History does not record everything which lives and exists; it only knows of that portion which interferes immediately with material events; thus it arrives at the fiction of the relief of one epoch by the succeeding one. In truth they all continue to exist in and with another. Just as no state in the individual literally passes away, but only disappears from the scene of activity, so historical conditions endure, although they no longer affect the movement of the world. I know circles in which the eighteenth century still continues, provinces in which, even to-day, the spirit of the Reformation period dominates. I am sure there are still Chaldeans, Sumerians, Phœnicians; only it is difficult to discover them. This world is filled by ghosts. And they are abroad most noisily where their existence is denied most definitely. Whence the multiplicity of the modern man who thinks historically, his dissatisfaction, his enmity to his own world? He wants to be different from what he is; he wants to fit himself into an intellectual structure by violence. In his superstitious belief in himself as a historical unit, he endeavours to silence that within himself which does not harmonise with his age. Is it surprising that the repressed ghosts are sounding the alarm? They have shouted many a promising genius out of existence. – The Rajputs, however, whose times have passed long ago, these Homeric heroes in the century of industry, continue their magnificent existence unconcerned.

Night had fallen when the elephant bore me from the rock fortress down the valley with noiseless steps. I lay on an upholstered platform, the earth invisible below me, my gaze lost in the stars. I was devoid of all consciousness of any specific form of existence. Who I was, where I was, what I did – I knew it not. I did not know any more that I was lying on an elephant: ever since I had accustomed myself to the rhythm of his steps, he existed for me no longer. I was not driving nor riding nor flying, and I was certainly not walking. Nothing was to be seen of the earth. Only heavenly bodies surrounded me. And with the absolute security of a dreamer I glided through the vast realm of space. Fundamentally it seemed to me as if I were no longer confined to space. It

was that strange condition of externalisation which I have only known on the verge of death, when an intense consciousness of existence goes hand in hand with the volatility of reality. It is impossible to assert firmly that one still continues to live; one vanishes together with the world round about. And yet, at such a moment, one is more convinced than ever of the reality of one's being.

When I had to descend and faced, in the glaring torchlight, as it were for the first time, the Leviathan to whom I had entrusted myself, a shudder passed through me. It may yet be true that the earth rests on a tortoise. For I did not perceive more of the monster below me than the inhabitants of the earth might feel if they were borne aloft on something alive.

23

JAIPUR

How little my subconscious is still free from European prejudices! It disturbs me – I cannot describe it otherwise – that there are men in India like the Rajputs! I still believe in 'the' Indians, and I have abstracted this type from the Brahmins, these femininely versatile intellectuals; and therefore it strikes me as a 'contradiction' that I find myself among Indians who resemble Frankish barons of the Middle Ages far more than the mass of their nation. And I really ought to have learnt long ago not to apply the general European concept of nation, race, people, etc., to Indians. When I gained my first general survey over the tribes of Hindustan in Rameshvaram – and there they were all the followers of one faith! – I had to think of the Iliad; how the Mirmidons differed for Homer from the Spartans and Phoecians no less than from the Trojans; how for him, in spite of the community of language, there was hardly any such thing as 'Greeks.' Only the various tribes of Hindustan do not speak one but a hundred languages. What I have experienced since, ought to have robbed me altogether of the belief in 'the' Indians; one small day's

journey has not uncommonly shown me as varied aspects of humanity as if I had suddenly been transferred from Iceland to Sicily. What general concept is applicable in any way to the peoples of India? Only that of 'caste,' as it is popularly applied by the Hindus. This concept does not imply anything limited or definite; every community is called caste which appears exclusive in any sense. Sometimes it is based on blood – the offspring of Mongols are of a different 'caste' from the Hindus; sometimes on faith – as in the case of the Sikhs; here the concept is due to geographical seclusion, in another case to similar occupations. Exact, in the scientific sense, the Indians have never been. Again and again the bathos of blood community has been watered down by the possibility of adoption; again and again a religious community has assimilated followers of another faith. The Hindus have differentiated only as artists, that is to say, from the angle of a given present. From there they have observed more ably and drawn more far-reaching conclusions from their observations than any other people. They admit the type of each group with admirable generosity. If a new sect, a heresy, is born in the land of a certain faith, as soon as it seems sufficiently well founded to have produced a new type, it is accepted as a new caste. Thus the Hindu who regards killing as a sacrilege and eating meat with horror, takes no offence in possessing fellow-believers who, like the Rajputs, are beasts of prey. He does not judge the various castes any differently from the various species of animals, all of which are created by God and all of which have a right to live; beyond this as a rule he does not think. If, however, he does so, then his belief convinces him at once of the excellence of the existing order: the soul must pass through varied incarnations in order to gain every conceivable experience. There are, no doubt, higher and lower forms of existence; the Brahmin stands above the Kshattrya, but his type is no less necessary and ordained by God, for no soul seems ripe for the bliss of wisdom which has not previously inhabited the body of a fighter.

The weaknesses of such a point of view are obvious: thanks to it, India has not only not achieved unity, but could not

possibly have acquired it. There is no Indian nation, no Indian faith, no Indian spirit. On the other hand: how marvellously rich and well adjusted is India's humanity! How wonderfully every type is defined! Everywhere where, as in the East, the individual is not decidedly unique, he becomes himself most in so far as he perfects his type. And the Indians have differentiated as many types as can reasonably be differentiated, and they are prepared to accept every new one: therefore, there is hardly any danger for the individual that caste should suppress his peculiarities. Really, I gain the impression more and more that the caste system, at any rate in idea, means more free play to the individual than our system, which denies all typification. If every one of us were conscious of his profoundest being, and could express it freely, then, of course, our system would be the most perfect conceivable; on the other hand, the European who is not aware of his type is guided all the more slavishly by abstract forms, whose limits are more oppressive than any caste prejudice. The European wants to be simply 'man,' forgetting that such a being does not exist, and for this reason his growing consciousness of unity brings about, not profundity, but surface unification. Consciousness of unity has hardly ever taken deeper root, or been more widespread, than amongst Indians. But there it assumes simultaneously the exclusiveness of the phenomenon. And thus Indian humanity, which does not believe in personality, is much more varied and richly differentiated than the individualistic humanity of the modern West.

It is a great delight to wander through this rose-tinted town. How splendid these Rajputs look! Life in Jaipur is conducted no differently from that at the courts of rulers in the heroic age, as Valmiki has described it in the Ramayana. The day after to-morrow the visit of the Queen of England is expected. Knights enter by all the gates in their clashing armour, attended by their horsemen and vassals. The brother of the Maharajah, a dominating figure, rides in a purple robe upon a gold-decked elephant through the streets, in order to supervise the preparations for the reception. Just now the Naga (snake) troops passed by me: young noblemen in close-fitting

green armour, whose leaders perform a wild sword dance during the march.

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THE world of the Rajput is indeed mediæval, so much so, that no boy whose ideas have been formulated by the novels of Fouqué would be disappointed by its reality. In Jaipur they do not ride, but gallop; all the arts of knighthood are practised; only knightly virtues matter, knights alone count. Here that excessive one-sidedness predominates which alone leads to the production of strong and enduring forms.

It is undoubtedly better if the forces of heredity are over- rather than underestimated. There are no more noble types than these Rajputs; the best-bred herds are rarely as perfectly and as evenly beautiful as this race. How paltry do the bearers of our oldest names, the oldest of which only date from yesterday, compared with those of India, appear by the side of any Rajput! – We are here concerned with the greatest triumph of human breeding that I know of; it is simply unheard of that the results of centuries, if not of thousands of years, even of the wisest in-breeding, satisfy the highest demands so that there is no evidence of degeneration. Whence this success? I do not wish to go into the physiological and biological side of the problem, for whose solution the necessary data are still missing. Perhaps it is because they exhaust themselves less than we do, because their nervous nature is more robust, their variability smaller (which is to the advantage of the preservation and consolidation of the type) – it is certain that the races of the East are longer lived in general than ours, and that the continuance of a type seems less endangered than in our case. But we are only looking at one side of the problem in pointing to the physical condition: why do the laws of heredity function, not nearly so unfailingly, as they do in the case of animals? Because in the former psychic circumstances play their part, because these are in many cases the deciding factors. Undoubtedly the marvellous consistency with which the type is handed on among the Rajputs is traceable in large measure to psychic factors.

What has happened, and is happening, in Europe, leaves me

little doubt as to the correctness of this view. Up to the beginning of the recent anti-static epoch, our generations too were longer lived and their types were inherited with greater certainty than has happened since; and even to-day the country gentleman and the peasant – that is to say, those who confess the static view of the world – represent the most permanent types of all. The man of the Middle Ages believed in himself as the bearer of a specific form. Every offspring of a knight assumed, as a matter of course, that, by virtue of his blood, he inherited knightly virtues – and thus they generally took possession of him. This assured belief then created from itself the further circumstances which helped to secure the type: the avoidance of intercourse with members of other castes, the rapid and complete elimination of those who did not fit the type, the consideration, in choosing a bride, of the best possibilities for the anticipated heirs, the unceasing self-discipline in the light of the ideals of his station in life, and so on. Ever since the old forms have lost prestige, since none of them is considered necessary any longer, and since the ideal of rising in the social order has replaced the original idea of a complete filling of the station in which and to which one was called, the psychic conditions are opposed to the preservation of types. No wonder that ever since they lose increasingly in vitality. The psychic disposition of a man is never originally capable of only one, but of manifold expression. If the form is not taken seriously by the man who bears it, it results inevitably in lack of character, which, slowly but surely, transfers its effect from his soul to his physique. Only that which represents an ideal to a man remains permanently vitalised. The houses of rulers degenerate more slowly than any others because they are supported by the most powerful ideals; the landed gentry degenerate more slowly than the patrician, because the basis of its ideals is profounder. Everywhere among men psychic circumstances are decisive; where they counteract the consolidation of a type, no amount of pure breeding is of any avail.

The general view of life in the East corresponds with that of our Middle Ages. The East believes in its traditions. The fact that this faith is more powerful here than it has ever been with us is due to its incomparably greater intensity. This

brings me at last to speak of a problem which has occupied me since the first days of my stay on Indian soil: the power of faith of the Indian exceeds every, even the most extravagant conception which the Westerner can formulate. His faith is incapable of being shaken. You may prove to him whatever and as much as you like, he adheres to his concepts like an octopus adheres to an object he has seized. Thus he believes in his caste with the same fervour with which Luther believed in God. This creates a condition of consciousness in which forces become effective which would otherwise have remained out of play: forces which 'move mountains.' Thus it is that tradition performs in India what really goes beyond its power. Even among us, the continuation of family types is conditioned psychically to a considerable degree: the continued desire to rival an image leads ultimately to its realisation. Amongst Indian nobles, with their gigantic power of faith, the great simplicity of their nature and their much simpler psyche, the same happens in the highest degree.

And thus it is possible to do justice to the much-despised caste system. Its basis is largely imaginary. Its assumption of the all-pervading differences in blood does not bear criticism; the laws of heredity do not act as simply as the Hindus assume. The complex abstract system which to-day controls the adjustment of society is not only imperfect, but haphazard and often contrary to nature. No wonder, then, that all who know India only superficially condemn it as a monstrosity. As a matter of fact, it justifies itself fully as well as any other, which the more reasonable West has invented, because in India one factor is the main consideration which hardly arises in the West: an almost unlimited power of faith. The Indian simply believes in the mental gifts of the Brahmins, the knightly attitude of the Kshattrya, the economic efficiency of the Vaicya, and the predestination to service of the Cudra; he believes with almost the same intensity in the specific virtues of each sub-caste. What is the result? Psychic conditions are established, thanks to which the smallest seed which corresponds to the assumptions of faith can develop freely, whilst all others die quickly, so that the caste of the Brahmins, for instance, really produces as many thinkers and priests as it could produce in the best

possible circumstances, whereas its inefficient members remain unnoticed. Men never notice what is opposed to their firm belief. In the end it is their faith which creates the reality which is appropriate to them. And the presupposed peculiar proficiencies of each caste are inherited by its members with greater certainty than seems compatible with the laws of nature, because nobody knows them. That is to say, that education completes what heredity has begun. It is therefore doubtlessly more desirable, I have said already, to over- rather than to undervalue the power of tradition: its might is capable of enormous developments by means of creative faith.

From here I think back to the fundamental teachings of Indian philosophy. If any people have been bidden to affirm mental bonds, this is true of the Indian people. Here, more than anywhere else, psychic conditions have determined the nature of material reality; this reality is differentiated more richly than anywhere else; nowhere in the world does the type, as type, seem anything like as substantial. And yet, Indian thinkers have never erred in the way in which Western ones have always done from much more slender causes, namely, to take manifestations seriously in a metaphysical sense. With them, the consideration which among us is still a paradox, was a matter of course: that whatever can be created by an arbitrary act, is for that very reason not necessary. I behold the gay spectacle before me through the eyes of a Rishi: is not the world only as it is because it might just as well have been different? How strong the local colour of Jaipur seems to be! And yet: if I concentrate my mind upon it, it pales, becomes evanescent, and all contours melt away.

24

LAHORE

I AM now in the Northern Punjab. A completely new world, judged from the point of view of the man who only knows India. To me, however, this world is all too familiar. In

Lahore at Christmas everything looks very much the same as it does in the moderate clime of Europe at the same time. At any rate, I, a transient visitor, cannot recognise any essential difference, because the framework within which my life takes place is completely European. This perturbs my mind not a little: why have I journeyed hither? The 'brother ass,' however, the flesh, the creature of habit, is immensely pleased; I often have to laugh at how much he enjoys the cuisine, the comfort, the whole atmosphere. Nor does his joy seem to be reduced by the fact that, in the very first hour of his arrival, he caught a bad cold: this too belongs to the northern winter. The affectionate peasant wife even likes being beaten by her husband on his return home.

I must away. I dare not feel too comfortable. What a lot of trouble this condition gives one! Everywhere, where one has stayed a while, it steals in silently, and, once it has made itself at home, it does not rest until it has resolved all tension. There is nothing worse that can be said of a mode of life than that it favours such a condition. Being comfortable means nothing else than that one's whole existence is subjected to the spirit of inertia. I really do not belong to those who preach the mortification of the flesh; on the other hand, however, I refuse to countenance all enervating experiences. The joys and delights of life in themselves are not enervating at all: only the habit of enjoyment enervates; the habit is the real enemy. In this respect the ascetics have probably never thought clearly. In their simpleness they failed to see that the habit of chastisement is just as evil as the habit of gluttony. If it were otherwise, there would be fewer miserable wretches among those who renounce on principle. Generally, they are even more dull than the Bohemians, which is saying a good deal. – The 'old Adam,' who ought to be resisted daily and hourly, is the creature of habit. There are no such things as good habits. It is not true that any routine of life produces freedom of spirit. A saint by routine is no saint at all; only faithfulness which could have been avoided has ideal value. The minute an action becomes a habit, the spirit vanishes from which it emanated. Mechanical action takes the place of spontaneous creation.

And the only man who finds his way back to the creator within himself from the machine, is the man who smashes it. – The fact that man needs a certain regularity in life is due to the fact that he cannot be absolutely free; in order to be free in any one particular direction, he must tie himself down all the more firmly in another. The advantage of all rules is exclusively based on the fact that they make freedom possible, not that they enchain us – and this advantage is lost the moment we take a liking to the chains.

I must get away from Lahore; it must not get comfortable. But I am compelled to admire the extent to which the white residents have impressed their character upon this Indian town; here the native quarters appear hardly less exotic than the ghettos in New York or Amsterdam. Lack of understanding is an enormous power. If Englishmen cut themselves off a little less narrow-mindedly from everything which is not English – they could never rule India as they do. And it is probably the same everywhere. The most successful connoisseurs of women are always those who have least consideration for their emotional life; the best educators are always those who preserve the greatest distance from their pupils. The Jewish-Christian world looks up to its personal God in the same way. Humanity would not have credited Him with the quality of universal goodness and understanding quite so unhesitatingly, nor would they rely so firmly upon the belief that He does everything for the best, if He had not proved, by fundamental misunderstanding, by indifference to all hopes and all desires, that He undoubtedly stands above it all.

25

PESHAWAR

I HAVE really strayed beyond India. Leafless trees, the cold, clear air of winter; broad, dusty high roads on which men wander about, whose physical type is familiar to me. Curious: between Afghanistan and Russia there lies a whole world.

Every district of Central Asia is inhabited by different tribes, possessing differing histories and cultures, with different customs and manners; and yet to-day *one* psychic atmosphere is spread from the Khyber Pass to the Ural Mountains. In this atmosphere all significance disappears. In Peshawar murders take place daily, and gaily coloured Indian shawls are for sale – what does it matter? Everything might just as well not happen at all, or happen differently. The meaning of life here is not changed by one event more or less, by one event of this or of another kind. The camels march one behind the other in long, endless rows. Century follows century in one long, unending sequence. Millions of similar people die rhythmically one after another, sometimes violently, sometimes naturally, all with the stereotyped expression of a shrug of the shoulders.

I am seized by that infinite melancholy for which only the Russians possess the right word: *Unynie.* I want nothing, lack nothing, I have no demonstrable reason for it, I am just melancholy. My soul is hollowed out, as it were. This Asia knows no vibrations of a mental kind. The rays which I radiate myself disappear in endless space, but I lack the inner power to arrest them. The result is a feeling of emptiness which makes me profoundly miserable. And then, alien, brutal forces enter into me – the thoughts and desires which may dwell in the wild hearts of Afghan cattle thieves. I can hardly resist them, so suddenly do they assail me. And then I recognise in horror that they are not at all as alien to my inner self as I had thought: in me too there is somewhere, deep down, a crude Central Asiatic, and I curse the air which has let him be wakened from his slumber.

Yet this world contains possibilities for unique greatness. When the storm is let loose over the desert, whole mountains of sand are piled up which roll on like waves. Such storm forces have several times been embodied in men. They were beings without souls or sense, without inward aim or feeling for values; they hardly possessed any human consciousness. But on the other hand, the elemental force of the desert storm was in them. Like grains of sand they drove nations before

them, burying cultures under mountains of sand. But if these did not remain, then everything was once more as if nothing had happened, as if their invasion had been an evil dream. – These conquerors represent intrinsically non-spiritual powers. But greatness, yes, superhuman greatness, cannot be denied to Attila and Jengis Khan.

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AND to think that here, and not even at such an immeasurable distance of time, lay the very centre of Buddhistic culture! That the Valley of Kabul was the holy land of Mahayana doctrine, longed for by every searcher from the land of the five streams to the Japanese sea, the scene of the blending of the Hellenic and Indian spirits in art, culture and religion, to which all the later developments of the Far East can originally be traced! – Central Asia was, for thousands of years, the source of all spiritual influences on earth. But as the waters dried up and the gardens withered to the dust of the desert, the spirit vanished irretrievably from this parched atmosphere, and the extremest forms of barbarism became the heir to the extreme of culture. – My thoughts wander back to my geological days and the way in which I then regarded the world; in the Alps, I beheld the ocean, liquid lava in basalt, and life itself in the rigidity of stone. The archæologist beholds Central Asia with a similar vision. But it seems to me: both overlook the really significant factor. This is the change in itself. Anyone who has ever been a farmer knows what 'history' means: one year of culture more or less represents cosmically an absolute entity; it cannot be taken away nor retrieved; such time is real before eternity. For such time creates change. Where growth is guided by conscious volition, development takes place; everything progresses, marches onward, further and further, and no end is in sight. If, for any reason, volition fails, all events change their being. Development diverges, branches off, or even ceases, and the casual takes the place of the rational. Thus the desert follows upon the garden, the wilderness upon culture, lack of all spirit upon spirit, eternal death upon brief life. What folly to believe in a Providence which guides life

on earth from outside! Life could, of course, progress in accordance with a high purpose, no principle is opposed to such a course; we men will perhaps one day bring about such a state of affairs. But what happens on earth seems a matter of complete indifference to God. Spirit yesterday, none to-day, to-morrow perhaps spirit again; sometimes garden, sometimes desert, sometimes the primeval forest, sometimes the sea: I dare say He delights in aimless change, as the tired Maharajah delights in the Nautsh, so that eternity should not become too tedious for Him.

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NONE the less, it is stimulating to live for a while among such wild fellows as the Afridis. They are magnificent – like beasts of prey in their primitiveness, their instinctive irresponsibility. The Government does not like to see people going unprotected and without a guide through the bazaars: suddenly one of these gentlemen might dig a dagger between one's ribs, the Government would have to interfere, which, in its wisdom, it prefers not to do, because murdering means nothing worse to them than the polite expression of a differing opinion does among us. Could I bear the Afridi a grudge who sought my life? Hardly. At any rate, no more than a tiger. And as I wend my way through the narrow streets, I look out whether I cannot spy the beginnings of a quarrel. These men must look magnificent when fighting. As long as peace reigns, the best in them is asleep, in the same way in which the best sleeps in the Spanish fighting bull while he chews the cud.

All at once I must laugh: the Afridis are the very embodiment of that ideal of supermen to which a fair proportion of our young poets cling! Great men who are cruel because they must be so, who fulfil their destiny although it ruins them – whose passion knows no limit – who are never led astray by reasonable considerations: yes, indeed, the description befits them. It is droll to think to what manifestations the need for hero-worship leads over-civilised townsmen. Undoubtedly originality is necessary: but is it not possible to conceive a

higher kind than that of the animals? It is hardly conceivable that the Athenians who surrounded Plato looked up to Achilles and Diogenes as ideals; it needed the modern decadents to lower the ideal of humanity so much to the animal level; even Nietzsche, the gentle pastor's son, never intended anything of this sort, no matter what he may have said. But to-day we have really reached the stage at which originality and primitiveness in the animal sense appear identified. I am quite prepared, and why not, to honour the candour of the cow; only, I stipulate that she shall not write; this form of expression is only suited to cultured human beings. I refuse in the same way to honour savages as heroes. – The Afridis are really the supermen worshipped by our modern literary youth. It amuses me to examine them from this point of view. Formerly it used to be said: he who controls himself is strong. To-day: he who must let himself go. Of course: to anyone who has no passion at all, its mere existence implies an ideal. But it is not true that all modern men are emasculated; only those who write are for the most part in this state, the *canaille écrivante, cabalante et convulsionnaire* of Voltaire, the most unreal people of all, and to-day, it is more fatal than ever that they have so much power. The ideal of the emaciated, the impotent, the weakling, drives healthy individuals into barbarism. Literary cows are magnified, savage churls are honoured as heroes: thus more and more cows begin to write, and more and more men capable of culture become savage. How good it would be for the young men of to-day to imbibe a little Indian wisdom! To learn that it is a sign of weakness and not of strength if a man has to be cruel, if he succumbs to his fate, if he is not master of his passion, if he is impervious to the considerations of reason, and that not only the superman of the newest, but also the tragic hero of the classical pattern, embodies a barbaric condition! No doubt the modern condition of humanity is not worth much; but the ideal which we should strive after lies in the direction of transfusing life with spirit, not with animality. Not only the cow, but God also, is natural, and we should simulate the latter, not the former. All the more so as we are already much nearer to Him. As I regard these Afridis,

I realise very clearly how far their nature is removed from ours. Perhaps it is due to this change of perspective, as opposed to the conditions of antiquity, that the animal seems to us above everything worthy of reverence, just as God seemed to the ancients.

26

DELHI

I SEE myself transplanted without any transition from barbarism into a town which, a few centuries ago, was still considered as an unrivalled centre of culture, and yet I am not aware of any strong spiritual vibrations: in the midst of the splendours of Delhi I feel cold. It lacks altogether individual significance, deeper expressive values, and this is particularly true of the mosques. Mohammed was quite right, like his spiritual cousin, Calvin, to ban all sensual charm from places of worship: no work of art is appropriate to this god. His living spirit is revealed in wild nature, on the field of battle, in the power and justice of the Caliphs; the 'artistically beautiful' is not a possible means of expression for Him. This fact appears here, where Indian artists have put all their delicacy and all their versatility at the disposal of the Mussulman, with painful clarity. This art means nothing here at all, no matter how attractive it may be; it lacks the background which it possesses at the courts of Indian princes. In India the Mohammedans appear important only as rulers, and for this reason only those monuments possess an atmosphere which express their imperial sway: fortresses, walls, mausoleums; and in other artistic creations their magnificence in itself, their greatness, the mere possibility of their having been created. The artistically beautiful, as such, cannot be a direct expression of Empire; by themselves the show buildings of the Grand Moguls tell us nothing more than that they had the power to erect them. Imperialistic art is really rich in content only where it appears as perfected appropriateness. Hence the enormous expressive values of the Roman aqueducts,

every one of whose arches possesses more soul than the most beautiful monuments erected according to Greek patterns; hence in our days the fact that only metal structures, stations, bridges and tunnels, possess living artistic value. I therefore find in Delhi, as in Rome, my greatest pleasure in wandering at random through the landscape without looking too much at detail. The landscape is closely related to that of the Campagna, in spite of all their concrete differences. There and here blows a spirit expressive of space, completeness, greatness, whose elements are yet closely bound together – the spirit of Empire.

If I relate – what I have really no business to do – the beauty of the mosques and palaces of Delhi, not to Islamic rule as such but to the remarkable individual men who have embodied it, then no doubt it acquires a profound meaning. And if I trace worldly power and beauty together back to the soul of an individual, then he appears on a scale which will not easily find a parallel in history. It goes hard to judge rightly here: but to-day it seems to me as if the great ones among the Grand Moguls were, as types, the greatest rulers which mankind has produced. They were men of vehement temperament, as the offspring of a Jengis Khan and a Timur had to be, refined diplomats, experienced connoisseurs of men, and simultaneously sages, æsthetes and dreamers. Such a constellation has never occurred in the West, at any rate to no good purpose. The greatly praised Marcus Aurelius, for instance, has something distinctly ridiculous, owing to the display of his philosopher's mantle in the wrong place. (The equestrian statue on the Capitol, which makes me laugh every time I look at it, is undoubtedly like its original.) Frederick II, however, the Hohenstaufer, the only European ruler who offers a comparison, was, probably, an extremely interesting individual, but nothing like as important as a ruler. All excessively richly endowed natures which came to the throne in the West expressed versatility in officiousness; one talent overflowed into another; so that the poet dreamed away his wars, or strove to realise his poetic creations, the wise man laid lame the man of action, the diplomat imposed himself on the philosopher, and

finally the man – the most important element of a ruler – lost the unity of his effectiveness. In the case of an Akbar this unity lay beyond everything which he did, which he recognised and which happened to him; his wealth always remained concentrated. As Emperor he stood above the poet, the dreamer, the god-seeker and the sceptical sage. For this reason every arabesque which he inspired bears the imperial stamp. An equally superior human synthesis has never been embodied by any prince of the West. Only a few of the Popes have succeeded in doing this. In fact, the palaces of papal Rome exhale a spirit which is reminiscent of Delhi. In the case of the Popes, their external position has had a similar effect as the natural traits of the offsprings of Timur. The Pope, as God's lieutenant, as unquestioned ruler of Christianity, as infallible judge of all controversy, inevitably attains, if he is fitted for his popedom at all, something of the superiority and inner tension which characterised Akbar. Even his greatness was conditioned not by nature alone: most of the means, which among Western rulers are at the disposal only of the Pope, such as the unchallengeability of his power and the obedience of subordinates as a matter of course, fell to the lot of every autocrat in Asia. Nevertheless, there has only been one great Mogul dynasty, and among them only a few great, and one supremely great, ruler, so that I am probably justified in honouring Akbar as the greatest Emperor of whom I know. It is marvellous how all conceivable expressions of the Mogul power have found a single centre in the soul of this one man. Austere greatness, universality, superior sense of justice; and at the same time the fragrant colours of an almost feminine drawing-room culture, the all-pervading understanding of the philosopher, the vibrating sensuousness of the poet. Yes, this man seems superhumanly great when one has recognised that above all he was a lover: a delicate, fragile soul, with a superabundant capacity for sympathy. It reminds one of the ideal picture of the Christian God: the almighty and just father, who rules the destiny of the world with an iron hand, and who is simultaneously pure love and pure compassion; who bears the burden of the sin of the sinner more heavily than the most

penitent mortal could, and whose life appears as an unending tragedy, as He can never give enough.

Greatness, constituted thus, requires necessarily a supernational inner standpoint, which is also expressed in the fact that the Indian emperors, like the Cæsars and Pontifices of Rome, were of any origin. The grandiose tolerance of Akbar seems, once we have admitted his nature, just as much a matter of course as the relative largesse of the aristocrat as opposed to the pettiness of the plebeian. Thus, the tolerance which Moslems, unless they happen to belong to a fanatical sect, display towards those of a different faith, is based on nothing but their greater distinction. The more I see of Islam, the more am I impressed by the superiority this faith gives to its confessors. Apparently nothing is more advantageous to men than to regard themselves as chosen. Everybody who believes in himself, no matter who he be, stands on a higher level than the wobbler. The lack of distinction of the typical Christian who takes his faith literally, is due to his plebeian timorousness. It is not difficult to make the counter-test: the original Calvinists regarded themselves as chosen in the same way as the Moslems, and there is no doubt that among them the most superior types which Christianity has produced are to be found. They were never quite so distinguished as the Moslems; for this reason they were also intolerant. What parson was ever so generous as Mahomet, whom tradition credits with having said: 'The differences of opinion in my congregation are a sign of divine compassion'? They stood, however, high above the Lutherans, who lived in constant fear of the uncertain, and they stood hardly less high above the Catholics, whose church robbed them of their feeling of responsibility. – Yes, in superior tolerance, not only the Brahmanic and Buddhistic, but also the Islamic East, can stand above the West. How is it, now, that the latter has never lost its character, which the European does regularly, when he discards his national prejudices? I do not know as yet. The national character always seems somewhat blurred wherever the crescent moon illuminates the landscape, which is particularly noticeable here in India, where the types are otherwise outlined so clearly. But

its place is taken by a more universal and no less definite character: that of the Mussulman. Every single Mohammedan whom I asked what he is, replied: 'I am a Mussulman.' Why has this religion alone understood how to substitute national feeling by something wider? And by a something wider which is no less strong and significant? How is it that Islam, without a corresponding dogma, achieves the ideal of universal brotherhood, whereas Christianity fails in spite of its ideals? It must be due to intimate relations between the underlying tendencies of this peculiar faith and the fundamental traits in the nature of its followers, concerning which I am still quite in the dark.

The formative power of Islam is truly immense. Even the faces of the faithful, who belong unmistakably to the blood of the Hindus, betray the self-conscious, calmly superior expression which characterises the Moslem everywhere. These Indians are no hallucinated dreamers, no strangers in this world. Their effect is correspondingly more real. Their muscles seem taut, their eyes keen, their attitude is, as it were, ready to jump; their physique has much more expressive value. How right are Englishmen in regarding and treating the Islamic element in India as the decisive one!

I am continuously exercised by the problem, whence Islam derives its formative power which seems so much greater than that of all other religions. Reflection upon the extreme democratic nature of Mohammedan communities has given me at last to-day, unless I am mistaken, the right clue to the problem. The democracy of Islam explains its power of attraction, especially in India, where conversion to it implies the only possibility of escaping from caste rigidity; and here it is a question of real equality – far more so than in the United States of America, for the Moslems are not merely supposed to be brothers, but they really treat each other as such, irrespective of race, means and position. But this democracy is nothing ultimate; it is the effect of a profounder cause, and this seems to offer me the key to all the riddles of the advantages of the Mohammedan faith. Islam is the religion of absolute submission. What Schleiermacher has described as

the nature of all religiosity does in fact define that of the Mussulman. He feels himself to be at all times in the absolute power of his divine master, and, moreover, in his personal power, not in that of his ministers and servants; he always stands face to face with him. This conditions the democratic quality of Islam. In all absolute monarchies the spirit of equality reigns supreme up to the steps of the throne; of all European countries, the Russia of yesterday was the most democratic, because, compared with the absolute power of the Czar, all differences between his subjects seemed insignificant. But there are autocracies of various kinds; they appear strong or weak, according to the kind of ruler they possess. Thus the unique formative power of Islam depends on the unique nature of their God. Allah deserves the name of the Master of Armies far more than Jehovah, far more than the Christian God. He is an autocrat in the sense of a general, not that of a tyrant. And thus I appear to have it: the Mohammedan faith signifies, as the only one in the world, essentially military discipline. There is no question of right, no begging, no arguing, no crawling to and before God; here mere intention in prayer (Schirk) is a cardinal sin; man has to obey orders like a soldier. Now no one will deny that the form of consciousness of a well-drilled soldier ensures the greatest efficiency of all everywhere where execution and not thinking out of a problem is concerned. The Islamic world represents a single army with a unified, unbroken spirit. Such a spirit melts down all differences in the long run; it makes every one into a comrade. In Islam it has melted down all racial differences. The ritualism of this faith has a different significance from that of Hinduism and Catholicism. It is a question of making discipline objective. When the faithful perform their prayers at fixed hours in the mosque, kneeling there line upon line, when they all go through the same gestures simultaneously, this is not done, as in the case of Hinduism, as a means to self-realisation, but it is done in the spirit in which a Prussian soldier files past his Emperor. This fundamentally military attitude explains all the intrinsic advantages of a Mussulman. It explains simultaneously his fundamental failings: his lack of pro-

gressiveness, his inadaptability, his lack of inventive power. The soldier only has to obey his orders; the rest is Allah's business.

From this angle it may perhaps be possible to do justice to the demand for obedience in religion, on which modern thought places a purely negative value. It is regarded as an old adage among soldiers that only he who can obey knows how to command. Why? Because commanding and obeying presuppose an identical inner state of collectedness. The man who learns how to obey learns really simultaneously how to command. And thus, nothing could be more unwise than to condemn the demand for obedience, which is done very often, as a training of weakness: on the contrary, none gives greater strength. Only such training must not be extended indefinitely; it must not last beyond the moment in which a man has learned to command himself. If it were otherwise, then the lower military rank would embody the ideal type of humanity, and the Jesuit would be above the sage.

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ISLAM is more than anything else the religion of the simple soldier. It makes him great as no other religion does, since the day that Cromwellian Puritanism died out. I am thinking of the North African Arab: his life is as clear as the air of the desert. His ideal consists in being healthy and pure, in never having doubted, never having fought inwardly, in waiting calmly and fearlessly for the call of eternity; and this simple, clear ideal he does realise. This means something, for it is no mean ideal, simple though it may be: only the inwardly superior individual can attain to it. The fatalism of the Moslem, like that of the original Calvinist, and in contradistinction to that of the Russian, is the expression not of weakness but of strength. He neither trembles before the terrible God in whom he believes, nor does he hope for His particular benevolence, nor does he suffer himself to be driven at will by fate: he stands there, proud and inwardly free, opposite to the Superior Power, facing eternity with the same equanimity as he faces death. The Mohammedan does not squint at heaven

like the Christian, although he is much more sure of it. He is too proud to anticipate fate. Events may take what course they will: mekhtub (it is written).

The belief in predestination is always grandiose in effect where its disciples possess proud souls. This was not so in the case of the Greeks; nor did it make them any greater. Œdipus Rex does not grow in our estimation through his tragedy, this merely increases our sympathy for him. The Mohammedans are proud. Islam makes every one proud who professes it, just as the king's uniform makes every one proud. Thus, the highest pathos befits the life of the Mohammedan. The remarks of a strictly religious Egyptian princess, who had endured a great deal of sorrow in her life and now faced her end calmly, were once repeated to me. She said: 'We women have not been promised eternal bliss, as men have. Is that, however, a cause for anxiety? Or for non-compliance with our earthly duty? We women do good for love's sake, and we do not ask for any reward.' Her thoughts were truly Islamic. It was the expression of specifically Islamic greatness. A greatness such as does not occur in the same way anywhere else. The Buddhist, too, does not worry about life or death, and goes calmly on his way; but he does not care for life; he wants Nirvana; his renunciation lacks pathos correspondingly. The Mohammedan is purely earthly in his attitude; he lacks all intellectual transcendentalism. His proud self-content is therefore all the more noble.

Within Christianity there has been only one formation which has produced similarly superior men: that of Calvinistic Protestantism. Calvinism and Islam are, in fact, as has been remarked several times already, closely related. Both religions present the dogma of predestination; Puritans as well as Mohammedans regard themselves as the chosen of the Lord, and are correspondingly self-assured; the divinities of both possess the same character. And Mahomet as well as Calvin was opposed to theological speculation and in favour of conquering the earth. Similar causes, similar effects. But if Puritanism, thanks to its progressive tendencies, has proved itself superior in the formation of this world to Islam, it must

be stated in favour of the latter that, as far as inner distinction is concerned, the Puritan has never rivalled the Moslem. This is due to the fact that the Puritan was never enabled to free himself from the slavish consciousness of sin, that original sin of all Christianity which always makes him tremble before the Lord. The Moslem trusts Him above everything else, as the soldier trusts his general.

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As I sit before the funeral monuments of the emperors and generals, whose mighty cupolas stretch out again and again above the remains of old Delhi into the cloudless sky, and think of the relation in which the Moslem stands to death and eternity, it seems to me often as if the sound of Luther's hymn, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,' came from within them. Its atmosphere corresponds very well to the spirit of Mohammedanism, better than it does to the Lutherism of to-day. The colour of proud assurance, of delight in battle which belongs to this song as perhaps to no second creation of the Christian spirit, is the intrinsic colour of the faith which goes back to the prophet of Arabia.

To-day I feel impressed, as I have not done for a long time, by the austere greatness of monotheism. It is grand, this conception of man who stands naked and alone and without intermediaries, opposite to his God, a God who will decide his fate, unrestrained by laws and regulations, entirely according to His whim. It lends unique pathos to the life of the individual. How much more power does confidence in such a God presuppose than the faith of the theosophist! And conversely: what strength it must give! – The fact that it does so is proved in history with a clearness which does not often occur; nowhere have there been stronger characters, nor are there any to-day, than among Mohammedans and Protestants. Radical monotheism points men absolutely to themselves (if it is said that it delivers them, on the contrary, entirely to God, this is only another way of putting the same relationship); it makes man absolutely responsible. Thus it is inevitable that his soul becomes as firm as his nature permits. It becomes

correspondingly unformative, clumsy, rigid, and arid; monotheism cannot compete with polytheism in psychic variety. But the soul does grow strong. The monotheist possesses, above all, character. He therefore reveres character, whose immutability he postulates, as the highest value.

An Arabian proverb declares: 'If thou hearest that a mountain has been moved, believe it; but if thou hearest that a man has changed his character, do not believe it.' What sage of India would ever have pronounced such a saying? We are not concerned here with the matter-of-course assumption that the elements of a nature are simply given phenomena, but with the assertion of the immutability of the kind of their relationship. This assertion could only be made by a monotheist, by a man who believes in a personal God whom he faces as an external being, whose God above all represents character. Character signifies something ultimate only to such a man. The Indian view is the more profound, but it cannot be denied that the Islamic and Protestant view, judged from the angle of efficacy in this world, stands the pragmatic test more satisfactorily. In the case of the monotheist, self-consciousness is concentrated in the person; it signifies something ultimate, insurmountable, for which he will have to answer at the Last Judgment. Therefore, whatever he possesses of profundity grows into his personal peculiarities. How weak the most eminent Hindu appears by the side of any Mussulman! Or else, even a very great Western thinker (in so far as his self-consciousness is rooted in the super-personal) by the side of a narrow-minded Prussian officer! – The latter is not more valuable for this reason in the metaphysical sense; 'character' is, and remains, a limitation; all higher humanity begins above it. But since higher humanity is not in question for the masses, it would probably be well if these at any rate had character; if all simple, uneducated people believed in God in the way in which Moslems do.

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IF I had been transplanted directly from Southern India to Delhi, I would probably have felt at once what is now revealed

to me on reflection: how little alien this world is to me; the European hardly requires to change his attitude in order to understand it. I imagine that the Italians who came to the court at Delhi acclimatised themselves there without any difficulty, and that they worked there as a matter of course in its own sense, for the culture which dominated here did not differ in spirit from that of Latin courts of the same period. It differed from the latter perhaps only by a shade: its Fata Morgana-like quality. The Grand Moguls did not really live in the fairy world which their artists created round about them, but they looked at it as they looked upon a stage festival. Their real life was stern and crude, much more stern than those of the Popes and princes of Italy. But just as the milk-white marble bric-â-brac seem planted upon the massive fortress of Delhi without any connecting link, so did a veil of the most delicate beauty hang above severe reality, a veil unreal itself but all the more magical. Timur, the most terrible conqueror of his day, was also a refined æsthete; it was a necessity to him to be surrounded by exquisite charm; and this necessity grew in strength in the case of his offspring. It is probably impossible for men to produce so fairy-like an art as an expression of their being; they would have to be elves whose souls corresponded to the Pearl Mosque. And probably the artists of Hindustan performed the incredible here, because they had to express dreams. These people were never altogether real; they only possessed unusual gifts of imagination. And imagination creates most freely in the fairy world.

No, this world is not foreign to me. This, of course, is not only due to its meaning: even its single formations are familiar to me, though I never saw most of them before. The more I see and experience, the more clearly do I perceive how little freedom man possesses in his mental creation. If he produces new forms out of himself, this never means that he creates unconditionally; he only gives the opportunity of complete evolution, in obedience to its own pre-ordained law, to the form from which he started – for only God can create out of nothing. Creative minds are only media, like parents are from the point of view of the seed, whose development, once begun,

follows its own laws exclusively. In my early days I used to smile at the art historians who love to trace the evolution of a style to exterior circumstances; an article by Diderot, for instance, is said to have exercised a decisive change upon French painting. I said to myself: as if creative artists would be influenced to such an extent by critics! As if an external factor could ever be the cause of an inner change! As far as the facts were concerned, I was right. Only I have realised since that such theoretic conclusions, although false in themselves, are nevertheless justified, because they present a scheme which describes reality correctly. The growth and change of forms are processes of such necessity that everything contributes to their development, and for this reason its causal co-ordinates may be chosen at random. Therefore, even if Diderot did not really influence the artists, he nevertheless expressed, as a critic, the very same which was the unconscious creative tendency of the painters; and therefore, for the sake of simplicity, one may say that Diderot was the originator. Every direction contains its immanent boundaries, every form hides within itself the whole of its possible progeny, and for this reason it is always possible in principle to reconstruct events as well as to predict them. Without Richard Strauss there would never have been Straussian music, but its idea has been 'derived' from that of Richard Wagner (as Viktor Goldschmidt has already proved so well by mathematical means), so that Strauss' originality, like that of any other creator, has only consisted in realising actually and empirically what was an ideal necessity. For this reason all philosophies seem matters of course to the man who possesses their fundamental idea, and with sufficient far-sightedness it ought even to be possible to construct, by *a priori* means, the philosophic convictions of every epoch whose other elements are known. The necessary connection of all forms are revealed most plainly in the case of the plastic arts, because here the formative laws manifest themselves most openly. Hence, on the one hand, the possibility of any critical art history, on the other hand, the unique significance of monuments of plastic art in the field of historical determination. Since, however, all forms of expression are

necessary by nature, and reveal their origin unmistakably, it is possible to understand a strange appearance directly from within, if only it is connected with something familiar. This is what happened to me in reference to Mogul art. It originally came from the West, or rather, from that union between East and West, which characterises the Eastern Roman Empire, and the latter's formations are familiar to me. The later development has taken place according to its proper laws and can be surveyed at a glance. And since, moreover, a particular meaning does not only produce necessarily corresponding forms, but as the latter, conversely, affect the former, the mere taking over of Byzantine means of expression has conditioned an inner approach between West and East, thanks to which the spirit of Delhi seems more closely related to that of Constantinople than to the spirit of Udaipur. A German who speaks and thinks French continually ultimately becomes mentally a Frenchman; a man who has studied Kant for a sufficient period eventually becomes, to a certain degree, his descendant, no matter how much his original disposition may have been opposed to that of Kant.

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THIS world is familiar to me in a far wider sense than I thought originally: Islamic culture is not strange to me as such; it is the expression of the same spirit which conditions my own. The man who only knows Europe may well see something foreign, 'oriental,' in it; the Tarascon sees in Beaucaire's inhabitants a special species with whom he has nothing in common. When contrasted against the background of India, the world of Islam seems hardly more differentiated from the Christian world than the spirit of the Greek Orthodox Church differs from the Catholic.

Jews, Christians and Mussulmen are brothers. Just as all these three religions historically go back to Moses, so it is one spirit which ultimately animates them from within. To-day I see it clearly: it is a mistake to speak of Aryan as opposed to Semitic culture, so far as any manifestations up to the present are in question: no matter how much the Semite lacks the

Teutonic trait of transcendentalism, no matter how much the latter characteristic makes the Teuton appear related to the Indian, his inherited culture is of Mediterranean origin, and the same can be said of Latin, Semitic and Turkish peoples. The 'spirit' of antiquity and of the Near East, of Mosaism, of Christianity, and of the Celto-Germanic people from the north, in so far as they had become latinised, had been melted into a collective being long before the days of Mahomet. Thus Islam only signifies a special expression of that which is true of all Occidentalism.

The comparison with Indian tradition and life makes me realise very clearly what Occidentalism really consists of. It is characterised by two things: its worldliness and the energy by which it fashions appearance. This differentiates it radically from that Orient, which finds its extremest expression in India. The consciousness of the Hindu is turned towards Being; he therefore turns his back on appearance. If he despises individuality, fails in the processes of this life, attaches little importance to earthly success, scientific recognition, technical mastery, if he strives towards Nirvana, seems extraordinarily spiritualised, then all these things are so many expressions of his typical attitude to life. All Westerners – Mahommedans always included – look in the opposite direction; their typical ideals find their extremest and, simultaneously, their most pregnant expression in the Christian concept of the infinite value of the human soul and the commandment to realise the kingdom of God upon earth. The Mohammedans, as well as the Christians, perceive their real field of activity in this life; the outlook of both is individualistic in so far as they do not know of a super-individual reality (which may, or may not, express itself further in real individualism as we understand it to-day). Both are greater idealists, as opposed to the Hindus, for only he who affirms the world of appearances is capable of professing ideals within its realm. On the other hand, both are more materialistically minded than Hinduism, since they aim at the expression of 'significance,' not significance itself, which does not necessarily, but may very easily, occasion materialism in its real

sense. The Mahommedans harbour, of all Westerners, the most materialistic concepts; in the Islamic aspiration towards heaven, for instance, there is no transcendentalism at all. But it cannot be said that they are materialists as men; they are less so than most of the Christians of to-day. Nor are they spiritual, but they are idealists in the highest degree; the ideal of faith stands high above all success for them. Only their ideal is something static, something at rest; hence their lack of progressiveness which creates the semblance that they are more closely related to the Indians than they are to us. Such a semblance is deceptive, however, for their restfulness is not that of the passive, but that of the collected. It is our Western energy, only represented as tension. Anyone who sees something un-Christian in this should call to mind the character of Greek orthodox Christianity: the latter is surely more closely related to the Islamic spirit than to that of the Methodists.

Yes, Islam is an expression, among others, of the Western spirit; it is not closer to the Indian spirit than we are. And it is immediately intelligible to the Christian. There is really nothing strange to us in the mentality of the Mussulman. Islam, of course, develops in India more and more towards the Indian spirit; blood will out in the long run. With every new religious leader, the mystic racial traits make themselves felt more and more strongly, just as has happened in Persia long ago. Thus, on the other hand, Christianity becomes less and less Semitic from century to century. It is becoming more and more the vessel of purely Germanic aspiration towards infinity. It is already true to say that the spirit which animates the West is specifically different from that Mediterranean culture which was its cradle. This, however, does not prevent the fact that all mature and perfected manifestations still emanate absolutely from its spirit, and this spirit lies at the bottom of all the manifestations of the West and the Near East, beyond all racial opposition. Thus, the world of Islam, regarded on Indian soil, provides a homely atmosphere to the Westerner.

27

AGRA

I COULD not have believed that there could be anything like it. A massive marble structure without weight, as if composed of ether; perfectly rational and yet purely decorative; without ascertainable content, and yet full of significance in the highest degree: the Taj Mahal is not only one of the greatest works of art, it is perhaps the greatest of all pieces of artifice which the creative spirit of man has ever achieved. The maximum of perfection which seems to be attained here is beyond every gauge of which I know, for partly perfected achievements in the same direction do not exist. Structures of similar design are spread in dozens over the wide plain of Hindustan, but not one of them lets us even suspect the synthesis which is embodied in the foundation of Shah Dshehan. The others are rationally devised buildings, with beautiful decorations super-added; the reasonable element has its own effect, so has the decorative, and we can judge the whole from the same premises which apply to all architecture. The case of the Taj Mahal is unmistakably one of a change of dimension. Here the rational elements have been melted into the decorative, which means that gravity, whose exploitation is the real principle of all other architecture, has lost its weight; conversely, the decorative quality has been stripped of its arabesque-like nature, for here the arabesques have assimilated all reason and are possessed by the same mental significance which is usually the privilege of the rational. Thus, the Taj Mahal seems, not only beautiful, but simultaneously, strange as it may sound, marvellously pretty; it is the rarest of jewels. It lacks, in spite of perfect beauty, unrivalled loveliness and charm—all grandeur. And now as to its meaning: as far as the ordinary architectural possibilities of expression go, it lacks all expressive value, as much as any show specimen of the goldsmith's craft. It exhales neither intellectual sublimity, like the Parthenon, nor composure and strength, like the typical Mohammedan buildings. Its forms have neither a spiritual background, like those of Gothic cathedrals, nor an animalic, emotional one, like the

Drawidian Temples. The Taj Mahal is not even necessarily a funeral monument: it might just as well, or just as badly, be a pleasure resort, as every one will recognise who does not let his unbiased vision be dulled by surrounding cypress trees and the scores of usual accessories. It is, of course, very pleasant to think that this structure is a monument of a husband's faithful love, and that it bends above the pair reunited in death. But the dead queen is by no means the soul of the Taj Mahal. It has no soul, no meaning which could be deduced from anywhere. And yet, for this reason it represents the most absolute work of art which architects have ever erected.

Architecture is regarded as a fettered art; this is true in so far as spiritual beauty can only be represented in it through the medium of empirical appropriateness. That which seems to be beautiful without being appropriate is, for that reason, senseless and lacking in content – the arabesque is there and pleases us, but it means nothing. Hence the curious antagonism between the rational and decorative elements: in the case of a perfectly rational art, like that of the Greeks, the arabesque seems superfluous; the less decoration and accessories, the better. On the other hand, the decorative element necessarily needs an object which gives meaning to it. It strikes us as most substantial where it presupposes a life which corresponds with it, as in the palaces of Italy and India; the more independent significance it assumes, the emptier and more meaningless does it appear. In the case of the Taj Mahal the spirit does not seem fettered by matter, and the decorative elements do not seem empty of inner content; this building is absolutely purposeless, in spite of perfect rationality, and perfectly substantial in spite of its arabesque character. It belongs to a special sphere. And in it the usual categories do not apply. Here the decorative elements have as much inner meaning as beauty embodied appropriately has everywhere else; the rational side of the Taj seems no profounder than its glamour. The Taj Mahal is probably the most absolute work of art which exists; it is so exclusive that its soul, like its body, has no windows. We can only suspect and honour this soul, for in reality no way leads to it.

And what is it which conditions its unique quality? It is the accumulated effect of many details; it is the existence of shades which we would never credit with the capacity for signifying so much. The general plan of the Taj Mahal is shared by hundreds of Indian mausoleums, whose effect is perfectly indifferent; its chromatics have been imitated a hundred times, with no better result than that the buildings thus decorated give the impression of a wedding cake. Let us transpose ever so slightly the proportions, or change its dimensions by an iota, or use a different material; or place the Taj Mahal, as it is, into another region which is subject to different conditions of air, damp and light: it would be the Taj Mahal no longer. I have seen the same white marble used for mosques not a hundred miles distant from Agra: it lacks the enamel-like quality of the Taj Mahal. This work of art makes particularly clear what the nature of individuality really is. No matter how many causes and relations we establish: the essential escapes us; if some apparently insignificant circumstance disappears, the nature of the object seems immediately transformed. This says little in favour of the metaphysical reality of the individual; how could anything be metaphysically real which is manifestly so dependent upon empirical circumstances? It proves, on the other hand, however, the absolute nature of the phenomenon. This is intrinsically unique, not to be traced to anything else or anything external. And sometimes, when I am in a platonic mood, I incline to the belief that phenomena may thus far participate of metaphysical reality. A certain aspect of the eternal spirit can only become visible subject to special empiric conditions. These conditions, as such, are not intrinsic, and they exhaust the individual elements. The spirit, however, which animates the phenomenon exists in itself, no matter whether or how it is expressed. Thus the original image of the Taj Mahal may have decorated from eternity the world of ideas.

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IS it because Italian architects are partially responsible for the marvel of the Taj Mahal that my thoughts travel to distant

Italy? Or is it because of the Renaissance-like character of the Mogul culture? – the latter is the reason. This culture really means the same as the Rinascimento in Italy from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century.

That is to say, it offers us an equally great riddle. I have never been able to understand how intelligent people can pretend to having understood the Renaissance on discovering that it may be traced back to its new relation to classical antiquity. How is it that this new relation had such immense consequences – why only then (for this connection was never broken altogether), why only for a few centuries and never again? How is it that the Italians were capable of greatness only at that time? Biologically they are the same to-day; they have not deteriorated in the least; it is still true, what Alfieri asserts, that man, the plant, flourishes nowhere upon earth better than in Italy. The Italians of to-day are just as gifted artistically as their ancestors: why were they only great in the age of the Renaissance? At that time obviously a 'spirit' came over them, just as it did during the time of the great Mogul emperors over the artists of India. The empirical constellations were of such a kind that they were capable of serving a 'spirit' as a means of expression.

What that means I do not know myself; I have struggled with the problem for years. But the facts are beyond question: the great periods of culture, like that of the Renaissance, cannot be explained altogether out of the demonstrable series of causes. They differ qualitatively from that which preceded or succeeded them. They owe their existence ultimately to a spiritual influx which bears unmistakably the stamp of divine grace. Such grace incidentally transmutes all nature. Once its source, however, has dried up, no effort and no talent is of any avail. Since the height of the Renaissance, artistic culture has declined in Italy, in spite of all the genii who have been born there again and again, and to-day the Italians probably possess less creative taste than any other people, although they are still artistically the most gifted. What does that mean? – I do not know, but since I have seen the Taj Mahal, all kinds of curious thoughts flit through my mind concerning the rela-

tion of appearance and meaning. A small change of empirical circumstances, and the Taj Mahal would not be the marvel which it is. It is quite possible to find the right ones by accident. An insignificant change in the choice of words or syntax transforms a triviality into a profound saying, and vice versa; a line drawn by accident, a patch of colour placed at random upon the canvas, gives to the picture an inimitable expression. And this expression is really the essential, that upon which the whole value of the Gioconda, for instance, depends. Is it possible that there is a secret connection between spiritual necessity and empirical accident? So that, when a genius arises on earth, when he enters upon history at a given time, when he draws a certain line at random, it corresponds perhaps to a necessity in the eyes of God?—I know nothing definite, no matter how much I guess. But the marvels of Renaissance and Mogul art are explicable only by the direct manifestation of an independent 'significance.'

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I UNDERSTAND very well that most Europeans regard the residences of the Mogul emperors as the most noteworthy sights in the whole of India; for most of them are only interested in that which has a direct relation to their person. This world is immediately intelligible, one can feel at home in it; it is, moreover, more charming than most others. I, however, feel drawn away from it. What am I to do in the midst of these treasures? Their contemplation does not stimulate me, their spirit is too closely related to me for that. And this art is too great to live among it. It would disturb me whatever I did. In the same way, I could not live in Florence, where the perfected spirit of the Quattrocento discourages all the aspirations of the Novecento. But I do visit Florence again and again, and each time I like it better than before, because there visible beauty signifies the flower of Spirit, and means precisely the same as the platonising philosophy of the same age. When I regard the belfry of Giotto, the same quality of Reason is manifested to me as found abstract expression in humanism, and when I enter the Medici chapel, I feel the presence of a

genius who, in different circumstances, might have created the world. In Florence all art has a profound metaphysical significance, which permeates its remotest outrunners. Indian and Mohammedan art, however, lacks such meaning. Therefore it cannot give anything to my soul.

The more art I see which is nothing but art, the more conscious am I of my peculiar disposition which allows me to appreciate art only as the immediate expression of metaphysical reality. For that reason truly great art means more to me than to the majority of its admirers, but I cannot do justice to small art, and many a masterpiece appears to me as such. Especially the purely decorative leaves me cold. The gracefulness, the charm of an arabesque has no profounder direct background than the choice taste of its inventor; and I do not know in what way it should concern me that a certain individual had taste. This, of course, only proves my limitations, not the lack of value of decorative art. Undoubtedly its character is superficial, and it is ridiculous to compare Sansovino with Michael Angelo. But it is not only profundity which has a right to existence. Generally, I know well enough how to appreciate superficiality, only I am not able to do so in the case of art, and this proves that I lack certain organs. It proves, above all, lack of culture. The explanation is not far to seek: possibly nowhere in Europe is there such an inartistic atmosphere as in my home; thus I lack the nursery thanks to which Florentines in a similar position to myself possess taste and delight in semblance as a matter of course. It is in this case, as with all other advantages of birth: the advantage which it bestows is an absolute advantage, which can only be made up for by productive talent. – I am therefore glad that I will shortly be in Benares. There I will be more in my element.

28

BENARES

When Brahma weighed the sky with its gods against Kashi (Benares),
Kashi, being the heavier, sank down to earth.
The sky, being the lighter, soared upward.

AGAIN and again I must think of these verses from Shankaracharya's Manikarnikastotram, for the breath of divine presence hangs over the Ganges more mightily than I have ever felt it anywhere else. Especially in the morning, when the faithful cover the ghats in thousands, when their prayers flow in golden waves towards the rising sun, and significance manifests itself in the form of the most delicately sensuous beauty, the whole atmosphere seems to be divinely transfused. How good it is that the Indians have revered this site as a sanctuary for thousands of years: thus, thanks to the miraculous power of faith, it has truly become a holy place. Benares is dedicated to Shiva, the black-necked God; but it is not dedicated to him as a person, but as one aspect of the super-personal Brahma, who excludes nothing and conditions everything. Thus the whole of India makes its pilgrimage to Benares irrespective of sects. And thus the whole of humanity could congregate here. The slender mosque of Aurang-Zeebs, the fanatical Moslem, is not disturbing in its effect in the midst of the Hindu temples. And when, borne by the winds from the distant cantonments, the echo of a hymn hung over the Ganges, I felt as if it too belonged here.

Benares is holy. Europe, grown superficial, hardly understands such truths any more. Before long no one will undertake a pilgrimage, and sooner or later, only too soon, Christianity will stand there without holy places. How poor it will get in the process! It is meaningless to ask whether a place is 'really' holy: if it is regarded as holy for a sufficiently long period, then Divinity inevitably takes up residence there. The pilgrim who enters in at such a place finds it remarkably easy to remain in a reverential mood, and this mood widens him

and makes him more profound. Of course, it would represent the highest pinnacle if men could feel the presence of God everywhere, independent of external means. But hardly one man out of a million is capable of doing this. It is not every year that a child is born who can say, like Jesus: I have, like my father, all life within me; whose spontaneity is so great and so absolute that it requires no awakening. The rule is here what it is everywhere – in art, philosophy and morals – that men only experience in themselves what has been shown them externally, or else what indirect stimulus calls forth in them by reflex action. If it were different, not only would places of pilgrimage be superfluous, but there would be no cause to honour great men in gratitude. – For why should we reverence them if they did not give us something which, without them, we should lack? Most of us require stimulus in order to enter into communication with the Highest; where stimulus is wanting, men lose their at-one-ment with God. Such stimulus is supplied for our daily life by the study of holy writ, the participation in a cult. But the routine of daily life cannot do more than preserve the normal process of growth, and to obviate retrogression; extraordinary experiences alone affect men, these creatures of habit; only strange impressions act on them as quickening influences which can raise them suddenly to a higher level. For this reason all religions have instituted holidays; they have advised intercourse with holy men, and recommended pilgrimages in particular. In the case of pilgrimages all factors contribute to set the strings of the soul in motion and to make their vibrations continue. The change of locality makes men forget their accustomed surroundings; for the time by keeping the goal of the journey constantly in the mind's eye, derogatory memories are excluded from consciousness; imagination, finally, increases the possible influence of the holy place to such a degree that the soul surrenders itself with the utmost receptivity to that which is actually present. But it is not only this subjective quality which conditions the beneficial effect of holy places: they become objectively sanctified through the accumulation of religious thought-forms of its visitors. These thought-forms

produce in the end an atmosphere which takes possession even of men who journey there in an unholy mood. And this blessed power grows with the passage of time. They become gradually real sources of Divine Grace. He who measures a time-honoured pilgrim's road in a devotional attitude may easily find at the end that, from the spiritual point of view, he has progressed farther than years of inner struggle would have brought him. India is intersected in all directions by pilgrims' roads; it is strewn with holy places; again and again the wanderer, in ever new and therefore stimulating forms, is reminded of the presence of God. But nowhere so powerfully as on the Ganges. This holiest of rivers rises in Shiva's paradise, in the snowy Kailas in the Himalayas. He who gets there is bodily in the presence of God. Then it flows through densest mountainous woods in which Munis and Rishis dwell, supermen, Jivanmuktas, for whom life and death are one; he who penetrates to them is sometimes accepted as their disciple. And progressing in its southward course, from the sunburnt Punjab to the fruitful plain of Bengal, the river sanctifies site upon site. No one has ever climbed up to the Kailas; few have ever reached the Mahatmas; but Benares can be approached by each and all. Thus this town is the focus of all the religious thoughts which are connected with the Ganges, and this fact bestows its unique sanctifying power upon it.

What is the explanation of this 'psychic atmosphere,' which is manifestly real in the objective sense, and whose existence I feel more clearly the longer I live? I do not know. I assume that it is a question of waves belonging to an 'ether' which hardly corresponds to that of the physicist, but which are nevertheless vibrations of a material kind. No doubt thoughts are just as much 'things' as the objects of the external world, no less real and probably more enduring than we suppose. The spirit of an age is an entity no less objective than the physical air. If mental images were not material, they could not be infectious. I do not know, either, how else I could sense a psychic atmosphere directly, how else I could be influenced so strongly by the place in which I happen to be, and be affected differently in accordance with the beings who constantly live,

or have lived, there. Only he can doubt the reality of psychic atmosphere whose senses are too blunt to feel it. Its theory has never yet been written down. The only coherent attempt of which I know originates from the old Indians: I mean the obscure teachings of the Tattvas.[1]

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IT is glorious when the sun rises above the horizon, and the faithful on the ghats bend towards the giver of life in their thousands in one single gesture of adoration. Hinduism has no sun god; that which is material, he has never honoured as spirit. But Hinduism commands to pray before the sun because it is the foremost physical manifestation of Divine creative power. What would man be without sun? He would not exist at all; the whole of his being is sun-produced, sun-born, supported by the sun, and withers when the mainspring of life turns away.

The more I advance in recognition, the more do I profess sun-worship myself. During those terrible months when the sun only throws a hasty, disdainful greeting upon Esthonia, in order to turn rapidly, as if after the execution of an unpleasant duty, to more beloved latitudes, the curve of my life declines every time. My body feels ill, my vitality decreases, my soul loses in tension. And conversely, the periods of my highest creative power always coincide with the longest days. But what is the hottest sun which is known in the north compared with that of India! A smouldering candle-light. The sun of India is an object of fear for many: I feel inclined, like the pilgrims on the Ganges, to sink down every morning before it in fervent gratitude, for it is immeasurable what it gives me. I feel nearer here than I have ever done to the heart of the world; here I feel every day as if soon, perhaps even to-day, I would receive the grace of supreme revelation. I am no longer surprised that the deepest wisdom comes from the East: it comes from the proximity of the sun. All manifestation is physical; the spirit is revealed there where there is the force

[1] See, as to this, the booklet, *Nature's Finer Forces* (London, 1907, Theosophical Publishing Society), by Prama Prasad.

to express it, and all force is material and derives ultimately from the sun. The sun of India does not encourage thinking, no more than any other conscious action; its power here is too great to express itself by means of the weak wills of human beings. Its effect is direct, both for good and evil. Thus it kills the over-inquisitive brain which exposes itself too long to its rays. Thus, too, it illumines, suddenly and without mediation, the humbly receptive mind. To such a mind, that which no amount of thinking could have made lucid in the north, here becomes clear at once. This is due to the circumstance, that the fundamental forces of being become quickened, and enter the centre of self-consciousness. Metaphysical recognition is nothing else but this becoming-conscious of the profoundest elements of being. As a rule these are overlaid with the thousand instincts and impulses which constitute the superficial play of life, in direct proportion to the distance from the source. Thus the European is, on the one hand, more active, and, on the other, more superficial than the Indian. The latter dislikes action, his reflective thought is usually imperfect, and his kinetic energy is small: all surfaces are singed by the sun. But the same sun gives to what is unsingeable such power of lighting up the darkness, that it becomes evident to the poorest consciousness.

Is what I am writing down here correct? Considerations of this kind are never 'correct,' but their significance may be true, and that is more. Thus, all sun-worshippers are right before God. For the man who believes in myths, there are no facts in our sense; he knows nothing of the sun of the physicist. He prays before what he feels as the immediate source of his life. The man of later days, whose emancipated intellect raises the question of correctness in the first instance, must, of course, deny sun-worship; for him there is only the fact of astronomy, and this is undoubtedly no divinity. The spiritualised being does justice once more to the ancient faith. He recognises in it a beautiful form of expression of a true consciousness of God. He knows that all truth is ultimately symbolic, and that the sun expresses the nature of divinity more appropriately than the best conceptual expression.

THE atmosphere of devotion which hangs above the river is improbable in its strength: stronger than in any church that I have ever visited. Every would-be Christian priest would do well to sacrifice a year of his theological studies in order to spend this time on the Ganges: here he would discover what piety means. For in Europe all that exists is its remote reflection. What European can still pray fervently? Who knows that concentrated devotion which is sufficient unto itself, which needs no institutions, and eliminates automatically the influence of disturbing surroundings? Hardly one among a million; those who believe they are most pious are generally least pious in reality; they regard faith as identical with believing-to-be-true, and prayer as synonymous with begging, which proves that they have no idea of profound devoutness. Not the simplest Hindu seems to be guilty of such fundamental misconceptions. No Hindu regards faith as believing-to-be-true, for the question of the existence of gods and goddesses is never raised, no matter how many he reveres. And not one of them regards his prayer as a petition. He knows that begging is never sacred, not even when it is done for others, because ultimately it always means egoism. Prayer as a sacrament is an expression of what appears also in sacrifice, in the praise of God, in cults, hymns, and best of all in silent meditation: the opening of the consciousness to the influences which are awaiting liberation in the innermost depths of the soul, which, when liberated, connect the spirit directly with God. The means in themselves are indifferent. The Hindu knows this, and this knowledge imparts the same sacramental nature to all the manifestations of his religiosity, be they spiritualised or naïve. Whence has he got this knowledge? From his nursery. The first thing which an Indian mother teaches her child is the art of meditation, the submersion at will into the highest which it can conceive. Once it has learned this art, then it does not require any exterior apparatus, no church atmosphere, no belief in dogma, no seclusion to enter into communication with God. And thus, you can see children on the Ganges in the midst of the noise, the traffic, in spite of all the foreigners who stare at them stupidly as they pass by,

fervently absorbed in their divinity, imperturbable and calm when the hour of prayer has come. And the art which the child has acquired, the grown-up learns slowly to understand, if not with his intellect, at any rate with his heart. He knows from experience what matters; he knows the exaltation which is produced by the liberation of the fundamental forces of life; thus he cannot, like most modern Christians, mistake the means for the end. All the less so, as the whole of his education was directed towards teaching him how to differentiate between the essential and the inessential. His mother, who taught him to breathe and to meditate, left him completely free in the choice of his spiritual teacher. If he had become the disciple of one who in his particular profession differed as far from that of his mother as a Lutheran from a Catholic, she would not have attempted to restrain him: for among Indians it is regarded as a deadly sin to use force in influencing the faith of another, because every one is a particularised being and must therefore undertake his pilgrimage to God along a path appropriate to him, and him alone. And in the same sense the Brahmins taught him how to advance in knowledge, in so far as he really wanted to know and seemed capable of understanding. They told him that in reality there is only one God, that the many gods are his manifestations, real only in so far as they facilitate realisation for man; for God in Himself cannot be imagined; he who has progressed sufficiently far within himself could dispense with all ritual. And thus he will also have met wise men here and there who stood outside all communities professing any cult. – How could the Hindu not know what matters? How could he become half-hearted if he has once experienced the blessedness of religious realisation? In Western Europe, which in the Middle Ages resembled India so much, real devotion is hardly to be met with to-day except in out-of-the-way corners, in which the spirit of bygone centuries still dominates. Only in Russia do we know it as a normal phenomenon. In fact, I have, since I have been in India, had to think of the Russian people more than once. Their attitude to the world is singularly like that of the Hindu: equally all-understanding, equally all-brotherly, equally un-

practical. And their religiousness, above all, is strangely similar. I am sure that there was nothing but a difference of dogma between many of the pilgrims whom I have seen, on the one hand, on the shores of the Ganges, and on the other, in the Ssergievskaja Lawra. Not only the same fervour, but the same quality of fervour, inflamed their hearts both here and there. Yes, Russia – the Russia of the simple peasant – is to-day probably the only province of Christianity which is near to God.

Near to God, at any rate so far as the heart, the Bhakti Yoga, is in question. The heart, no matter what they say, is only poorly developed in the Westerner. We imagine, because we have professed for one and a half thousand years a religion of love, that for this reason love animates us. That is not true. Our excessively active nature has immediately translated the inspiration which came from the East into action, into forms of life, ways of life, institutions, so that more love is expressed in them than in any known to the East; but the heart as such appears empty. The soul of the European is poor in feeling in the same proportion as it creates in the spirit of noble feelings. It does not seem possible to hold fast a spirit as such, and to embody it in external organs. How meagre is the effect of Thomas à Kempis by the side of Rama Krishna! How poor is the highest European Bhakti beside that, for instance, of the Persian mystics. Western feeling is stronger than that of the East in so far as it possesses more kinetic energy; but it is not nearly so rich, so delicate or so differentiated. San Juan de la Cruz often appears obscene in spite of the most real love of God, because his coarse Spanish soul was incapable of more delicate expression; Francis of Assisi, in spite of his sweetness, was more of a force of nature than a transfigured spirit. It is really high time to give up the superstition that Christianity has a monopoly of love. It stands supreme so far as work in the sense of love is in question, but love itself, as an experience, is less known to Christianity than to the gentler humanity of Hindustan. I now understand well why the cultured Hindu regards the hearts of Europeans as coarse: they are coarse, there can be no doubt of it. And they will hardly ever be capable of real Bhakti: our development tends in another direc-

tion. We are becoming less and less devotional. One should not be led astray by the new devotionalism which predominates in many religious communities of the West, especially that of the Theosophical Society inspired by India: it will always only be congenial to a minority even among women. And this minority will be reduced in the same proportion as the consciousness of her real soul becomes clearer to Western humanity. Here, as everywhere else, the given natural disposition sets a boundary whose transgression succeeds only in appearance. In order to be pious in the Indian sense one has either to be born an Indian or a Russian. One must have a need for devotion in one's blood; the capacity for reverence has to be developed very highly. The soul must long to surrender itself, to renounce self-will, to experience passively; it must be feminine in form. The best souls of Europeans are not like that; they are masculine in the extreme. Thus, the want of piety of the European, his crude misunderstanding of the meaning of faith and prayer, is based ultimately upon the fact that Bhakti Yoga does not imply the road which leads him most surely to his God.

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I SPEND many hours every day in the labyrinth of streets which link temple to temple, and which in themselves are thickly strewn with shrines and altars. No Christian place of pilgrimage has as many 'stations' as Benares. And in almost every one of them the divinity is honoured in a special form and from a specific aspect. Most attention is, of course, paid to the idols, which are calculated to suit the poor man's power of understanding; thus, even in Benares, the town of Shiva, Ganesha, the elephant-headed protector of earthly success, receives the richest sacrifices. The educated do not object to this; their philosophy approves and encourages every form of devotion. Their view teaches that all concepts of faith have the sole object of giving an aid to men to become conscious of their deepest selves. The simpler and coarser a man is, the cruder and less spiritual must be the images which are proffered to his attention, for more subtle ones would fail of their aim

in his case. It cannot be expected of the peasant that he enter into direct relation with Brahma. The peasant is to pray quite happily to the gods whose images were created by the uncultured imagination of the people, for as long as he believes, as long as the object of his veneration really holds fast the attention of his soul, this object does for him precisely what the contemplation of the absolute does for the Rishi and the Muni. There are, moreover, not many who really know; not many who are truly beyond the sphere in which discipline and traditional cults are advisable. The point is to realise God truly, not merely to imagine that one does so: who has gone so far as to be able to do this without 'name and form'? Shankara had not got so far, nor had Ramanuja, otherwise they would not have sacrificed so assiduously; both remained faithful to the time-honoured forms of faith; they declined to invent new forms apparently more appropriate to their philosophies, for they had found that mental images, which are inherited or learnt in childhood, are the vessels into which the Holy Ghost enters most readily. And Ramakrishna, the gentle saint of Dakshinesvar, of whom it is said that he was a Jivanmukta, beyond all earthly fetters, who therefore knew, better than anyone else could know, what was necessary and what was superfluous, had impressed upon his people only recently that they were to practise according to ritual, as revelation simply could not be attained without spiritual exercises (without Sadhana) and that the traditional ritual was by far the most effective. – As a matter of fact, all cultured Hindus whom I have met believe genuinely in their gods (which, of course, does not prevent them as philosophers from subscribing sometimes to a belief in Advaita, sometimes in Visishtadvaita); they all practise their faith. They did not attend the primitive rites of which the main body of Hinduistic cult-practices consist, but they all participated in some kind of ritual.

The spirit of Hinduism, regarded as a cohesion of religious ideas and forms, is identical with that of Catholicism; only the spirit seems, in the case of the former, to be more intellectualised. The practical regulations which are prescribed to the faithful of both religions have the same significance everywhere,

they are equally wise, equally profound psychologically, equally to the purpose. Only the Hindus have understood the same thing in a better way. Thus, the Catholic Church recommends the veneration of saints because the saints are really supposed to abide in heaven, really act as advocates before God, who is believed to have arranged that we are not to approach Him directly, but to address ourselves to the appropriate intermediaries; the Indians know that the devotion to specified divinities is advisable, because it is too difficult for men to realise divinity as such, because realisation is the one and only thing on which everything depends, and because a specific form appropriate to specific aspirations is most beneficial. Catholicism as well as Hinduism worships images; but whereas in practice it is only too often a question of real fetishism, idol-worship in its crudest form for the Catholic, every Hindu knows (or can know it at any rate) that the value of images depends solely on the fact that they help to concentrate the attention of the praying individual; it is impossible for most people to concentrate their souls except in reference to a visible object, and so forth. In the Catholic Church the profound doctrines of antiquity continue to exist in a misrepresented form; within Hinduism they are generally interpreted correctly. So far as the principle is in question, this is the only difference between the two religions.

The Indian philosophy of religion and ritual is a rich storehouse of psychological and metaphysical wisdom. It contains real treasures of recognition which, when they have been unearthed and sifted, will in all probability modify the scientific concept of psychic reality. For the Indians have been great simultaneously in two directions, which among Westerners generally preclude each other: in faith and in understanding of faith. Notwithstanding their sense for form and its possibility of effectiveness, they have judged their objective significance correctly on the whole. In this connection the one fact is already highly significant, that the Indians, who have gone further in self-recognition than any other men, whose consciousness has freed itself to an incredible degree from the entangled fetters of names and forms, have always been Catholic in

practice; all the greatest Indian philosophers, like Ramanuja, Shankaracharia – I have said it already – practised just like Thomas Aquinas. There have, of course, been reformers with Protestant tendencies among Indians, as everywhere else, as, for instance, Buddha, the Gurus of the Sikhs, and lately the founders of Brahmo-Samaj. But to begin with, not one of them has gone as far as Luther did among us, and then they were never able to conquer the Hindu spirit on a great scale; they never became popular. Buddhism disappeared from India as soon as it lost the external support of regal power, and the other Protestant religions have all remained limited sects. What does this mean? It means that, in the view of the Hindus, Catholicism embodies a system of mental hygiene which could not conceivably have been improved upon; that, whatever the ultimate meaning of religion may be, the Catholic form conduces best to its realisation. The most essential technical feature of all Protestant reforms is that they have simplified the apparatus which serves spiritual progress. Whereas Catholicism employs every means which seem calculated to stimulate religious feeling, Protestantism sanctions only a few and impresses upon the soul to enter into relation with God, in all simplicity and candour, without external assistance. This would be all very well if communion with God could be attained by this less circuitous route with the same degree of perfection. This is the point on which the Hindus differ. According to their experience, only the highest man has the inner right to choose the path of Protestantism, for he alone can hope to find God in seeking him in his own way. The others do not find him. For them it is better to avail themselves of the whole apparatus of assistance which the wisdom of generations has developed, and to travel along the broad road which it has marked out for all.

It would be mistaken to put the question as to whether the Hindus are absolutely right in their attitude: undoubtedly they are right for themselves. The roads of Catholicism and Protestantism both lead to God, but each one of them is appropriate to special natures. Anyone who becomes conscious of a significance best by entering, mind and heart, into an objec-

tive form and then letting it fashion his soul, is Catholic by nature, no matter what profession he may avow *de facto*. And similarly, a man is essentially a Protestant who approaches form from its significance. As far as advancement in the world, including scientific recognition, is concerned, it can be said that, objectively, the Protestant attitude is more suited to this purpose. On the other hand, the Catholic attitude implies an absolute advantage where the desired aim is the realisation of God in contemplation. This contemplative realisation is not the only possible form of religious experience; he who does not wish to behold the Kingdom of God, but to realise it upon earth, is better off with the soul of a Protestant. The Catholic has no call to transformation, his natural attitude is not progressive. But it falls to his lot more readily to behold God. Therefore, it cannot but be that the Indian people who are solely concerned with recognition, who are absolutely indifferent to practical questions, who are contemplative in the highest degree, also think and feel to an extreme degree in a Catholic way. For it is a great mistake, no matter how often it is taught, to believe that Protestantism has made religious recognition more profound; the reverse is true. It has made action in the religious sense more profound, but it has not benefited recognition, because the Protestant consciousness, which is directed to externals, turns its back upon the influx of the divine. One cannot think out one's God, one must accept Him; He comes upon us, one does not create Him from within oneself; He reveals Himself according to His divine will, not as we wish. Thus, the man who strives after personal expression, whose mind is intent upon inventing new forms, is at a disadvantage in religious recognition as opposed to the believer in authority with a receptive mind and soul. It may be objected that precisely Luther was receptive; that just he had placed faith and humility high above all desire for knowledge. Quite so; in many essential directions he personally remained, up to the end, what I call Catholic. But the *principle* whose victory he brought about is inimical to humility and faith; the real spirit of Protestantism does not appear to-day in the Lutheran Church, but in critical science. If it were otherwise, then the

religious Protestant communities would not suffer all the world over from inner decay, and Lutherism in particular would not show already all the symptoms of a fatal illness. The choice is: either believing or free determination; either being a Catholic or a Protestant. And he who is intent upon beholding God will always choose the first alternative. All the mystics of the world were Catholics in their attitude; all contemplative natures are of a Catholic trend of mind. All great religious revelations have been given to spirits of Catholic tendency, and it will be like that for all time to come.

Of course, I do not wish to assert that any existing Catholic system will subsist permanently.[1] During these days, in which I have witnessed so many cults, I have become more conscious than ever how much the development of humanity tends away from ritualism; magic loses more and more in meaning and purpose. To this extent the world tends undoubtedly towards Protestantism. Fewer and fewer cultured Hindus follow the prescriptions of the Tantras accurately; the Catholic Church lays less and less stress upon the help we are to find in ritual. Apparently it is less and less effective. Ever since the eighteenth century Catholicism in Europe does not achieve what, theoretically, it could and should achieve, and it seems to-day as if its profession did more harm than good in general. Why? The explanation is surely not that the Tantras do not embody anything but superstition, that what was always the case is only being recognised now, nor is the position, as the theosophists assert, that modern humanity is forfeiting one of the most important means to salvation; and it is quite certain that the cessation of belief in magic as such does not cover the ultimate cause of the situation. I personally am convinced that the teachings of the Tantras are correct on the whole, and that it is nevertheless in order that they meet with less and less observance. Magic can only be effective where consciousness is in a certain position; this position can only be maintained

[1] I have treated exhaustively the problem of the future of Catholicism, and, in part, that of Christianity in my two lectures entitled 'Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung,' published in the Year-book of the School of Wisdom, der Leuchter, 1924 (Darmstadt, Otto Reichl Verlag).

in a certain equilibrium of psychic forces, in which critical intelligence does not disturb the creations of imagination and faith. Where this necessary equilibrium exists, magic is, of course, efficacious; and in those cases Tantric ceremonies often imply the safest means to inner progress. But where this equilibrium is disturbed, their effect is nil. And it is disturbed in the whole of humanity more and more, in the sense that the intellect outweighs imagination. This induces progress everywhere where mastery of the external world is in question; but it involves simultaneously losing out of sight another side of reality. The man who is beyond the Tantra stage is superior to many influences of the psychic sphere which are often disturbing, but he also misses their positive qualities. Supreme self-realisation is within reach of the one as much as the other; he is, moreover, much better fitted to understand it. Whereas the Tantrika generally interprets real experiences in the light of absurd theories, the man of clear understanding is in a position to interpret objectively and correctly. But he is aware of it much more rarely. There is no doubt that the soul of the Tantrika is open to influences which do not react upon any other condition of consciousness at all; and no doubt the process of growing beyond this state implies a loss. We Europeans with our clear intellect do not experience a great deal of that which the superstitious Hindu experiences. And in all probability the condition of our souls does not only preclude us from many unimportant experiences, but also from some of the highest of which the human soul is capable. This, at any rate, is the only way in which I am able to account for the fact that the highest revelations came from spirits who in many ways were not only simple but also undeveloped, immature, inadequate, uncritical and as unreasonable as children.

Hinduism, of course, excels even the wisest Christian Catholicism a hundredfold in psychological insight. I do not know any condition of the soul to which it would not do justice from the point of view of its own possibilities. Blessed are the people whose prophets and spiritual teachers were sages! Those of Christianity were anything but that; they were deeply entangled in 'name and form'; no matter how open-hearted their

doctrines, they excluded without exception the greatest portion of the human race from salvation. This had to be so, since their teachings were particularised doctrines; since they saw the substance of truth in a specialised form of belief. This error of all errors is foreign to Hinduism; the Indians are beyond the stage where any manifestation can be taken seriously from the metaphysical standpoint; they know that all dogmatic professions can be appraised only according to the gauge of pragmatism. Absolute truth must, of course, assume a shape if it is to be made manifest to men; they lack the organ with which to perceive the absolute as such. But this form always originates from man, and is an earthly vessel which, in the most favourable circumstances, is completely filled by the divine spirit. How could it be possible otherwise to deduce the actual facts of all concrete religions, historically and psychologically? How is it conceivable otherwise that all the visions which appeared to divinely inspired saints, correspond to the ideas of the Church to which they belonged? The Divine reveals itself everywhere to men within the framework of their intimate prejudices. For this reason, Ramakrishna admonished his disciples so strongly not to change their religious ideas; the Krishna-worshipper was to remain faithful to Krishna, the Vaishnava to Vishnu, the Christian to Christ. New ideas were never rooted so firmly as inherited ones, and could therefore never offer an equally good means of materialisation to the Holy Spirit. And thus this man who in a state of ecstatic rapture had long ago become one with Parabrahma, remained in his normal condition a worshipper of Kali, the maternal aspect of Divinity.

It is indeed wonderful to what a degree the *Viveka*, the power of differentiating in matters of religion, has been developed among the Indians. Among cultured individuals there is no conception that I know of whose rational elements they do not understand. Here there is no *Credo quia absurdum*, incomprehensibility is postulated nowhere. The latter is accepted as a fact, where it is met with, but then, its 'why and wherefore' is determined as far as possible. I come back to the Tantras again and again; no matter how extravagant some of its sen-

tences sound, it is always possible to follow their meaning; their fundamental ideas are always in accordance with reason.[1] How many errors to which Christianity has succumbed to this day, have not been obviated in India by philosophic foresight! Sexual continence is regarded in both cases as spiritually valuable. Why, and in what way, is this so? The Christian Church has never explained it. Thus it proclaimed the most extraordinary doctrines: love, as such, is denounced as a sin, woman is looked upon almost as a she-devil, virginity is the only condition which could be called blessed; Christianity raised that which was contrary to nature to an ideal. The Indians have sought the meaning of the problematical value of renouncing the joys of love. In so doing they discovered that continence helped the man who was ripe for saintliness, because in his case his creative energies are capable of transmutation into spiritual ones; for him, continence is a technical aid. But this transmutation succeeds only in those rarely organised creatures whom we call saints, from which it follows that continence does not advance the average man spiritually. It is better for his soul that he permit his body what it demands, for otherwise the latter's repressed desires would be forced up into the realm of the soul. – Therefore, what Christianity has revered as an ideal for centuries is in reality only a technical optimum for certain exceptional natures. – The meaning of spiritual love has also been understood better by the Indians than by us. As I have already remarked: fervent love towards God is more widespread in India than among us. It is to-day the predominant form of divine worship. The ancients differentiated between three ways which lead to the ultimate goal: the path of recognition (Gnana Yoga), that of love (Bhakti Yoga), and that of work (Karma Yoga). Of these, the first was regarded as the highest in so far as salvation (Mukti) consisted in recognition in every case; the philosopher, therefore, moved in the highest sphere from the beginning; the last of

[1] One should read in this connection the books on Tantra by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), published by Luzac & Co. in London. His *Principles of Tantra*, and in particular his introduction to the Mahaparanirvana-Tantra are the best books published so far on the spirit of any philosophy of ritual.

the three was regarded as the lowest, because here the autonomous spirit hardly collaborated, and success was achieved by virtue of rules and regulations followed blindly, as it were mechanically; but the path of love was regarded as the *easiest.* In what way is it the easiest? In so far as it is in the nature of this feeling to radiate; he who loves does not think of himself for the time being; his soul opens out naturally and inevitably; and the man who has become entirely free from himself has by this very fact found his God. From this virtue of love the founders of Christianity have drawn the conclusion that love is the highest virtue in itself. The Indians, who are too profoundly conscious to assign metaphysical reality to an empirical feeling, too acute to see something super-empirical in it, too critical in order to raise, to an end in itself, any means, no matter how good, have simply deduced that the path of love is the easiest for men. For this reason they recommend it above all others. Each successive saint has laid greater stress upon the advantages of Bhakti Yoga and upon the difficulties of the path of recognition, so that to-day precisely that which the Christian Church regards as its very own is the heart of Hinduism. But even to-day, as in the days of the great sages, the path of recognition is considered the higher and love does not count nearly as much as it does among us. Of course God is love, say the Bhaktas, just as He is the quintessence of everything positive; but the feeling of love, as men know it, no matter how much their feeling strives heavenwards, is not divine in itself. How could longing be without self-interest? Desire for union without selfishness? Human love is intrinsically not selfless. It is true that human love contains within it the road which leads to selflessness most rapidly, because it opens the soul; but this does not sanctify it. – In fact, human love is intrinsically not selfless. Anyone who doubts this should survey the history of Christianity with an unprejudiced mind: this section of humanity, inspired by the spirit of Love, has brought about the era of the crassest egoism which has ever become dominant. Of all followers of higher religions, the Christian is the least free. It is not well to call divine that which is human: we would have got spiritually farther than

we have done without the cult which is practised in Europe in the name of love. We would be less aggressive, less inconsiderate, we would have more insight and understanding; if we had lacked its covering cloak, we would not have let ourselves go so unrestrainedly in the direction of our selfish impulses. Love, as a mode of feeling, is not at all divine; it is something purely empirical, which leads us upwards or downwards, according as to how we treat and care for it, how it is understood, directed and animated. In its nature love is essentially unjust, prejudiced, exclusive, covetous and lacking in charity: a sufficiency of attributes indeed to characterise it as all too human. What changes love – in, oh, such rare cases – to something divine, is a higher spirit which animates it. If the spirit of pure giving without ulterior motive, of giving without wanting to receive, has taken possession of it, then love is indeed divine. But it does not possess this spirit by nature; the latter, on the contrary, melts down everything which is usually considered 'lovely and lovable,' and manifests itself, moreover, just as well in the desire for recognition, the impulse for action, the impulse for artistic creation. It is a misfortune that this spirit has now been identified with love for more than two thousand years. Plato was the first instigator of this identification. With his preference for mythical expression, he called the primary force of spontaneity after the god of love, in recognition of the fact that it found its most tangible expression in procreation. But he never identified it with love. This happened later on in Christianity, when the longings of the weak began to determine more and more all conceptual formations. It has gone so far by now that it is considered a matter of course to regard love as the highest possible ideal. All higher aspirations are determined in accordance with this dogma. Nothing could be objected to such a view in so far as it were possible to make the concept of love so wide that it included all creative spontaneity within it. This, however, is not possible. Love without personal inclination, without emotional obsession, without the impulse of the heart, remains an empty concept. Thus, this dogmatic assumption compels most people to conceive as transcendental

the most empirical elements of love. The man who does not love his fellow personally, no matter how ideal his aspirations may be otherwise, is said to be 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal': that is how they understand the saying of St. Paul. Sentimentality is to them an expression of spiritual profundity, although no saint was ever sentimental, and affectionate attachment is regarded as a proof of spirituality. What a superstition! – Humanity will still need many Nietzsches, many enemies of Christianity, before they reach the point of differentiating the spirit from the letter, of living in the spirit and in truth.

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As far as I can judge, the Indians alone have understood the meaning of the importance of faith in religion correctly. In practice, Hinduism teaches exactly the same concerning the healing power of trust in God as Christianity. Indian humanity has, in the course of its development, accepted more and more the assurance of Krishna (in the Bhagavat-Gita): 'He who is unable to follow neither the path of recognition nor that of love nor that of work, but who trusts himself to me confidingly, him will I yet save.' The Indians, however, have never understood this miraculous power of faith as though believing-to-be-true and trust as such possessed this quality; they have, above all, never betrayed the folly of imagining that blind belief is more than understanding, and that the desire for knowledge is criminal. They have realised, with the intuition of far-sighted psychologists, that faith can even bring the man to recognition for whom a direct approach is barred by lack of talent. Recognition does not lead to salvation, but is salvation. He who really knows (that is to say, knows vitally, not merely theoretically, with his intelligence) that he is one with Brahma, is beyond all fetters by virtue of this knowledge.[1] Every rise on the ladder of created beings consists in changing the plane of one's consciousness; such change is the primary cause of all differences; it differentiates the savage from the sage and the latter from God. When we say that a higher being stands

[1] I have developed this trend of thought fully, and adapted it to modern Western conditions, in my book *Schöpferische Erkenntniss*, Darmstadt, 1922.

above certain things, we state something which is literally true: they no longer fetter him; because being different, he sees them differently, from a different point of view, they no longer possess any power over him. This 'seeing differently' means at the same time better recognition; recognition, therefore, does not only condition, but is, salvation. There is no greater power than that of knowledge. There is no other kind of inner progress than that of recognition. The man who strives after goodness knows better than the evil-minded, he who desires to understand is more wise than the man who hunts gold. Even where something apparently non-intellectual is at stake, such as moral or ethical progress, even the advanced individual himself does not understand, he is in fact increasing in wisdom, for all development tends in the direction of the conscious spirit. There is no greater superstition than the belief in the insurmountability of natural conditions. Nature, of course, is as she is – the facts of nature are doubtless insuperable in themselves; but all forces are effective only on a certain plane, and the man who rises above it escapes their influence. He does not escape these forces in imagination, but in absolute reality, because, 'knowing better' presupposes 'becoming different.' In his deepest being man is spirit, and the more he recognises this, the more firmly he believes it, the more fetters fall away from him. Thus, it could happen that, in accordance with Indian mythology, complete recognition overcomes even death.

All salvation consists in recognition, but faith prepares the way. This is due to the fact that belief in some truth gives the latter the possibility of externalising its immanent forces. Every idea accepted without resistance, faithfully adhered to, reverentially fixed in the mind, reacts upon the consciousness. Man, moreover, is much more receptive than he appears; his subconscious takes in more than his consciousness; the object of belief impresses itself upon the former and provokes a development which necessarily proceeds in accordance with the image in which he believes. If this image has been well chosen, which is the case in most materialisations of ideals within all higher religions, then it accelerates inner progress;

it leads towards recognition. And such an image leads poorly gifted people much more quickly to their goal than independent thinking would do. An idea is a force which produces its peculiar effect – organising, stimulating, procreating – with the same necessity as any other natural force, always provided that the idea finds sufficient credence. The medium which it needs is a believing soul. For this reason, all religions which teach that, if only we believe, the rest will happen of its own accord, are right in doing so. The automatism of the processes of the soul leads to the goal more rapidly than any unintelligent efforts of autonomy.

Belief, therefore, is a means to more rapid recognition; it has no other significance. For this reason it is a matter of indifference in principle, what we believe in, whether what we believe in is real, or whether it can resist critical thought. Uncultured people will only be able to believe when they are convinced simultaneously that the content of their faith is also objectively real: that Krishna was really an Avatar, that the Bible is really the Word of God, that Christ has saved humanity from death in the historical sense. The cultured individual knows that faith in the religious sense, and believing-to-be-true in the scientific one, have nothing in common with each other, that religiously it is completely indifferent whether Christ existed or not, and the perfectly cultured individual who is spiritualised, employs faith at will like an instrument. The greatest among the Indians attained to this stage. They had attained to the union with Brahma; they knew that all concrete religious manifestations are of human origin. Nevertheless, they sacrificed themselves to this, sometimes to another god, in the fullness of their faith, knowing very well that such practices benefit the soul. Ramakrishna was, for a while, a Christian and also a Mussulman; he wanted to know the effect of these ideals; and in the meantime his faith was so strong that Mahomet as well as Jesus appeared to him in the spirit. For the rest, he kept to the worship of Kali, the heavenly mother, as being the cult best suited to his nature, for he was conscious of the truth that no one form was intrinsically adequate to divinity.

Everywhere where a religious form is to suit each and all, it seems necessary to lay stress on faith; faith alone is appropriate to all. Only the intellectually gifted attains to God through recognition; only he whose nature is rich in possibilities of feeling attains to Him along the road of love; and only the physically energetic individual can travel successfully along that of labour. Every path is appropriate only to certain temperaments, and no one can alter his nature. But every one can believe and trust in a principle. This explains why the commandment to believe has gained pre-eminence in the long run everywhere, even among the followers of Buddha, whose teaching stresses, as no other, the necessity of independent recognition; this does not mean that a higher principle has supplanted lower ones (unless we call the desire for catholicity a higher principle). But at one time or another the moment comes when faith begins to lose its healing power. It has arrived when the intellect becomes emancipated. The intellect begins its independent career as a destructive and disintegrating element; it cannot build up before it has matured. Whenever it becomes the dominant factor of a soul, the soul changes in its state of consciousness. It does not seem capable, as before, of realising its depth directly, it can do so only through the intellect, and as the intellect is not in the beginning a match for deeper problems, the soul loses all contact with its depths. It becomes superficial. Thus, the men of classic antiquity became superficial after their intellect had broken through the barriers of faith, and the same is true progressively of ourselves, the children of the modern age, ever since the days of the Reformation. What is to be done? The worst possible means would be to advocate the suppression of the intellect, to support a return to a simpleton's faith: it is an advantage, not a disadvantage, that men are becoming stronger intellectually. The problem is to make the intellect more profound. Once the intellect has developed sufficiently to understand the meaning of faith, the profound significance of all that it originally regarded as nonsense, then the intellect will become religious once more. Not before. Modern man is intrinsically an intellectual being. Only that which he has

understood becomes a vital force in him. Let him, therefore, as soon as possible, understand what made his unreflecting ancestors great.

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NOTHING can be heard more frequently from the lips of those who pray on the Ganges than the repetition of the holy syllable, *Om*. It is said to embody the ultimate meaning of the world, the alpha and omega of all wisdom; it is said, moreover, to possess the virtue, thanks to the particular enervation which results upon its pronunciation, of inducing, after sufficiently frequent repetition, a condition of the organism which is most favourable to the realisation of Atman. There may be some truth in it. I got them to show me how one has to produce the word *Om*: it is not easy; apparently, no one can pronounce it in the only satisfactory manner for a long time; it is quite possible that the combination of particular bodily movements, with particular mental images which must be visualised simultaneously, induces, in this case too, lasting changes in the psycho-physical equilibrium.

But even if the belief in the physical effect of articulating the word *Om* should prove to be insubstantial, the belief in the virtue of its repetition would still be justified. 'Superstition' is right as opposed to rationalism: there is a point in repeating audibly the truth which we wish to take possession of us. Napoleon used to say: *La seule formule rhetorique sérieuse, c'est la répétition;* he knew that by repetition one ultimately influences that portion of the subconscious mind from which everything profound and enduring emanates. And in the same way it is useful to the faithful to say out loud, in the briefest possible words, what he wants to realise. Such repetition is more potent in effect than thinking; it influences the subconscious directly, which connects automatically every content with the word which normal consciousness has ever associated with it.

But, of course, such a procedure is only efficacious in the case of the man for whom the word has a living significance, and who is seriously concerned to translate it into life. Most of those who pray on the Ganges 'use vain repetitions,' as

Christ said of the heathens, no matter what the idea of their action may be, and the summit of their success is confined to putting them into a pleasant hypnotic trance by virtue of the constant repetition of similar sounds. Has any devotional practice ever been spared this fate of becoming meaningless? Very likely not. All the less so, because they are all meaningless in themselves, and only embody exactly as much meaning as the man who employs them knows how to bestow upon them. Perhaps no religious leader, with the single exception of Buddha, has realised this; most of them believed that what was useful to them would be useful to every one. All the great Indian Bhaktas have praised the mere repetition of the name of God as the most effective spiritual exercise. They were justified for themselves: in their exalted souls this repetition awakened all the mental images which they could connect with Him, in a higher degree than any cumbersome prayer which demanded more attention to the wording, and at the same time could never imply anything like as much as the name of God meant to them. The same exercise was less useful to their disciples, whose souls were not devoured by the same fervour, and for their pupils it soon ceased to mean anything at all. – It is probably impossible that a formula will ever be found which is capable, as such, of keeping alive religious content. Rites are desirable because they stimulate the recreation of religious content; dogmas are always unsatisfactory because they falsify it. Luther, in this connection, has probably given the most impressive example. I know of few greater religious experiences than his; what he understood by 'justification by faith' was something so immense, so profound an inner religious experience as has, perhaps, been vouchsafed in the whole history of Christianity only to St. Augustine beside himself. But now as to the formula of 'justification by faith' in itself! It is perhaps one of the most unfortunate which has ever been found, perhaps the most superficial of all possible formulæ. It positively compels man to accept the idea that the fact of recognising a particular set of dogmata is sufficient to justify and save the soul; that all profounder aspirations are superficial if not evil. Luther's formula has

had a corresponding effect upon those who professed it. Lutheran religion developed only too soon into what it is, on the whole, to-day: a cheap believing-to-be-true of certain dogmata, together with an even cheaper trust in God's goodness; a religiosity which precludes all profound experience. There is real tragedy in the continued effect of Luther's experience of God. This tragedy seems all the greater when we have recognised that it was inevitable. Luther's personal experience was simply unique; it could not be generalised, it could hardly become fruitful. Martin Luther was not universal enough to act as a beneficent personal example. And it fell precisely to his lot to inaugurate a new era.

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YESTERDAY towards sundown I saw the one show-saint of whom my Indian friends had told me that he was to be taken seriously. He made a great impression upon me. Not because he has already sat for seven years in a receptacle like a dovecot, which he only leaves once a day in order to bathe in the Ganges, and because, through the whole of this long period, he has never said a word; not because his gymnosophic existence represents the completion of a successful activity as a teacher – in this connection almost every Indian is worthy of admiration, because almost every one of them is capable of renouncing the world at a moment's notice and ending his days in poverty and seclusion: the saint impressed me through his highly intelligent and wonderfully spiritualised expression. His eye revealed nothing of that moist glamour which grows with emotional hallucination, his traits showed nothing of that estrangement which is simultaneously a sign of the derangement of the inner equilibrium. His consciousness is, no doubt, wrapped up completely in the experiences of his inner life, but what it reflects must be truly his inmost self, for otherwise his expression could not be so real; he looks as self-contained and strong as any man of action. If only he would speak, he could reveal much, but he is speechless. I can well understand it. The desire for communication disappears in proportion to the advance in interiorisation, and he who does

not possess the temperament of the scientist, the man who does not to this extent remain a child of the world, no matter how unworldly his aims may be, becomes ever more monosyllabic until he finally becomes dumb. The explanation is that everything extreme is exclusive. The man who has literally got behind his thoughts knows that his real meaning is not communicable, because all peculiarity is unique and can only be understood by one individual, in the same way as the existence of a particular personality can only be 'lived' by this one personality. Whatever men like myself strive for, appears, from the Atman point of view, as a compromise. What am I doing in trying to determine metaphysical reality objectively? I am looking for a scheme which would circumscribe it from all sides, and I might find this scheme. But after doing this, that which I mean would not be expressed as such, but only its contours would have been described. Of course, it might seem as if I had done more, for if the contours are clear as well as correct, every other intelligent human being could place the content there for himself, so that he might believe I had shown the 'thing.' But I would not really have done this, because it is impossible. All scientific expression is only a frame for that of which one must be conscious anyhow in order to recognise it; the man who is not possessed of a self, or of a self-consciousness similar to my own, will never understand what I mean, even if I found the best possible definition. The holy man to whom the progress of science seems a matter of indifference, therefore prefers to keep his knowledge for himself, since he cannot express it as such.

According to modern European ideas, the life of such a man seems altogether worthless; for he does nothing, does not even teach, lives only for himself and allows himself, moreover, to be supported through the charity of his fellows. The Indians regard such a life as being more valuable than that of the most active philanthropist. They are grateful for his existence, they count themselves blessed that he is among them, and they deem it an honour to be allowed to contribute to his sustenance. This expresses the same spiritual idealism of which I had an opportunity to speak already in Ceylon: it is

a necessity to the nobler individual to serve his ideals, and he needs to do this with the appearance of selflessness. But how are we to understand that precisely the inactive holy man embodies the ideal of the Indians? – Here I touch upon a decisive element in his outlook on the world. Undoubtedly the facts are not as the Theosophists would have them, who cannot shake off their occidentalism, and justify the facts by interpreting them in saying that the Yogi actually works much more than the worldly worker, only he works in another sphere; he is sending out ceaselessly astral and mental vibrations which are more beneficial to the rest of humanity than all earthly toil. That may be; but that is not what the Indians mean. They mean that action, even good action, is not intrinsically important. Only being is of real significance. Why want to make humanity happier, wiser, better, when everybody stands on the very level to which he has worked himself up in the course of his previous incarnations, when he experiences just as much good, suffers just as much as he deserves? It is altogether impossible to help others directly; not even the most energetic nor the best organised charity reduces the sins and the sufferings of this world. Since unhappiness and happiness depend upon an inner condition, even the most favourable change in external circumstances could not make any essential difference. Of course, benevolence, working for others, beneficence, self-sacrifice, have been ordained – but why? So that the man who does good shall progress inwardly, not because in so doing he helps others much. Man is to do good for his own sake; it belongs to Sadhana, which leads to perfection. The man who is perfect, or nearly so, needs this exercise no longer. He need act no more, nor perform anything; he has attained to the goal of all possible work. He is truly selfless, beyond the fetters of the ego; whatever he may do is meaningless for him. But for the others? It does not matter about the others in the sense in which the West, in its superstition, believes that one can help others materially. Altruism is not worth a farthing more than egoism, in fact it can be more corrupting in so far as it purchases the gain of the man who practises it at the expense of the disadvantage of

many others. It is hardly possible to benefit another person without encouraging him in his selfishness; for such a man perceives that his selfish wishes are taken seriously, and this influence is corrupting. It makes him think first of all of his personal happiness, it makes it more difficult for him to become free, and everything depends on liberation (Mukti) alone. One can only be truly of use to others by giving them an example. And the Yogi, who is beyond all earthly fetters, beyond labour and work, beyond egoism and altruism, beyond in- and disin-clination, presents the highest example of all. For this reason, his existence among men is more valuable than the life of the most useful of workers.

I will not probe to-day how far this attitude is applicable on the whole. It is, at any rate, certain that it contains two truths which are valid in general. The first of these is that work is only a means, not an end. It is certainly true that a man's inner necessity for work proves the youth of his soul. If a crude man does not work he deteriorates, he precludes the possibility of progress for himself; a Grand-Seigneur does not need to do anything, and still remains on his high level; and the sage is altogether superior to all need for occupation. All eternal values have reference to being, not to performance; performance possesses real significance only in so far as it substantiates being. Nothing illustrates this truth more clearly than Western civilisation, which is built upon the opposite point of view. The Westerners live for their work, they deem it the most important, the most essential of all things, they judge all being according to its efficacy. With the result that their performances probably outstrip everything which has ever been done upon earth; life, however, is the loser as never before. The more I see of the East, the more unimportant the type of the modern Westerner seems to me. He has abdicated his life in favour of a means to it. – The second absolute truth which lies at the bottom of the Indian attitude to this world is that good action benefits essentially only ourselves, not others. The most enormous presumption, coupled with pathetic misunderstanding, is contained in the belief which animates Western charity. It is a good thing that this charity

exists: it advances the charitable; that it often damages those who receive such charity is certain, but their loss is, on the whole, probably smaller than the advantage which the others gain by it. But their gains would be many times greater if they did not live in the delusion of doing good to others: of giving rather than taking themselves; of being allowed to count upon gratitude. This delusion often costs them their reward. Let us look at our typical benefactors: they are generally Pharisees of the worst kind, self-admiring, self-complacent, aggressive, pre-potent, tactless and inconsiderate, a moral plague for their clients. If they knew that they really helped themselves, not others, by dispensing with their superfluity, that they therefore had more cause to be grateful to the poor than to expect gratitude from them, then their activities would be more fraught with blessing. It would accelerate their progress, would make them seem more lovable, above all, it would produce, in the souls of the poor, not that inner resistance which the demand for gratitude awakens in most of them, and to which so much of the inner shrinking is due which predominates among our poor; then, lastly, less stress would be laid in the appraising of life's inessentials. Anyone who imagines that he is doing goodness knows what in satisfying some sufferer, professes, in so doing, the point of view according to which material well-being is the main essential.

There is actually much more charity among the natives of India, as in the whole of the East, than among us. The sense of belonging together is so strong there, the consciousness of being unique so little developed, that no extraordinary determination is necessary in order to let one's neighbour participate in one's possessions. Apart from catastrophe, real famine, the poor in the East seem to be exposed to the danger of starvation far less than they are with us. Every one gives as far as he can to the needy, supports poor relatives, the sick, children and wanderers; he does so as a matter of course, without making any fuss about it; he does not believe that he is doing anything very special, and above all he does not count upon eternal gratitude. He knows that what he is doing benefits himself. For this reason there is, in the whole of the vast

Orient, incomparably less resentment among the poor towards the wealthy, a much lower estimation of riches, and a much more free attitude towards material needs and their satisfaction. No needy individual makes any fuss about accepting support; it would never occur to any priest to be particularly grateful for sacrificial gifts; there the existence of a holy man, who does nothing and is supported by his fellow-men, is a matter of course. It ought to be like that everywhere. But the matter-laden West will hardly climb to so elevated a position.

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BENARES is overflowing with the diseased and the infirm. No wonder: a great number of the pilgrims come here in order to die on the shores of the Ganges. I have indeed, during these days, seen more of that which induced Prince Siddhartha once upon a time to leave this world than ever before. And yet I have never felt less compassion. These sufferers suffer so little, they have, above all, no fear whatever of death. Most of them are superlatively happy to be allowed to end their days near the holy river; and as to their infirmity – well, that must be endured; it will not take very long anyhow. And some old sin is no doubt scored off in the process. – The faith of the Indians is said to be pessimistic. I know of none which is less so. It believes in a scheme of the world in which every being rises upward inevitably, in which, at most, one man in millions of millions succeeds in falling lower. The whole processes of the world bear him along in so far as he progresses, and he must overcome all resistance before he can deteriorate. The aim of this ascent is, of course, not one which may seem desirable to the Westerner. His soul is still too young to strive after liberation. But it is certain that to the Hindu liberation means the same state of bliss as Heaven does to the Christian.

I have spent this day with the members of the local Ramakrishna Mission. They have founded an asylum where those who have come to die in Benares can find care and a home. Very few of the sufferers would think of seeking admission;

their physical suffering does not seem to them important enough for that. But a certain number of members of the Mission go on a daily round through the streets of the town and select the infirm old people whose condition seems to them to be worst. I have never been in a hospital with a more cheerful atmosphere. The certainty of salvation sweetens all suffering. And the quality of the love for one's neighbour which animated the male nurses was exquisite. These men are truly real followers of Ramakrishna, the 'God-elated.' Full of love and yet understanding everything, not fanatical, not importunate. They are what all 'friends of men' should be.

Intercourse with these men has made me clearly aware of the difference between Indian and Christian piety, even there where both religions approach each other most closely: the Indian does not know the feeling of sinfulness. The word 'sin' appears often enough in their religious literature, if one can believe the translations, but the meaning to which it corresponds is a different one. What we call sin is unknown to the Indian. He cannot know it, since all wrong-doing (just as all good actions) is traced to Maya; failings therefore do not possess metaphysical significance. Every action entails, according to the law of Karma, its natural and inevitable consequence; every one must bear those for himself, no merciful Providence can remove them. Salvation, however, consists in the liberation from all bonds of nature, and once this has been attained, the traces of all actions are wiped out. – But in making this observation the real problem has not yet been touched upon. The Christian consciousness of sin depends less on the fact of the sinfulness believed in than upon the commandment to bear it in mind constantly, and this is what the Indian doctrine of salvation forbids. It teaches: as man thinks, so will he become. If he thinks of himself constantly as bad and low, he will become bad. Man ought to think of himself, not as badly as possible, but as well as possible; not, of course, in such a way that he exalts his actual position, but so that he never doubts that he can become better. Nothing is considered more conducive to progress than optimism, nothing more conducive to decay than lack of self-confidence. The

man who does not believe in himself is considered to be an atheist in the real sense of the word. The highest ideal would be if a man could think of himself continuously, not as the most sinful of sinners, as according to Christian doctrine, but as perfect; such a man would no doubt attain perfection even in this life.

Once more, Hinduism is absolutely in the right; perfect understanding of the soul speaks from the commandment forbidding the contemplation of sinfulness; nothing could in principle be more erroneous than the Christian point of view. Undoubtedly innumerable failures of Western humanity can be traced back to this psychological error. To-day it may probably be regarded as having been overcome. Not only the emancipated spirits among us reject the traditional doctrine; the same is happening more and more within those branches of the Christian Church which have remained alive and therefore continue to develop. This concept of sin is the remnant of the conceptual complex of crude times. In those days it was beneficial enough: our reckless ancestors could only be held in check by the constant fear of the wrath of God, by nothing but crises of contrition could they be led to a higher condition. Even to-day the consciousness of sin is beneficial to many. There are not a few who delight in it so much that they will continue to adhere to it in spite of superior insight. Masochism is deeply rooted in men; up to a certain degree every one feels his vitality heightened by being violated by a superior power; a note of voluptuousness can clearly be heard from the contrition of most Christian penitents. All the same, every spiritualised type of humanity will, sooner or later, have to reject the concept of sinfulness; it is only harmful from a certain point onwards, because, in and by itself, it is false. Of course, there is sin – we call sin that which man thinks or does in opposition to the God within him; in this sense every profound human being will know the consciousness of sin in all time to come, and this will contribute to his salvation in proportion as it becomes clear to him, for recognition alone causes an immediate improvement. But there is no sinfulness in the Christian sense, no sin which is only and essentially enslaving.

Man, as he is, is the product of his own actions and those of his forbears. He experiences, during every moment of his existence, the reward which Christianity saves up for the hereafter. And nothing which he has done condemns him. So long as the soul is alive, so long it is capable of rising higher, in fact, it generally reaches the glorious radiance of day most quickly from the blackest of black nights, because its terrors force the soul to the recognition, which twilight does not necessarily give to it – that and in what direction it has gone astray. – Here, as in so many other cases, the Indians are the older and the wiser people compared with ourselves. However, not only wisdom, folly too has its advantages. It was in Adyar, I think, that I pondered upon the merits of the absurd belief in eternal damnation, and how much their profounder teaching had damaged the mass of the Hindus. The position about the consciousness of sinfulness is similar. It creates a pathos which cannot be supplied by anything else, it gives a specific profundity to experience, which stands or falls with it. Of all people, the Puritans and the Moslems have most, and the Hindus least, character. This is to be explained by the fact that the latter believe in a massive, unalterable destiny, which appears to man as something external; and the former believes in his own absolute autonomy. The Indian faith corresponds to reality; in a perfectly cultured individual it produces the highest of which mankind can conceive. It devitalises, on the other hand, the uncultured individual; it tempts him to let himself go, to live slackly. For him it is probably better to possess a motive for constant self-control in the beneficent fear of an external power, no matter how fictitious it may be.

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THE man in the holy city who expects to meet only saintly and wise men, to meet only the expression of real religiosity and profound understanding, will suffer grave disappointment in Benares: nowhere on earth, on the contrary, does one meet with more superstition and more lack of understanding, more mercantile priesthood, and more well-calculated swindles. It is not possible that the mass should not be superstitious in a

place where visible and tangible phenomena conduce so much to such a belief; only a developed individual can differentiate with certainty between the symbol and the empirical reality. And it would be inhuman if no people could be found who make money as far as possible out of such misunderstanding. Among the Yogis all too great a proportion train themselves not upwards towards God, but downwards towards the animals: for, if a man gains power over muscles not usually subject to the will, for instance, if he learns consciously to regulate the beating of his heart, this means that he is retrogressing to the condition of the worm; just as, if a man can let himself be buried for weeks without taking harm, it means that he can do what hibernating animals can do even better. These Hatha Yogis are all of them insipid and are regarded as such; the whole of the energy which, at best, is controlled by their intellects, is confined to the body. And probably most of the pilgrims are more or less superstitious. This must be so where psychic phenomena are regarded as primary, for only the intellectually gifted and cultured individual possesses enough self-criticism in order to differentiate, without external assistance, between true and false ideas. The mass, after all, in so far as it is to progress in this world, is better served by crude realistic nature; for this reason the Christians and the Mohammedans make a much more genuine impression than the Hindus. The former accept only the tangible; that is to say, something real, nothing imagined, no matter how small a portion of the whole of reality this may be; whereas the latter, intent only too frequently upon unreality, ultimately become unreal themselves.

But it is just in this that the profundity of Indian philosophy is proved, that it sees in error everywhere the expression of truth, and thus does not exclude anything from life. The Indian spirit has recognised long ago that all empiric formations are strictly conditioned; it knows that it depends upon externals whether a man thinks wrongly or rightly, whether his actions are good or evil, whether he believes in reality or unreality; it knows that it is a matter of accident (from the point of view of one given life, without reference to the totality

of the past) whether a man appears a criminal or a saint. Ultimately all appearances have the same significance. If a tiny cog is moved in the brain, the wise man becomes a fool; particularly favourable external circumstances allow a small individual to appear great; an experience which by accident has not been made prevents the seeker after God from ultimate enlightenment: who can assert, then, that manifestation possesses a necessary relationship to being? It is therefore not a haphazard product of mental construction if faith in false phenomena is put on the same footing, metaphysically, as faith in true ones: the man incapable of understanding must establish his relation with divinity in a different form from the other who is capable of recognition. Exoterism and Esoterism possess a more essential relationship in India than they do in Catholicism. The latter affirms only a pragmatic connection between its higher and lower forms of expression: that is to say, exoteric and esoteric truth are felt to be of equal value in so far as they fulfil the same purpose. The Indian, of course, affirms the same relationship; but he knows, moreover, that error can be equivalent to true knowledge, not only in the pragmatic but also in the ontologic sense: under certain empirical circumstances – intellectual deficiency, lack of education, pronounced emotionalism – the consciousness of metaphysical reality appears in the form of belief in the unreal, whereas it is revealed as pure recognition to the great mind. It is a matter of indifference in principle whether the connection of particular ideas with their ultimate meaning existed from the beginning, or whether it became established subsequently; the latter is almost always the case; metaphysical connections are valid independently of history. No matter what happens, irrespective of all causes, and at whatever time: events will always and everywhere confirm the truth recognised by the Rishis.

Thus, there is no breach between Indian error and Indian wisdom; it seems possible everywhere to reach the one from the other. In our case this is different, because we still cling to the substantiality of names and forms, we still want to grasp the totality of life with the intellect. Thus, truth seems to us to

disprove error, perfect expression to destroy imperfect expression, and when two concepts contradict each other logically, we hold that only one of them can be correct. We find ourselves in this, as in so many other directions, in a more rudimentary stage of development. For this reason the majority among us are not yet able to understand the whole profundity of Indian wisdom. The Bhagavad-Gita, for instance perhaps the most beautiful work of the literature of the world, appears to many as a philosophically worthless compilation, because a great many different directions of thought affirm themselves within it simultaneously. To the Indian, the Bhagavad-Gita seems to be absolutely unified in spirit. Shankaracharya, the founder of Advaita philosophy, the most radical form of monism, which has ever existed, was in practice a dualist, that is to say, a supporter of Sankhya-Yoga, during the whole of his life, and a polytheist in his religious practice. How was this possible? – Shankhara's logical competence is beyond question. But he was more than a mere logician. Thus it seemed a matter of course to him that different means should be used for different ends. In practice no one gets beyond dualism; it is impossible to think, wish, strive for, act at all without implicitly postulating duality. Why then deny it? It alters nothing. On the other hand, the practical insurmountability of dualism does not prove that it belongs to Being; in all probability it depends rather upon the nature of our instrument of recognition. Being may nevertheless be 'one, without a second'; which, on the other hand, does not prevent it from manifesting itself in manifoldness. Thus, an extreme monist may pray to many gods in so far as they facilitate the realisation of the One. – Shankhara's point of view is opposed by others: there are schools which ascribe duality even to Being, and again others which present it both as unity and as duality; there are theistic, pantheistic, atheistic interpretations. In so far as they are meant to be direct expressions of metaphysical reality, they are all regarded as equally justified and orthodox: it is manifestly impossible to arrive at a valid decision on the farther side of the domain of reason; there, all philosophies can only be ways of expression. For practical

purposes of recognition, Sankhya-Yoga alone is recognised, for all practical recognition demonstrably presupposes duality. As a believer finally, every one may take what view is most congenial to him, for in this case there can be no question of any other conception of truth than that of pragmatism. Are the Indians, then, eclectic? Indeed they are not; they are only the opposite of rationalists. They do not suffer from the superstition that metaphysical truths are capable of an exhaustive embodiment in any logical system; they know that spiritual reality can never be determined by one, but, if at all, by several intellectual co-ordinates. The fact that monism and dualism contradict each other means just as little in this connection as the contradiction between the English and the metric system. Of course, there are people who swear by the one or the other unity of measures: that is their personal affair. It is even undeniable that the one evinces advantages over the other for this or that purpose: the man who does not take advantage of this fact is a fool. But never, never have the Indian sages – I am speaking only of these, I do not mean the Pandits, the scholars – fallen into our typical error of taking any intellectual formation seriously in the metaphysical sense. These formations possess no more density and are no more substantial than any Maya formation. They may express essentials in more or less clear and more or less convincing symbols – this more or less decides their value – but it is never intrinsic in itself. The Indians, however, are concerned only with being. They see it in everything, through everything, in spite of everything. Thus, they are not led astray by intellectual insufficiency, or by contradictions. They read the Gita literally as 'the song of the Hallowed one,' as the expression of a divine spirit, for it is He who speaks to them, no matter how defective its body.

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HOW is it that the real meaning of Indian wisdom has been recognised so imperfectly in Europe, in spite of the many learned works which have dealt with it? In so far as general causes are in question at all, the main fault should probably be attributed to the external circumstance, that our most important

investigators have only stayed in India cursorily if at all, and have never gained contact with its living spirit. Of course it is possible to understand the spirit of a given expression without personal and local knowledge – for instance, a language as such, the letter of a philosophy; it must be granted to the West that they have understood India in this sense better than India has understood itself. But what a man or a people have wanted to say, what its innermost meaning has been, can be perceived in its expression only in the one case where it appears as the perfect embodiment of its meaning. This happens very rarely; it is very questionable whether even Kant's philosophy, of all philosophies the most univocal, could really be understood by an alien out of touch with our living thought. Now the mental creations of the Indians can be regarded, less than any others in the literature of the world, as perfect embodiments; they are not perfect already because their originators were not concerned, in our sense, with adequate expression. They were concerned neither with scientific exactitude nor with artistic pregnancy of expression. Their writings aimed at something quite different: they were, on the one hand, to be the skeleton of the living tradition, on the other, a means for realising spiritual truths, and lastly, an easily intelligible and retainable method of fixing them in conventional symbols for the benefit of the uninitiated. Not for the benefit of those who wanted to learn. They were admittedly, in fact, not meant to be expressions in our sense of the word. How should it be possible in such circumstances to discover the meaning from the letter? – It is quite intelligible, though regrettable, that the equally popular and mistaken parallel should have been drawn between Indian and Hellenic and even Kantian philosophies: a fact erroneously ascertained cannot serve as the basis for correct theories.

Indian philosophy – in so far as it may be described at all in this way – is, to go to the essential point at once, incomparable with ours, already because it is not based upon the work of thought. Think of the traditional Indian method of teaching as it is referred to every now and then in the Upanishads: if a pupil puts a question, the teacher does not answer him directly,

but merely says: Come and live with me for ten years. And during these ten years he does not teach him as we understand it: he merely gives him a phrase to meditate. The disciple is not meant to think about it, to analyse it, to evolve, construct something out of it – he is to sink himself, as it were, into the phrase until it has taken complete possession of his soul. Kant used to say to his students: You are not to learn a special philosophy from me, but how to think. That is just what the Indian Guru never teaches his chelah. In so far as he studies in a manner known to us at all, he learns by heart – he does, in fact, the precise opposite of what we regard as desirable. – We must remember, too, the famous Sutra style: the most important thoughts and teachings of the Indians appear in such mutilated brevity that they simply cannot be understood without commentary: this is done so that the pupil shall not be tempted at any price to study in our way. According to Indian conviction, Brahmavidya, the realisation of being (the only one which is regarded as worthy to be striven for), is not attainable by the processes of thinking. Thinking is believed to move in its original sphere, without ever leading beyond it. It is believed to be equally incapable of leading to metaphysical recognition as the senses. Just as no amount of development can lead the senses to perceive thought, so no amount of thinking could lead to metaphysical realisation. This can be attained only by the man who reaches a new level of consciousness. Metaphysical truth appears to this deeper state of consciousness as 'given' in the same direct way as outer nature is given to the eye and the world of concepts to the intellect. Therefore, for purposes of study, it is not a question of the work of thought, but of becoming profound in oneself: it is not a question of how to fathom reality by means of a given instrument, but of how to fashion a new and better one. The methods of study in India and among us, for purposes of gaining philosophic recognition, are therefore absolutely incomparable: we think, experiment, criticise, define; the Indian practises Yoga. His ideal is to get beyond the boundaries which Kant has laid down for the possibilities of experience, by means of changing one's psychic organism.

From this incomparability of both methods follows the incomparability of their results. The Westerner advances from thought to thought, inducing, deducing, differentiating, integrating; the Indian advances from condition to condition. The former rises higher and higher in the domain of abstractions, from particular to general concepts, from these to ideas, and so forth; the latter changes continuously the form of his consciousness. He has, of course, objectified what he has experienced on various planes, he has done so in conceptual forms; and these concepts are often found identical with ours, as far as words go. The Indians also speak of the Absolute. But whereas this concept means a certain stage of abstraction for us, it means to the Indian rendering an experienced subjective condition objective. It is therefore not a question of identity but of incommensurability. Atman is not a rational idea to the Indian, but the description of an attainable level of consciousness, purusha is not the soul of an imagined world but a principle of experience, and so on. We have, therefore, in every Western philosophy, a systematic context held together by laws of reason where limits are, on the one hand, phenomenal actualities, on the other, the extremest possible abstraction; we have in Indian philosophy an empirical description of the possible ascent of the soul from lower to higher forms of existence. No matter how similar the concepts may be which are used in both cases for the description of the various stages – in essence the philosophies of India and the West are completely incongruous; there is no kind of connection between them.

Of course, one often sees the living kernel of Indian philosophy overgrown by the hard husks of scholasticism. But the man who sees anything essential or necessary in the latter, errs even more than he who sees the essentials of the teaching of St. Thomas in his logical constructions. Both cases mean attempts to present, as a rational connection, what is in reality one of living condition. Such attempts are never successful, can never be successful, and are therefore not to be taken seriously. One must see through them if one wishes to understand what is essential. And this essential is never hard to see

in the case of Indian scholasticism, it is generally as clear as day. The Indians have never been convinced rationalists, as our mediæval philosophers were, for they were not burdened by a Greek tradition. Thus, their logical webs are always threadbare and never strong. All deeper philosophers have known what they really meant. Thus, even among the Indian scholars, the practice of Yoga is regarded as the path to the recognition of being. The Pandits are not thought of in India, as they are among us, as wise men; they are considered as what they are: grammarians and antiquaries.

I mentioned St. Thomas Aquinas: truly, if anything in Western literature can be compared with Indian philosophy, then it is the writings of the great theological doctors. But even this comparison does not lead us far, because they originally pursued the same path in a different direction from the Rishis. The Catholic Church has always only used Yoga in order to strengthen a faith already presupposed to be true, and to lead man in the spirit of this faith towards perfection. The Catholic Church has never wanted to lead men to independent recognition. To induce independent and true recognition was the one intention of all training in the great and difficult art of Raja-Yoga.

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EVERYTHING rational and systematic in Indian philosophy is so much dross; it is scholasticism in the worst sense of the word. Ever since there has been such a thing as philosophy, spiritual knowledge and scholastic thought have gone together: where mind recognises directly (or believes to recognise), which is more than all reason, there a man must be extraordinarily cultured in order to leave its independence intact. Generally he commands reason to prove, *coûte que coûte*, that which he knows already, and as he is sure of truth and therefore does not really need proof, he is content with even dubious demonstration, so long as it demonstrates what he presupposes. It is only thus that it can be explained that so noble a spirit as that of Thomas Aquinas never perceived the insufficiency of his system.

Indian scholasticism is infinitely worse than that of the West (just as the Pandits represent the worst embodiment of the professorial type which I know), because the concepts with which it juggles are originally not intellectual concepts but descriptions of concrete conditions, so that its constructions have no basis whatsoever. But then all Indian philosophy is more or less scholastic. It is useless to defend Shankhara or Ramanuja: as philosophers they were scholastics, that is to say, they started from certain convictions which their thought had to carry out and prove; and this makes them inferior to every critical thinker of the West. Thus, Oldenberg and Thibaut are undoubtedly in the right as opposed to those who try to laud Indian philosophy to the skies. But it involves a serious misunderstanding of the Indian spirit if one supposes it to be completely embodied in any system, or in any definite outlook on the world. Advaita is opposed by Dvaita and Visishtadvaita; monistic metaphysics supplement a dualistic theory of existence and of recognition; the apparently levelling meaning of the logion *tat twam asi* is being cancelled by the most subtle sense for differences, the exhausting tendency of an extreme consciousness of unity is counteracted by the richest growth of myths and gods. In India there is no monism at all, no pantheism, and no consciousness of unity in the Western sense; that is to say, in no case does the impartial recognition of manifoldness suffer anywhere. Far from destroying the wealth of the world of appearances, the teaching of Advaita, as such, implies only one expression of this very wealth; one branch more of the vital tree of the Indian spirit. That is how the Rishis understood it. And if they profess this doctrine personally as opposed to any other, it was done because some peculiar empirical form is the most appropriate to every being for empirical reasons. They regard it as idle to argue about what Brahma was in himself, or even whether he existed, or whether he was manifold or the reverse. The existence of any absolute reality appeared evident to them; and the term Brahman points to this. Whatever idea or image we form of it depends on our mental disposition. The Bhakta will always incline to Theism, the Gnani, on the other hand, towards a

doctrine which stresses unity. For the deeper one penetrates into oneself, the more one's being is realised in consciousness, the stronger does the feeling of unity become; therefore one would have every ground for supposing that, from the point of view of recognition, the doctrine of essential unity is the best expression of metaphysical reality. As investigators, the Rishis were extreme empiricists; they believed only in experience. In so far as one can co-ordinate their philosophy at all in any one of the usual categories, one must describe it as pragmatic. They were, in fact, the ideal pragmatists. They would agree with William James and F. C. S. Schiller, that all living truth is traceable to postulates in concrete; for no manifestation is regarded as metaphysically substantial, every one of them is said to be the product of empirical circumstances, which, in the case of recognition, means that the truth of the individual, as a definite, concrete appearance, depends on his talent, prejudices and wishes. Only, they would add with a smile, that this theory does not pronounce the last word; it only deals with the expression of what we call truth. Its meaning escapes the frame of pragmatism. There is a 'beyond' of manifestation, a realm of pure significance, into which no postulate reaches, which conversely, however, animates all living postulates and lends them substance. The man who has raised his consciousness into this sphere, and knows how to keep it there continuously, is beyond pragmatism; he sees through all postulates; his recognition reflects truly the creative power which reclines within himself, which is the living cause of all appearance. Of such a man one could say that he possessed 'truth'; but this would be an unreal expression; the pragmatist would be perfectly right to regard such a concept as empty (so far as it is a question of living and not of logical truth); for it could be defined only as the expression of meaning, not as meaning itself, and all expression is necessarily relative. It would be most correct to say that the 'scientes' are beyond truth as well as error; that this difference does not exist for them. They live in the domain of pure, living significance, which can manifest itself as well in error as in truth. This significance is a dynamic entity, something purely intense,

which cannot be imagined or conceived as such; wherever and however this may be attempted, we clutch at an insufficient transient manifestation instead of an eternal meaning. Thus, even the Rishi when he must speak, professes necessarily some relatively correct system which can be defined by postulates. But one can give this meaning directly; one can think and act from it, and then it seems irrelevant exactly what one thinks and does.

The exemplary and eternally valuable quality in Indian philosophy is the spirit of profundity from which it emanates. All its manifestations can be imagined in a more perfect form. I do not believe that one can penetrate into being more deeply; it seems to me that the extremest profundity has been attained here. The Indians have overcome the static concept of truth and replaced it by a dynamic one which transfigures its meaning: we too will do this sooner or later. We too will realise, one day, that recognition of being cannot be attained even by the most far-reaching perfection of our conceptual apparatus, not by the most exhaustive exploration of our consciousness as it is, but only by the acquisition of a new and higher form of consciousness. Man must rise above his secular instrument for recognition; he must get beyond the biological boundaries whose classical abstract expression is contained in Kant's criticism; he must grow beyond his present gauge; his consciousness must, instead of cleaving to the surface, learn to reflect the spirit of profundity which is the primary cause of his being. This higher development has begun in India; hence the miracle of India's recognition of being and its wisdom of life. It is for us to continue.

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THE fact that the wise men, to whose intuitions everything valuable in Indian metaphysics is traceable, have attained to that most desirable and profound layer of consciousness, is admittedly due to Yoga practice. It signifies the practical foundation-stone of all Indian wisdom. Whereas we base all our hopes on genius, they expect most things from training. – The other day a Hindu said to me: That you need great minds

in order to discover truth is a sign how uncultured you are; you are dependent upon extraordinary accidents. Truth, after all, is there, to be found by everybody, it is contained in the smallest phenomenon: after sufficient training every one can perceive it. What supreme irony that you, the impatient ones, must wait for the birth of an unusual individual in order to become conscious of something which is a matter of course (for every truth is a matter of course!) – The Hindu is undoubtedly right in principle. Our dependence on talent is somewhat mortifying. But is it possible to escape from it? That it is possible is proved by the mere existence of the marvel of Indian wisdom. In so far as its originators are known, we are not concerned with great minds in our sense of the word. It is possible to draw conclusions concerning the quality of a genius, his originality, his potentiality, the wealth of his talents, with great certainty from his style and tone: I do not know of one in the whole of Indian history, with the single exception of Buddha, who could be regarded in the Western sense as a great mind; I cannot think of one Indian philosopher who could bear even an approximate comparison with our great thinkers. Shankhara, Vyara, as well as Ramanuja were, at most, philosophers of the second rank. And yet many of the profoundest cases of insight come from them and not from the Rishis of antiquity; and yet, Indian wisdom is the profoundest which exists. I am not asserting something which cannot be proved; the further we get, the more closely do we approach to the views of the Indians. Psychological research confirms, step by step, the assertions contained, in no matter how insufficient a theoretical setting, within the old Indian science of the soul. Again and again the results of philosophical criticism agree with the mythically cloaked intuitions of the old Rishis; and with Bergson even metaphysics have turned in the direction in which India has marched from the beginning. For his metaphysics resemble no one else's more than they do that of the Indian Acvagosha.

India owes its recognition admittedly to the training according to the Yoga system. Its underlying idea is the following: by heightening his power of concentration man gains posses-

sion of an instrument of immense power. If he controls this instrument perfectly it is possible for him to enter into direct contact with any object in the world, to act at a distance, to create like a god, to attain whatever he wishes. He has to direct his concentrated attention only towards one point, and he then knows everything concerning it. He need only turn to a problem to understand and solve it. The perfect Yogi is said not to require any material tools to be effective in the world, no scientific apparatus in order to attain to recognition; he is capable of everything, and can experience everything directly. – It is a matter of indifference whether there has ever been a perfect Yogi. The essential, decisive factor is, as I already explained in Adyar, the obvious correctness of the principle of Yoga theory, the way in which it does justice to all proven facts of experience, and the inner probability even of the most extraordinary phenomena which are described as attainable. Undoubtedly the power of concentration is the real propelling power of the whole of our psychic mechanism. Nothing heightens our capacity for performance as much as its increase; every success, no matter in what domain, can be traced back to the intelligent exploitation of this power. No obstacle can resist permanently an exceptional power of will, that is to say, one which has been concentrated to the utmost; concentrated attention forces every problem sooner or later to reveal all of its aspects which are capable of recognition by a specific nature. Yoga philosophy asserts that a sufficiently high degree of concentration can substitute natural talents. What is it that characterises ultimately the special qualifications of the mathematician? The Yogis reply that it is the capacity to envisage mathematical relationships so clearly, and to observe them so attentively, that their character and their possible consequences become completely evident to him. For they are there, they exist in the mental world, just like any object in nature, it is only a question of perceiving them. If it did not concern itself with something objectively valid, something existing by itself no matter whether it is recognised or not, there could not be such a thing as mathematical science. All recognition is perception; reflection, induction, deduction,

are only means to attain to perception. It is not for nothing that, even in the case of invisible relationships, people say, I *see* how matters stand; in fact, one perceives also an abstract connection. It is unjustified to affirm a difference in principle between the observation of an external object, the visualisation in the imagination of a painter, the conception of a thought and the mental vision of an idea. It is always the same problem: that of perception. Only the objects and the organs differ. But an idea, as a phenomenon, is something equally external as the tree in front of us; we either do or do not perceive it. Just as cognisance in the world of sensuous perception, so in the world of ideas understanding is solely dependent upon the degree of clarity with which the individual sees. From this two things follow. First of all, the objective meaning of what we call talent: talent is the idiosyncrasy of an individual who perceives especially one kind of appearance; the bad mathematician is the man who fails to attach his powers of concentration to abstract symbols and their relation; this interpretation is proved to be correct by the fact that it is possible to 'suggest' faculties to a man in a hypnotic trance which he does not possess otherwise. – The second and most important conclusion to be drawn from the previous general consideration is, however: the man who is complete master of his psychic apparatus so that he can apply equally well his power of concentration in every direction, the man who is capable of fixing perfect attention upon any given point, upon any given problem will, if his power of concentration as such is strong enough, recognise every connection instantaneously which he turns to (because he sees this connection with perfect clarity): he will perceive truth everywhere directly. Such a man obviously would not need any scientific apparatus, he could dispense with all logic, all thinking altogether, for these are only means towards perception; he would not even need unusual talent, for important results can be attained by imperfect means if they are perfectly controlled. And here again the analogy of experience speaks in favour of this theory from the beginning: is it not the essence of genius to perceive directly and instantaneously what others attain to eventually by round-

about paths, if at all, after passing through a thousand intermediate stages? It is really possible to substitute talents by training, in fact, to get further than talents alone could lead one. For this reason it is not at all extraordinary that the Indian sages, in spite of their unquestionably smaller talents, have evinced deeper insight than the greatest genii of the West.

So much for Yoga philosophy. I do not want to assert that it teaches literally what I have described here, but I am sure my description implies a possible embodiment of its ultimate significance. I do not know that anything can be said against this; I am convinced that it corresponds to reality. I am convinced, moreover, that the Indian discovery of the fundamental significance of the power of concentration and, above all, the method of heightening it, is one of the most important discoveries which has ever been made. We would be fools if we did not take advantage of it. We are so much more vital than the Indians, have so much more psychic capital at our disposal, that who knows where we could get to if we only developed ourselves sufficiently? – I am not merely anticipating here, I am speaking from experience. At the very beginning of my stay in India I once discussed inspiration with a Yogi. I told him what we Westerners understand by this concept, and how it was the tragedy of all those occasionally visited by inspiration, to which they owed the art they had produced, that inspiration never stays; it is not susceptible of retention. Here the Yogi interrupted me. Why does it not stay? Apparently only because you do not know how to retain it. Of course it can be retained; it only implies a special and by no means supernatural condition of consciousness, which can become the normal condition like any other one. If I were in your place I would never rest – since your very best, as you say, emanates from an inspired state – until inspiration became my normal condition. This advice struck me very much at the time. I began to practise according to the Raja-Yoga method; instead of transposing, as heretofore, the inspiration of the moment immediately into thoughts and words, I tried to fix in my mind the region from which it emanated, and if possible to rise into it altogether. And behold!

the attempt was successful. It was possible to remain for considerable periods in a state which otherwise disappeared after a few seconds: I began to be conscious of an even higher condition. I tried for myself what the Yogis asserted: that every condition of consciousness is phenomenologically equivalent to any other. Just as every one can let his spirit roam in the external world, which can be perceptible by the senses, the realm which appears as a fixed actuality, it is also possible to wander about in the world of mental images when the mind has been 'stilled,' when the imagination, the 'intoxicated monkey,' has learnt to be quiescent, and to survey one's concepts as calmly as one surveys trees. And if one learns, moreover, not to transpose the ideas just formed into thoughts and concepts immediately, but to hold them fast as such, then one experiences what suggested to Plato his doctrine of ideas. But the world of ideas does not signify the highest stage: high above it towers the domain of pure significance, and he who dwells there continuously may well be omniscient. I need hardly assert specifically that I did not get so far. I have, however, frequently gone through the same experience as Plato: I have surveyed ideas like objects. During such periods I perceived their connection, their origin, their meaning; I did not have to think; and sometimes I succeeded literally in getting behind and round them. I practised the power which philosophers, from Plotinus to Schelling, have so inaptly described as 'intellectual contemplation' (it is not intellectual, but just as empirical as any other, only from a different plane of consciousness). I perceived directly what is otherwise only deduced indirectly. Since having these experiences I am no longer surprised at the profundity of Indian insight. Recognition is inevitable as soon as one has learnt to observe psychic events with perfect attention. For every apparently ultimate instance can serve, in its turn, as a new basis of observation, from which it is no more difficult to keep one's eyes on concepts and mental images as on external objects, and it is as easy to survey ideal relationships as empirical relationships of faith. This explains why the Indians, without previous epistemological criticism, and in spite of the most meagre scientific

equipment, have recognised rightly metaphysical reality at once in its relation to the world of ideas and appearances; and it also explains why their psychology, no matter what may be said against its expression, reaches to incomparably greater depths than ours has done up to to-day. This also explains ultimately the unique profundity of Indian wisdom on the whole. The great Rishis have lived in their depths continuously. No wise man of the West has ever done this. Plato, who was doubtless capable of visualising ideas, did not know how to gaze beyond them, and therefore failed to determine their real character; he overestimated them. Moreover, he only saw them occasionally: thus, he only pointed to them again and again, or else he shed light on the world of appearances in inspired moments. Plotinus has done nothing but descend from Atman; his sayings have the Atman behind them as it were. Fichte and Hegel attempted, on their part, to formulate appearances from profundity, and successfully so; Nietzsche cast flashes of lightning, as it were, upon them in occasional flights: not one of them has really lived in his depth. No matter how talented they were, they had not developed their power of concentration sufficiently; they remained dependent upon empirical accidents. No mind of the West was sufficiently capable of concentration in order to live continuously in his deepest self. This lack is most in evidence perhaps in the case of Goethe. This man has probably confined in words more enlightened rays from profundity than any other man of recent periods; but at the same time he was less capable than any other great man of remaining in the region from which they emanated. His normal existence took place on the surface, and if he plunged down into deep waters he had to recover all the longer on the surface. His Faust represents the transfigured expression of this insufficiency. In this poem we see condition ranged upon condition, and no succeeding condition gives expression to an intrinsically more profound state than the preceding one; nor does the last act represent any fulfilment of the whole of life, but it simply shows an additional condition, which by chance happens to be the last, and which, equally accidentally, is valued as the highest.

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ALL inner progress from the moment that one's organs are mature depends, in fact, upon concentration; my own development confirms this absolutely. I was no more stupid at the age of twenty than I am to-day. But my capacities were not co-ordinated, and as no single one of them, regarded by itself, is remarkable, I could not achieve anything of consequence. When my literary and philosophic tendency became dominant, I acquired an ideal focus in which to collect the rays of my spirit, and the more these became concentrated, the more capable did I become. I grew from being a republic gradually into a monarchy, each year I became more master of myself, and correspondingly stronger in mind. For a long period this task of collecting my forces, which I had at an early stage recognised as the main problem of my self-education, was made difficult by the weakness of my nerves; every effort was followed by a collapse, which to some extent confined me to superficiality. Of course, my *Gefüge der Welt* is not a superficial work, for at that time I was borne along by the passion of early youth; but my *Unsterblichkeit* has shallow places, and this is only because my nerves were not healthy at the time of its creation. If they had been stronger, this work, which is nearer to my heart than any others,[1] would not have been worse than my *Prolegomena*; for I conceived the latter in the same year, only fortunately I did not work it out in detail until three years later. Profundity as a propelling force is a direct function of nervous energy: the man who cannot strain his brain cannot think profoundly, no matter how profound his intuitions may be. It would appear daring to measure profundity of thought by a dynamic gauge, but it is possible, because the penetrating power of the mental rays depends upon the degree of their density, and they in turn depend upon the existing nervous force. But in making this observation, the importance of concentration for development is not yet exhausted. The more the mind collects itself, the more quiet does it become, the more competent as an instrument. As long as the surface is in constant motion the intuitions from

[1] I have partly rewritten this book in preparing its third edition, so that now it really represents what it was always meant to be.

the depths cannot interpenetrate it. No matter how often they may shoot out like lightning, the period of illumination is too short to transfigure the surface. The collected intellect does not only allow the intuitions to pass through it, it serves them as a pliant organ, so that ultimately the whole soul becomes a means of expression for the inmost light. Thus I find myself fuller in content from year to year. Instead of cold reason gaining the upper hand more and more over the living forces of the soul, I develop conversely from the man of reason towards growing concreteness. The intellect serves me more and more as a pliant means of expression, after having been my master once upon a time. All these progressive steps are the direct result of increasing concentration. In all departments, with the partial exception of that of the fine arts, age creates the most important work, although productive power, as such, is probably at its greatest height in all people in the thirties. This is due to the fact that the mind only becomes collected at a later period to the degree which permits him to see altogether what he has discovered long ago.

The exemplary quality in Indian culture is to be found in the fact that it has emphasised like no other the importance of concentration. What I have said in the above concerning Yoga only refers to a fraction of that which this concept embraces for the Indian: for him it embraces all struggle for culture. The raising of the faculties for recognition is, after all, only a technical matter; however different the direction may be, the problem lies on the same plane with our efforts to make the forces of the outer world serviceable to us. We have changed the world by means of a given instrument. The Indians have devoted themselves primarily to the perfection of the instrument, and it is only possible to decide which alternative is to be preferred in reference to presupposed practical purposes. The absolute superiority of India over the West depends upon the fundamental recognition that culture, in its real sense, is not to be achieved by way of widening the surface, but by a change of plane in terms of depth, and that this growing more profound depends upon the degree of concentration. A concentrated individual is never superficial; in

the direction in which he has concentrated himself (which need, of course, not be all directions, and not the most essential one) he is necessarily profound. For this reason, Indian wisdom asserts that religiousness and morality can be acquired by work; it is not considered teachable in the Socratic sense, but attainable for every individual by way of conscious self-culture. Only superficial beings are capable of irreligion; as soon as the profundity of the soul shines through the surface, consciousness of God is created. Only the superficial individual can doubt the difference between good and evil, for it is a question of an objectively real relationship which one either does or does not perceive; and the perfectly profound man could only wish good. For this reason everything depends on self-education, on Yoga. It is a matter of complete indifference in principle what you begin as: as atheist or theist, as a moralist or sceptic; views and opinions are always irrelevant; one has to *know*. Knowledge, however, results inevitably upon increasing inwardness.

That the degree of religious realisation (in its widest sense) and that of moral discrimination is dependent upon the level of profundity in which a man's consciousness is rooted, is certain. And it is equally impossible to deny that man is capable of becoming more profound. The best men in the West have always recognised this fact. But India alone has known how to make this recognition bear fruit in general practice. This is, as has been said already, the exemplary quality of this culture. We would do well to rival it as soon as possible. What is the essence of all that which to us seems blameworthy in our condition, that our forces, differentiated to the utmost, have grown into independent creatures to such a degree that we no longer succeed in centralising them, and for this reason everything ceases to exist which can only emanate from this centre. It is said of the most highly developed modern man of culture that he does not know how to love any more. That is so: he probably possesses every element which belongs to love, and he does so probably in a richer form than any previous individuals did. But he fails to synthesise them. Sensuousness grows its own way, the same may be said of his idealism, the

same of his emotional inclinations, and so on. Full love he never attains except in the paroxysms of passion. Quite logically, passion has become glorified in our day: the forces of nature are valued above everything else; once more the cry goes up from the roofs of all towns, 'Return to nature.' They represent an equal number of misunderstandings. Passion implies a crisis, even among animals, and all great deeds which are performed during this period signify nothing; under the sway of passion weaklings appear strong, cowards courageous, and yet they remain intrinsically what they were. As to the 'return to nature,' it is impossible to rise above a cultural level which has once been attained by descending from it. Of course we ought to become direct and genuine again, but directness and being like animals are not synonymous concepts. To return to the example of love: animal sensuousness is often regarded as the whole of it, because it is something direct, and this is hardly ever true of love in its higher form. Sensuousness seems really to become the whole of love where a cultured people approaches a condition of exhaustion. That is what happened with the late Romans, and that is what is happening to-day more and more in all the degenerated circles of Europe. But where the force of life is not yet exhausted, there a better way to directness exists: beyond differentiation towards concentration. That is the path which India has trodden, that is the one on which we must march onward.

This path, and it alone, will lead us beyond our present condition. The problem is to bring the emancipated forces, by means of concentration, back to the centre of life, to make strikers into organs ready to do service. There is nothing in our state which we need to deny. The extraordinary breadth, unique in the history of mankind, of the modern soul must not be hemmed in, for it implies an absolute plus. The unequalled differentiation of our being is an advantage. We must animate the whole of this rich body from the same depth as that in which the Indian lives; we must make the surface, which is all of which modern man is usually conscious, into the mirror of profundity, and we must change the organs from ends in themselves into means of expression. If we suc-

ceed in doing this we will undoubtedly reach the highest human condition which has ever been presented hitherto. The richer the means of expression, the better can significance be manifested; God, for Whom the entirety of the world serves as a means of expression, is, for that reason, more God than man can be. On the other hand: the richer the means, the greater is the power needed to control them. For this reason the problem is much more difficult for us than for the Indian. How often have I sighed enviously when I looked at them: how easy it is for you to be profound! Your surface is so small, your body so slim, that it cannot be difficult for you to make the whole of your nature into a means of expression for the spirit. We fat, rich Europeans have to go through agony in order to follow the path of your journey. Then, however, I said to myself: If we succeed in what you succeeded in – will we not then be supermen? – Nietzsche's Superman only defines the physiological basis; it therefore describes a way, perhaps the way of the Westerner, but not the goal. The Supermen of Theosophy, the Masters, are too far removed from this world, too strange for men, in order to loom before us as models. I do not know what superman will be like. But he will undoubtedly be born, if at all, from the concentration of the whole of our forces.

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THE fact that the exemplary quality of Indian culture has not been recognised earlier, and, when it was recognised, not always with good results, is due to the incapacity of most people for seizing a meaning independently of its appearance. Appearances are never transferable anywhere, without doing harm; they are always the product of certain relations which only exist once, and hence they are only appropriate to a certain condition. If Anglomania has not helped anyone, this is true to an even higher degree of Indomania, and in the highest degree with reference to the most important achievement of India: its culture of concentration. It is very significant that the Indian breathing exercises, which have been popularised by Svami Vivekananda through his lectures in America, have

not helped a single American to a higher condition, but, on the other hand, they are reported to have brought all the more into hospitals and lunatic asylums. Hatha-Yoga is considered, even in India, as dangerous; many exercises have been branded by all authorities long ago as unquestionably derogatory, and they merely continue thanks to the ineradicable tendency of all men to prefer dubious to undubious means. But it has not been proved, even of the most harmless exercises among them, that they are appropriate to the organism of the European; it may be that they do more harm than good in the case of most people. No matter how advantageous breathing exercises are in general – there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the idea, that breathing, as it were, resembles the fly-wheel of the whole psycho-physical organism, and that perfect breath-control leads to self-control in every respect – the particular exercises in question depend entirely upon the given empirical circumstances. The exemplary quality in the Indian culture of concentration is its underlying idea, not its specific manifestation. As far as this is concerned, it can hardly be denied that, from the point of view of our ideals, it leaves a great deal to be desired; most of that which we take pride in is lacking in India. But then the Indians have never pursued our aims; therefore we cannot reproach them with their failure.

In order to understand the truly exemplary quality of this culture, it is well to think, not of Indian, but of Occidental manifestations of the same idea (which, as such, have of course, never determined development consciously in the West): for instance, Englishmen as a nation, and certain of the highest types of American business men. The natural talents of the Englishman are more limited than those of the German and the Russian; but the former achieves more with the few he possesses than the others with their abundance. One is often surprised at the many-sidedness of English aristocrats, who to-day are journalists, to-morrow viceroys, the day after perhaps Ministers of the Board of Trade, and, if they happen to have time, write good books on history or philology. As far as this many-sidedness is concerned as such, Germany as well as Russia could count for each many-sided Briton some fifty

much more many-sided individuals; but the Englishman alone knows how to organise his riches in such a way that each single element proves to be productive. The Englishman has himself more in hand than any other European; for this reason, he appears to be the most profound, the most profound from the point of view of humanity and character. In spite of the level of his culture, he is quite unbroken, a thoroughly integral unity, firmly anchored in his living depth, and personally superior as no other European. He owes this to Yoga. Not, of course, to Indian Yoga, but to the one which was created by the ideal content of Puritanism and Methodism, a culture of concentration no less intensive than that of India, no matter how different in character. – The other Western example for the importance of the fundamental Indian idea of India is supplied by the foremost of the American millionaires. Anyone who has met one of them and has enquired after the formula of their success, will have been told: We work by intuition alone, reflection does not carry us forward fast enough. That means they operate continuously with a capacity which is practised by the ordinary man only in exceptional cases, only in making plans and in critical decisions which do not permit of delay. And this means further: they have reached a level of development on which abnormal phenomena seem normal, where the extreme limit of a former state has been changed into the basis. This is precisely what is true of the Indian Yogis. What gives them absolute superiority in idea, so that one is justified before eternity in speaking of Western manifestations of the fundamental Indian idea, is that they alone have understood the meaning and the value of their doings. Recognition is the most important thing in this world; only a truth which has been understood becomes altogether productive. It need not concern us whether the Indians themselves have got very far or not, but we owe them eternal gratitude because they have perceived and revealed to all the meaning of that which has ever been the soul of all inner progress, no matter how unrecognised it was. Thanks to this recognition, we, every people and every individual, will advance henceforth ten times more quickly than before in

the direction in which the natural tendencies of each direct him.

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ALL heightened and highest expressions of life represent an equal number of effects of concentration, which inevitably conditions profundity. The sense in which it renders men profound depends upon the spirit and the purpose in and for which it is practised; it benefits every conceivable form of culture. But of course: the man who is concerned with spiritual realisation and with sanctification will always have to emulate the Indian. So will the artist bent on creating works of the same spiritual significance as the Indians have created, and their greater pupils in the Far East. We are already tolerably aware of the fact that, in spiritual expressive value, our art is below that of the ancient cultures of the East; and we also know that this is, somehow or other, connected with the non-naturalism of their art. But most people are not clear in their minds as to the real nature of Eastern art; they cannot possibly be, for otherwise they would not fall into the error of comparing Buddhist with Greek art, and the younger generation would think twice before they attempted to represent the meanings they aim at by means of Eastern formulæ. For such a process cannot lead to a good end: the significance of Eastern art is totally different from that of the West, and its forms are appropriate means of expression only for its own.

What is the meaning of the specific 'Stylisation' (a bad word), which is apparent in all Eastern pictorial art? – It does not imply simplification from the point of view of reason. The typification of the Greeks, which lies, more or less obviously, at the bottom of all Western art, is rational in origin. Of all the possible connecting lines between two points, a straight one is the shortest; of all possible movements towards a goal, the most appropriate is the best; of all conceivable architectural structures, the most perfect is the one which simultaneously takes the most complete account of the inner laws of the devised mathematical figure, the materials employed and the idea which a building is to embody (as a temple, as a palace, etc.): these are axioms of all rational art. These axioms suffer

only a slight transformation, but no change of meaning, when the æsthetic centre of gravity is transferred from the work of art to the observer: in this case preference is given to those forms which in the reflected image realise best what has been realised in the former case by the work as such. It is this spirit from which the curves of the Parthenon, Michael Angelo's Contraposto, and the infinitely complicated rhythm of Rodin have emanated. It is the spirit of pure reason. It has become fruitful through concentration. Just as concentration of reason upon the processes of nature leads to the discovery of a formula, which makes its laws, and accordingly its essence, appear much more comprehensible to the mind than it seems in its concrete embodiment, exactly in the same sense does the concentration of reason lead the artist to a form, which in its simplification makes clear to the eye what in nature it overlooks all too easily. We must not be led astray by the fact that artists are usually disinclined for reflection, and assert that they create purely from their emotions, that the effect which a work of art has gives far fuller satisfaction than the fulfilment of the mere demands of reason could possibly do: the existence of a process does not depend upon its becoming conscious, nor does the multiplicity of effects prove that its cause was not simple. Man is essentially a rational being, and therefore that which corresponds to reason, provided it appears in a sympathetic embodiment, wakens the whole of the spirit of life, whereas, conversely, all these spirits may have been concerned in the creation of that which is appropriate to reason. All specifically Western production of forms is based in principle upon concentration of reason.

But this method enables us to take hold only of that portion of life which involves groping from the outside to the inside. For this reason our plastic arts have never expressed what our music and poetry have been able to convey. It is the function of both to give a body to feelings; poetry is a match for articulated feeling, music alone for the inarticulated, the most vital, the profoundest of all. Why is it that these subjectivities cannot be rendered objective in a picture? Because the greatest possible concentration of reason does not lead to the Holy of

Holies of the soul. As we have always been rationalists as painters, we have never been able to give direct expression to the 'soul' in painting, no matter how marvellously we succeeded in doing so in music. Our Madonnas and saints, our figures of Christ, are absolutely earthly beings; no more spiritual because their expressions betray psychic emotion. The only exceptions that I know of are a few masterpieces of the early Middle Ages, which, however, are the children of a different spirit, and also the paintings of Perugino. But in the latter their religious quality, as has been proved by Berenson, does not depend upon direct incarnation of the religious spirit, but upon a special treatment of space which awakens religious association in the observer. In order to be able to express soul directly, the visible form would have to be a direct expression of the soul, and would therefore have to be based upon a different concentration from that of reason. To concentrate themselves in this sense is a thing which the artists of the West have never known how to do.

That is just what the East succeeded in doing, thanks to which they have produced works by the side of which we have nothing to offer. From the point of reason, of course, no work of the East is a match for the art of Greece, but they cannot be judged from the point of view of reason. They spring from the same depth of life only as poetry and music do in our case, and thus every means of gauging appears to be altered. Rationality is not directly in question (although its existence can always be proved because man happens to be a creature of reason); visible form appears now as the direct expression of being, and as such it is often most convincing at the very time when its meaning cannot be grasped at all by the intellect, as in the case of a child's laughter or a woman's whim. Again and again I must think of the dancing Shiva in the museum in Madras: this many-armed, anatomically impossible bronze realises a possibility which no Greek has ever allowed us to suspect – it is simply a wild, undisciplined god; who deliberately dances the world to pieces. – How is such a creation arrived at? Only by the realisation of the God within us, and by the ability to re-create this immediate inner experience as imme-

diately in terms of visibility. The artists of the East have accomplished this apparently impossible task. And they have succeeded in doing so by virtue of what I have been writing about during all these days: their culture of concentration. We know little or nothing of the great artists of Hindustan. But we know of those of China and Japan, their heirs, that they were all Yogis, that they saw the only path to art in Yoga. They did, of course, in their first student years, draw after nature with the most earnest perseverance, in order to become the complete masters of their means of expression; but they regarded this merely as a preliminary. For them the essential was the problem of absorption. They became absorbed in themselves, or in a waterfall, a landscape, a human face, according to what they wished to represent, until they had become one with their object, and then they created it from within, unconcerned by all outer forms. It is said of Li Lung-Mien, the master of the Sung Dynasty, that his main occupation did not consist in work but in meditating by the side of the mountain-slopes, or near the brooks. Tao-tse was once asked by the Emperor to paint a certain landscape. He returned without sketches or studies and replied to surprised questioning: 'I have brought nature back in my heart.' Kuo-Hsi teaches, in his writings concerning landscape painting: 'The artist must, above all, enter into spiritual relation with the hills and rivers which he wishes to paint.' Inner collectedness seemed to these artists to be more important than external training. And, surely, the completely 'inward' individual stands above reason, for its laws live within his mind; he does not need to obey them any more, just as he who knows is beyond good and evil. As his knowledge unconsciously controls all his activity, thus the knowledge of the artist-Yogi directs unfailingly even the most capricious delineation. The rhythm of Far Eastern drawing is not of rational origin: it is an inner rhythm, like that of music. If one compares the design of Leonardo or Durer with it, one sees at once what the difference consists in: the one is the outcome of the concentration of reason which necessarily leads to the discovery of objective rules; the other is the product of pure self-realisation, pure subjectivity con-

densed into form. Thus the East has succeeded in what has never yet been reached in the West: the visible representation of the Divine as such. I know nothing more grand in this world than the figure of Buddha; it is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain. And this is not owing to the expression of calm, of soulfulness, and inwardness which it bears, but it is due to the figure in itself, independent of all concurrence with corresponding phenomena in nature.

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THE heart of the Yoga idea would perhaps be expressed most adequately in the language of modern European thought in the following sentence (for in every particular period a specific embodiment seems best suited to the same ideas): it is the mission of man to get beyond humanity as a condition of nature, and it depends entirely on him whether, and how far, he fulfils this destiny. Of all vices, that of inertia is the worst: man must never surrender himself to it. Not that he is to work at any price, according to the command of the West – how senseless our deification of work would appear to the Rishis! – but he should strive untiringly to give expression to the Eternal Spirit which animates him, by increasing and enhancing what is positive in himself and transmuting what is negative into a positive quality. For the rest, every path leads to the goal, and every one can attain to it. As Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita: No matter how men approach me, I accept them just as they are; for all paths on which they may wander are mine. And it is so. One single primordial force flows through the universe, conditioning and animating every formation, manifesting itself in all of them; thus, each of them is not only an expression, but a possible perfect expression of divinity, and perfection is the goal. Every formation is capable, not in spite of, but because of its peculiarity, of realising divinity; whether it succeeds depends upon the spirit in which it lives. If it lives in the spirit of profundity, of absolute inner truthfulness, then even the criminal reaches God, for before Him the difference between good and

evil conditions, as such, is as nought. The criminal who does evil in the spirit of truthfulness must needs recognise his mistake sooner or later, and this transforms his nature, as happened to the thief on the cross by the side of the Saviour, or to the Marquise de Brainvilliers on the scaffold, and in the process of this transformation the old condition ceases to be. Such transformation always consists in recognition. All paths lead to it. The shortest of all are the anciently recommended ones of love, of selfless work, of the desire to understand; but the path of egoism and not wanting to know lead there too, in so far as they have been embarked upon in the spirit of truth, for sooner or later those who wander in this spirit will turn back. And all paths end in recognition. Recognition *is* salvation. As soon as a created being has recognised its true essence, it becomes God's means of expression, and everything becomes radiant by a divine light. Then the opposites of good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, welfare and woe, exist no longer; then the soul is no longer discomfited; then life, like the sun, becomes one single source of pure giving. Good and evil are opposite only from the point of view of ignorance. The facts on which the difference of judgment depends do certainly all exist, and will continue to exist as long as the world, for otherwise no events could take place. What folly even to hope that objectively it could be different one day! What can be changed is the human state of consciousness. When man has ultimately learned how to identify himself with his true being, then he will see no greater evil in the repulsive side of life than in the resistance of the vessels thanks to which the circulation of the blood through the body becomes possible in the first instance.

From childhood on I have, in many important ways, thought in the Indian manner quite naturally; and when the Upanishads came into my hands, I was not a little delighted, but also said to myself proudly: everything that they know, you really know too. One always recognises one's ignorance only when one has acquired knowledge. Thus, it is only since I have come into personal touch with the spirit of Hindustan, and have been penetrated by its living influence, that I can judge

how little I knew then of what the Indians really meant. I recognised myself in the Upanishads only because I had myself entered into them. Of course, the spirit of profundity is essentially the same everywhere; thus, all profound minds mean essentially the same; and assuredly, Yajnavalkya, Laotse and Eckhart understood each other in this way at their very first meeting in Elysium. But essential unity does not exclude differences in appearance; what I wrote down before was a translation, not the original; as an appearance, Indian wisdom is equally specific as any other individual form of life. If it were not so, it would never have been able to create life; life continues only through individuals, not through generalities. I heard the other day that the family Guru gives to every Hindu child a special name on the occasion of his initiation, by means of which the child is to pray to God. This name is his absolute property; he tells it to no one, and no one is allowed to question him about it. It is assumed that in all the world the child alone knows this name, and through it enters into unique relations with Divinity. This is one illustration more of the same truth. Only unique, individual, personal, exclusive qualities can be the living vessel of universality. Thus, Indian wisdom, in spite of its universality, is a monad into which no one can penetrate, who is not possessed by it.

It seems to me as if by now it does possess me. I experience more and more in the Indian manner, more and more do I see the world and life in the light of the spiritual sun of Hindustan. I will spend the last days which are left to me for my stay in Benares in accounting to myself for the peculiarity of Indian wisdom. But it is too late to begin to-day. The whole town is already asleep. And to-morrow at daybreak I want to be once more, as I have been so often, at the Ganges in order to receive the blessing of the first rays of the sun.

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NO philosophy on earth gives voice to the conviction that in the domain of life significance creates the facts with such radicalism as Indian philosophy. What a man does is said to be completely indifferent; everything depends on the spirit in

which he does it. – And it is so. No matter how far we carry this point of view, up to the extremest consequences: we still find its principle confirmed everywhere.[1] How many Europeans have been estranged by the argument of the Bhagavad-Gita, that from the man who has realised his self all actions fall away, so that, for him, good and evil no longer exist! And yet what it advances is true, as appears immediately from a more up-to-date expression of the same thought: the man who always does what is in accordance with his deepest being necessarily does right, irrespective of the impression his actions may make upon others. One might suppose – what in fact all Philistines imagine – that the actions of a godly man must always appear good to every one, but this is not true, not possible. It might be so if every one were as profound and inward as he; but as this assumption is not correct, his actions are often judged by others to be blameworthy, a fact which is amply proved by the habitual persecution of the spiritually great. Take the most ordinary difference, that between egoism and altruism. It is usually regarded as good to consider the feelings and wishes of others; the man who does not do so is said to be blameworthy. But no truly deep man can be an altruist in this sense, because he does not see a sufficient motive in other people's inclinations any more than in his own; he does to men what advances their progress most, and only too frequently this does not meet their wishes; he will sooner make them unhappy than happy, he will trample upon their desires more often than fulfil them. Since he no longer possesses egoism, he necessarily does not know altruism either. – Another case which illustrates the truth of the Indian teaching very well is that of the great statesman. Such a man is generally admitted, at any rate after his death, to have stood beyond good and evil, but why? Because, as every one dimly guesses, the significance of his bloodiest actions does not coincide with them. The man who pursues an ideal in the turmoil of the world, by means of the world,

[1] I have developed this line of thought in all its consequences, in particular in the domain of history and politics, in my book *Schöpferische Erkenntniss*, Darmstadt, 1922.

cannot march through life as cleanly as an anchorite; he will have to do more or less harm according to the time in which he lives, because, in one way or another, he has to operate with evil forces as external factors. But whatever evil he may do does not concern his deepest self; it concerns him only in the sense of original sin, of racial karma (just as every one is responsible for the failings of his age, guilty of the guilt of every one); though stained with blood, he may yet be essentially clean. The essential character of a man is decided by the spirit in which he lives. Anyone who still doubts this fact should remember that the man of action and the saint are concerned with the same relation between facts and significance as the man who kills as part of his duty. No one brands the judge who passes sentence of death on a murderer, nor the soldier who shoots countless enemies in battle. The element of duty places a different value on the facts. The same is to be said everywhere of the spirit in which anything is carried out: the spirit decides ultimately concerning the facts of any case. This is what the Indians have recognised with unrivalled clarity.

But they have allowed this recognition to determine the whole of their life to such an extent that there are no facts for them at all, but only symbols. Significance is regarded as primary in opposition to facts to such an extent that they lose all independent meaning. Facts, however, do possess a meaning of their own, and this is overlooked. It is therefore not surprising that they revenge themselves. The non-recognition of actual conditions (as is lately being practised consciously and systematically among ourselves by Christian Science) would be all very well if the soul really had the power of changing all other realities. But it has not got this power; it can control them only in so far as it understands them. We have become the masters of nature because we have learnt not to ignore her laws but to exploit them. The Indians ignore them altogether. They live in a world of purely psychic relations, which in themselves are real enough and almost always profoundly construed, so that anyone who reflects upon them is impressed by their inner truth. But the psychic links are less

strong and firm than the objective ones of nature; where they contend with one another, nature wins the day. Thus, in the life of the Indians, we are met everywhere by a curious struggle: that which is full of meaning and inwardly true in the highest degree means none the less superstition in practice; the same, which appears as an admirable explanation from the point of view of the soul, turns out in fact to be a purely arbitrary connection. Thus, the man who thinks that he can refute the true meaning of Indian wisdom on account of the facts he recognises as insufficient, is, of course, mistaken. But on the other hand, meaning alone is of little assistance in the practice of life. The life of the Indians has never been exemplary. The leaders of all the people have failed to see that meaning can only be perfectly expressed in appearance if it respects the latter's laws to the full. Thus, among the Indians, metaphysical realisation all too often manifests itself in the form of insufficient theory, the most genuine religiousness in the form of gross superstition, and the profoundest morality assumes the appearance of the most dubious method of life.

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I HAVE several times already referred to the Catholic character of Indian religiosity. No doubt there have been Protestants among Indians: Devendranath Tagore, for instance, the Maharshi, was decidedly puritanically minded; the man who did not know that his autobiography was the work of a Hindu might almost suppose that it had been written by one of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England. But the general spirit of Indian religiosity is strictly Catholic; all that is best and profoundest in it is animated by this spirit; above all, the doctrine concerning the path which leads to recognition.

I will recall briefly once again what I mean by Catholic as opposed to Protestant. Catholicism teaches that the recognition of an objective order and the faithful obedience to authoritative regulations, signify the road to salvation. Protestantism, on the other hand, preaches that every soul should strive to approach God in a personal, independent manner. The latter is certainly not the teaching of Luther or Calvin,

but it is the teaching of the Protestantism which is alive to-day, just as my definition of Catholicism takes into consideration only its vital element. – The Indian, whatever his belief may be in particular, thinks of the path to salvation in the Catholic manner. He condemns the search after independent ways; he regards trust in authority as the primary condition of all inner progress. No great Indian, apart from the Protestant-like Buddha, Mahavira and others, has ever doubted the quality of revelation attributed to the Vedas and Shastras, and all have condemned doubt as being a corruptive force. This means that even the great exponents of knowledge among the Hindus were profoundly imbued with the value of faith as a means to recognition. The man who doubts is not considered capable of becoming wise; and since it is only possible to have faith in fixed dogmata and regulations, they all postulated their immutability. All of them, have, moreover, demanded obedience to the Guru, the spiritual guide (just as all, even the greatest minds among them, have been faithful unto death to their own Gurus), because they knew that teachings which one man conveys audibly to another, who stands in a relation of absolute receptivity to him, influence subconsciousness more powerfully than the same teachings could do when received from one's own mind.

Such a train of thought is as Catholic as possible. According to the letter, all the theological doctors of the Middle Ages taught the same thing, and among them, in part at least, Martin Luther. On the other hand, however, the Indians have understood the significance of the same doctrine much better, so that Hinduism has never enthralled souls as Christian Catholicism has done only too often. Of course, the degree of this servitude must not be overestimated. Theoretically, Catholicism allows just as much freedom to the thinker as orthodox Protestantism; only in practice the result is generally different. Theoretically the Catholic Christian is at liberty to research and think on all subjects with which intelligence and reason can deal competently, and more cannot be demanded, for beyond these limits reason cannot lead to recognition. No matter how rarely this idea has been understood correctly,

it is there, and sooner or later it will undoubtedly become dominant in its purity, when the Church sees no other method of continuing its existence.[1] The outer apparatus of the Catholic Church, however, its ritualism, its ceremonies, represent an absolute advantage, of which Protestantism, especially in its extremest anti-dogmatic form, is beginning to be more and more conscious. But to return to Hinduism: in Hinduism the forms of belief which as such are preserved equally strictly as the Catholic Christians preserve theirs, are regarded not as substances but as forms for expression of divinity, and simultaneously as means to realise it. Accordingly, forms of belief are taken less seriously than among us, they are never regarded as metaphysical realities; on the other hand, however, they are taken more seriously, since no Hindu doubts their appropriateness. For the same reason, belief as such is taken more seriously than I have ever seen it taken in Europe: the Hindus know what faith *signifies*; that it is a means, incomparable with any other, for realising Being. For this reason there are no freethinkers among highly educated Hindus, no matter how many there are among half-educated ones, and even the acutest minds reject with scorn the suggestion that they doubt fundamental religious truths – unless, perchance, they have got altogether beyond faith because they know from personal experience. The soul of the Hindu is cultured to such an extent that they differentiate clearly between belief and believing-to-be-true; they can believe in something without demanding its objective existence. Belief is a means, it is the sovereign means; the man, therefore, who does not believe is a fool. As to the rest, he may think what he will. Meredith Townsend tells the story of an Indian astronomer who, trained scientifically, calculated every eclipse of the sun to the second, but every time one occurred he rushed to his drum in order to frighten away the demon who attempted to swallow the sun, and in reply to Townsend's surprised query, replied with a smile, that faith and knowledge surely were two different things. He adhered to the mythical conception which, of

[1] See as to the possible great future of Catholicism my two lectures, *Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung* in *Der Leuchter*, 1924 (Otto Reichl Verlag).

course, he saw through, because he knew from experience that, thanks to the association of memories from his childhood, this mythical conception helped him to realise divinity.

The Hindus are solely concerned with the problem of realisation; everything else is a means to that end. They stress the problem of realisation so exclusively that, for this reason, two tendencies which have always played a prominent part in the West, are almost entirely lacking: the struggle after exactitude of formulation (correctness of statements) and that after renewal; and this already gives Indian metaphysics an unmistakably individual character. In fact – what does it matter whether a formula is scientifically correct or not, if only it calls forth or makes communicable the experience on which alone everything depends? And, moreover: why invent new forms if the old traditional ones perform everything which new ones at best could do? Thus we perceive a form of metaphysics which is unrivalled in truth and profundity, which is being confirmed more and more by our own preciser forms of research, handed down in a body of theories which originate not infrequently from the most primitive stages of thought. The fact is that the Indians know what they mean; and their method of teaching guarantees that the meaning is handed on from Guru to Chelah in a living form; for this reason, they regard renewal of form as superfluous. In fact, for this reason in practice, for all their god-like tolerance, they are hardly different from narrow-minded Christians, they are actually often more hostile to innovations than the Christians, because they deny all individual value to mental images as such. This attitude prevents the growth of real science, and accordingly science has always been in a bad way in India, from the days of antiquity; but the same attitude does assist spiritual progress.

From this fundamental Catholic tendency follows the peculiarity of Indian philosophy which estranges the Westerner perhaps most of all: their denial of the possibility of discovering truth independently; it has to be revealed, it has to be taught by one to whom it was revealed in his turn. One must not believe that this attitude is only a trick of the Brahmins, as

undoubtedly a great many of their regulations are, which serves to increase the prestige of the Gurus: it signifies a fundamental attitude of the Indians, and is backed psychologically by sufficiently good reasons. In cases where work for purposes of recognition does not consist in thinking, but in the complete absorption in a given phrase, there revelation can really only 'come' to one, one does not win it; to put it the Christian way, it falls to one's lot, not by merit, but by the grace of God. Now all Indians presuppose the existence of a hierarchy of beings; they are accustomed never to practise Yoga without guidance; they have no idea of unbiased research: it is therefore only natural that they see revelation from higher spheres in all recognition, and generally trace it back to concrete beings. This again coincides completely with the Catholic idea of authority. Only in this case it seems universalised, so that it could never become a weapon on a large scale for the priests, and, besides, what is more important, it has never given the victory to a particular profession of faith. All recognition is revelation; from this it follows that no man and no institution can make capital out of its own particular revelation. – This attitude explains a considerable portion of the lack of originality among Indian thinkers: they lack every impulse to wish to be original, for originality in our sense does not exist, according to their ideas; hence, too, the emptiness of their scholasticism; it explains too why the belief in authority has been so exaggerated in India – with an exaggeration which is probably unparalleled anywhere else on earth: since all recognition is 'given' *par definition*, therefore no higher court is conceivable above authority. But on this point of view is based, on the other hand, without question the unrivalled substantiality of the Indian concept of truth, which in itself implies the best key for recognition. Originality is really not in question in matters of knowledge; there is no kind of necessary connection between it and the conception of truth. For truth is there, for every one to see, just like the sun; if the man with sight has an advantage over a blind one, it is not his merit, and the sun would shine even if he did not exist. – To make a genius responsible for some recognition in the Western

manner, and to deify it accordingly, is in principle just as ridiculous as regarding an individual as a superman who, by pressing the button on an electric current, turns on the light. Recognition means becoming aware, discovering, exploiting given possibilities; being a genius means, having inherited a superior instrument by nature: where, then, is the absolute originality of the man who attains to knowledge? It is really true what the Indians teach in their mythical form, that truth cannot actually be discovered. And the fact that they understood this is one of the main reasons why they have got so marvellously far in metaphysical realisation. – The incomparable Indian spirituality is based, moreover, directly upon this attitude. If it is taken as an axiom that independent recognition does not exist, then the man who strives after knowledge cannot feel haughty impulses, display the condescension of superior knowledge, give vent to vain prejudice; he, on the contrary, humbly surrenders himself. Thus the spiritual truths which are embodied in the holy writings find a minimum of resistance in his soul, and can take possession of him with ease. For the same reason, Catholic Christianity, in so far as real religiosity is concerned, is in spirituality so far in advance of Protestant Christianity. That the former at the same time is far behind the Indian spirituality seems intelligible enough when one considers that the sacred writings of the Indians are the holiest of all in the world because they are the deepest in recognition, and because they are unimpeded in their sanctifying light in a unique degree, thanks to the psychological culture of the Indian people, through misinterpretation and erroneous treatment.

The Rishis have from the beginning only been concerned with spiritual realisation; they have gone further in this direction than all other men. Many of them have really attained a state of consciousness which may be described as superhuman – a state in which the mind lives unerringly in the sphere of pure significance, in which it regards and understands everything according to its true meaning. But for this very same reason they have expressed themselves so very indifferently, and have never given ideas of anything like such great vitality

to the world as those of Plato or Hegel. The man who stands on the level of consciousness which the greatest Indians have attained is as directly conscious of the meaning of things as the average man is of the physical outer world; he does not need to possess originality to perceive it. For this very reason he cannot create mentally any more. All production emanates from the depths of the unconscious; one does not create what stands in front of one already. That is something which at best one may copy. Thus, the Rishis were, as writers and thinkers, copyists and nothing more. This explains the triviality of their style and the lack of vitality of their ideas. Our great thinkers have never attained the state of consciousness in which one sees truth spread out like a landscape; for this very reason they were able to give birth to it. Thus, what they have recognised has developed into creative ideas, and continues to operate, as no Indian thought has ever been able to do.

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THE Indian sages were only concerned with realisation; therefore they could not see any value in originality. They maintained that since that whose reflection in consciousness is called truth, existed anyhow, the question of invention did not arise. Discovery, however, did not imply personal merit, because man could only discover what nature or higher powers revealed to him: 'Only he, whom He chooses, understands him' (Ruysbroek). As far as the embodiment of truth is concerned, only established truths can be realised, those in a condition of transition were useless. Moreover, the acquisition of a new point of view involves expenditure of energy which could be put to better account in a different way. Men of faith, like those of action, are, as far as ideas as such are concerned, inimical to originality out of physiological necessity. Both create in a different dimension from the mental creator; the latter translates ideas into inner, the former into outer reality, as such they mean nothing to them; to them they mean mere plans, outlines, points of departure, of value only in so far as they are realised. Such natures deem all theorising idle.

Not only Napoleon but Bismarck too hated theorisers from the bottom of their hearts, and both believed firmly in Providence. This belief was a physiological necessity to them: without certain protection at the back of them, neither could have advanced without apprehension. The case of men of faith is the same as that of men of action. Being religious means realising, wanting to translate spiritual values into life. In order that a man can devote himself unrestrainedly to this task, the values, as such, must be beyond question. He must therefore believe in dogmata, must cling unquestioningly to definite concepts: whether, for the rest, he is tolerant or fanatical, depends upon the degree of the culture of his soul, the width of his mental horizon. The orthodox Christian in his presumption, which makes him believe that dogma in itself embodies salvation, wants to convert, *coûte que coûte*, every one who has a different faith, and in the meantime he despises them. I have never met a Hindu who did not believe absolutely in some form of dogma, but, on the other hand, I have not met one who wanted to convert anybody, or who despised anyone because of his superstition. The Hindus are cultured enough to know that not dogma as such is the important factor, but its effect upon life.

But the negative attitude of the Indians towards originality possesses a still profounder reason than the one which has been examined hitherto. The Rishis thought, from the depths of their state of consciousness which permitted them to gain a direct view of Significance: why put another appearance into the world, since there are so many already? What are creative ideas other or more than the little flowers which grow on the lawn? What does it matter how far each individual one develops? – They thought thus, not as sceptics, but as omniscient beings. It has often been remarked that scepticism and the profoundest metaphysical recognition coincide on the surface; and this is so. Sceptics as well as mystics realise the relativity of manifestation, they therefore agree in its appraisement; only the latter know what the former do not suspect, that reality is not exhausted in relativity. They are conscious of the essential being which expresses itself by means of appearance.

This is true, on a small scale, of every man of action, every creator, every one, in fact, who takes anything really seriously, and whom humanity has, therefore, by correct instinct, always placed above even the cleverest doubter. But it is true of him only on a small scale; hence the limitations of all men of action, their one-sidedness, insufficiency, prejudice – men compared with whom the sceptical observer has such an easy advantage. On the largest scale the same is true of the sage: he accepts all appearance, not equally indifferently, but equally earnestly. Thus he is, like God, beyond all narrowness.

But can such recognition lead to a fruitful life? In the case of God it does become fruitful. He knows the relativity of all appearance, and expresses Himself, nevertheless, in each one of them with the extremest one-sidedness; He knows the insufficiency of every special manifestation, and yet this never weakens His energy. The reason is, that He creates coherently. As a unit of understanding, man can probably attain to divine universality, but as a unit of action he remains strictly limited; as a unit of life, he never gets beyond the one-sidedness of a particular form of existence. Thus, his all too profound insight lames his forces. It need not do so, but it does do so generally. It has done so in the case of the Indians. Nothing can be said against the truth of their attitude. Undoubtedly the ideas of Alexander mean no more than little flowers to the cosmos; both are appearances in nature, each after its own kind. The man who creates ideas does, in principle, nothing different from a calving cow; when understanding is developed and seizes hold of life, it is only one process of nature among others. The struggle of artists for recognition, of the state for power, of humanity for ideals, is one form amongst others of the general fight for existence, and progress is a biological process for which parallels may be found everywhere. Thus, no form of ambition is essentially more than the animal impulse for growth, no form of idealism more than one exponent among others of the general striving of all life after rise and enhancement, and whether this or that happens, whether one masterpiece, one recognition, one act of heroism more enriches the world, means little enough in its general relation, all the less

since significance is everywhere the same, and does not gain anything from its own point of view by the increase or improvement of its form of expression. Yes, the ideas of Alexander mean no more before God than tiny flowers. But would it have been well for Alexander to think thus? Certainly, if he had been so great that he could, in spite of it, have fulfilled his destiny as Alexander; but in that case he would hardly have done so.

The Indians knew that no recognition may influence action according to Dharma; this is in fact the underlying idea of the Bhagavad-Gita. There, Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna that he is to fight, no matter what he knows or recognises, for he was born to be a fighter. The same underlying idea penetrates the whole doctrine of non-attachment: kill ambition in thyself, but act as if thou hadst been animated by extreme ambition; throttle all egoism, but live thy special life as actively as any egoist; love all creatures equally, but do not fail, for that reason, to do next what lies nearest to hand. The Indians, in fact, knew everything. But knowledge and life are two different things, and this is proved nowhere more impressively than in their case. We know of no Indian who, as a living human being, has realised this wisdom on a large scale; and there are probably fewer Hindus who do it on a small one than Turks and Chinese. Herein lies the curse of that primate of the psychic side of life which characterises the Indian condition of consciousness as nothing else does. The Indians have always put the chief accent in existence on psychic experience, that is to say, on realisation of life in the psychic sphere. Thanks to this attitude, they have gone marvellously far in their recognition and vision of divinity; but, equally thanks to it, they have never, as live, active men, been even a fraction of that which their theory postulates. And this is only natural. If the mind is centred in the conceptual world, then thoughts are born as independent entities without connection to personal life; this remains, in spite of all recognition, where it was.[1] A different

[1] I have developed this trend of thought at length, with reference to modern Western life, in my essay, *Erscheinungswelt und Geistesmacht* in *Philosophie als Kumt*, Darmstadt, 1920.

attitude is needed to produce a great man. Thus, the Hindus illustrate with exemplary clarity the advantages as well as the disadvantages of an existence purely devoted to understanding. It leads to recognition as no other existence does; it leads men born to wisdom and saintliness, to a degree of perfection which seems unattainable subject to different presuppositions; but it does not benefit the life of other men. Lately the Hindus who have a command of English, stung by European opinions which they disapprove of, have pointed again and again to the fact that Indian doctrines do justice to practical life, and by no means preach quiescence. They certainly do not preach quiescence; as doctrines they are the truest and profoundest, most all-embracing and exhaustive, which exist. But they have never had an effect upon Indian *life*. It is not good for the average man to know so much; if Alexander hears once that before God he is only a tiny flower he, as Alexander, will abdicate only too readily. He decides for himself that no particular existence has any purpose, he does at most what is near at hand, and fills the position for which he has been born as well as he can. He denies all ambition all too soon. The holy writings do in fact teach that only the highest men are born to the highest life; the rest are to fight, to battle, to live actively, to be ambitious, for only such an existence could progress them inwardly. But who, except the man of the very highest culture, is content not to be born to the highest life? Once a condition has been proclaimed as the highest, every one attempts to represent it after his own manner. In the East ambition is generally considered as undignified: this is a misfortune. It does signify the highest achievement if a great individual is without ambition, but the small one who has none does not get on. The Hindus, like Christ, regard gentleness as the highest virtue: this is a misfortune. No one but the man who possesses the passion of a Peter the Great may profess himself to the ideal of gentleness; those who are weak – and the Hindus are weak – are made even weaker by it. To understand everything is regarded as the highest aim: if men, who cannot understand, profess this ideal, it obstructs their development like no other, for it turns them into sceptics without energy. Thus, it is just

the singular profundity of their recognition which has become an evil to the Indians as a people. It has made them slack and weak. This is highly significant. It is once more an example which India gives to the whole of humanity. It shows how little good it does if every one strives after perfection in the capacity of philosophers. This road is only appropriate to the very few who belong to the type; it leads all others into destruction. Thus, the Indian theory according to which the Rishi, the Yogi and even the Sanyassi is regarded as the highest of all men, means something different from what it appears to mean. It does not mean that these types are actually the highest, nor that all men could find their supreme self-realisation within its limits: it means that, subject to the Indian presupposition, only born philosophers and saints can become perfect, while other men deteriorate.

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THIS, then, is the real cause why the Indian outlook on the world is being called quietistic, not without justice: it is not their teaching as such which gives preference to non-action as opposed to action, to apathy as opposed to energy, but this is the way in which it has affected life. It is not only the theosophists who have drawn special practical conclusions, against which various things are to be said, from the theoretical doctrine of the ancients, who as such can lay claim to general validity; the same applies to the Indians themselves. As philosophers, the Hindus have raised themselves, as no other people have done, above empirical accident; but their practical lives have not followed the soaring flight of their minds; life has, accordingly, unmasked the latter by presenting an overspecified appearance, as a form of that hybrid which the gods never leave unpunished.

Nothing general can become a life-force, only some particularised thing can attain this; which means, in the case of a philosophy: a particular interpretation, a particular practical application of it. Thus, even the most universal teachings of the Rishis have been understood specifically from the start. Atman, according to the Vedas, rests within himself beyond

the realm of appearances, without name, without form, neither suffering nor acting. The highest aim of existence is to become one with him, that is to say, to become so profoundly inward that consciousness takes root in the principle of life. Several practical conclusions may be drawn from this teaching. The Hindus have advocated the withdrawal from life into divinity as the highest aim, thus wanting to juggle away creation. *Plus royaliste que le roi*, wiser even than Brahma himself, who thought it expedient to develop His own Being into a universe, they have directed the whole of their efforts to get beyond the process of growth. Thus the men who renounced the world had to appear to them as the absolutely highest types of humanity, they could not see any intrinsic value in the fashioning of this life. I would draw the opposite practical conclusion from the same doctrine, with equal logical justification. We ought to recognise Atman within ourselves, and then realise him in the world; we should assist Brahma, whose partial expression we are, to perfect himself in appearance. Regarded in this way, the Vedas' doctrines do not appear as sterile but productive in the highest degree. Reason recognises that our actions do not possess necessarily a relation to ourself: we should get to the point that all of them reflect the Atman! The consciousness which corresponds to the primary synthesis of the intellect is not as such our deepest self: it should be developed so far that it serves the latter as a means of expression. And so on. If anyone had attained to such a condition, if he had realised completely what is divine in his earthly being, the whole question of the difference between the absolute and the relative would no longer exist for him, then he would neither have to affirm or deny it, since he would live as being in appearance. The fact that the Indians have not chosen this alternative, which they have recognised as the higher one again and again, and which undoubtedly possesses every advantage, is to be explained by empirical circumstances: above all, by the influences of the tropical world. They have changed the Aryan immigrant more and more from an energetic into an indolent creature, they have given to his life more and more that character of vegetation which found its

perfect expression then in Buddhism. It availed nothing that they overcame Buddhism as such, which they did probably by virtue of the unconscious recognition of its degenerating character; its tendency was the tendency of their own blood.

The question now arises: would the Hindus, as recognisers and beholders of the divine, have reached such a singularly high plane if they had been different as human beings? Would they have realised the one thing which is needful to salvation if they had been capable of giving expression to it in life? Probably not. The great moralist is typically amoral, because freedom from prejudice implies freedom from inhibition; the man whose understanding is great is typically lacking in character, because he cannot regard any manifestation as being absolutely the best one; conversely, the great man of action is typically narrow-minded. Here the exceptions only confirm the rule in so far as they do not belong to a higher level of existence, on which the human laws of compensation no longer operate. The fact that the Indians are conscious, as far as feeling goes, of the one-sidedness of their natural disposition, is proved by the fact of their Catholic outlook, their decided disinclination to all Protestantism: they feel that they, being all too free inwardly, require firm external forms so as not to disintegrate. It is further proved by the fact that they have emphasised to an unheard-of degree, as the aim of life for all those capable of recognition, the acquisition of perfect knowledge (not of great character, of a noble attitude, etc.): the man who is essentially a recogniser can determine his development only from reasoned insight. But no matter whether they knew it or not, the fact remains. For purposes of the highest perfection in the sphere of understanding and religious realisation, a natural basis is required which, if it does not preclude perfection in other directions, at any rate makes it extremely difficult. The people know this in so far as they are surprised if a 'clever' man is simultaneously 'good'; science knows this in so far as it declares that a higher degree of religiosity appears very frequently in conjunction with a temperament which science regards as 'pathological'; in the case of the artist, the public opinion of the whole world is unanimous as to the same

relationship. Only in the rarest cases are such people altogether valuable human beings. The position is, to give a biological analogy, which is perhaps more than an analogy, as if 'geni' operated in the man of recognition, of religion, or the poet, which prevent the manifestation of the 'geni' of the man of action, of character, of the ethical individual. In the former case their real life takes place in the psychic sphere, and its translation into and effect upon that which is 'real' life in others, means almost nothing in reference to their being. In order to acquire perfect recognition one must not only live altogether for it, but to a certain degree one must *be* recognition; one must live in recognition, as women do in love. The man who does so cannot direct his primary energy to the application of his knowledge to life, because it is already fixed elsewhere.

It would therefore be ultimately a mistake to reproach the Hindus with the fact that they have not proved themselves to be as great in the world of practical, active life as in the world of recognition and religious feeling. Their weaknesses signify the purchase price of their virtues. Of course, all Hindus do not possess the power of recognition, and those among them who do not possess it are correspondingly inferior to Europeans without this quality. But in the same sense the idlers of Europe are incomparably worse than those of India. Every cultural system is determined by the average character of the people which created it, and education in its spirit and within its limits must inevitably be to the disadvantage of those whose nature differs from the average. The question may now be raised as to whether some tendency of manifestation does not possess absolute advantages over others? As, for instance, the Christian European one over the Indian? Many favour such a view; I cannot decide. If the greatest perfection of the masses is to be applied as the gauge, it is quite possible that we have chosen the better part. But are quantitative considerations in question where essentials are at stake? – I content myself with establishing the fact that India, and not Europe, has produced the profoundest metaphysics we know of and the most perfect religious system.

Since psychic phenomena are primary to the Indians, in so far as their realisation in imagination is biologically equivalent to the realisation in practice among us, it is obvious that the man of recognition, of understanding, the anti-worldly visionary and the ecstatic, must appear to them as the highest types. That is what they are subject to Indian presuppositions. And it is not to be wondered at that Indians look up in amazement when Europeans ask them whether higher forms of existence are not conceivable.

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DO the Rishis, the silent sages from the Himalayas, not signify the highest type of men? Is a higher one conceivable? – Both questions must be answered in the negative. The first without further ado, the second because it contains a misconception.

The fact that the highest man of recognition is not simultaneously the highest kind of man, is conclusively shown by the preceding observations; his type presupposes a temperament which, limited as such, excludes many valuable possibilities. The question as to whether a higher kind is conceivable contains a misconception, in so far as it is based on the supposition that a highest kind could exist at all. There is no such man, nor can there be such, because every definite type is limited by boundaries which rob him of his value from a universal standpoint. No limitation is an advantage, no impulse should be repressed; the absolutely highest man would be the one who could embody perfectly all the potentialities of mankind; this cannot happen because every realised possibility removes or precludes many others. All ideals which can be rendered concrete are correlated to a definite natural basis; in this way it is possible to conceive perfect Englishmen or Frenchmen, perfect sages, saints, kings, artists, but not simply perfect human beings. 'The perfect man,' conceived as a type, is an impossible concept. The fact that humanity has not understood this for such a long time has done incalculable damage to it. How dearly we have paid for the heritage of Christ! He too only signifies the perfection of a particular type (which, incidentally, has changed according to the idea

which people have had of Jesus), and the process of raising it to a general ideal of humanity has prevented millions of the most promising traits in their development. Hence the level of culture of Christian humanity, which is so low in many respects, as opposed to that of classical antiquity; hence certain unclean characteristics, the result of repression, which distinguish Christians everywhere, even to-day, from members of a different faith, to their disadvantage. The Indian philosophy has in theory obviated these dangers in advance; but as we have seen, only in theory. In practice the idealisation of the philosopher, who renounces the world, has lamed the power of the men of action, has discouraged all external development and accordingly devitalised the whole of life. Nevertheless, the theory is indeed wonderful. It teaches, on the one hand, that every type possesses its own dharma, and should only follow this, on the other hand it affirms a normal sequence: out of the dharma of the Cudra springs that of the Vaicya, out of that of the Vaicya, that of the Kshattrya, out of that of the Kshattrya, the dharma of the Brahmana, and the man who fulfils this perfectly is said to incarnate the highest conceivable type of man. It does affirm that the condition of the Rishi is the highest ideal of humanity, but it teaches, on the other hand, that this condition is attainable only by a special temperament, which, for its own part, is dependent upon the age of the soul. The highest ideal is accordingly the highest, not really in the sense of absolute general validity, but in so far as it represents the ultimately possible ideal. The Indians have thus, in fact, perceived the truth, which remains true even if we drop the mythical scaffolding upon which it rests. Undoubtedly wisdom shows traces of age, undoubtedly it does not befit youth; undoubtedly it makes appear old even a man who has acquired it in his early years. But equally undoubtedly it means the crown of life. It is impossible to be more than wise. – If the Indians had been as far-sighted in practice as in theory, one might indeed say that they had solved the problem of life. But this supposition cannot be made. In spite of their superior insight, they have regarded the wise man as the type of example valid for everybody. This explains why modern European

humanity, in spite of its being coarse, earth-bound and blind of soul, in fact, just because of its materialistic ideals, which are the true ideals of its natural stage, is, on the whole, on a higher level than that of India.

It is superstition – perhaps the superstition which we need to discard most to-day – that the ideal is embodied in any definite condition. No being stands isolated; from the point of view of the universe the whole of living nature is one connected whole; no isolated phenomenon is ever more than an element, and no phenomenon is conceivable which sums up the others, which would have to be the case if it were to serve as an example for all. Every one of them is an organ of life, no more, and hence only to be understood from the general point of view; it has only a right to exist as a particularised entity, in interchangeable relation to other, differently qualified organs. But there are elements of differing importance; some possess great emphasis, some possess little, and the rest is attuned to those which signify a great deal. The types which mankind has honoured always as the highest, embody the fundamental tone in the symphony; the better these are distributed, the richer and purer their resonance, the more beautiful is their music. The saints and sages embody the fundamental tones, whereas the other types are only incarnations of semi- and over-tones: this is the only sense in which the former are above the latter. This description suffices to make clear the relation of the one to the other, as it ought to be. The overtones are not to try to develop into fundamental tones, but they should harmonise with them: in this sense the veneration of wise and holy men is beneficial to all. In so far as they are fundamental tones, their existence is necessary – more necessary indeed than all the useful activities of men of action: even if a fundamental tone has been suppressed, or actually not struck at all, it has its effect; as long as the music is harmonised with it, all is well. For this reason it does not matter that saints are rare, that a Christ, as we revere him, has perhaps never lived. In this way it is absolutely in order that the great men we honour pass through metamorphoses in the course of time: where the melody changes its key, the same must be done with the fundamental tones.

But they alone are insufficient; no bass viol replaces the orchestra; it is only within the orchestra that it comes into its own. Thus the saint does not render the child of the world superfluous, but both are directly dependent on one another.

From this point of view the old question of absolute values appears to be solved. Absolute values certainly do exist, but only in the sense of fundamental tones. The whole of life has reference to them; one always succeeds in proving them to be essential. On the other hand, it is impossible for ever and a day theoretically to do justice to life from them alone, or to organise it practically. Whenever this attempt is made, life seems impoverished; it is as if the Pastoral Symphony were performed by nothing but double basses. A Puritan outlook has always done nothing but damage; where moral and spiritual values alone have been recognised as valid, this has always happened at the expense of human perfection. It had to happen like that. The absolute values in themselves are certainly embodied in the types of the saint and the sage, but by themselves they are nothing; they presuppose all the rest. For this reason it is ridiculous, erroneous, nay criminal, to wish to destroy any kind of phenomena, which in their way are perfect, from the angle of absolute values: whatever these phenomena may be, they do not antagonise the latter; these, in fact, condition the former from within, just as the fundamental tones condition the treble sequences. Thus, even these observations end in the recognition which has so often proved to be the last word: perfection, specific perfection is the one and only ideal which is appropriate to all. Whether a man is born to be a fundamental or an overtone, concerns God alone; man's duty is to ring with a pure sound.

Now it is clear in how far not only Buddha and Christ, but also the great Indian recognisers, the Rishis, may yet be regarded as generally valid examples: not as types, but as perfected individuals. As types they signify special appearances, only desirable as ideals for those who belong to the same type. But as perfected individuals, as beings who have fulfilled their possibilities perfectly, within the limits of some particular type, they can and should be an example to all.

TO-DAY at sundown to take leave of Benares I went once more to Sarnath, that field of ruins which mark the place where Buddha delivered the first of his sermons which became famous. Several visitors from Ceylon were present, among these two yellow-garbed Bhikshus. They gathered round the Stupa erected by Acoka, and held a liturgical service amid a tiny congregation of believers. What a contrast to the ritual of the Hindu temples! How plain and simple, how uncomplicated is Buddhistic piety! – I let the atmosphere of Sarnath take complete possession of my soul, and then passed in review all that I had seen and experienced in Benares. Yes, Buddhism can be welcome tidings to the man whose soul has grown sick of wealth and multiplicity; who feels weary to death after so many reincarnations, who does not care any more for progression, who only longs for the end. In Buddhism the sun of India sets; it contains the whole atmosphere of the twilight hour, the entire sweetness of the hope of speedy rest, the whole blessedness of loving promises: soon everything, everything will be overcome.

The atmosphere of Sarnath still has me in its hold. To-night I want only rest, rest at any price. And that makes me think how wonderful it would be if Buddha had spoken the truth when he asserted that it is possible to extinguish for ever. But is it possible? Is there not a thousand times more Hybris in this idea than in that of thousand-fold reincarnations? The gods did regard the undertaking of Buddha as Hybris, and he knew very well what an immense task he had accomplished. The whole of creation, from Brahma downward, must continue for ever, only he, a son of man, succeeded in stepping out of the circuit.

The Nirvana of Buddha differs from that of Hinduism; to the Hindus it means a positive condition, Buddha envisaged it essentially as the end. He has revealed nothing concerning what it is, he has left open all possibilities; but his emphasis lay unquestionably on the idea of an ultimate end. This gives its unique atmosphere to Buddhism, its sweet sundown colouring. Of all the twilights of the gods which there have been, the one to which the sermon of Benares gave rise resembled twilight most.

29

BUDDHA-GAYA

A MARVELLOUSLY spiritual air breathes in this holiest site of Buddhism. It is not the atmosphere of Buddhism as such, as I felt it only the day before yesterday in Sarnath. It is not that of devotion in general, as on the Ganges or in Rameshvaram, nor yet the atmosphere of consecration which surrounds every great monument: it is the peculiar spirit of a place where a particular man whose greatness stands alone in history has found his self. Much may have contributed to the fact that this spirit has been preserved in such strength and purity; that it is reborn unaltered in every receptive mind. The chief reason is undoubtedly the fact that Buddha received his revelation even here, in the shadow of the very Bodhi tree which spreads its branches out to-day – a revelation of such intensity that it continues to shine on and on in millions of souls. Then Buddha-Gaya represents an historic monod of such exclusivity as only very few places on earth; I could only name Delphi to equal it. Shut off in an artificial valley, the sanctuary rests, in a world of its own, in which every detail recalls the great days of yore; many an integral part of the stone walls, of the daghobas, is said to date from Acoka's time. Finally, the pilgrims contribute to the renewal of the reverberations as they die away. Buddha-Gaya lies far from the realms in which Buddhism flourishes to-day; not many make their pilgrimage hither. Those, however, who are not put off by the long journey are in earnest; they do not come for idle curiosity. To-day a few Burmese, a few Japanese and a dozen Tibetans are here; all of them deeply impressed by what Gaya means for mankind, and thus their souls vibrate in harmony with the atmosphere of the place itself. The most profound, the holiest peace reigns here; all voices are lowered of their own accord. And the ancient trees softly, softly whisper their great memories.

Buddha-Gaya is, for my feelings, the most sacred site of the whole earth. The teaching of Jesus was profounder than that of Gautama, but he was not so superior a man as Buddha. He was one of those sunny natures which appear upon the dark

earth every now and again, a Sunday child, upon whom the spirit had descended as a pure gift, one who, according to human ideas, was not responsible for what and who he was. He was really a god amongst men. But the born god means less for us than the man who has raised himself to be a god, and such a one was Buddha.

The Buddhistic legend recounts that the gods prayed before Buddha, the man; and this legend does not seem incredible to the Brahmins. The Indians, as opposed to ourselves, have always understood and interpreted correctly the relationship of merit and grace. Undoubtedly supreme revelation is given to man only by the grace of God, but grace never comes undeservedly; it is the necessary crown of merit. What the mystic's manner of speech wants to say by the experience of the invasion of grace, is that passage through a critical point, that apparent *solution de continuité* which lies everywhere in nature between conditions varying in quality. Just as after a constant rise of temperature water suddenly disappears in steam, or, after constant sinking, suddenly turns to ice – so does the condition of grace follow upon that of merit. Of course, 'merit' need not be meritorious in our sense: the ways of God do not necessarily correspond with the postulates of reason and morals. Ingenuous sinners are generally nearer to salvation than cautiously upright men. But grace never falls to the lot of him who is not 'in seinen dunklen Drange des rechten Weges wohl bewusst' (Goethe), who is petty, cowardly, mean; it presupposes a quality of will and of inner truthfulness, which raises their most imperfect owners high above all virtuous people. The mass of humanity suspects that there is an upward path, but it does not know how and where it begins. If children of the sun like Jesus appear on the horizon, humanity reveres them, perhaps also believes their promise, but is hardly encouraged, for the distance seems too great and the road to them not clear. If, however, some one arises from their midst, a man like the rest, who, as it were, works himself beyond humanity, then humanity is filled with joy, gains wings and follows him, full of hope. It was ever thus. Through the example of Christ, as such, Western humanity would never have been stimulated to make

the ascent; He was too immeasurable; nor is He the father of Christianity. If St. Paul had not appeared, a man who, being a child of the world, intelligible to every one, yet finally grew to be a saint, we would know nothing of Jesus any more. And that Christianity developed into a world religion, into glad tidings for the whole of the West, is the desert of St. Augustine. This most powerful of all ethical natures the West has produced gave the human example thanks to which only Christ Himself could become one. His life proved that sin implied not only an obstacle but also assistance, that it is precisely the barriers of nature which make it impossible to overcome her; that imperfection is the very substance of which God stands in need in order to take shape in man. Thus his example applies really to every one. – But Buddha was even greater than St. Augustine. He started from a higher level of humanity, he had profounder and richer experiences, and he ultimately reached a height of superiority as no other personality in history. He was so great that one impulse sufficed to keep the wheels of good law in motion until to-day. Buddhism did not have a St. Paul nor a St. Augustine. Sanbuddha was all in all to it.

The scholars often wonder, in their simplicity, which is their divine right, as to why Christ and Buddha mean so much more than all the great spirits of the world that preceded and succeeded them, since the former has taught nothing which has not been proclaimed before and after him, and the latter was undoubtedly behind his predecessors in profundity of recognition: the reason for their greater significance is that the word in them did not remain the word, but became flesh; and that is the utmost which can be attained. To appear wise, nothing is needed but the actor's talent, to be wise in the ordinary sense, it only requires a prominent mind: before a man turns into a Buddha, the highest which he has recognised must have become the central propelling force of his whole life, must have gained the power of direct control over matter. How easily the substance of thought can be moved! How easily it can be turned into the most glorious form! To shape the whole ego in the same sense, so that every single impulse

becomes an organ of the ideal – this presupposes a degree of strength which appears supernatural. This strength is latent in every one, just as the smallest molecule contains sufficient energy within itself to explode a whole kingdom into the air, provided the energy became liberated. But man does not control it; only the superman can operate with it. He in whom a recognition, in itself less profound than that which a Vyasa may have possessed, has become the creative centre of his being, is more than all the sages have ever been.

It is deeply significant that the greatest of all Indians did not stop at Yogiism; that, after having first striven after the traditional ideal, he subsequently renounced it. Buddha is the only Indian who has understood that no given condition, no matter how lofty it may be, embodies an absolute ideal; that the Yogi as such is no nearer to the goal than the courtesan; that perfection is the one thing that counts. And because this knowledge became life in him, because the 'word' became 'flesh,' not as a gift from above but in the course of natural growth, accelerated by intensive self-culture – therefore, Buddha is the greatest example in history. He was the first in whom the fundamental Indian recognition became really fruitful, that it depends upon us whether we remain human beings or whether we grow beyond all limitations by name and form. The Rishis used this recognition to fly beyond the world of appearances, the Yogis generally use it to climb to a higher ladder in the same world. Buddha alone amongst the Indians has understood it correctly and applied it perfectly correctly for his own person: hence the enormous creative power of his example, which promises to be more fruitful to-day than it has ever been. Buddha's teaching is assuredly nothing less than free from the limitations of name and form; it is only an interpretation among others of the fundamental Indian idea, and of all those which have become effective, perhaps the most superficial. But Buddha was not a thinker at all. It would be doing an injustice to him to judge him by the content of truth of Buddhistic teaching. To him this teaching meant something different and essentially more than its wording permits us to suppose, and this significance determines, even to-day, for the most part, the character

of Buddhism. The four noble truths, almost trivialities in themselves, contain a spiritual kernel, which is effective even in the meanest shell. Buddhistic doctrine is in truth only a stammering, like so much of the highest possessions of humanity; a stammering which yet again and again is understood, and in some mysterious way wakens and creates more life than most of the more articulated wisdom. But it is, all the same, not Buddhism which conditions Buddha's unique greatness: it is the living example which he gave. That is the explanation why in India, where no reality subsists, where all historical figures melt into dreams in a twinkling, this one man has continued to live in memory, word and image, as he wandered upon earth.

I think again of what I wrote down in Benares concerning saints and sages as fundamental tones. There was one thing I forgot to mention then: in what sense Buddha embodies a deeper fundamental tone than all the Rishis. He does so in so far as life is more profound than recognition. A word turned to flesh means more than the word in itself. For this reason the holy man stands above the wise one.

30

THE HIMALAYAS

THIS morning, long before the sun became visible, I saw the giants of the Himalaya catch its rays. The earth lay invisible in the darkness of night; at the height of clouds pale mists floated along in the uncertain twilight. The summits of the Himalayas, however, high, high above the clouds, began to glow at the first greetings of the day.

Yesterday, when I arrived, the sky was overcast, but again and again a sharp wind rent the grey shrouds, and I was informed that for short moments I might perhaps be able to see the Kinchin-yonga. I looked for it where a mountain-top, some hundred miles distant, should have appeared in accordance with the experiences I had gained in the Alps; however, I found nothing; until suddenly I raised my eyes: there, where

I only suspected heavenly bodies, glistened its eternal snows.

I have never faced such overwhelming substance. The Himalayas are not a mountainous group like others; it seems as if the moon had burst and suddenly planted itself upon the green earth, so cosmically great, so unearthly, so out of all relation with the manifestations of this planet do they appear. Far, far from the point on which I stand my gaze reaches over mountains and valleys, the chains folded one above the other to the height of the loftiest Alpine peaks, the valleys carved out to the depths of sea level. Formation is laid upon formation, flora upon flora, fauna upon fauna; sub-tropical vegetation gradually changes into Arctic; the realm of the elephant is succeeded by that of the bears, and finally of the snow leopard. And above these worlds the real Himavat only begins. – One thing is certain: if the realm of gods lies anywhere at all, it lies here. I am reminded of those reliefs in Ellora which represent the giant Kailas attempting to kill the sleeping Shiva by causing the Himalayas to reel: having been wakened by the anxious Parvati, the god lowers one foot from his couch and casually crushes the Titan. – It seems to me: here no overwhelming imagination is required in order to invent overwhelming pictures. In the midst of such nature extravagance comes of its own accord. Formed by exaggeration, it forces others to exaggerate. Here the greatest imaginations appear too small. Joyously, the spirit leaps over all barriers, triumphantly it transgresses all boundaries. What was, if not my first, then certainly my second thought when I beheld these giants? That the spirit could move mountains! Every doubt of it appeared laughable. Whenever a humanly limited thought shot through my brain, it seemed to me as if from yonder, from the eternal snow, there sounded the metal laughter of Shiva, and for sheer shame I had to join in his mirth.

In the midst of a nature, which builds up such mountains, a Mahabharatam may very well be created. All the grandeur of Indian mythology is preconceived in her. How well can I understand to-day the significance which the Himalayas possess for the Indian consciousness! Within their domain lies Shiva's paradise; even there the holiest of rivers rises. In the Hima-

layas, the Munis and the Rishis dwell, and all those who thirst for wisdom strive up towards them irrepressibly in an unending chain. From the Himalayas, the Vedas have come, so have the Upanishads; all inspiration emanates from them even to-day. This is probably true. Never have I, the stranger, felt such wings given to my soul. It seems to me as though a thousand spirits were at hand, glistening like the eternal snows in the morning light, laughing gaily like lately wakened children, confidential as if they had always known me, to strip my soul of all prejudice. Now they call me: Come! And are running ahead of me into infinite space. Canst thou not follow? – I am coming soon. But I cannot treat this divine freedom as lightly as you do. Where you are laughing and playing, I feel awed. It makes me giddy to soar high above all that which lately bound me on all sides. And I do not yet understand how this is possible. – They laugh: what is there to understand? It is a matter of course! – Is this the secret? – I feel as though, in some mysterious manner, in some indescribable sense, light suddenly began to shine in me; as though new and never-suspected paths of recognition were opened to me, as if all earthly barriers fell away, and the world of men gave place to a new world. I now behold what was previously invisible, relations and connections of quite a different kind from those which I had formerly perceived, and, together with the world about me, I am becoming changed myself. I now recognise myself as the sun-like source of boundless power, ceaselessly giving, ceaselessly pouring out without hindrance or resistance. No problem disquiets me any more, and I can no longer understand my former research after truth. – The spiritual light is extinguished in the same sudden and mysterious way as it flashed up. The old problems appear again, and seem no more soluble than before. But in my heart I now can guess their meaning. When the light of Brahma has been kindled in a soul, then the problems cease to exist: that is the solution of the world's riddle. As questions belonging to earthly consciousness, they are unanswerable. In themselves they are equations whose premises are false, and which therefore cannot be solved. The relation of the man fettered to earth with the man who knows, resembles

that of the ant with the human being who crosses its path: no matter how certain the ant is by instinct, it cannot help itself when faced by problems which must appear transcendental to its organism. Just so is the case of the man who attempts to solve the riddle of the universe. From the angle of reason, it is insoluble. Reason lacks too many data; it cannot overlook the whole situation. And man's state is worse still than that of the helpless animal, because he knows how to question that which is beyond his power to reply to, because his consciousness represents an unhappy half-way stage between blindness and omniscience. – But it is given to man to rise above himself, the God within him is nigh upon awakening. One day, unexpectedly and suddenly, the light of Brahma will be kindled in his conscious soul; and this light extinguishes all human problems. – It still sheds its afterglow in my imagination; I still feel my humanity as something alien, burdensome; and as if I were one of the genii who flit about me, I would like to laugh at the misery of the world. Don't you see? Just look up! Understand! How can they understand? Even I have only understood, I understand now only dimly in my memory. And if I am to give voice to what I mean, I cannot do so. The words I call forth turn back, thoughts take flight. They cannot grasp what I know, they are afraid of being burst asunder. And if I force them, my wisdom sounds like folly. There is no evil. – Of course that is nonsense, not sense from the angle of human consciousness. It therefore seems useless to speak to men about it. There would be no purpose at all if, even in the most benighted consciousness, there did not live a suspicion of the light, a light which slowly, from incarnation to incarnation, devours the darkness. If it were otherwise, Christianity would never have been brought to believe the paradoxical teaching of Jesus, nor would the Indian people have seen their highest ideal in renunciation, or Buddhistic humanity be striving after Nirvana, within which everything that makes the sum of life is supposed to disappear. – We all know more than we think is knowable. This knowledge dictates us our ideal, inspires our longing. As unconsciously and knowing beings we cling to the paradoxes of religion, and shall cling to

them unto the last day, on which the light of Brahma will at last become the light of all.

In the Himalayas man is marvellously near to God. This nature widens the limits of consciousness more than any other upon earth. All petty connections are severed, and the widest, apparently even the most extreme, sway uncertainly in the air, like soap bubbles, ready at any moment to dissolve in the light of the Highest Sun. And in the vast space which is thus created, over-powerful forces pour in from above. – I gaze upon the ridges of the Himavat with boundless longing. If I could reach up into the pure air of the gods, would the scales not fall from me for ever? Would I not breathe freely there at last, in the blessed knowledge that the word: I knew it! is fulfilled? From year to year I feel more strongly within me the powerful presence of something higher, something new, which presses towards manifestation. I feel that I am being driven bodily upwards from below. Nowhere have I felt it so strongly as I do here. And gratefully would I like to pray before Shiva's paradise, whose vision brings such blessing.

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EVERY time as my gaze rests upon the giants in front of me, the verse comes into my mind like a refrain: 'Faith can move mountains.' This truth has never appeared such a matter of course to me as here, where matter seems so overwhelmingly powerful. Instead of limiting my sense of freedom it increases it; just as all consciousness actually grows out of opposition.

Mind can move mountains. (The usual wording which gives such power to faith is too narrow and, moreover, liable to be misunderstood: it is not confidence as such which brings about the miracle, but faith gives to the mind complete possession of its power.) Of course it can do so. It is ridiculous to doubt this truth, almost as ridiculous as the desire to prove it in particular. For what do I do when I will something, when I think, when I act? As mind, I influence matter; in principle there is no difference between the most ordinary gesture of the moment and the miracle which a magician may perform. My own conceptual world is an external world as opposed to

the ego, just as much as the most distant star in space; so far as the laws peculiar to matter permit it, precisely so far has the mind power over it. This limit, of course, may not be transgressed, for, were it to cease, nature herself would vanish; but within this boundary nothing is impossible in principle, and within it there lies the world.

I have, therefore, essentially much the same relationship to the snowy summits of the Himavat as to the body which has served me as my nearest instrument now for more than thirty years. Even this is true only in one respect, that I am physically further from them than from myself: with my eyes I touch them directly, in thought I am with them, and on them; for in so far as one can speak of space at all in connection with thoughts, they are wherever one attaches them. There is no point in the universe to which I could not be as near as I am to myself. Whether I am or not depends upon the direction of my attention; one can literally be far from, in fact outside oneself. It is thus no doubt literally true what Indian wisdom teaches, that isolation is ultimately caused by egoism (Ahankara) and disappears as soon as this has been overcome: if all my mental energy flowed from me like the rays of the sun, if none of them returned to me tied by interests to my person, then I would be free as well as unlimited. And such a process of liberation *is* possible, for there is no insoluble connection (just as, on the other hand, there is none which cannot be established) between the mind and the processes of nature. This, then, would appear to be the meaning of that condemnation of self-interest on which all higher religions are agreed: through selfishness man reduces himself. With every thought which does not radiate into infinity, but returns to the body from which it emanated, man cuts himself off from his own wider reality.

I look round about into the glorious world which I could feel myself to be if I were more free from my person. Objectively, as nature, I am firmly tied to her: I am only a centre of force, among others, in unending continuity. But I could *know* myself to be one with her, could be her conditioning centre, as a conscious self, in so far as I took deep enough root in my

being. Why have I not yet reached that point, since I have known for so long what really matters? – Because my nature has not yet been wholly penetrated. My spiritual consciousness has not yet entered into the body of my passions. They continue, uninfluenced, their own existence. They even grow instead of shrivelling in their platonic realm, and every time when spiritual progress has taken place in me, I am compelled to recognise that they too have gained in strength. They, however, are blind. They need not remain in this condition. It must be possible to relate them back to my deepest self, to gain their elemental power as my willing tools. But I do not know yet how this is to be done. I am still at the stage where life in the spirit, as in the case of the Indians, means soaring above matter.

There still are times in which I would like to be great in the earthly sense. But here, in the midst of this grandiose nature, no pettiness can abide. While I am looking out upon the snow-covered peaks, which are just beginning to glow in the evening light, a nameless longing burns within me to get altogether beyond the limits of personal existence.

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IT is in these mountainous forests that the Mahatmas are said to dwell, the silent, unrecognised supermen who guide unselfishly the destiny of mankind. They have got beyond the limitations of matter. Externally they are like us; they possess a mortal frame, and appear even less than our great men do as far as the wealth of their human power is concerned. Yet they are more than men because they are completely free. They are only fettered because they wish to be so, they do not need to die nor to be born again; wherever they wish to be, there they are present, whatever they turn their attention to, they know. Their consciousness embraces the world; they leap as spirits from star to star, just as we do from memory to memory. They act in silence, in secrecy. Only very rarely do they interfere visibly with earthly events. But they train assistants in the stillness who are to further their plans in the visible world. Whenever a struggling child of man seems ripe to be translated

into a higher dimension, the master meets him lovingly halfway and points him the road to a newer and higher course.

Whether this legend corresponds to truth I know not; but it pleases me to-day to give it credence. As I roam alone through the woods, and cast my eyes far over stream and valley and to the snowy glaciers' tops, I envisage this superhuman existence, and hope at every turn of the road that a Mahatma might suddenly stand before me. Would he not become aware of me, or would he really refuse to come over to me on the wings of merciful thought? For I need him so badly. Just now I find myself again at a point where I am undecided as to what course I am to take. It is true that my subconscious has always known the right direction, and no doubt it is the same to-day. As a youth, when as a spirit I was yet unborn, I have, nevertheless, not seldom, in defiance of all reason, prepared in advance for my fate; I have rejected all occupations which did not correspond to my best future, I have spent many a year experimenting in laboratories without any real interest, as if I had been clear in my mind that such training was absolutely necessary, and I turned my back upon the study of nature, without being really conscious of the cause, the moment it ceased to advance me. During the periods of physical depression I have hastened, with the instinct of migratory birds, to the unknown latitudes which were to benefit me, and equally unerringly I have all my life prevented myself the fulfilment of my dearest desires which would have broken my destiny. And yet, had I been left to myself, I would not even have attained my present very preliminary stage: at all the critical moments I have met kindly people who helped me on. There is something marvellous about the example seen with one's own eyes and the influence of the spoken word. No matter how much we strive, nor how strong-willed we are, the subconscious follows auto-suggestion never so well as the suggestions conveyed by others; if it were otherwise, there would be need neither for teachers nor doctors, neither for schools nor hospitals. This is proved especially where we are concerned with a new beginning or with progress from a new basis. To traverse a road which one's consciousness clearly surveys, no guide is necessary,

because here one knows and knowledge gives the right direction from within. The sinner, however, no matter how near he may have come to the gates of sanctification, does not know it, for his consciousness is held fast in the meshes of sin; the caterpillar can only feel as a butterfly when it has turned into a butterfly. But when a man, in process of growth, stands before a crisis, when inwardly he is mature for new developments, and then beholds outside himself a being who has attained to what he aims at, he then recognises this being, and this recognition suddenly calls what was unconscious in him into consciousness. Now he knows whither he should and whither he wishes to go; what would otherwise occupy long periods of time happens then, perhaps, in one supreme moment. This is the deed of the master, the saviour. – It seems to me as if I stood at a similar critical point. My one-time aims appear worthless to me. Whatever I pursue in the spirit of my past makes me feel that I at heart want something different. But what? I do not know. I am in bitter need of a master, of one who stands where I aspire to.

It seems to me to-day as if my goal lay in Mahatmadom; as if I were right to cast off the skin of humanity; for already there is nothing human which ties me in my innermost self. And just as the Mahatmas are supposed to be, thus should and could supermen be. When Jahveh promised to reveal Himself to Elias, the latter awaited him in the form of the storm. He came, however, as a still small voice. What folly to imagine that supermen could be like Hebbel's Holofernes! The higher a being is, the more spiritual he is, and the more spiritual he is, the smaller is his direct material power. God does not affect physical activity at all; He cannot be proved, hardly inferred. The Mahatmas act only indirectly. In their sphere none of the laws is valid which determine earthly greatness, there it seems a matter of course what the saviours and saints of all times and all countries have taught, which, however, will sound paradoxical to men for ever: that humility is more than pride, that ambition is evil, that all struggle after earthly happiness is a mistake, and that only he shall gain his life who loses it. The Mahatmas demand from him who wishes to

follow them the renunciation of everything which here below is regarded as worthy to be striven after. Very naturally. Am I so far as to be able to renounce? It seems to me to-day as if this were so; as if all earthly purpose had already died out in me, as if all vanity, all striving after elevation and fame, were dead. If a master appeared to me to-day and said: Come! I would follow him blindly.

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NO Mahatma appears to me. No voice of a master do I hear, either within or without me. But the air in the Himalayas is marvellously stimulating. For a long time it has not been so easy for me to think, or cost me so little trouble to abide by the problems which occupy me at the moment. Thus I spend several hours every day in making Yoga experiments, without feeling appreciably tired.

In the course of these experiments I remembered the remark of a biologist, that our brain was protoplasmic in nature; that it was the only one of our organs which is still plastic in the same sense as the entire body of a protozoon. That is not correct. No matter how difficult it may be to determine the structure of the brain: it is a differentiated organ which becomes changed in the course of time in no different a sense from a muscle which is developed by exercise; nothing essentially new is being created within it. The peculiarity of the protist, however, consists in the fact that, out of a formless fundamental mass, he creates forms *ad hoc*, according to the circumstances to which he is subjected, and these, sooner or later, sink back into formlessness. Man, the whole of whose body represents an ultimate expression of its potentialities with the one exception of his semen, is also like protoplasm – not, however, as a physical but as a psychic organism. If I concern myself with protozoa, I can only make clear to myself their peculiarity by comparison with the soul: their organs are created just as ideas come to men. If I reverse the comparison, judging from the protozoon's point of view, I am obliged logically to deduce that the substance of which thoughts and mental images are composed possesses the very characteristics of protoplasm. In

a condition of rest the content of the soul, so far as we are conscious of it, is amorphous; as soon as attention has been roused and directed to some point, or as soon as the mass is set in motion at all, formations are produced – thoughts, tones, pictures, etc. – which disappear as soon as the consciousness changes its centre. I have tried to observe these manifestations as such, which is not altogether simple, in so far as they do not remain willingly, and every thought which we have concerning what we have seen assumes a form which overlays the original picture: the conclusion which I have come to, in agreement with the Indians, is that the formations of the soul are real things, that is to say, objects, which must be understood according to the categories of force and matter. Of course, they belong to a different order of appearances from the events of outer nature, but it would be a mistake to deny their material existence, since they are objects of experience and cannot be understood as 'spirit.' What ultimately is the truth about the difference between nature and spirit? That the difference is a real one seems to me highly improbable, and, besides, the question cannot be decided in any case; it is impossible to draw safe conclusions in the sphere of metaphysics by means of reason. For certain we can affirm no more than that the antithesis of nature and spirit concerns an epistemological relation, a ratio cognoscendi. All given actual phenomena are 'nature' and follow her immutable laws. The creative principle which we must presuppose is expressed in creation, but is not creation itself. I am free in so far as I am able to will, but as soon as I have willed, I find myself rigidly determined; as soon as a manifestation has been formed, spontaneity is at an end. Thus, freedom may be at the bottom of the body, and God may stand behind all nature, but to imagine that one sees God directly at work in it is just as contrary to sense as to regard one's finger-nails as a free decision of the will. Of all versions, my own seems to be the most correct, which identifies the concept of metaphysical reality with that of life,[1] for in life alone we see ourselves, ever and again, pointed back to the fundamental creative cause. Thus, the whole of nature may

[1] See my *Prolegomena zur Naturphilosophie*, Ch. V

originally have been alive in this sense, and the army of stars may owe its creation to a whim of God – who can tell? – but what we actually experience is not the will of God, but events which follow mechanical laws, that is to say nature; in the same way, mature organisms obey no laws but physiological ones; just so, social life follows the dead forms of law and habit, and so forth. From all this it appears that, no matter in what relation nature and spirit may stand to one another, it is impossible for reason to differentiate between them, and as the *raison d'être* of this differentiation lies in reason itself, it may apply it in any way whatever. I am therefore justified in comprehending the phenomena of consciousness as matter. Of what kind this matter is, I cannot say; I myself have not gained any satisfactory conclusions in this respect, and the assertions of the Indians and the theosophists can at present not be tested. But that there is in fact something like thought-substance, seems certain to me, and this conclusion, as well as the possibilities which it involves, leads on to not uninteresting deductions.

Thus it appears that the sphere of freedom recedes in proportion with progressive development. In the case of the protozoa, it still includes the body; with them the physical side of life proves itself to be plastic in the same sense and to the same degree as only the psychic side in the case of man. The more definite forms the physical body assumes, the less free does it become. Starfish are still able to regenerate half of their bodies, reptiles at least the extremities, the higher animals have only retained, of the one-time unlimited imagination of their bodies, enough that they generally recover quickly and without being taken care of, when they are ill. In the case of grown-up human beings, freedom practically does not express itself at all any more in the physical sphere. – On the other hand, a new sphere of reality is revealed in them. Man as a psychic entity is just as much protoplasm as any protozoon is as a physical one; unformed in himself, but capable of every formation. But here again, development travels towards stabilisation; the more advanced a soul has become, the more differentiated are its organs and formations, and the more does it incline to crystalli-

sation. Thus we possess not only laws, social systems, religions, definitely worked-out philosophies: the mind of every one crystallises, sooner or later, into a rigid structure which, once it is completed, seems incapable of any change, and only grows and changes its substance as the physical body does. And now comes a paradox: we regard as the greatest mind not the one whose structure is the firmest, but, conversely, the one who is most plastic; the one who is never finished (*figé*). Thus, the protoplasmic condition seems in principle to be the higher one, although its own progressive tendency undoubtedly inclines towards solidified manifestation.

Just at the moment I can only interpret this fact by assuming that, in the sphere of life, there are higher, but no highest, manifestations. Definitely outlined phenomena are above indefinite ones, but above these there are again new undetermined ones which, on their part, find fulfilment in determination, and so on *ad infinitum*. Definition means the maximum of any given moment, but as soon as the moment becomes time, the maximum tends more and more towards the aspect of a minimum. Thus, no absolute perfection is conceivable unless we mean, as Hegel did, the final product of an endless process – a quantity purely imaginary in the empirical sense and possessing only mathematical reality. What practical conclusions are we to draw from this recognition? – I see no other but the one which has always been my guiding principle: to strive after perfection everywhere, but not to regard any perfection as ultimate. Thus much for theory. In practice the question is considerably more simple. The perfected figure of man is unattainable to the amœba, and none of us will ever reach the perfection of a Buddha. As every individual embodies definite and limited possibilities, so there exists for every one an absolute maximum (in a given existence, in so far as many of such may be in store for each, which I do not know). To attain this maximum should be the aim of man's life. This ideal must also be stuck to in those cases in which he becomes aware that higher possibilities exist in him than he thought originally, for the path to a higher level of perfection always leads through the aspiration to a lower one, and cannot be found otherwise.

This, then, is the truth which is at the bottom of the theory of evolution, though the Indian, as well as the Darwinian, expression of it only does justice imperfectly to the real circumstances: there really is a sequence of levels, a hierarchy of beings, in which the immediate ideal of each lies on the next highest plane. We must strive after perfection, although each perfection which has been attained, seen from the next highest standpoint, appears as a limitation. Only one other possibility is conceivable, but it seems doubtful to me whether men can realise it: to become so profoundly inward, by renouncing all external expression, that one lives in one's own pure possibility. In that case all barriers would be overcome, because removed to start with.

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I AM continuing the interrupted train of thought in a different direction. If the innermost principle of life is capable of every formation, on what does the given formation depend? Apparently on the external circumstances to which inheritance, Karma, temperament also belong. Thus, the evolution of the world of organisms, on the one hand, and the fate of the individual, on the other, could be understood exhaustively as far as I can see to-day. Everywhere those formations appear which, on the one hand are possible, and, on the other, necessary. When I think from this angle of that Proteus ideal, to which I have professed myself for such a long time, I recognise that its realisation requires no more than an unlimited plasticity and the opportunity of letting an infinite number of circumstances affect one. A being made of thought-substance could literally assume any shape; material beings must needs abide by their species and their type.

The more I concern myself with the problem, the more does it estrange me that philosophers can take mental formations so seriously when they must experience every moment how transient they are, how superficial and accidental their bases. Men become crystallised into professional types, religious societies create nations, a man's position in life is expressed in his physique – certainly. But what is the cause? Surely and exclu-

sively, inertia. If men had a little more imagination, all these classes could not exist, or, rather, they would exist for reasons of expediency, but they would not be taken so bitterly in earnest. For my part, I cannot treat even the most solid manifestations differently from the formations of the roaming imagination, and, instead of being delighted by it, I suffer from the fact that many of them are so enduring. However, most men see the situation differently, and probably it is well that they do so; for otherwise, this planet would never acquire a fixed inventory. Yet, if I were to decide I confess that in many ever-returning moods I regard my aspirations to perfection as a *pis-aller*. In the given circumstances, owing to the insurmountability of inertia, it is impossible to aspire to anything better. But I would much prefer if I could continue without superimposed determination and could manifest myself, intangible, my real within Self, just as it happens, sometimes as Keyserling, sometimes as animal or God, and sometimes as the universe.

No, essentially I am not a human being; my humanity is accidental or necessary, just as one happens to take it, but certainly no more. In the air of the Himalayas, which gives wings to the mind as no other, the singular tragedy of my existence becomes painfully plain to me.

Even in my childhood I was surprised that, as a person, I was unchangeable; I felt myself to be so little identical with 'myself,' I knew myself as capable of such unlimited transformations, that it would have seemed more natural to me if my body had behaved just like the products of my fancy, which appeared sometimes thus and sometimes differently, according to my mood. And when I was read to about Proteus, I thought: at last a being who seems thoroughly natural. I, too, ought to be able to change like Proteus, for 'in reality' I can do so. 'Essentially' I am no more Hermann Keyserling than an animal or a tree or any other human being, and if it seems different it is not my fault. The surprise of my childhood has never left me; it has only grown more profound. Never, throughout the whole of my life, have I felt myself to be identical with my person, nor regarded what is personal as essential; never felt myself affected by what I was and did, what I suffered

and what happened to me. And for years I have striven to burst the fetters of definite existence, to manifest myself as I knew myself to be. Soon I had to see that this was not possible in the way in which I meant it: man's body is not plastic in the protean sense. Then I tried the same with the soul, but it failed me too. The actor does not change 'himself,' when he appears different, but he only represents some one else; the poet changes only his expression, not his person. I knew that this did not represent an ultima, that it must be possible to change one's real existence just as the actor changes his part, the poet his imaginative embodiment; my direct experience revealed to me that my person was not identical with myself, that it limited me, that I could be much more if I only could succeed in escaping from its confines. I had to realise that here below this is impossible. I had to renounce the deepest wish of my heart.

This fate caused me to turn to my inner self. After I had recognised that not only my body had failed me, but that also my soul was too inert for my purposes, I gave up all outward strife and withdrew deeper and deeper into my inmost soul, in order to realise my freedom there. And when I further recognised that inner realisation possessed its outer exponent in perfection, I disavowed the Proteus ideal as an ultimate goal and only strove to perfect myself within the confines of my nature. But even to-day I have not ceased to grieve that I had to give up what I really wanted to achieve. Fundamentally I am not here to perfect myself in the all too narrow confines of humanity, I have been born to act freely in freer spheres. And at the times when my wandering faith makes a halt at the Karma doctrine, I would fain believe that my present fate signifies the punishment for a period in which I was all too extravagant a demon.

This much is certain: I am pursuing a course which fundamentally is not suited to my nature; the aim which I have set myself will be more difficult for me to attain than for anyone else. A Proteus, who strives after finite perfection there is something tragi-comical about it. If I were, at any rate, a Bhakta, if I had the inner means at my disposal, which are the

outcome of an emotional religious mood: I lack them; I feel no real desire for salvation. Or if I were capable of belief in authority! The blind believer has an easy task to attain his specific perfection. He just surrenders himself to the traditional ideas which, thanks to his lack of understanding, he does not question, and if they are only more or less reasonable, they develop his soul accordingly. I happen to be, as a human being, an extreme expression of the type whose greatest advantage, his intellectual power, makes self-realisation most difficult. I am not capable of believing blindly for any period, I must understand before a spiritual reality becomes real to me and capable, therefore, of influencing my inner being; I must have understood my own impulses before they can take hold of me completely. The centre of my consciousness lies in the sphere of understanding, in the same way as, with the animal, it lies in the sphere of the senses, or in the sphere of feeling in the case of women. This retards my development. Intellect either lags behind, or else it anticipates experience, thus abbreviating it and corrupting the experiences of the soul which might awaken it. How long did it not take me before I got beyond the condition of the radical sceptic, so that I gained the first traces of ingenuity! In the days of my youth I was certain of nothing, since 'man' within me had not yet been awakened, and my powers of recognition were undeveloped. And since truthfulness prevented me from professing what I did not know, I appeared to be lacking in character. I was unable to decide in favour of anything. To-day I am beyond this bitter stage. But I do not know anything like as much as I would have to know to be completely sure of myself. Once more: how easy it is for inward natures of small intelligence! They do not need to understand before that which is alive in their soul becomes real in their consciousness. People like me remain uncertain until they know, and they know with such difficulty. And the end overtakes them generally long before they have attained to the recognition which is their salvation.

This state of affairs makes, in my case, extraordinary demands upon my patience, because I cannot feel myself identical with

my person; I suffer in reality for somebody else. What consoles me is the consciousness of being a pioneer. My course will in fact become more and more that of every one, because the process of intellectualisation continues to advance irrepressibly. The times of blind belief are over. So are the times in which definite forms could be taken perfectly seriously. I am reminded of Paul Dubois' ideas concerning self-education; he states very correctly that it is a matter of understanding whether a man strives after good or evil, but he then solves the practical problem by saying that we ought to tie ourselves by good habits – we are to introduce such a process of crystallisation that a good and efficient citizen results. This would only be a new version, well adapted to freethinkers, of the old means of binding men by dogmata. No one who has attained the state of consciousness in which the living centre rests in understanding will be able to approve such a view for himself; he is literally 'beyond good and evil,' in so far as no special manifestation can signify an ultimum. He strives after a higher kind of certainty: not in the form of limitation but of freedom. He does not want to be good any more as an appropriate habit, but he wants to get beyond all habit. He wants to take root in the fundamental ground of his being, which, conditioning all limitation, is unlimited itself, he wants to know absolutely, without prejudice, to wish purely without intention, solely to be without any limitation of his existence. This higher condition is attainable. Only the way to it leads through many dangers, which many a man will fail to overcome. But never yet has anything essential been achieved without loss. The ideal of Personality is no longer the highest: the vanguard of mankind has already gone so far as to be obliged to profess a higher ideal if it does not want its own perdition. Where faith in the absolute value of definite manifestations has passed away, where authority is no longer binding, where ritual is no longer a support, where only that which is understood appears absolutely real, only two possibilities are left open: one of them is that of destruction. We will die of decomposition if we do not discover new means of salvation, for the old ones are no longer effective, and a descent from a

natural level to which man has once risen, however often it has been advocated, is only possible in the form of a fall. The other, the positive possibility – and the only one – consists in our recognising the fact of the new natural level, and in erecting a higher ideal upon this. No matter how few have up to to-day risen to this level – these few are decisive; it will depend upon their example whether the mass will fall into the abyss, or whether it will advance towards freer and loftier heights. The new natural level manifests itself in the facts that man can no longer believe without understanding, that he no longer recognises accidental barriers, that he has become incapable of taking names and forms seriously in the sense in which this has been done hitherto. From this there follows the corresponding ideal: we must understand perfectly, become absolutely free from dogma and prejudice, and realise a synthesis of humanity above personality. A synthesis in which the perfectly inward human being, living in the spirit and in truth, uses empirical manifestations only as a means of expression.

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ONCE more I have ridden this night to the peak which, of all those round about, offers the most distant view, in order to behold the sunrise. This unfortunately took place unnoticeably as the mist had already risen too high. But it was given to me, for hours before, to contemplate the giants which stood out like alabaster from the dark sky. During these hours I experienced a marvellous feeling. Once more I felt as if I had already attained to my goal, as if I had already escaped from the chrysalis of my humanity. And as I thought of the reality which flags so sadly behind what is possible and what ought to be, my bitterness suddenly became changed into joy. I thought how exquisite it is that I have not yet attained my goal! That I still have something to do; thus my earthly existence has a meaning. And how admirable that my natural disposition is unfavourable! Thus I will experience joy at work done. It is not the goal which has been attained, but the forced difficulty which heightens happily the consciousness of

life. I will see how far I can get with this person of mine, which here below I will never be able to overcome altogether.

It is only thus that I, that every one, ought to put the problem of his life. It is not possible to alter one's talents – but why should one? Not one of them embodies any value in itself, each one is only an opportunity for expression, by means of which every one can realise the utmost. And the more difficulty is experienced, the sooner does one succeed. No one has yet achieved real greatness in the domain whose mastery was easiest for him; nothing offers a greater obstacle to a genius than his talent. A just man hardly ever becomes a saint. Unfavourable circumstances call forth supreme efforts with the greatest certainty. Thus I have every cause for joy.

I will see how far I can get in my course; now I ought to progress at a double-quick pace, far quicker, at any rate, than at the time when I did not recognise clearly on what everything depended. Then I lost much time through doubt, through looking backward and sideways; I reproached myself because I could not do justice to many demands which were made upon me, especially as far as the realm of altruistic activity was concerned. I might have spared myself those. I, as a definite, limited person, am only an organ of that self, which is my real being; and this organ should function according to its nature; that is the sole cause of its existence. In doing its utmost, no matter how blindly it may be intent upon its special aim, it acts better in and for the whole than when it attempted to serve it directly. To the latter task others have been called. The quintessence of all ethics is contained in the warning of Sri Krishna's: Rather fulfil thy own Dharma, no matter how low it may be, than the most illustrious Dharma of some one else. The objective ideal, the absolute, can only then penetrate appearance completely when the personal centre of the latter becomes the focus of the former. That innermost personal spot which is incapable of approach by the outer world, is at the same time directly connected with the centre of the universe. Thanks to it, God can manifest Himself through every nature, but only in so far as it lives in accordance with itself. Therefore, no one nature need worry about itself. As to my-

self, I am in a particularly favourable position, because I now recognise with perfect clarity what is essential. Now I can do all and everything in the spirit of the 'one,' so that all and everything must contribute to my eternal welfare. What should discourage me, now that I know? What should impede me? Neither disease nor misfortune, neither my own failure nor that of others, neither virtue nor vice. Everything in life serves the man who knows.

I am truly favoured. I feel my happiness so intensively to-day that I would like to radiate it to the whole of mankind. I wish I could become an encouraging example to it! Would that humanity might learn from me how little reason it has to be afraid! It still suffers from the superstition of good disposition; it still reverences definite states as ideals; it still fancies that there are exemplary natural dispositions. Thus, humanity does not become joyful but wretched, when it must look up to something, and when love is not strong enough to throttle envy. But there are no exemplary natures, nor can there be. Not the greatest man was worthy of reverence as a product of nature. If Buddha and Christ represent the highest examples for us, this is not due to their disposition, but to what they have made of it; it depends on their being born again in the spirit. But those greatest individuals were from the beginning so blessed that it does not seem easy to look beyond that which was born with them; every one feels unconsciously, in contemplating them, the inferiority of his own position. My person happens to be perfectly unexemplary. My Dharma demands an existence which could hardly be desirable for anyone but myself, it requires the rejection of nearly all those ties which are justly regarded as the most formative, so that probably nothing of what I do or what I am could be an example, in the good sense, for anyone. I must appear positively abnormal, because Proteus must present itself on the level of human existence, not as the most universal, but as the most extremely specialised appearance. But this is just what predestines me to be an example. No man is exemplary as a product of nature – there is no sort of danger that anyone should take me as an example; but every one becomes exemplary in case he attains

his supreme perfection within the limits given by nature; that is what I could, what I must attain to. And even if I do not get so far, if death overtakes me half-way, every one who aspires at all will be able to learn from me, if only my struggle for perfection animates the whole of my life, if only every single thing I do gives clear expression to this strife. Whoever strives for himself will see in me that in truth nature does not imply fetters, but the way to freedom, that spirit is able to transfigure all appearance; that we belong essentially to a world of spirit, whose laws are quite different from those of the earth, the whole of whose significance depends on the fact that they can serve the spirit as a means. There is no other than spiritual significance; significance alone in its turn gives meaning to facts. Thus it depends upon the spirit in which a man lives, whether the insufficiency of his talents, adversity, suffering, or, conversely, good fortune, will lead to his salvation or to his destruction.

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IN the evening the Tibetans like to gather together by torchlight to watch a mummery. They are rich in humour, true masters of mime, and especially when they dance, dressed up as dragons, they are so perfect in style that every movement strikes one as a natural necessity, actually conjuring up the spirit of the chalk age – it is then that I loudly add my applause to that of the crowd. This nightly play in the mountain world of the Himalayas works upon me like a living myth. The Indian sagas of the beginning and the end of the world come back to my mind; playfully, they tell us, and as if at play, did Brahma create the world; without compulsion, without design, without forethought, just like a child at play. And in full play it will some day pass away. On Doomsday Shiva will begin a wild dance, bacchanalian, exulting, more and more frenzied, till at last the universe is danced away.

How sublime is this myth! How much grander than that of the carefully pondering patriarch, who laboured for six days with a fixed purpose, and was then, on the seventh, so very well pleased with himself – who planned a final settlement of

all accounts, at which each item will be examined to the last detail. Let me, on the other hand, praise Brahma, the player! Very probably the Indian myth speaks truth. If this world has a beginning, if it be based on intelligent thought, then it must have been called into existence without aim or purpose, as a work of art originates in the poet's fancy. Only in such a case can it pass for a masterpiece; from the angle of any design, but its very own, it is a failure. But if Brahma was at play when he created the world, then indeed should creation be praised. How rich in change are all events! How surprisingly the one fits into the other! And how full of meaning are the invented rules of the game!

Is it not a mistake when man takes life tragically? Would it not be sublime if he too could do as Brahma does? For what, after all, differentiates play from work? Not its seriousness: I know nothing more serious than the way in which real children play. It is the particular aim in work, compared with the want of purpose in play. But life in itself is absolutely without aim or purpose. It is a pure outpouring, a growing and giving, a clear striving for ever fuller expression, in which the idea of a purpose and the purpose itself are only a hindrance. The more original a being, the more veracious, vital, genuine – the more his existence will resemble a game. Thus the existence of a God is only conceivable as play.

I place myself into the condition of consciousness which corresponds to the above: what would I lack if I could attain this plane? I would stand above fate, above care, above myself, above everything which concerns me. However acutely I peered into the world, I could discover no evil in it. Thus Shakespeare looked upon it when in the mood in which he created his comedies. They are the work of a god, not of a man; of a being for whom tragedy has ceased to exist, for whom law and fate are empty words, because he has come to know nothing beyond the rules of the game.

31

CALCUTTA

It was in the ancient palace of the Tagores. The musicians squatted on silken carpets, playing their old-world ditties on strange instruments. Their music could not be confined within the limits of melody, it had no reference to special harmonies, nor could it be dissected in accordance with a simple rhythm; even the individual tones were not clearly defined. Nevertheless, every apparent entity really represented a kind of unity: the unity of the state of soul which continues until it changes in another. The theory, I would almost say the mythology of this music, is indeed very wonderful. From the earliest days certain sequences of tone correspond to certain picturesque scenes; the connoisseur knows the corresponding Rāg for every pictorial motif. And every Rāg corresponds to a special time of the year and may only be played at a certain hour. There are Rāgs for every hour of the day and night: when yesterday, on a winter's evening, a midsummer noonday melody was to be played at my special request, the musicians became restive; they could not imagine how such a thing was possible.

It is not easy to explain in words what Indian music means, for it has very little in common with our own: it is essentially of a piece with Indian dancing. No intention, no formation with contours, no beginning, no end; it is the undulation and the sway of the eternally flowing stream of life. Hence the same effect upon the listener; it does not tire one, it might continue for ever, for no one ever tires of life. But what is true of the Nautsh in general has been developed in this music to the finest, the most intimate point. Not time in general, but the particular conditions of life, seem in this case to have been projected upon the background of eternity.

The programme music of Europe is at fault when it wants to represent with tones, qualities which are not music. For musical qualities there are no equivalents in other spheres; music can only be direct expression. In the overture to Tristan,

the eddying of the waves on the sand seems to be represented almost tangibly, but only because the listener has the shore in front of his eyes, or because he knows what is meant to be represented; in themselves these harmonies would hardly correspond any less to the rustling of trees. In reality this music only expresses a certain condition which cannot be defined by anything objective. Just in the same way the noonday Rāg of summer would not necessarily evoke the feeling of paralysing heat. But this is something which the Indians have never demanded of it: the noonday Rāg of summer is to correspond to its subject only in so far as it should hold an enhancing mirror to the real conditions which one passes through – and this much music can do. A French artist once observed, concerning Indian music, which possesses this faculty more than any other: *c'est la musique du corps astral.* That is precisely what it is (so far as there is an astral realm which corresponds to the traditional concept): a wide, immeasurable world, in which states of soul take the place of objects. One experiences nothing definite, nothing tangible, in listening to it, and yet one feels oneself most intensely alive. In fact, in following the change of the tones, one is listening to oneself. One feels how evening grows into night, and night into day, how the bedewed morning is succeeded by the oppressive noon, and instead of watching stereotyped pictures passing before one's review, which make experience so easily a nuisance, one becomes conscious, in the mirror of tone, of the ever new shades with which life reacts to the stimuli of the world. How should one grow weary? How should one get tired of listening? When I was blind, I was surprised by the discovery that the man without sight knows no boredom. The time which, as a rule, we measure by the appearance of objects which changes rarely as rapidly as we could wish, is now valued by the change of mental images. And as the soul produces restlessly, heaping pictures upon pictures ceaselessly, no consciousness of monotony can exist. This comfort which nature gives to the blind, Indian music has made the common property of all who have ears to hear.

There are variations to every Rāg; they are called Rāginis,

feminine Rāgs, and every masculine Rāg possesses many of these. Their relation to each other is expressed in the most curious way in music. It is undoubtedly partially a question of musical relationship, but the essential quality of the relation of the Rāgs to the Rāginis is displayed in the specific effects, the special conditions, which they call to life. For women have a different effect from men. Indian music belongs in its essence positively to another dimension than our own. That which is objective for us hardly exists here. Successive tones are not necessarily related harmoniously, the division of bars is missing, key and rhythm are changed constantly; an Indian piece of music could not, in its real character, be written down in our connotation at all. The objective element of Indian music, the only decisive factor, is that which is left to subjective appreciation in Europe: expression, interpretation, touch. It is pure originality, pure subjectivity, pure *durée réelle*, as Bergson would say, uninterfered with by external ties. It is tangible objectively at most as rhythm, for rhythm implies, as it were, the point of indifference between objective and subjective conditions. Thus, this music is, on the one hand, intelligible to every one, on the other, only to those whose souls are most highly cultured. Intelligible to every one in so far as he is alive, and this music expresses the very nature of life; intelligible only to those most highly cultured, as its spiritual significance can only be fathomed by the Yogi, who knows his own soul. In relation to this music, a musical individual hardly occupies a preferential position. The metaphysician, however, does so. For the metaphysician is the man whose consciousness reflects the essential nature of life, and that is just what Indian music does. In listening to it, he hears his very own knowledge gloriously reborn in the world of sound. This music is, in fact, another and more coloured expression of Indian wisdom. He who wishes to understand it completely must have realised his self, must know that the individual is only a transient tone in the world's symphony, that everything belongs together, that no unit can be detached from the whole; that nothing substantial is essentially more than a condition, and that no condition is more than the momentary picture of

dark, ever-flowing life. He must know that Being abides beyond all manifestation, which is only its expression or the reflection of its splendour, and that salvation consists in anchoring his consciousness in being. – That is how the Indian, whose guest I was, felt and understood this music. The performers resembled ecstatics in the act of communicating with God. And the audience listened with the devotion with which one listens to divine revelation.

It was a memorable night. The noble figures of the Tagores, with their delicate, spiritualised faces, in their picturesquely folded togas, fitted admirably into the lofty hall, hung with its ancient paintings. Abenindramath, the painter of the family, made me think of the types which, once upon a time, were the ornament of Alexandria; Radindramath, the poet, impressed me like a guest from a higher, more spiritual world. Never perhaps have I seen so much spiritualised substance of soul condensed into one man. And now, at one glance, I survey Indian music, Indian wisdom and Indian life. This music, compared with our own, is monotonous; a long composition often embraces only a small range of tones, often but a single note has to convey the entirety of a mood. The essentials of this music lie elsewhere, in the dimension of pure intensity; there no wide surface is needed. – Indian metaphysics are monotonous too. They speak always only of the One, without a second, in which God, soul and the world flow together, the One which is the innermost essence of all multiplicity. Indian metaphysics too refer to something purely intensive. They refer to life itself, that ultimate, essentially un-objective Reality from which objects are poured forth like sudden fancies. In the language of extension, one can only speak of the non-extensive in the form of the simple; extension as such does not interest this philosophy. But no philosophy has realised the One more clearly than the Indian has. – And now as to the Indians themselves. As they are solely intent upon essentials, they have bestowed little attention on appearance. This has luxuriated at times like vegetation, at others it has eked out its miserable existence, ever unaided by conscious mind. Hence, Indian personality is notably lacking in width and breadth.

Even at best it seems poor compared with its Western equivalent. By compensation, however, it knows modulations of intensity, a manifoldness in the dimension of depth, as no other does. Of all lyric verse of our time, that of Rabindranath Tagore embodies the most richly and gorgeously coloured profundity.