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THE HIBBERT LECTURES FOR 1930

THE RELIGION

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE RELIGION  
OF MAN

BEING

THE HIBBERT LECTURES FOR 1930

LONDON

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TO

**DOROTHY ELMHIRST**

## PREFACE

THE chapters included in this book, which comprises the Hibbert Lectures delivered in Oxford, at Manchester College, during the month of May 1930, contain also the gleanings of my thoughts on the same subject from the harvest of many lectures and addresses delivered in different countries of the world over a considerable period of my life.

The fact that one theme runs through all only proves to me that the Religion of Man has been growing within my mind as a religious experience and not merely as a philosophical subject. In fact, a very large portion of my writings, beginning from the earlier products of my immature youth down to the present time, carry an almost continuous trace of the history of this growth. To-day I am made conscious of the fact that the works that I have started and the words that I have uttered are deeply linked by a unity of inspiration whose proper definition has often remained unrevealed to me.

In the present volume I offer the evidence of my own personal life brought into a definite focus. To some of my readers this will supply matter of psychological interest; but for others I hope it will carry with it its own ideal value important for such a subject as religion.

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My sincere thanks are due to the Hibbert Trustees, and especially to Dr. W. H. Drummond, with whom I have been in constant correspondence, for allowing me to postpone the delivery of these Hibbert Lectures from the year 1928, when I was too ill to proceed to Europe, until the summer of 1930. I have also to thank the Trustees for their very kind permission given to me to present the substance of the lectures in this book in an enlarged form by dividing the whole subject into chapters instead of keeping strictly to the lecture form in which they were delivered in Oxford. May I add that the great kindness of my hostess, Mrs. Drummond, in Oxford will always remain in my memory along with these lectures as intimately associated with them?

In the Appendix I have gathered together from my own writings certain parallel passages which bring the reader to the heart of my main theme. Furthermore, two extracts, which contain historical material of great value, are from the pen of my esteemed colleague and friend, Professor Kshiti Mohan Sen. To him I would express my gratitude for the help he has given me in bringing before me the religious ideas of mediæval India which touch the subject of my lectures.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*September 1930*

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE BAÛL SINGERS OF BENGAL

THE following account of the Baüls in Northern India has been given in the *Visvabharati Quarterly* by my friend and fellow-worker, Professor Kshiti Mohun Sen of Santiniketan, to whom I am grateful for having kindly allowed me to reproduce what he has written in this Appendix:

Baül means madcap, from *bayu* (Skt. Vayu) in its sense of nerve current, and has become the appellation of a set of people who do not conform to established social usage. This derivation is supported by the following verse of Narahari:

“That is why, brother, I became a madcap Baül.  
No master I obey, nor injunctions, canons or custom.  
Now no men-made distinctions have any hold on me,  
And I revel only in the gladness of my own welling love.  
In love there’s no separation, but commingling always.  
So I rejoice in song and dance with each and all.”

These lines also introduce us to the main tenets of the cult. The freedom, however, that the Baüls seek from all forms of outward compulsion goes even further, for among such are recognized as well the compulsions exerted by our desires and antipathies. Therefore, according to this cult, in order to gain real freedom, one has first to die to the life of the world whilst still in the flesh—for only then can one be rid of all extraneous claims. Those of the Baüls who have Islamic leanings call such “death in life” *fana*, a term used by the Sufis to denote union with the Supreme Being. True love, according to the Baüls, is incompatible with any kind of compulsion. Unless the bonds of necessity are overcome,

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liberation is out of the question. Love represents the wealth of life which is in excess of need. . . . From hard, practical politics touching our earth to the nebulous regions of abstract metaphysics, everywhere India expressed the power of her genius equally well. . . . And yet none of these, neither severally nor collectively, constituted her specific genius; none showed the full height to which she could raise herself, none compassed the veritable amplitude of her innermost reality. It is when we come to the domain of the Spirit, of God-realization, that we find the real nature and stature and genius of the Indian people; it is here that India lives and moves as in her own home of Truth.

The Bāil cult is followed by householders as well as homeless wanderers, neither of whom acknowledge class or caste, special deities, temples or sacred places. Though they congregate on the occasion of religious festivals, mainly of the Vaishnavas, held in special centres, they never enter any temple. They do not set up any images of divinities, or religious symbols, in their own places of worship or mystic realization. True, they sometimes maintain with care and reverence spots sacred to some esteemed master or devotee, but they perform no worship there. Devotees from the lowest strata of the Hindu and Moslem communities are welcomed into their ranks, hence the Bāils are looked down upon by both. It is possible that their own contempt for temples had its origin in the denial of admittance therein to their low class brethren. What need, say they, have we of other temples, is not this body of ours the temple where the Supreme Spirit has His abode? The human body, despised by most other religions, is thus for them the holy of holies, wherein the Divine is intimately enshrined as the Man of the Heart. And in this wise is the dignity of Man upheld by them.

Kabir, Nanak, Ravidas, Dadu and his followers have also called man's body the temple of God—the microcosm in which the cosmic abode of the all-pervading Supreme Being is represented.

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Kabir says :

“In this body is the Garden of Paradise; herein are comprised the seven seas and the myriad stars; here is the Creator manifest.” (I. 101.)

Dadu says :

“This body is my scripture; herein the All-Merciful has written for me His message.”

Rajjab (Dadu's chief Moslem disciple) says :

“Within the devotee is the paper on which the scriptures are written in letters of Life. But few care to read them; they turn a deaf ear to the message of the heart.”

Most Indian sects adopt some distinct way of keeping the hair of head and face as a sign of their sect or order. Therefore, so as to avoid being dragged into any such distinctions, the Baüls allow hair and beard and moustache to grow freely. Thus do we remain simple, they say. The similar practice of the Sikhs in this matter is to be noted. Neither do the Baüls believe that lack of clothing or bareness of body conduce to religious merit. According to them the whole body should be kept decently covered. Hence their long robe, for which, if they cannot afford a new piece of cloth, they gather rags and make it of patches. In this they are different from the ascetic *sanyasins*, but resemble rather the Buddhist monks.

The Baüls do not believe in aloofness from, or renunciation of, any person or thing; their central idea is *yoga*, attachment to and communion with the divine and its manifestations, as the means of realization. We fail to recognize the temple of God in the bodily life of man, they explain, because its lamp is not alight. The true vision must be attained in which this temple will become manifest in each and every human body, whereupon mutual communion and worship will spontaneously arise. Truth cannot be communicated to those on whom you look down. You must be able to see the divine light that shines within them, for it is your own lack of vision that makes all seem dark.

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Kabir says the same thing:

"In every abode the light doth shine; it is you who are blind that cannot see. When by dint of looking and looking you at length can discern it, the veils of this world will be torn asunder." (II. 33.)

"It is because the devotee is not in communion that he says the goal is far away." (II. 34.)

Many such similarities are to be observed between the sayings of the Bāüls and those of the Upper Indian devotees of the Middle Ages, but, unlike the case of the followers of the latter, the Bāüls did not become crystallized into any particular order or religious organization. So, in the Bāüls of Bengal, there is to be found a freedom and independence of mind and spirit that resists all attempt at definition. Their songs are unique in courage and felicity of expression. But under modern conditions they are becoming extinct, or at best holding on to external features bereft of their original speciality. It would be a great pity if no record of their achievements should be kept before their culture is lost to the world.

Though the Bāüls count amongst their following a variety of sects and castes, both Hindu and Moslem, chiefly coming from the lower social ranks, they refuse to give any other account of themselves to the questioner than that they are Bāüls. They acknowledge none of the social or religious formalities, but delight in the ever-changing play of life, which cannot be expressed in mere words but of which something may be captured in song, through the ineffable medium of rhythm and tune.

Their songs are passed on from Master to disciple, the latter when competent adding others of his own, but, as already mentioned, they are never recorded in book form. Their replies to questions are usually given by singing appropriate selections from these songs. If asked the reason why, they say: "We are like birds, We do not walk on our legs, but fly with our wings,"

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There was a Brahmin of Bikrampur, known as Chhaku Thakur, who was the disciple of a Baül of the Namasudra caste (accounted one of the lowest) and hence had lost his place in his own community. When admonished to be careful about what he uttered, so as to avoid popular odium, he answered with the song:

“Let them relieve their minds by saying what they will,  
I pursue my own simple way, fearing none at all.  
The Mango seed will continue to produce Mango trees,  
no Jambolans.  
This seed of mine will produce the real *me*—all glory to  
my Master!”

Love being the main principle according to the Baüls, a Vaishnava once asked a Baül devotee whether he was aware of the different kinds of love as classified in the Vaishnava scriptures. “What should an illiterate ignoramus like me know of the scriptures?” was the reply. The Vaishnava then offered to read and explain the text, which he proceeded to do, while the Baül listened with such patience as he could muster. When asked for his opinion, after the reading was over, he sang:

“A goldsmith, methinks, has come into the flower garden.  
He would appraise the lotus, forsooth,  
By rubbing it on his touchstone!”

Recruits from the higher castes are rare amongst the Baüls. When any such do happen to come, they are reduced to the level of the rest. Are the lower planks of a boat of any lesser importance than the upper? say they.

Once in Vikrampur, I was seated on the river bank by the side of a Baül. “Father,” I asked him, “why is it that you keep no historical record of yourselves for the use of posterity?” “We follow the *sahaj* (simple) way,” he replied, “and so leave no trace behind us.” The tide had then ebbed, and there was

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but little water in the river bed. Only a few boatmen were to be seen pushing their boats along the mud. The Baül continued: "Do the boats that sail over the flooded river leave any mark? What should these boatmen of the muddy track, urged on by their need, know of the *sahaj* (simple) way? The true endeavour is to keep oneself simply afloat in the stream of devotion that flows through the lives of devotees—to mingle one's own devotion with theirs. There are many classes of men amongst the Baüls, but they are all Baüls—they have no other achievement or history. All the streams that fall into the Ganges become the Ganges. So must we lose ourselves in the common stream, else will it cease to be living."

On another Baül being asked why they did not follow the scriptures, "Are we dogs", he replied, "that we should lick up the leavings of others? Brave men rejoice in the output of their own energy, they create their own festivals. These cowards who have not the power to rejoice in themselves have to rely on what others have left. Afraid lest the world should lack festivals in the future, they save up the scraps left over by their predecessors for later use. They are content with glorifying their forefathers because they know not how to create for themselves."

"If you would know that Man,  
Simple must be your endeavour,  
To the region of the simple must you fare.  
Pursuers of the path of man's own handiwork,  
Who follow the crowd, gleaning their false leavings,  
What news can they get of the Real?"

It is hardly to be wondered at that people who think thus should have no use for history!

We have already noticed that, like all the followers of the simple way, the Baüls have no faith in specially sacred spots or places of pilgrimage, but that they nevertheless congregate

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on the occasion of religious festivals. If asked why, the Baul says :

“We would be within hail of the other Boatmen, to hear  
their calls,  
That we may make sure our boat rightly floats on the  
*sahaj* stream.”

Not what men have said or done in the past, but the living human touch is what they find helpful. Here is a song giving their ideas about pilgrimage :

“I would not go, my heart, to Mecca or Medina,  
For behold, I ever abide by the side of my Friend.  
Mad would I become, had I dwelt afar, not knowing Him.  
There's no worship in Mosque or Temple or special holy  
day.  
At every step I have my Mecca and Kashi; sacred is every  
moment.”

If a Baul is asked the age of his cult, whether it comes before or after this one or that, he says, “Only the artificial religions of the world are limited by time. Our *sahaj* (simple, natural) religion is timeless, it has neither beginning nor end, it is of all time.” The religion of the Upanishads and Puranas, even that of the Vedas, is, according to them, artificial.

The followers of the *sahaj* cult believe only in living religious experience. Truth, according to them, has two aspects, inert and living. Confined to itself truth has no value for man. It becomes priceless when embodied in a living personality. The conversion of the inert into living truth by the devotee they compare to the conversion into milk by the cow of its fodder, or the conversion by the tree of dead matter into fruit. He who has this power of making truth living, is the Guru or Master. Such Gurus they hold in special reverence, for the eternal and all-pervading truth can only be brought to man's door by passing through his life.



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The Baüls say that emptiness of time and space is required for a playground. That is why God has preserved an emptiness in the heart of man, for the sake of His own play of Love. Our wise and learned ones were content with finding in Brahma the *tat* (lit. "that"—the ultimate substance). The Baüls, not being Pandits, do not profess to understand all this fuss about *thatness*, they want a Person. So their God is the Man of the Heart (*manner manush*) sometimes simply the Man (*purush*). This Man of the Heart is ever and anon lost in the turmoil of things. Whilst He is revealed within, no worldly pleasures can give satisfaction. Their sole anxiety is the finding of this Man.

The Baül sings:

"Ah, where am I to find Him, the Man of my Heart?  
Alas, since I lost Him, I wander in search of Him,  
Thro' lands near and far."

The agony of separation from Him cannot be mitigated for them by learning or philosophy:

"Oh, these words and words, my mind would none of them,  
¶ The Supreme Man it must and shall discover.  
So long as Him I do not see, these mists slake not my  
thirst.  
Mad am I; for lack of that Man I madly run about;  
For his sake the world I've left; for Bisha naught else  
will serve."

This Bisha was a *bhuin-mali*, by caste, disciple of Bala, the Kaivarta.

This cult of the Supreme Man is only to be found in the Vedas hidden away in the Purusha-sukta (A.V. 19.6). It is more freely expressed by the Upper Indian devotees of the Middle Ages. It is all in all with the Baüls. The God whom these illiterate outcastes seek so simply and naturally in their lives is obscured by the accredited religious leaders in philo-

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sophical systems and terminology, in priestcraft and ceremonial, in institutions and temples.

Not satisfied with the *avatars* (incarnations of God) mentioned in the scriptures, the Bāül sings :

“As we look on every creature, we find each to be His  
*avatar*.

What can you teach us of His ways? In ever-new play He  
wondrously revels.”

And Kabir also tells us :

“All see the Eternal One, but only the devotee, in his  
solitude, recognizes him.”

A friend of mine was once much impressed by the reply of a Bāül who was asked why his robe was not tinted with ascetic ochre :

“Can the colour show outside, unless the inside is first  
tintured?

Can the fruit attain ripe sweetness by the painting of  
its skin?”

This aversion of the Bāül from outward marks of distinction is also shared by the Upper Indian devotees, as I have elsewhere noticed.

The age-long controversy regarding *dvaita* (dualism) and *advaita* (monism) is readily solved by these wayfarers on the path of Love. Love is the simple striving, love the natural communion, so believe the Bāüls. “Ever two and ever one, of this the name of Love”, say they. In love, oneness is achieved without any loss of respective selfhood.

The same need exists for the reconciliation of the antagonism between the outer call of the material world and the inner call of the spiritual world, as for the realization of the mutual love of the individual and Supreme self. The God

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who is Love, say the Bāüls, can alone serve to turn the currents of the within and the without in one and the same direction.

Kabir says :

“If we say He is only within, then the whole Universe is shamed.

If we say He is only without, then that is false.

He whose feet rest alike on the sentient and on the inert, fills the gap between the inner and the outer world.”

The inter-relations of man's body and the Universe have to be realized by spiritual endeavour. Such endeavour is called *Kaya Sadhan* (Realization through the body).

One process in this *Kaya Sadhan* of the Bāüls is known as *Urdha-srota* (the elevation of the current). Waters flow downwards according to the ordinary physical law. But with the advent of Life the process is reversed. When the living seed sprouts the juices are drawn upwards, and on the elevation that such flow can attain depends the height of the tree. It is the same in the life of man. His desires ordinarily flow downward towards animality. The endeavour of the expanding spirit is to turn their current upwards towards the light. The currents of *jiva* (animal life) must be converted into the current of *Shiva* (God life). They form a centre round the ego; they must be raised by the force of love.

Says Dadu's daughter, Nanimata :

“My life is the lamp afloat on the stream.

To what bourne shall it take me?

How is the divine to conquer the carnal,

The downward current to be upward turned?

As when the wick is lighted the oil doth upward flow,

So simply is destroyed the thirst of the body.”

The *Yoga Vasistha* tells us :

“Uncleansed desires bind to the world, purified desires give liberation.”

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References to this reversal of current are also to be found in the Atharva Veda (X. 2.9; 2.34). This reversal is otherwise considered by Indian devotees as the conversion of the *sthula* (gross) in the *sukshma* (fine).

The Baül sings:

“Love is my golden touch—it turns desire into service:  
Earth seeks to become Heaven, man to become God.”

Another aspect of the idea of reversal has been put thus by Rabindranath Tagore in his *Broken Ties*: “If I keep going in the same direction along which He comes to me, then I shall be going further and further away from Him. If I proceed in the opposite direction, then only can we meet. He loves form, so He is continually descending towards form. We cannot live by form alone, so we must ascend towards His formlessness. He is free, so his play is within bonds. We are bound, so we find our joy in freedom. All our sorrow is because we cannot understand this. He who sings, proceeds from his joy to the tune; he who hears, from the tune to joy. One comes from freedom into bondage, the other goes from bondage into freedom; only thus can they have their communion. He sings and we hear. He ties the bonds as He sings to us, we untie them as we listen to Him.”

This idea also occurs in our devotees of the Middle Ages.

The “*sahaj*” folk endeavour to seek the bliss of divine union only for its own sake. Mundane desires are therefore accounted the chief obstacles in the way. But for getting rid of them, the wise Guru, according to the Baüls, does not advise renunciation of the good things of the world, but the opening of the door to the higher self. Thus guided, says Kabir,

“I close not my eyes, stop not my ears, nor torment my body.

But every path I then traverse becomes a path of pilgrimage, whatever work I engage in becomes service.

This simple consummation is the best.”

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The simple way has led its votaries easily and naturally to their living conception of Humanity.

Rajjab says:

“All the world is the Veda, all creations the Koran. Why  
read paper scriptures, O Rajjab?  
Gather ever fresh wisdom from the Universe. The eternal  
wisdom shines within the concourse  
of the millions of Humanity.”

The Baül sings:

“The simple has its thirty million strings whose mingled  
symphony ever sounds.  
Take all the creatures of the World into yourself. Drown  
yourself in that eternal music.”

I conclude with a few more examples of Baül songs, esoteric  
and otherwise, from amongst many others of equal interest.

By Gangaram, the Namasudra:

“Realize how finite and unbounded are One,  
As you breathe in and out.  
Of all ages, then, you will count the moments,  
In every moment find the ages,  
The drop in the ocean, the ocean in the drop.  
If your endeavour be but *sahaj*, beyond argument and  
cogitation,  
You will taste the precious quintessence.  
Blinded are you by over-much journeying from bourne to  
bourne,  
O Gangaram, be simple! Then alone will vanish all your  
doubts.”

By Bisha, the disciple of Bala:

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"The Simple Man was in the Paradise of my heart,  
Alas, how and when did I lose Him,  
That now no peace I know, at home or abroad?  
By meditation and telling of beads, in worship and travail,  
The quest goes on for ever;  
But unless the Simple Man comes of Himself,  
Fruitless is it all;  
For he yields not to forgetfulness of striving.  
Bisha's heart has understood right well  
That by His own simple way alone is its door unlocked."

"Listen, O brother man," declares Chandidas, "the Truth of Man is the highest of truths; there is no other truth above it."

## APPENDIX II

### NOTE ON THE NATURE OF REALITY

(A conversation between Rabindranath Tagore and Professor Albert Einstein in the afternoon of July 14, 1930, at the Professor's residence in Kaputh.)

E.: Do you believe in the Divine as isolated from the world?

T.: Not isolated. The infinite personality of Man comprehends the Universe. There cannot be anything that cannot be subsumed by the human personality, and this proves that the truth of the Universe is human truth. I have taken a scientific fact to illustrate this—Matter is composed of protons and electrons, with gaps between them; but matter may seem to be solid. Similarly humanity is composed of individuals, yet they have their interconnection of human relationship, which gives living solidarity to man's world. The entire universe is linked up with us in a similar manner, it is a human universe. I have pursued this thought through art, literature and the religious consciousness of man.

E.: There are two different conceptions about the nature of the universe: (1) The world as a unity dependent on humanity. (2) The world as a reality independent of the human factor.

T.: When our universe is in harmony with Man, the eternal, we know it as truth, we feel it as beauty.

E.: This is a purely human conception of the universe.

T.: There can be no other conception. This world is a human world—the scientific view of it is also that of the scientific man. There is some standard of reason and enjoyment which gives it truth, the standard of the Eternal Man whose experiences are through our experiences.

E.: This is a realization of the human entity.

T.: Yes, one eternal entity. We have to realize it through our emotions and activities. We realize the Supreme Man who has no individual limitations through our limitations.

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Science is concerned with that which is not confined to individuals; it is the impersonal human world of truths. Religion realizes these truths and links them up with our deeper needs; our individual consciousness of truth gains universal significance. Religion applies values to truth, and we know truth as good through our own harmony with it.

E.: Truth, then, or Beauty, is not independent of Man?

T.: No.

E.: If there would be no human beings any more, the Apollo of Belvedere would no longer be beautiful?

T.: No.

E.: I agree with regard to this conception of Beauty, but not with regard to Truth.

T.: Why not? Truth is realized through man.

E.: I cannot prove that my conception is right, but that is my religion.

T.: Beauty is in the ideal of perfect harmony which is in the Universal Being; truth the perfect comprehension of the Universal Mind. We individuals approach it through our own mistakes and blunders, through our accumulated experience, through our illumined consciousness—how, otherwise, can we know Truth?

E.: I cannot prove scientifically that truth must be conceived as a truth that is valid independent of humanity; but I believe it firmly. I believe, for instance, that the Pythagorean theorem in geometry states something that is approximately true, independent of the existence of man. Anyway, if there is a *reality* independent of man there is also a truth relative to this reality; and in the same way the negation of the first engenders a negation of the existence of the latter.

T.: Truth, which is one with the Universal Being, must essentially be human, otherwise whatever we individuals realize as true can never be called truth—at least the truth which is described as scientific and can only be reached through the process of logic, in other words, by an organ of thoughts which is human. According to Indian Philosophy there is Brahman the absolute Truth, which cannot be conceived by



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the isolation of the individual mind or described by words, but can only be realized by completely merging the individual in its infinity. But such a truth cannot belong to Science. The nature of truth which we are discussing is an appearance—that is to say what appears to be true to the human mind and therefore is human, and may be called *māyā*, or illusion.

E.: So according to your conception, which may be the Indian conception, it is not the illusion of the individual, but of humanity as a whole.

T.: In science we go through the discipline of eliminating the personal limitations of our individual minds and thus reach that comprehension of truth which is in the mind of the Universal Man.

E.: The problem begins whether Truth is independent of our consciousness.

T.: What we call truth lies in the rational harmony between the subjective and objective aspects of reality, both of which belong to the super-personal man.

E.: Even in our everyday life we feel compelled to ascribe a reality independent of man to the objects we use. We do this to connect the experiences of our senses in a reasonable way. For instance, if nobody is in this house, yet that table remains where it is.

T.: Yes, it remains outside the individual mind, but not outside the universal mind. The table which I perceive is perceptible by the same kind of consciousness which I possess.

E.: Our natural point of view in regard to the existence of truth apart from humanity cannot be explained or proved, but it is a belief which nobody can lack—no primitive beings even. We attribute to Truth a super-human objectivity; it is indispensable for us, this reality which is independent of our existence and our experience and our mind—though we cannot say what it means.

T.: Science has proved that the table as a solid object is an appearance, and therefore that which the human mind perceives as a table would not exist if that mind were naught. At the same time it must be admitted that the fact, that the

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ultimate physical reality of the table is nothing but a multitude of separate revolving centres of electric forces, also belongs to the human mind.

In the apprehension of truth there is an eternal conflict between the universal human mind and the same mind confined in the individual. The perpetual process of reconciliation is being carried on in our science and philosophy, and in our ethics. In any case, if there be any truth absolutely unrelated to humanity then for us it is absolutely non-existing.

It is not difficult to imagine a mind to which the sequence of things happens not in space, but only in time like the sequence of notes in music. For such a mind its conception of reality is akin to the musical reality in which Pythagorean geometry can have no meaning. There is the reality of paper, infinitely different from the reality of literature. For the kind of mind possessed by the moth, which eats that paper, literature is absolutely non-existent, yet for Man's mind literature has a greater value of truth than the paper itself. In a similar manner, if there be some truth which has no sensuous or rational relation to the human mind it will ever remain as nothing so long as we remain human beings.

E.: Then I am more religious than you are!

T.: My religion is in the reconciliation of the Super-personal Man, the Universal human spirit, in my own individual being. This has been the subject of my Hibbert Lectures, which I have called "The Religion of Man".

### APPENDIX III

## DADU AND THE MYSTERY OF FORM

(From an article in the *Visvabharati Quarterly*  
by Professor Kshiti Mohan Sen.)

THE language of man has been mainly occupied with telling us about the elements into which the finite world has been analysed; nevertheless, now and again, it reveals glimpses of the world of the Infinite as well; for the spirit of man has discovered rifts in the wall of Matter. Our intellect can count the petals, classify the scent, and describe the colour of the rose, but its unity finds its expression when we rejoice in it.

The intellect at best can give us only a broken view of things. The marvellous vision of the Seer, in spite of the scoffing in which both Science and Metaphysics so often indulge, can alone make manifest to us the truth of a thing in its completeness. When we thus gain a vision of unity, we are no longer intellectually aware of detail, counting, classifying, or distinguishing—for then we have found admittance into the region of the spirit, and there we simply measure the truth of our realization by the intensity of our joy.

What is the meaning of this unutterable joy? That which we know by intellectual process is something outside ourselves. But the vision of anything in the fullness of its unity involves the realization of the unity of the self within, as well as of the relation between the two. The knowledge of the *many* may make us proud, but it makes us glad when our kinship with the *One* is brought home to us. Beauty is the name that we give to this acknowledgment of unity and of its relationship with ourselves.

It is through the beauty of Nature, or of Human Character, or Service, that we get our glimpses of the Supreme Soul whose essence is bliss. Or rather, it is when we become conscious of Him in Nature, or Art, or Service, that Beauty flashes out. And whenever we thus light upon the Dweller-

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within, all discord disappears and Love and Beauty are seen inseparable from Truth. It is really the coming of Truth to us as kinsman which floods our being with Joy.

This realization in Joy is immediate, self-sufficient, ultimate. When the self experiences Joy within, it is completely satisfied and has nothing more to ask from the outside world. Joy, as we know it, is a direct, synthetic measure of Beauty and neither awaits nor depends upon any analytical process. In our Joy, further, we behold not only the unity, but also the origin, for the Beauty which tells us of Him can be nothing but radiance reflected, melody re-echoed, from Him; else would all this have been unmeaning indeed—Society, Civilization, Humanity. The progress of Man would otherwise have ended in an orgy of the gratification of his animal passions.

The power of realization, for each particular individual, is limited. All do not attain the privilege of directly apprehending the universal Unity. Nevertheless, a partial vision of it, say in a flower, or in a friend, is a common experience; moreover, the potentiality is inherent in every individual soul, by dint of disciplined striving, to effect its own expansion and thereupon eventually to achieve the realization of the Supreme Soul.

By whom, meanwhile, are these ineffable tidings from the realm of the Spirit, the world of the Infinite, brought to us? Not by potentates or philosophers, but by the poor, the untutored, the despised. And with what superb assurance do they lead us out of the desert of the intellect into the paradise of the Spirit!

When our metaphysicians, dividing themselves into rival schools of Monism, Dualism or Monistic-Dualism, had joined together in dismissing the world as *Maya*, then, up from the depths of their social obscurity, rose these cobblers, weavers, and sewers of bags, proclaiming such theorems of the intellect to be all nonsense; for the metaphysicians had not seen with their own inner vision how the world overflowed with Truth and Love, Beauty and Joy.

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Dadu, Ravidas, Kabir and Nanak were not ascetics; they bore no message of poverty, or renunciation, for their own sake; they were poets who had pierced the curtain of appearances and had glimpses of the world of Unity, where God himself is a poet. Their words cannot stand the glare of logical criticism; they babble, like babes, of the joy of their vision of Him, of the ecstasy into which His music has thrown them.

Nevertheless, it is they, not the scientists or philosophers, who have taught us of reality. On the one side the Supreme Soul is alone, on the other my individual soul is alone. If the two do not come together, then indeed there befalls the greatest of all calamities, the utter emptiness of chaos. For all the abundance of His inherent joy, God is in want of my joy of Him; and Reality in its perfection only blossoms where we meet.

"When I look upon the beauty of this Universe", says Dadu, "I cannot help asking: 'How, O Lord, did you come to create it? What sudden wave of joy coursing through your being compelled its own manifestation? Was it really due to desire for self-expression, or simply on the impulse of emotion? Or was it perhaps just your fancy to revel in the play of form? Is this play then so delightful to you; or is it that you would see your own inborn delight thus take shape?' Oh, how can these questions be answered in words?" cries Dadu. "Only those who know will understand."

"Why not go to him who has wrought this marvel", says Dadu elsewhere, "and ask: 'Cannot your own message make clear this wondrous making of the One into the many?' When I look on creation as beauty of form, I see only Form and Beauty. When I look on it as life, everywhere I see Life. When I look on it as Brahma, then indeed is Dadu at a loss for words. When I see it in relation, it is of bewildering variety. When I see it in my own soul, all its variousness is merged in the beauty of the Supreme Soul. This eye of mine then becomes also the eye of Brahma, and in this exchange of mutual vision does Dadu behold Truth."

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The eye cannot see the face—for that purpose a mirror is necessary. That is to say, either the face has to be put at a distance from the eye, or the eye moved away from the face—in any case what was one has to be made into two. The image is not the face itself, but how else is that to be seen?

So does God mirror Himself in Creation; and since He cannot place Himself outside His own Infinity, He can only gain a vision of Himself—and get a taste of His own joy—through my joy in Him and in His Universe. Hence the anxious striving of the devotee to keep himself thoroughly pure—not through any pride of puritanism, but because his soul is the playground where God would revel in Himself. Had not God's radiance, His beauty, thus found its form in the Universe, its joy in the devotee, He would have remained mere formless, colourless Being in the nothingness of infinity.

This is what makes the Mystery so profound, so inscrutable. Whether we say that only Brahma is true, or only the universe is true, we are equally far from the Truth, which can only be expressed as both *this* and *that*, or neither *this* nor *that*.

And Dadu can only hint at it by saying: "Neither death nor life is He; He neither goes out, nor does He come in; nor sleeps, nor wakes; nor wants, nor is satisfied. He is neither I nor you, neither One nor Two. For no sooner do I say that all is One, than I find us both; and when I say there are two, I see we're One. So, O Dadu, rest content to look on Him just as He is, in the deep of your heart, and give up wrestling with vain imaginings and empty words."

"Words shower", Dadu goes on, "when spouts the fount of the intellect; but where realization grows, there music has its seat." When the intellect confesses defeat, and words fail, then, indeed, from the depth of the heart wells up the song of the joy of realization. What words cannot make clear, melody can; to its strains one can revel in the vision of God in His reveals.

"That is why", cries Dadu, "your universe, this creation of yours, has charmed me so—your waters and your breezes, and this earth which holds them, with its ranges of mountains,

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its great oceans, its snow-capped poles, its blazing sun, because, through all the three regions of earth, sky and heaven, amidst all their multifarious life, it is your ministration, your beauty, that keeps me enthralled. Who can know you, O Invisible, Unapproachable, Unfathomable! Dadu has no desire to know; he is satisfied to remain enraptured with all this beauty of yours, and to rejoice in it with you."

To look upon Form as the play of His love is not to belittle it. In creating the senses God did not intend them to be starved. "And so", says Dadu, "the eye is feasted with colour, the ear with music, the palate with flowers, wondrously provided." And we find that the body longs for the spirit, the spirit for the body; the flower for the scent, the scent for the flower; our words for truth, the Truth for words; form for its ideal, the idea for form; all thus mutual worship is but the worship of the ineffable Reality behind, by whose Presence every one of them is glorified. And Dadu struggles not, but simply keeps his heart open to this shower of love and thus rejoices in perpetual Springtime.

Every vessel of form the Formless fills with Himself, and in their beauty He gains them in return. With His love the Passionless fulfils every devoted heart and sets it a-dance, and their love streams back to the Colourless, variegated with the tints of each. Beauteous Creation yields up her charms, in all their purity, to her Lord. Need she make further protestation, in words of their mutual love? So Dadu surrenders his heart, mind and soul at the feet of his Beloved. His one care is that they be not sullied.

If any one should object that evanescent Form is not worthy to represent the Eternal, Dadu would answer that it is just because Form is fleeting that it is a help, not a hindrance, to His worship. While returning, back to its Origin, it captures our mind and takes it along with itself. The call of Beauty tells us of the Unthinkable, towards whom it lies. In passing over us, Death assures us of the truth of Life.

APPENDIX IV

AN ADDRESS IN THE CHAPEL OF MANCHESTER  
COLLEGE, OXFORD, ON SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1930,  
BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

In his early youth, stricken with a great sorrow at the death of his grandmother, my father painfully groped for truth when his world had darkened, and his life lost its meaning. At this moment of despair a torn page of a manuscript carried by a casual wind was brought to his notice. The text it contained was the first verse of the Ishopanishad:

“Iṣāvāsyam idam survam  
Yat Kincha jagatyām jagat.  
tēna tyaktena bhunjīthā  
Mā ḡrdhah Kasyasvitdhanam.”

It may be thus translated:

“Thou must know that whatever moves in this moving world is enveloped by God. And therefore find thy enjoyment in renunciation, never coveting what belongs to others.”

In this we are enjoined to realize that all facts that move and change have their significance in their relation to one everlasting truth. For then we can be rid of the greed of acquisition, gladly dedicating everything we have to that Supreme Truth. The change in our mind is immense in its generosity of expression when an utter sense of vanity and vacancy is relieved at the consciousness of a pervading reality.

I remember once while on a boat trip in a strange neighbourhood I found myself unexpectedly at the confluence of three great rivers as the daylight faded and the night darkened over a desolation dumb and inhospitable. A sense of dread possessed the crew and an oppressive anxiety burdened my thoughts with its unreasonable exaggeration all through the



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dark hours. The morning came and at once the brooding obsession vanished. Everything remained the same only the sky was filled with light.

The night had brought her peace, the peace of a black ultimatum in which all hope ceased in an abyss of nothingness, but the peace of the morning appeared like that of a mother's smile, which in its serene silence utters, "I am here". I realized why birds break out singing in the morning, and felt that their songs are their own glad answers to the emphatic assurance of a Yes in the morning light in which they find a luminous harmony of their own existence. Darkness drives our being into an isolation of insignificance and we are frightened because in the dark the sense of our own truth dwindles into a minimum. Within us we carry a positive truth, the consciousness of our personality, which naturally seeks from our surroundings its response in a truth which is positive, and then in this harmony we find our wealth of reality and are gladly ready to sacrifice. That which distinguishes man from the animal is the fact that he expresses himself not in his claims, in his needs, but in his sacrifice, which has the creative energy that builds his home, his society, his civilization. It proves that his instinct acknowledges the inexhaustible wealth of a positive truth which gives highest value to existence. In whatever we are mean, greedy and unscrupulous, there are the dark bands in the spectrum of our consciousness; they prove chasms of bankruptcy in our realization of the truth that the world moves, not in a blank sky of negation, but in the bosom of an ideal spirit of fulfilment.

Most often crimes are committed when it is night. It must not be thought that the only reason for this is that in the dark they are likely to remain undetected. But the deeper reason is that in the dark the negative aspect of time weakens the positive sense of our own humanity. Our victims, as well as we ourselves, are less real to us in the night, and that which we miss within we desperately seek outside us. Wherever in the human world the individual self forgets its isolation, the light that unifies is revealed the light of the Everlasting

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Yes, whose sound-symbol in India is OM. Then it becomes easy for man to be good not because his badness is restrained, but because of his joy in the positive background of his own reality, because his mind no longer dwells in a fathomless night of an anarchical world of denial.

Man finds an instance of this in the idea of his own country, which reveals to him a positive truth, the idea that has not the darkness of negation which is sinister, which generates suspicion, exaggerates fear, encourages uncontrolled greed; for his own country is an indubitable reality to him which delights his soul. In such intense consciousness of reality we discover our own greater self that spreads beyond our physical life and immediate present, and offers us generous opportunities of enjoyment in renunciation.

In the introductory chapter of our civilization individuals by some chance found themselves together within a geographic enclosure. But a mere crowd without an inner meaning of inter-relation is negative, and therefore it can easily be hurtful. The individual who is a mere component part of an unneighbourly crowd, who in his exclusiveness represents only himself, is apt to be suspicious of others, with no inner control in hating and hitting his fellow-beings at the very first sight. This savage mentality is the product of the barren spirit of negation that dwells in the spiritual night. But when the morning of mutual recognition broke out, the morning of co-operative life, that divine mystery which is the creative spirit of unity, imparted meaning to individuals in a larger truth named "people". These individuals gladly surrendered themselves to the realization of their true humanity, the humanity of a great wholeness composed of generations of men consciously and unconsciously building up a perfect future. They realized peace according to the degree of unity which they attained in their mutual relationship, and within that limit they found the one sublime truth which pervades time that moves, the things that change, the life that grows, the thoughts that flow onwards. They united with themselves the surrounding physical nature in her hills and rivers, in the dance of rhythm in all her forms

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and colours, in the blue of her sky, the tender green of her corn shoots.

In gradual degrees men became aware that the subtle intricacies of human existence find their perfection in the harmony of interdependence, never in the vigorous exercise of elbows by a mutually pushing multitude, in the arrogant assertion of independence which fitly belongs to the barren rocks and deserts grey with the pallor of death.

For rampant individualism is against what is truly human—that is to say spiritual; it belongs to the primitive poverty of the animal life, it is the confinement of a cramped spirit, of restricted consciousness.

The limited boundaries of a race or a country within which the supreme truth of humanity has been more or less realized in the past are crossed to-day from the outside. The countries are physically brought closer to each other by science. But science has not brought with it the light that helps understanding. On the contrary science on its practical side has raised obstacles among them against the development of a sympathetic knowledge.

But I am not foolish enough to condemn science as materialistic. No truth can be that. Science means intellectual probity in our knowledge and dealings with the physical world and such conscientiousness has a spiritual quality that encourages sacrifice and martyrdom. But in science the oft-used half-truth that honesty is the best policy is completely made true and our mind's honesty in this field never fails to bring us the best profit for our living. Mischief finds its entry through this back-door of utility, tempting the primitive in man, arousing his evil passions. And through this the great meeting of races has been obscured of its great meaning. When I view it in my mind I am reminded of the fearful immensity of the meeting of the three mighty rivers where I found myself unprepared in a blackness of universal menace. Over the vast gathering of peoples the insensitive night darkly broods, the night of unreality. The primitive barbarity of limitless suspicion and mutual jealousy fills the world's atmosphere to-day

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—the barbarity of the aggressive individualism of nations, pitiless in its greed, unashamed of its boastful brutality.

Those that have come out for depredation in this universal night have the indecent audacity to say that such conditions are eternal in man, that the moral ideals are only for individuals but that the race belongs to the primitive nature of the animal.

But when we see that in the range of physical power man acknowledges no limits in his dreams, and is not even laughed at when he hopes to visit the neighbouring planet, must he insult his humanity by proclaiming that human nature has reached its limit of moral possibility? We must work with all our strength for the seemingly impossible; we must be sure that faith in the perfect builds the path for the perfect—that the external fact of unity which has surprised us must be sublimated in an internal truth of unity which would light up the Truth of Man the Eternal.

Nations are kept apart not merely by international jealousy, but also by their *Karma*, their own past, handicapped by the burden of the dead. They find it hard to think that the mentality which they fondly cultivated within the limits of a narrow past has no continuance in a wider future, they are never tired of uttering the blasphemy that warfare is eternal, that physical might has its inevitable right of moral cannibalism where the flesh is weak. The wrong that has been done in the past seeks to justify itself by its very perpetuation, like a disease by its chronic malignity, and it sneers and growls at the least proposal of its termination. Such an evil ghost of a persistent past, the dead that would cling to life, haunts the night to-day over mutually alienated countries, and men that are gathered together in the dark cannot see each other's faces and features.

We in India are unfortunate in not having the chance to give expression to the best in us in creating intimate relations with the powerful nations, whose preparations are all leading to an enormous waste of resources in a competition of brow-beating and bluff. Some great voice is waiting to be heard which

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will usher in the sacred light of truth in the dark hours of the nightmare of politics, the voice which will proclaim that "God is over all", and exhort us never to covet, to be great in renunciation that gives us the wealth of spirit, strength of truth, leads us from the illusion of power to the fullness of perfection, to the *Śantam*, who is peace eternal, to the *Advaitam*, who is the infinite One in the heart of the manifold. But we in India have not yet had the chance. Yet we have our own human voice which truth demands. The messengers of truth have ever joined hands across centuries, across the seas, across historical barriers, and they help to raise up the great continent of human brotherhood from *avidyā*, from the slimy bottom of spiritual apathy. We individuals, however small may be our power and whatever corner of the world we may belong to, have a claim upon us to add to the light of the consciousness that comprehends all humanity. And for this cause I ask your co-operation, not only because co-operation gives us strength in our work, but because co-operation itself is the best aspect of the truth we represent; it is an end and not merely the means.

Let us keep our faith firm in the objectivity of the source of our spiritual ideal of unity, though it cannot be proved by any mathematical logic. Let us proclaim in our conduct that it has already been given to us to be realized, like a song which has only to be mastered and sung, like the morning which has only to be welcomed by raising the screens, opening the doors.

The idea of a millennium is treasured in our ancient legends. The instinct cradled and nourished in them has profound meaning. It is like the instinct of a chick which dimly feels that an infinite world of freedom is already given to it, truer than the narrow fact of its immediate life within the egg. An agnostic chick has the rational right to doubt it, but at the same time it cannot help pecking at its shell. The human soul, confined in its limitation, has also dreamt of millennium, and striven for a spiritual emancipation which seems impossible of attainment, and yet it feels its reverence for some ever-

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present source of inspiration in which all its experience of the true, the good and beautiful finds its reality.

And therefore it has been said by the Upanishad: "Thou must know that God pervades all things that move and change in this moving world; find thy enjoyment in renunciation, covet not what belongs to others."

"Ya ekō varnō bahudhā śaktiyogāt  
Varṇān aṇḅkān nihitārthō dadhāti.  
Vichaiti chāntē viṣvamādaḥ sa dēvaḥ  
Sa nō buddhyā śubhayā samyunaktu."

He who is one, and who dispenses the inherent needs of all peoples and all times, who is in the beginning and the end of all things, may He unite us with the bond of truth, of common fellowship, of righteousness.

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