

Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore

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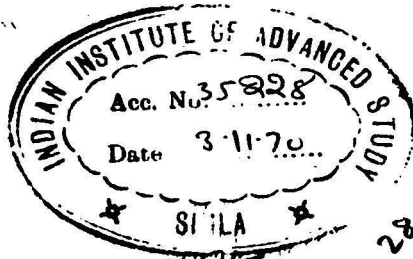


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I

SRI AUROBINDO ON RABINDRANATH

THE human intelligence seems on the verge of an attempt to rise through the intellectual into an intuitive mentality; it is no longer content to regard the intellect and the world of positive fact as all or the intellectual reason as a sufficient mediator between life and the spirit, but is beginning to perceive that there is a spiritual mind which can admit us to a greater and more comprehensive vision. This does not mean any sacrifice of the gains of the past, but a raising and extending of them not only by a seeking of the inner as well as the outer truth of things, but also of all that binds them together and a bringing of them into true relation and oneness. A first opening out to this new way of seeing is the sense of the work of Whitman and Carpenter and some of the recent French poets, of Tagore and Yeats and A.E., of Meredith and some others of the English poets.¹

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A greater era of man's living seems to be in promise, whatever nearer and earthier powers may be striving to lead him on a side path away to a less exalted ideal, and with that advent there must come a new great age of his creation different from the past epochs which he counts as his glories and superior to them in its vision and motive. But first there must intervene a poetry which will lead him towards it from the present faint beginnings.... A glint of this change is already visible. And in poetry there is already the commencement of such a greater

¹ *The Future Poetry*, pp. 275-76.

leading; the conscious effort of Whitman, the tone of Carpenter, the significance of the poetry of A.E., the rapid immediate fame of Tagore are its first signs. The idea of the poet who is also the Rishi has made again its appearance.¹

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The all-informing spirit, when found in all its fullness, heals the scission between thought and life, the need of a just balance between them disappears, instead there begins a new and luminous and joyful fusion and oneness. The spirit gives us not only a greater light of truth and vision, but the breath of a greater living; for the spirit is not only the self of our consciousness and knowledge, but the great self of life. To find our self and the self of things is not to go through a rarefied ether of thought into Nirvana, but to discover the whole greatest integral power of our complete existence.

This need is the sufficient reason for attaching the greatest importance to those poets in whom there is the double seeking of this twofold power, the truth and reality of the eternal self and spirit in man and things and the insistence on life. All the most significant and vital work in recent poetry has borne this stamp; the rest is of the hour, but this is of the future. It is the highest note of Whitman, widening, as in one who seeks and sees much but has not fully found, a great pioneer poetry, an opening of a new view rather than a living in its accomplished fullness; it is constantly repeated from the earth side in Meredith, comes down from the spiritual side in all A.E.'s work, moves between earth and the life of the worlds behind in Yeats' subtle rhythmic voices of vision and beauty, echoes with a large fullness in Carpenter. The poetry of Tagore owes its sudden and universal success to this advantage that he gives us more of this discovery and fusion for which the mind of our age is in quest than any other creative writer

¹ *The Future Poetry*, p. 285.

of the time. His work is a constant music of the over-passing of the borders, a chant-filled realm in which the subtle sounds and lights of the truth of the spirit give new meanings to the finer subtleties of life. The objection has been made that this poetry is too subtle and remote and goes away from the broad, near, present and vital actualities of existence. Yeats is considered by some a poet of Celtic romance and nothing more, Tagore accused in his own country of an unsubstantial poetic philosophising, a lack of actuality, reality of touch and force of vital insistence. But this is to mistake the work of this poetry and to mistake too in a great measure the sense of life as it must reveal itself to the greatening mind of humanity now that it is growing in world-knowledge and towards self-knowledge.¹

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Two of its (modern Bengali literature) creators, one, the sovereign initiator of its prose expression, supreme by combination of original mentality with a flawless artistic gift, the other born into its last glow of productive brilliance, but outliving it to develop another strain and a profounder voice of poetry, released the real soul of Bengal into expression. The work of Bunkim Chandra is now of the past, because it has entered already into the new mind of Bengal which it did more than any other literary influence to form; the work of Rabindranath still largely holds the present, but it has opened ways for the future which promise to go beyond it. Both show an increasing return to the Indian spirit in fresh forms; both are voices of the dawn, seek more than they find, suggest and are calling for more than they actually evoke.²

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¹ *The Future Poetry*, pp. 321-23.

² *The Renaissance in India*, p. 65.

Duhkhabhisar by S. Rabindranath Tagore...is one of those poems in which the peculiar inimitable quality of our greatest lyric poet comes out with supreme force, beauty and sweetness. Rabindra Babu has a legion of imitators and many have been very successful in catching up his less valuable mannerisms of style and verse, as is the manner of imitators all the world over. But the poignant sweetness, passion and spiritual depth and mystery of a poem like this, the haunting cadences subtle with a subtlety which is not of technique but of the soul, and the honeyladen felicity of the expression, these are the essential Rabindranath and cannot be imitated, because they are things of the spirit and one must have the same sweetness and depth of soul before one can hope to catch any of these desirable qualities. We emphasize this inimitableness because the legion of imitators we mention are doing harm to the progress of our poetry as well as to the reputation of their model and we would suggest to them to study this poem and realise the folly of their persistent attempt. One of the most remarkable peculiarities of Rabindra Babu's genius is the happiness and originality with which he has absorbed the whole spirit of Vaishnav poetry and turned it into something essentially the same and yet new and modern. He has given the old sweet spirit of emotional and passionate religion an expression of more delicate and complex richness voiceful of subtler and more penetratingly spiritual shades of feeling than the deep-hearted but simple early age of Bengal could know. The old Vaishnav *bhāva*—there is no English word for it,—was easily seizable, broad and strong. The *bhāva* of these poems is not translatable in any other language than that the poet has used,—a striking proof is the unsatisfactory attempt of the poet himself, recorded in another article..., to explain in prose his own poem, *Sonar Tari*. But while the intellect tries in vain to find other intellectual symbols for the poet's meaning, the poetry seizes on the heart and convinces the imagination. These poems are of the essence of

poetry and refuse to be rendered in any prose equivalent. Poetry is created not from the intellect or the outer imagination but comes from a deeper source within to which men have no means of access except when the divine part within seizes on the brain and makes it a passive instrument for utterance the full meaning of which the brain is unable at the moment to grasp. This is the divine mania and enthusiasm which the subtle spiritual discernment of Plato discovered to be the real meaning of what we call inspiration. And of this unattainable force the best lyrics of Rabindranath are full to overflowing.¹

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

Tagore, of course, belonged to an age which had faith in its ideas and whose very denials were creative affirmations. That makes an immense difference. Your strictures on his

¹ *Karmayogin*, 14.8.1909.

later development may or may not be correct, but this mixture even was the note of the day and it expressed a tangible hope of fusion into something new and true—therefore it could create. Now all that idealism has been smashed to pieces by the immense adverse Event and everybody is busy exposing its weaknesses, but nobody knows what to put in its place. A mixture of scepticism and slogans “Hail-Hitler” and the Fascist salute and Five-Year-Plan and the beating of everybody into one amorphous shape, a disabused denial of all ideals on one side and on the other a blind shut my-eyes and shut everybody’s eyes plunge into the bog in the hope of finding some firm foundation there will not carry us very far. And what else is there? Until new spiritual values are discovered, no great enduring creation is possible.¹

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The poetry of Whitman and his successors has been that of life, but of life broadened, raised and illumined by a strong intellectual intuition of the self of man and the large soul of humanity. And at the subtlest elevation of all that has yet been reached stands or rather wings and floats in a high intermediate region the poetry of Tagore, not in the complete spiritual light, but amid an air shot with its seekings and glimpses, a sight and cadence found in a psycho-spiritual heaven of subtle and delicate soul experience transmuting the earth tones by the touch of its radiance. The wide success and appeal of his poetry is indeed one of the most significant signs of the tendency of the mind of the age.²

¹ *A Letter*.

² *The Future Poetry*, p. 466.

II

RABINDRANATH ON SRI AUROBINDO

FOR a long time I had a strong desire to meet Aurobindo Ghosh. It has just been fulfilled. I feel that I must write down the thoughts that have come to my mind.

In the Christian Scripture it has been said :—"In the beginning there was the Word." The Word takes form in creation. It is not the calendar which introduces a new era. It is the Word, leading man to the path of a higher manifestation, a richer reality.

In the beginning and end of all great utterances in our scriptures we have the word Om. It has the meaning of self-acknowledgement of Truth, it is the breath of the Eternal.

From some great sea of idea, a tidal wave tumultuously broke upon Europe carrying on its crest the French Revolution. It was a new age, not because the oppressed of that time in France stood against their oppressors, but because that age had in its beginning the Word which spoke of a great moral liberation for all humanity.

Mazzini and Garibaldi ushered in a new age of awakening in Italy, not because of the external fact of a change in the political condition of that country, but because they gave utterance to the Word, which did not merely enjoin formal acts, but inspired an inner creative truth. The feeling of touch, with the help of which a man gathers in darkness things that are immediate to him, exclusively belongs to himself; but the sunlight represents the great touch of the universe; it is for the needs of every one, and it transcends the needs of all individuals. This light is the true symbol of the Word,

One day science introduced a new age to the Western world, not because she helped man to explore nature's secrets, but because she revealed to him the universal aspect of reality in which all individual facts find their eternal background, because she aroused in him the loyalty to truth that could defy torture and death. Those who follow the modern development of science know that she has truly brought us to the threshold of another new age, when she takes us across things to the mystic shrine of light where sounds the original Word of Creation.

In ancient India, the age of creation began with the transition from ritual practices to spiritual wisdom. It sent its call to the soul, which creates from its own abundance ; and men woke up and said, that only those truly live, who live in the bosom of the Eternal. This is the Word spoken from the heart of that age : "Those who realise Truth, realise immortality."

In the Buddhist age, also, the Word came with the message of utmost sacrifice, of a love that is unlimited. It inspired an ideal of perfection in man's moral nature, which busied itself in creating for him a world of emancipated will.

The Word is that which helps to bring forth towards manifestation the unmanifest immense in man. Nature urges animals to restrict their endeavour in earning their daily wages of living. It is the Word which has rescued man from that enclosure of a narrow livelihood to a wider freedom of life. The dim light in that world of physical self-preservation is for the world of night ; and men are not nocturnal beings.

Time after time, man must discover new proofs to support the faith in his own greatness, the faith that gives him freedom in the Infinite. It is realised anew every time that we find a man whose soul is luminously seen through the translucent atmosphere of a perfect life. Not the one who has the strength of an intellect that reasons, a will that plans, the energy that works, but he whose life has become one with

the Word, from whose being is breathed Om, the response of the everlasting yes.

The longing to meet such a person grows stronger when we find in men around us the self-mistrust which is spiritual nihilism, producing in them an indecent pride in asserting the paradox that man is to remain an incorrigible brute to the end of his days, that the value of our ideals must be judged by a standard which is that of the market price of things.

When, as today, truth is constantly being subordinated to purposes that have their sole meaning in a success hastily snatched up from a mad scramble for immediate opportunities our greed becomes uncontrollable. In its impatience it refuses to modulate its pace to the rhythm that is inherent in a normal process of achievement, and exploits all instruments of reckless speed, including propaganda of delusion. Ambition tries to curtail its own path, for its gain is at the end of that path, while truth is permeatingly one with the real seeking for her, as a flower with its stem. But, used as a vehicle of some utility, robbed of her love's wooing, she departs, leaving that semblance of utility a deception.

Ramachandra, the hero of the great epic Ramayana, during the long period of his wanderings in the wilderness, came to realise, helped by constant difficulties and dangers, the devotion of his wife Sita, his companion in exile. It was the best means of gaining her in truth through a strenuously intimate path of ever-ripening experience. After his return to his kingdom, urged by an immediate political necessity, he asked Sita to give an instant proof of her truth in a magic trial by fire before the suspicious multitude. Sita refused, knowing that such a trial could only offend truth by its callous unreality, and she disappeared for ever.

It brings to my mind the opening line of an old Bengali poem which my friend Kshitimohan Sen offered to me from his rich store of rare sayings. It may be translated thus :

“O cruel man of urgent needs,
Must thou in thy haste scorch by fire the mind that is
still in bud ?”

It takes time to prove the spirit of perfection lying in wait in a mind that is yet to mature. But a cruel urgency takes the quick means of a forced trial and the mind itself disappears leaving the crowd to admire the gorgeousness of the preparation. When we find everywhere the hurry of this greed dragging truth tied to its chariot-wheels along the dusty delusion of short-cuts, we feel sure that it would be futile to set against it a mere appeal of reason, but that a true man is needed who can maintain the patience of a profound faith against a constant temptation of urgency and hypnotism of a numerical magnitude.

We badly need today for the realisation of our human dignity a person who will preach respect for man in his completeness. It is a truism to say that man is *not* simple, that his personality consists of countless elements that are bewilderingly miscellaneous. It is possible to denude him of his wealth of being in order to reduce him to a bare simplicity that helps to fit him easily to a pattern of a parsimonious life. But it is important to remember that man *is* complex, and therefore his problems can only be solved by an adjustment, and not by any suppression of the varied in him or by narrowing the range of his development. By thinning it to an unmeaning repetition, eliminating from it the understanding mind and earnestness of devotion we can make our prayer simple and still simpler by bringing it down to a mechanical turning of the prayer wheel as they have done in Tibet. Such a process lightens the difficulty of a work by minimising the humanity of the worker. Teachers who are notoriously successful in guiding their pupils through examinations know that teaching can be made simple by cramming and hushing the questioning mind to sleep. It hastens success through a ruthless retrench-

ment of education. The present-day politics has become a menace to the world, because of its barbarous simplicity produced by the exclusion of the moral element from its method and composition. Industrialism also has its cult of an ascetic miserliness that simplifies its responsibility by ignoring the beautiful. On the other hand, the primitive methods of production attain their own simplicity through a barren negation of science and, to that extent, a poor expression of humanity. We recognise our true teacher when he comes not to lull us to a minimum vitality of spirit but to rouse us to the heroic fact that man's path of fulfilment is difficult, "*durgam pathas tat.*" Animals drifting on the surface of existence have their life that may be compared to a simple raft composed of banana trunks held together. But human life finds its symbol in a perfectly modelled boat which has its manifold system of oars, helm and sails, towing ropes and poles for the complex purpose of negotiating with the three elements of water, earth and air. For its construction it claims from science a principle of balance based upon countless observations and experiments, and from our instinct for art the decorations that are utterly beside the purpose with which they are associated. It gives expression to the intelligent mind which is carefully accurate in the difficult adjustment of various forces and materials and to the creative imagination that delights in the harmony of forms for its own sake. We should never be allowed to forget that spiritual perfection comprehends all the riches of life and gives them a great unity of meaning.

While my mind was occupied with such thoughts, the French steamer on which I was travelling touched Pondicherry and I came to meet Aurobindo. At the very first sight I could realise that he had been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through this long process of realisation has accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant with an inner light and his serene presence made it evident

to me that his soul was not crippled and cramped to the measure of some tyrannical doctrine, which takes delight in inflicting wounds upon life. He, I am sure, never had his lessons from the Christian monks of the ascetic Europe, revelling in the pride of that self-immolation which is a twin sister of self-aggrandisement joined back to back facing opposite directions.

I felt that the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, "You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice to the world, 'Hearken to me'."

In her earlier forest home Sakuntala had her awakening of life in the restlessness of her youth. In the later hermitage she attained the fulfilment of her life. Years ago I saw Aurobindo in the atmosphere of his earlier heroic youth and I sang to him,

"Aurobindo, accept the salutation from Rabindranath."

Today I saw him in a deeper atmosphere of a reticent richness of wisdom and again sang to him in silence,

"Aurobindo, accept the salutation from Rabindranath."¹

S. S. Chantilly,
May, 29, 1928.

¹ *The Modern Review*, July 1928.

শান্তিনিকেতন
বোলপুর।

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নমস্কার

অরবিন্দ, রবীন্দ্রের লহ নমস্কার ।
হে বন্ধু, হে দেশবন্ধু, স্বদেশ-আত্মার
বাণী-মুক্তি তুমি ! তোমা লাগি নহে মান,
নহে ধন, নহে সুখ ; কোনো ক্ষুদ্র দান
চাহ নাই, কোনো ক্ষুদ্র কৃপা ; শিক্ষা লাগি
বাড়াওনি আতুর অঞ্জলি ! আছ জাগি
পরিপূর্ণতার তরে সর্ব্ববাধাহীন,—
যার লাগি নর-দেব চিররাত্রিদিন
তপোমগ্ন ; যার লাগি কবি বজ্ররবে
গেয়েছেন মহাগীত, মহাবীর সবে
গিয়েছেন সঙ্কটযাত্রায় ; যার কাছে
আরাম লজ্জিত শির নত করিয়াছে ;
মৃত্যু ভুলিয়াছে ভয় ;—সেই বিধাতার
শ্রেষ্ঠ দান—অপনার পূর্ণ অধিকার—
চেয়েছ দেশের হ'য়ে অকুণ্ঠ আশায়,
সত্যের গৌরবদৃপ্ত প্রদীপ্ত ভাষায়,
অখণ্ড বিশ্বাসে । তোমার প্রার্থনা আজি
বিধাতা কি শুনেছেন ? তাই উঠে বাজি
জয়শঙ্খ তাঁর ? তোমার দক্ষিণ করে

তাই কি দিলেন আজি কঠোর আদরে
 ছুঁখের দারুণ দীপ, আলোক যাহার
 জ্বলিয়াছে, বিদ্ধ করি দেশের আঁধার
 ক্রবতারকার মত ? জয়, তব জয় !
 কে আজি ফেলিবে অশ্রু, কে করিবে ভয়,
 সত্বরে করিবে খর্ব্ব কোন্ কাপুরুষ
 নিজেরে করিতে রক্ষা ! কোন অমানুষ
 তোমার বেদনা হ'তে না পাইবে বল !
 মোছ'রে, দুর্ব্বল চক্ষু, মোছ' অশ্রুজল !

দেবতার দীপহস্তে যে আসিল ভবে,
 সেই রুদ্রদূতে, বলো, কোন রাজা কবে
 পারে শাস্তি দিতে ! বন্ধনশৃঙ্খল তার
 চরণবন্দনা করি করে নমস্কার—
 কারাগার করে অভ্যর্থনা । রুষ্ঠি রাছ
 বিধাতার সূর্য্যপানে বাড়'ইয়া বাছ
 আপনি বিলুপ্ত হয় মুহূর্ত্তেক পরে
 ছায়ার মতন । শাস্তি ? শাস্তি তারি তরে,
 যে পারে না শাস্তিভয়ে হইতে বাহির
 লজ্জিয়া নিজের গড়া মিথ্যার প্রাচীর,
 কপট বেষ্টন ;—যে নপুংস কোনদিন
 চাহিয়া ধর্ম্মের পানে নির্ভীক স্বাধীন
 অগ্নায়েরে বলেনি অগ্নায় ; আপনার
 মনুষ্যত্ব, বিধিদত্ত নিত্য অধিকার,
 যে নির্লজ্জ ভয়ে লোভে করে অস্বীকার
 সভামাঝে, দুর্গতির করে অহঙ্কার ;
 দেশের হৃদিশা ল'য়ে ষার ব্যবসায়,
 অন্ন যার অকল্যাণ, মাতৃরক্ত প্রায় ;

সেই ভীকু নতশির চিরশাস্তিভারে
রাজকারা বাহিরেতে নিত্য-কারাগারে।

বন্ধন পীড়ন দুঃখ অসম্মান মাঝে
হেরিয়া তোমার মূর্তি, কর্ণে মোর বাজে
আত্মার বন্ধনহীন আনন্দের গান,
মহাতীর্থযাত্রীর সঙ্গীত. চিরপ্রাণ
আশার উল্লাস, গম্ভীর নির্ভয় বাণী
উদার মৃত্যুর। ভারতের বীণাপাণি,
হে কবি, তোমার মুখে রাখি দৃষ্টি তাঁর
তারে তারে দিয়েছেন বিপুল ঝংকার,—
নাহি তাহে দুঃখতান, নাহি ক্ষুদ্র লাজ,
নাহি দৈন্ত, নাহি ত্রাস। তাই শুনি আজ
কোথা হ'তে ঝঙ্কাসাথে সিন্ধুর গর্জন,
অন্ধবেগে নির্ঝরির উন্নত নর্তন
পাষণ-পিঞ্জর টুটি, বজ্রগর্জরব
ভেরী-মস্ত্রে মেঘপুঞ্জ জাগায় ভৈরব।
এ উদাত্ত সঙ্গীতের তরঙ্গমাঝার,
অরবিন্দ, রবীন্দ্রের লহ নমস্কার।

তার পর তাঁরে নমি, যিনি ক্রৌড়াচ্ছলে
গড়েন নূতন সৃষ্টি প্রলয়-অনলে,
মৃত্যু হ'তে দেন প্রাণ; বিপদের বৃকে
সম্পদেরে করেন লালন, হাসিমুখে
ভক্তেরে পাঠায়ে দেন কণ্টক-কাস্তারে
রিক্তহস্তে শক্রমাঝে রাত্রি অন্ধকারে।
যিনি নানা কণ্ঠে কন নানা ইতিহাসে,
সকল মহৎ কর্ম্মে, পরম প্রয়াসে,

সকল-চরম লাভে—“দুঃখ কিছু নয়,
 ক্ষত মিথ্যা, ক্ষতি মিথ্যা, মিথ্যা সর্ব্ব ভয় ;
 কোথা মিথ্যা রাজা, কোথা রাজদণ্ড তার,
 কোথা মৃত্যু, অশ্রায়ের কোথা অত্যাচার ।
 ওরে ভীরু, ওরে মূঢ়, তোলো তোলো শির,
 আমি আছি, তুমি আছ, সত্য আছে স্থির !”¹

৭ই ভাদ্র, ১৩১৪

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

नमस्कार

अरविन्द, रवीन्द्रे लहो नमस्कार !
हे बंधु, हे देशबंधु, स्वदेश आत्मार
वाणी-मूर्ति तुमि ! तोमा लागि नहे मान,
नहे धन, नहे सुख; कोनो क्षुद्र दान
चाहो नाई, कोनो क्षुत्र कृपा; भिक्षा लागि
बाँडाओनि आतुर अंजलि ! आछौं जागि
परिपूर्णतार तरे सर्ववाधाहीन,—
जार लागि नर-देव चिररात्रिदिन
तपोमग्न; जार लागि कवि वज्ररवे
गेयेछेन महागीत, महावीर सबे
गियेछेन संकटयात्राय; जार काछे
आराम लज्जित शिर नत करियाछे;
मृत्यु भूलियाछे भय;—सेइ विधातार
श्रेष्ठ दान—आपनार पूर्ण अधिकार—
चेयेछो देशेर ह'ये अकुठ आशाय,
सत्येर गौरवदृप्त प्रदीप्त भाषाय,
अखंड विश्वासे । तोमार प्रार्थना आजि
विधाता कि सुनेछेन ? ताइ उठे बाजि
जयशंख तांर ? तोमार दक्षिण करे
ताइ कि दिलेन आजि कठोर आदरे
दुःखेर दारुण दीप, आलोक जाहार
ज्वलियाछे, बिद्ध करि देशेर आंधार
ध्रुवतारकार मत ? जय, तव जय !

के आजि फ़ेलिबे अश्रु, के करिबे भय,
 सत्येरे करिबे खर्ब कोन् कापुरुष
 निजेरे करिते रक्षा ! कोन् अमानुष
 तोमार वेदना हते ना पाइबे बल !
 मोछ रे, दुर्बल चक्षु, मोछ अश्रुजल !

देवतार दीपहस्ते जे आसिल भवे,
 सेइ रुद्रदूते, बलो, कोन् राजा कबे
 पारे शास्ति दिते ! बंधनश्रुंखल तार
 चरणवंदना करि करे नमस्कार—
 कारागार करे अभ्यर्थना । रुष्ट राहु
 विघातार सूर्यपाने बाड़ाइया बाहु
 आपनि विलुप्त ह्य मुहूर्त्तके परे
 छाया र मतन । शास्ति ! शास्ति तारि परे,
 जे पारे ना शास्तिभये हइते बाहिर
 लंघिया निजेर गड़ा मिथ्यार प्राचीर,
 कपट वेष्टन;—जे नपुंस कोनो दिन
 चाहिया घमोर पाने निर्भीक स्वाधीन
 अन्यायेरे बलेनि अन्याय; आपनार
 मनुष्यत्व, विधिदत्त नित्य अधिकार,
 जे निर्लज्ज भये लोभे करे अस्वीकार
 सभामाझे, दुर्गतिर करे अहंकार;
 देशेर दुर्दशा लये जार व्यवसाय
 अन्न जार अकल्याण, मातृरक्त प्राय;
 सेइ भीरु नतशिर चिरशास्तिभारे
 राजकारा बाहिरेते नित्य-कारागारे ।

बंधन पीड़न दुःख असम्मान माझे
 हेरिया तोमार मूर्ति, कर्णे मोर बाजे
 भात्मार बंधनहीन आनंदेर गान,

महातीर्थयात्रीर संगीत, चिरप्राण
 आशार उल्लास, गंभीर निर्भय वाणी
 उदार मृत्युर। भारतेर वीणापाणि,
 हे कवि ! तोमार मुखे राखि दृष्टि तार
 तारे तारे दियेछेन विपुल झंकार,—
 नाहि ताहे दुःखतान, नाहि क्षुद्र लाज,
 नाहि दैन्य, नाहि त्रास ! ताइ सुनि आज
 कोथा ह'ते झंझासाथे सिन्धुर गर्जन,
 अंधवेगे निर्झरेर उन्मत्त नर्तन
 पाषाणपिंजर टूटि,—वज्रगर्जरव
 भेरि-मंत्रे मेघपुञ्ज जागाय भैरव ।
 ए उदात्त संगीतेर तरंगमाझार,
 अरविंद, रवींद्रेर लहो नमस्कार !

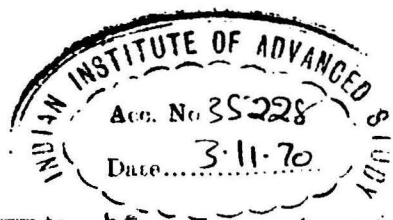
तार परे तारे नमि, जिनि क्रीडाच्छले
 गडेन नूतन सृष्टि प्रलय-अनले,
 मृत्यु ह'ते देन प्राण, विपदेर बुके
 संपदेरे करेन लालन, हासिमुखे
 भक्तेरे पाठाये देन कंटक-कांतारे
 रिक्तहस्ते शत्रुमाझे रात्रि-अंधकारे ।
 जिनि नाना कंठे कन नाना इतिहासे,
 सकल महत् कर्म, परम प्रयासे,
 सकल चरम लाभे— “दुःख किछु नय,
 क्षत मिथ्या, क्षति मिथ्या, मिथ्या सर्व भय;
 कोथा मिथ्या राजा, कोथा राजदंड तार,
 कोथा मृत्यु, अन्यायेर कोथा अत्याचार ।
 ओरे भीरु, ओरे मूढ, तोलो तोलो शिर,
 आमि आछि, तुमि आछो, सत्य आछे स्थिर !”

SALUTATION

RABINDRANATH, O Aurobindo, bows to thee !
O friend, my country's friend, O voice incarnate, free,
Of India's soul ! No soft renown doth crown thy lot,
Nor pelf or careless comfort is for thee ; thou'st sought
No petty bounty, petty dole ; the beggar's bowl
Thou ne'er hast held aloft. In watchfulness thy soul
Hast thou e'er held for bondless full perfection's birth
For which, all night and day, the god in man on earth
Doth strive and strain austerely ; which in solemn voice
The poet sings in thund'rous poems ; for which rejoice
Stout hearts to march on perilous paths ; before whose flame
Refulgent, ease bows down its head in humbled shame
And death forgetteth fear ;—that gift supreme
To thee from Heaven's own hand, that full-orb'd fadeless dream
That's thine, thou'st asked for as thy country's own desire
In quenchless hope, in words with truth's white flame afire,
In infinite faith, hath God in heaven heard at last
This prayer of thine ? And so, sounds there, in blast on blast,
His victory-trumpet ? And puts he, with love austere,
In thy right hand, today, the fateful lamp and drear
Of sorrow, whose light doth pierce the country's agelong gloom,
And in the infinite skies doth steadfast shine and loom,
As doth the Northern star ? O Victory and Hail !
Where is the coward who will shed tears today, or wail
Or quake in fear ? And who'll belittle truth to seek
His own small safety ? Where's the spineless creature weak
Who will not in thy pain his strength and courage find ?
O wipe away those tears, O thou of craven mind !
The fiery messenger that with the lamp of God

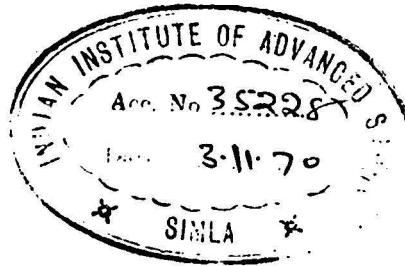
Hath come—where is the king who can with chain or rod
 Chastise him ? Chains that were to bind salute his feet,
 And prisons greet him as their guest with welcome sweet,
 The pall of gloom that wraps the sun in noontide skies
 In dim eclipse, within a moment slips and flies
 As doth a shadow. - Punishment ? It ever falls
 On him who is no man, and every day hath feared,
 Abashed, to gaze on truth's face with a free man's eye
 And call a wrong a wrong ; on him who doth deny
 His manhood shamelessly before his own compeers,
 And e'er disowns his God-given rights, impelled by fears
 And greeds ; who on his degradation prides himself,
 Who traffics in his country's shame ; whose bread, whose pelf
 Are his own mother's gore ; that coward sits and quails
 In jail without reprieve, outside all human jails.
 When I behold thy face, 'mid bondage, pain and wrong
 And black indignities, I hear the soul's great song
 Of rapture unconfined, the chant the pilgrim sings
 In which exultant hope's immortal splendour rings,
 Solemn voice and calm, and heart-consoling, grand
 Of imperturbable death, the spirit of Bharat-land,
 O poet, hath placed upon thy face her eyes a fire
 With love, and struck vast chords upon her vibrant lyre,—
 Wherein there is no note of sorrow, shame or fear,
 Or penury or want. And so today I hear
 The ocean's restless roar borne by the stormy wind,
 Th' impetuous fountain's dance riotous, swift and blind
 Bursting its rocky cage,—the voice of thunder deep
 Awakening, like a clarion call, the clouds asleep
 Amid this song triumphant, vast, that encircles me,
 Rabindranath, O Aurobindo, bows to thee !

And then to Him I bow Who in His sport doth make
 New worlds in fiery dissolution's awful wake,
 From death awakes new life ; in danger's bosom rears



Prosperity ; and sends his devotee in tears,
 'Mid desolation's thorns, amid his foes to fight
 Alone and empty-handed in the gloom of night ;
 In divers tongues, in divers ages speaketh ever
 In every mighty deed, in every great endeavour
 And true experience : "Sorrow's naught, howe'er drear,
 And pain is naught, and harm is naught, and naught all fear ;
 The king's a shadow,—punishment is but a breath ;
 Where is the tyranny of wrong, and where is death ?
 O fool, O coward, raise thy head that's bowed in fear,
 I am, thou art, and everlasting truth is here."¹

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



¹ *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, 1944. Translated from original Bengali by Kshitishchandra Sen.

