Arise Awake (Uttihata jāgrata)

Arise, awake! In the morning we are spontaneously awakened from our sleep by divine light—we wake up from the deep slumber of the entire night at once. But who will dispel the delusion of the evening? We find ourselves in an enclosure of deception emanating from the thoughts and practices of the whole day. How can the mind be redeemed from that into a pure, noble peacefulness? The whole day is like a spider spreading web upon web, surrounding us from various directions—completely concealing the Eternal and the Omnipresent. How shall I overcome all these webs to awaken the consciousness in the midst of the Infinite within? O dear, arise! Awake!

If we do not caution our consciousness from time to time when the day goes on tying us down from all directions through various acts, thoughts and desires, creating a veil between the universe and my atman—if the awakening mantra ‘arise, awake’ is not echoed time and again from the inner core of our atman when we perform various activities, then we would ultimately become numbed by being repeatedly wound round and tied in knots. In such a situation we no longer have the desire to pull ourselves out of this lethargic state. We consider all that surrounds us as the ultimate Truth. We even fail to believe that beyond this lies the liberating, pure, eternal Truth. In fact, we lack the effort to even doubt the existence of that Truth. Hence, when the day is a murmur of various activities, then it is as if in the innermost core of our heart an ektārā plays on:

1 Ka ha Upanishad, 1.3.14. “Uttihata jāgrata” translated as “Arise, awake!” are two words taken from a sloka which when translated into English reads thus: “Arise! Awake! Approach the great and learn. Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, so the wise say—hard to tread and difficult to cross.”
2 Ektārā is a folk single-stringed musical instrument of India. It is used by the bauls or wandering minstrels as an accompaniment to their songs.
3 Tagore used the present continuous tense in the Bengali Source Text but I use simple present tense.
‘Ye arise awake!’

Kolkata

17 Agrahāyaṇ 1315

Lack (Abhāb)

Granted that we are getting on without God day and night, if we were to incur the worldly\(^4\) loss\(^5\) of even a quarter of a pice\(^6\) we would immediately become alert to this fact. But that danger is not there; the sun provides us with light, the universe provides us with food, the vast human community fulfils our innumerable wants\(^7\) through its innumerable life-giving veins. What do we lack\(^8\) then by excluding God from our world? Alas! So long as we do not know that there is a lack,\(^9\) we live at ease free from any doubt, and while leading an affluent lifestyle\(^10\) we think we are the ones who are specially favoured by God.

But how can the manner of loss be explained?

---

\(^4\) The original Bengali word is “saṁśāric.” Tagore uses the noun form “saṁśāra” primarily in one sense—either to refer to the “phenomenal world,” or to the “world” or “worldliness” or “lifestyle”. My translation of the word in any given place depends on context.

\(^5\) Tagore uses the Bengali word “kṣati” three times in this essay, and I have translated it either as “loss” or as “harm” depending on context.

\(^6\) Pie is a quarter pice. Pice is one sixty-fourth part of a rupee.

\(^7\) The Bengali title of this talk is “abhāb,” a word which occurs three times in the talk itself. I have translated “abhāb” as “loss” and “wants” depending on context.

\(^8\) The original Bengali word is “abhāb.”

\(^9\) The original Bengali word is “abhāb.”

\(^10\) The original Bengali word is “saṁśāra.”
Here, let me give the example of a dream I had. I lost my mother quite early in my childhood. My mother’s presence was not felt during the days of my adult life. Last night I had a dream that I was still in the days of my childhood. Mother is sitting in a room at the garden house by the side of the Ganges. Mother is there in every respect—but her presence is not always uppermost in my consciousness. So, without paying any attention to Mother, I walked past her room. On reaching the verandah, I do not know what happened to me all of a sudden—a thought dawned upon me that Mother is there! I immediately went to her room, took the dust of her feet and offered my pra ām to her. She held my hand and said, “You have come!”

At that moment the dream broke off. I continued to think, “I live in my Mother’s house, I walk past her very door ten times a day—I know without any doubt that she is there, but household activities continue as if she is not there. What harm is there in that? She has not closed the door of her storehouse, she continues to serve food and even when I am asleep, her fan continues to fan me. Only one little thing is missing: she is not holding my hand and saying, ‘You have come!’” Food, drink, wealth, people, everything is there, but where is that voice and that touch? When the mind becomes fully awakened, and does not get the voice and touch that it longs for, it only searches from room to room, filled with goods, then food and drink no longer appeal to it.

Think carefully but once: rarely in life do we come close to something or someone. No doubt we visit our close relative daily, but it is only by the grace of God that we reach

11 A sign of paying respect or showing honour to a deity, an elderly person or a person worthy of respect by touching the feet of that deity or person. During Tagore’s time, it was common practice for the younger ones in a household to offer pra āms to senior members of the family.

12 The original Bengali word is “k ati.”

13 The original Bengali adverb is “sampūr a.” Tagore uses the related word “paripūr a” as an adjective in the next paragraph. In both cases I have translated the word as “full” or “fully.”
him even for a moment. How many days have we conversed with him privately and walked together in the glow of dawn and dusk, but out of all these days, perhaps I remember only that single day when my heart became full and I felt, “I have reached him!” There are hundreds and thousands of people who have never come close to anything or anyone even for once in their entire lifetime. Though born into this world, they have failed to make any direct contact with it. They are not even aware of the fact that they have not made this contact. While laughing, playing, gossiping with everyone, giving and taking, coming and going with different people, they think: “Ah, I’m together with everyone!” That this form of togetherness is utterly trivial lies beyond their comprehension.

Śāntiniketan

23 Agrahā a  1315

Sin (Pāp)

We clearly know this entity called sin when one atman longs for another Atman in such a manner that nothing can stop it in any way. When our consciousness wants to rush forth like a waterfall of melted ice, only then can it fully realize the obstacle of sin—it cannot ignore it even for a moment. To defeat that sin, to remove that sin, our ailing consciousness tends to float as froth around it. In fact, when our mind sets in action, due

---

14 In the Bengali original of this sentence, Tagore begins with the plural form “we” but changes to the singular “I” in mid-sentence.

15 Tagore uses the Bengali word “pāp” ten times in this essay and I have translated it either as “sin” or as “vice” depending on context.

16 The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’

17 The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
to the impact of its action it discerns even a small pebble, nothing remains concealed from it any more.

Prior to that, we regard sin\textsuperscript{18} and virtue as objects of social good and evil, convenience and inconvenience. We mould our character in such a way that it befits the society, so that the ideal of courtesy is maintained. If we succeed to that extent, there remains no hesitation in our minds; we feel that the purpose of the code of moral conduct has been fulfilled by us.

Then on one occasion when the atman awakens, it seeks the Atman within the universe, then it sees that mere politeness would not do, nor would it do to preserve the societal norms—the need is much greater, the obstacle graver. We have cleared and paved the way on the surface, it is not obstructing our worldly path, no one is able to notice it; but all the roots have been ingrained within, they have internally got entangled with each other in the form of a web, at every step cultivation of spirituality gets stunted there. Even the minutest, the finest root holds on to it and creates a veil. Then we also see that sin\textsuperscript{19} which did not come to our notice before and understand to what extent the entity called sin\textsuperscript{20} acts as an obstacle in the path of our ultimate success. Without paying any heed to man and to any social wants, we then consider sin\textsuperscript{21} only as vice\textsuperscript{22} and push it away with all our heart—it becomes impossible to bear it. With all its forces sin\textsuperscript{23} is, in fact, occupying the path to our ultimate union with Supreme Love—deceiving others or

\textsuperscript{18} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
\textsuperscript{19} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
\textsuperscript{20} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
\textsuperscript{21} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
\textsuperscript{22} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
\textsuperscript{23} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
one’s own self regarding it will not do any more—there is no longer any comfort in being
good to others—then with all our heart we have to pray to that Pure Form: Viśvāni
duritāṇi parāsuva.24 Dispel all sins,25 get rid of them entirely—not even a trace of them
should be left—because you are śuddha apāpaviddham26—the atman seeks only You,
that is its only true aspiration, that is its ultimate wish. Ye the Omniscient, sarvata
prāpya,27 I cannot even conceive of such wonderful fortune at present that I will be
united with Your Atman from all directions and will manifest myself within all. But I
have to pray for this little grace, even if I am not worthy of Your complete manifestation,
may that very light of Yours still enter through a slit of my closed door to enable me to
know the confined darkness of the room as darkness. With doors and windows shut, I
was asleep being unconscious at night. At daybreak, when light entered through a slit in
the door and I lay motionless in bed,28 the appearance of the perfectly pure dawn outside
struck my drowsy mind all of a sudden. Then the scorching heat of the bed became
unbearable, the air of the room defiled by my own breath began to suffocate me; it
became impossible to stay inside; then the pleasantness, clarity and purity of the liberated
universe—the presence of all the beauty, fragrance and music summoned me out of doors.

24 White [Śukla] Yajur Veda, 30.3. “Viśvāni duritāṇi deva savitar parāsuva” means
“Savitār, God, send far away all troubles and calamities,
And send us only what is good.”
Tagore omitted “deva savitar” from the above sloka. This sloka is also found in Rg Veda 10.121.10.

25 The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’

26 Īśa Upanishad, 8. “Śuddha apāpaviddham” means “It is He who pervades all—He who is bright and
bodiless, without scar or sinews, pure and by evil unpierced.”

27 Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 3. 2. 5. The words “sarvata prāpya” mean “behold everywhere the
omnipresent Brahman.”

28 Tagore uses the present continuous tense here but I used simple past tense.
In the like manner, send Your messenger of light, Your messenger of mukti through a few slits of my veil—only then will the affliction of my confinement, sin and darkness no longer allow me to be perfectly calm, the bed of comfort will continue to distress me, I will surely have to utter: \textit{Yenāha nāmrta syam kimahā tena kuryām.}

Śāntiniketan

\textit{Sorrow (Duḥka)}

In the mantra of our worship there is: \textit{Namah sambhāvāya cha mayabhāvāya cha!}

Let us give namaskar to the Bestower of happiness, give namaskar to the Bestower of benevolence. But we only give namaskar to the Bestower of happiness, we cannot always give namaskar to the Bestower of benevolence. The Bestower of benevolence is not only the cause of happiness but of sorrow as well. We know only happiness to be His bestowal upon us, and consider sorrow as harassment caused by some ill-luck.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Mukti means ultimate liberation.
\item \textsuperscript{30} The original Bengali word is ‘pāp.’
\item \textsuperscript{31} \textsuperscript{ Brhadārya aka Upanishad, 2.4.3. “Yenāha nāmrta syam kimahā tena kuryām” is said by Maitreyī, the younger wife of Yājñavalkya, means “What should I do with that which would not make me immortal?”
\item \textsuperscript{32} White Yajur Sa hitā, 16:41. “Homage to the source of happiness and to the source of delight,” this sloka is from “Śiva Namaskar Mantra.”
\item \textsuperscript{33} The act of folding the elbows at right angles and joining the palms of both hands together touching each other in front of the chest, parallel to the heart [anāhata cakra] (or sometimes in front of the forehead [ājñā cakra] mostly while doing it to a deity) with finger tips pointing upward. It is a sign of reverence to those that are superior to oneself: ‘I bow to you.’ It is also a sign of greeting in India which indicates or reveals reverence for the other being where too God dwells.
\end{itemize}
Being afraid of sorrow and pain, we create different kinds of veils to protect ourselves from sorrow. We only want to remain hidden. What happens due to that? Due to that we deprive ourselves of coming in perfect contact with Truth.

The rich and the luxurious, keep themselves away from all discomfort, they only remain surrounded by comfort. What happens due to that? Due to that he makes himself crippled; he ceases to have any control over his limbs. All those powers with which he was born in the world cannot develop due to the lack of action—they become withered and distorted. He lives in an artificial world in a self-created enclosure. An artificial world can never provide our nature with all its normal nourishment; so, in such a situation our nature becomes like that of a home-made doll, it does not attain perfection.

If out of utter fear we keep trying to protect our mind from the impact of sorrow, we then have to live in the world in an imperfect manner. Consequently, that never ensures our physical well-being and ultimate development of power. Being born in this world, if a person does not undergo sorrow in his lifetime then that person does not obtain all that he deserves from God--his allowance falls short.

All relatives and friends avoid those who are prone to sorrow by nature. Just because he considers some trivial matter to be grave, people say, ‘There is no use for him’--their conversation and behaviour towards him do not remain normal at all. He does not listen to every word or to the right words—he does not get all of what he deserves or does not get them in proper measure. This cannot do him any good. That unfortunate soul who is never hurt by his friends and gets only indulgence, is deprived of the complete taste of friendship—friends in their dealings with him cannot become his friends in the perfect sense.

In this world, it is not that the sorrow which is our due will necessarily be fully justified. We have to accept even that which we consider wrong and unjust. In fact, to go
very carefully through the book of fine accounts, to take only that which is rightful to 
sustain oneself never happens and even if it does then that does not do good to us. We 
must have the capacity to properly accept that which is also wrong and unjust.

Do we obtain the share of happiness in this world even in its right measure? Do we not many a time purchase more than what we have actually paid for out of our own pockets? But I never feel that I am unworthy of that.\(^\text{34}\) I just grab all of it quite well without the slightest hesitation. Is it only in the case of sorrow that I have to settle up accounts in terms of right and wrong?

There is a reason why in spite of our precise estimation we do not get what we want. The action of our prana\(^\text{35}\) goes on through acceptance and rejection—both the centripetal and centrifugal forces are of equal importance to us. In our prana, in our intellect, in our perception of beauty, in our inclination towards good, in fact, in all the aspects of our excellence, the fundamental dharma is that, it will not only accept, but it will also renounce.

That is why, the food we take does not contain the essential ingredients in right proportion, just as it has a nutritious portion, it has an unwanted portion as well. The body rejects this unwanted portion. If we take merely the nutritious part of the food in right measure then it does not help us and the body becomes diseased. It is because we not only have digestive power and digestive organs, we also have the power to reject and the organ to do so.\(^\text{36}\) We have to engage that power and that organ in action too, only then would there be a harmony between acceptance and rejection due to which the prana will attain fulfilment.

\(^{34}\) Tagore suddenly changes from plural pronoun to singular one.

\(^{35}\) Prana is the vital life-sustaining force in living beings.

\(^{36}\) I have interchanged the interrogative sentence to an assertive one.
Similarly, it is not also a law that in the world we would only get justice and none should do us an injustice. In the world, it is extremely essential for our nature that this justice be fused with injustice. Just as in the act of breathing, our nature too must have such spontaneous ability so that we can accept with ease what little we deserve and can give up that which is to be renounced without any resentment.

Hence, whether just or unjust, the utmost effort to protect ourselves from sorrow and hurt completely weakens our humanity and makes it diseased.

It is not that this cowardice gives rise only to frailty and weakness for luxury, it destroys the purity of those people who by nature are oversensitive to sorrow and protect themselves for fear of being hurt. Under the veil they accumulate a lot of filth. The more they want to conceal that publicly for fear of people, the more that becomes polluted and goes on to affect the health. Those who can accept criticism, injustice, sorrow and pain of the world freely and unhesitatingly, not only do they become strong but also become pure. In an unveiled life, the full impact of the world continues to wear away the extent of their defilement.

Hence, be prepared with all your heart and soul—offer pra ām to He who is the Bestower of happiness and also to He who is the Bestower of sorrow—only then would you attain health, attain power—He who is Śiva, He who is like Śiva, it is to Him that you will offer pra ām.

26 Agrahā a 1315
Renunciation (Tyāg)

If there is a little truth in this very upāsanā37 that we perform every morning then with the help of that we prepare ourselves gradually for renunciation day by day. We must truly be prepared for it, because, there is a dharma of renunciation in the world whose law is infallible. It does not allow us to stand anywhere; it talks only of letting go and moving on. There is no place we see on reaching which we can say—everything ends here itself and is fulfilled, hence we would never ever move away from here.

Since it is the dharma of the world not to hold on to anything, but to set aside, to propel forward, at that point if we do not establish a harmony of our will with the world itself then there will always be clashes between the two. If we go on asserting ‘We will stay’ ‘We will retain’ while the world says, ‘You have to let go’ ‘You have to move on,’ then unbearable pain continues to be generated. Our will gets defeated—that which we do not want to let go, is snatched away from us. Hence our will also ought to be tuned up with the strain of this universal dharma.

The instant we are able to unite our will with that of the universal dharma, we, in fact, become free. That is indeed the law of freedom. If I do not join the universe out of my free will, only then will the universe forcefully make me obey it. Then I will not be left with any joy, will not be left with any glory, at that point the world will pull me by the ear like a slave.

Hence someday the world should not get a chance to say, ‘I will snatch away from you,’ may I rather be able to say, ‘I will renounce it.’ But if we do not prepare our will towards this renunciation daily then, when death and damage come before us with their enormous demands, we will feel like evading them somehow, yet no deception will work there at all—that will be a sorrowful day indeed.

37 The word upāsanā means worship.
We should not think that through renunciation we suffer from poverty and destitution. Our renunciation is to attain something with all completeness.

We will not obtain that which we do not forsake. The baby enclosed within the womb does not obtain its mother—it becomes free when it is born by severing the bond of the placenta, only then it attains its mother completely.

Likewise, we too have to be free from the enclosed womb of this world—only then would we truly obtain the world, because we will obtain it freely. By being confined like a foetus we are never able to see the world; only he who has become free knows the world and obtains it.

That is why I say, the man who is attached to the world is not necessarily worldly; he who has come out of the world is, in fact, worldly, because he no longer belongs to the world, the world belongs to him. Only he can truly say, ‘This is my world.’

The horse drives the cart being tied to it by the reigns, but can the horse say, ‘The carriage is mine’? Is there, in fact, any significant difference between the wheels of the carriage and the horse? The charioteer who by remaining free drives the carriage, it is he who has the authority over the carriage.

If I want to be the master, I have to be free. This is the reason why the Gītā calls that yoga the Karma Yoga, the yoga in which we do work by being unattached. When we do

---

38 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.” I have translated it as either “obtain” or “attain.”

39 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.”

40 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.”

41 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.”

42 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.”

43 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.”

44 The original Bengali word is “mukta” which means “liberated,” but here I have translated it as “free” depending on context.
work by being unattached to our work, only then do we attain complete claim over work; otherwise we get entangled in work and become embodied in work itself, we do not become a karma yogi. 46

So, to attain the world we have to go away from the world, and to accomplish a work we have to forgo attachment while doing the work.

This certainly means harmony has to be brought about between these two opposing dharmas of “to give” and “to take”—within these two if one ever becomes predominant then there is misfortune in that. If “to take” is given the sole priority then we get attached, and if “to give” becomes solely prominent then we ourselves get deprived. If the work is devoid of mukti then we become slaves and if mukti is devoid of work then we become extinct.

In fact, renunciation is not emptiness, it is the completeness of claim. When a minor does not obtain complete claim over property, he cannot donate or sell it. He then has the limited claim of enjoyment, he does not have the great claim of renunciation. In a situation where we can only save and cannot give from our heart’s content, in that situation we do not have freedom regarding those items which we save.

That is why Christ said, 47 “It is very difficult for a rich man to gain salvation.” 48 That is because the very little wealth that he is unable to give away is what, in fact, binds him. Whoever has made this bondage greater has been in danger to that very extent indeed.

---

45 Karma Yoga is that union with God where a devotee attains Him through selfless work or action (karma). The following explanation of “Karma-Yoga” is from A Dictionary of Advaita Vedanta: “Disinterested performance of action may lead to liberation. Such a path of action is technically known as Karma-yoga. Karma yoga may purify the heart and thus make it fit for the attainment of knowledge or it may directly produce devotion.”

46 A karma yogi is a person who does his work unselfishly, that is, he does not expect any return for the work he has performed and eventually realizes God through his unselfish actions.
All these bondages are becoming relaxed day by day, renunciation is becoming easy for us daily—may we obtain this fruit from our upāsanā. Due to the intense attraction of various attachments, our nature has become hard like a stone. During our upāsanā may the fountain of amrita keep falling—may it infiltrate through our very pores—may it disintegrate this stone day by day and continue to soften it. After that by wearing it away, by removing it gradually, may it create a vast space within life and fill that space up.

Observe, look within yourself once—‘The narrowness of mind is getting changed into the broadness of mind daily due to the impact of His name, everything is becoming blissful, becoming calm, work is becoming easy, the relationship with all is becoming true and simple, and in this human life of mine I am being blessed by the glory of God.’

27 Agraḥā a 1315

The Prayer (Prārthanā)

In Bhāratvar a, the Upanishads are the great tree of the Knowledge of Brahman. Not only is it beautiful, green, shady, it is huge and rigid. Not only is the wealth of attainment grown within it, there is also the soaring rigidity of tapasyā in it. Amid that lofty unwavering firmness a beautiful flower has bloomed—its fragrance has made us ecstatic.

It is that very prayer-mantra of Maitreyī.

---

47 Tagore uses present perfect tense here but I used simple past tense.


49 The original Bengali word is “pāo ā.”

50 Amrita is referred to as the divine nectar of immortality obtained by the churning of the ocean. It is from the myth of the Samudra Manthana (Churning of the Ocean). Amrita had to be obtained by the gods to regain their lost power being continuously defeated by the demons.

51 The anglicized word for Bhāratvar a is India.

52 The word tapasyā means penance.
At the time of renouncing worldly life, when Yājñavalkya was about to give away his entire property to his two wives, Maitreyī asked him: ‘Well, tell me, will I be immortal by gaining all these?’ Yājñavalkya replied, ‘No, you will not be. But you will possess all those things necessary to lead your life. The way people of the world lead life comfortably with their homes, domestic animals, food and clothing, you too would be able to lead a life like that.’

At that very moment Maitreyī cried out: Yenāha nāmṛtā syam kimaha tena kuryām? What will I do with that through which I shall not be made immortal? These words have not emanated from any austere knowledge--neither from thought, nor from dhyana, nor out of the discrimination between the eternal and the transient that she uttered them. She had a touchstone in her mind upon which she rubbed all the aspects of the world just once and said instantly, ‘That which I aspire for is surely not this.’

In the Upanishads, amidst the profound voice of wisdom of all the male rishis, there is only a lone female voice which has been sounded with extreme yearning and that sound has not faded away. That sound, amidst their voice that is calm and resembles the rumble of clouds, has awakened an unprecedented sweetness full of tears. In the Upanishads, from various directions and means we came across only the man within the human being. Then all of a sudden it is seen that at one end there is the woman within the human being who also stands and radiates beauty.

53 Brhadāra yaka Upanishad, 2.4.2. It is uttered by Maitreyī: “Venerable Sir, if indeed the whole earth, full of wealth, belonged to me, would I be immortal through that?”

54 Brhadāra yaka Upanishad 2.4.2. This speech is by Yājñavalkya in reply to Maitreyī’s query as mentioned in the previous note. He replied, “No, your life would be just like that of people who have plenty. Of Immortality, however, there is no hope through wealth.”

We have a woman in our inner nature too. We bring all our savings to her. We bring her wealth and say, ‘Take this!’ We bring her fame and say ‘Save this!’ With utmost efforts throughout his life, the man in us brings so many things from so many sides that there is no count of that. He says to the woman, ‘With all these set up a home; be a good householder and be happy with these.’ The woman ascetic within us is not yet able to say clearly, “All these will be of no use to me.” She thinks: “Perhaps that which I want is just this.” Yet, even after obtaining all these, she is unable to accept at heart: ‘I have obtained all.’ She thinks that perhaps the amount of want has to be increased further—she feels that there is need for more money, more fame and it would not do without more power. But there is no end to that “more.” In fact, one day she will have to realize that she wants only amrita\textsuperscript{56} and that these necessities are not amrita. One day in a moment she will have to push aside, like garbage, all that she has accumulated throughout her life and say:

‘yenāha nāmṛtā syam kimahā tena kuryām!’\textsuperscript{57}

But, as Maitreyī said, ‘What will I do with that through which I will not attain immortality,’ what does that really mean? Does it mean that to be immortal we have to sustain this physical body for an endless period of time? Or is it to exist in some other life or some other form even after death? It is certain that Maitreyī did not aspire for the immortality of the physical body and that there was no concern in her mind regarding the eternal nature of the atman. But how then did she wish to become immortal?

This is what she said, “In this world we are, in fact, constantly moving from one aspect to another—by no means can we stay still. The aspects that occupy my mind also

\textsuperscript{56} In the original Bengali, Tagore plays with the literal and mythical meaning of amrita. Whenever the literal meaning is applicable I have translated it as either “immortal,” or “immortality,” and have transliterated “amrita” whenever its mythical meaning is implied by Tagore. My translation of the word or its transliteration in any given place depends on context.

\textsuperscript{57} See “Sin,” note 31.
shift focus, my mind too gets diverted. When I let go of what my mind supports then it is as good as dead to me. Gradually in this manner we proceed from one death to another—this very succession of deaths has no end.

Yet my mind aspires for something from which it will never have to waver ever again, on obtaining which it can say, ‘I need nothing beyond this’, and by obtaining whom there will be no possibility of separation any more. Only then can we completely avoid the hands of death. Where is that person or thing by obtaining which I can say, “I have attained this support of my whole life—there is nothing else that I need?” ”

That is why Maitreyī discarded all the forsaken property of her husband and said, ‘What will I do with all these? I aspire only for amrita.’

Well, if requirements are not amrita then what is amrita? We know what amrita is. It is not that we never had the taste of it on earth. If we had not known what that was all about, we would not have wept over it. In all the aspects of our world, it is that alone we go on seeking, because time and again it touches us.

Where in death do we find a touch of this amrita? We find it where there is love. Amid this love itself we get a taste of the Infinite. It is love itself which puts the shadow of the Infinite within the finite, transforms old into new and never accepts death. When we observe the trace of love within the diverse matters of the world, we get to know the Supreme Being who is beyond death. Through this we understand that His true nature is the embodiment of love. When we discover the true yearning of the inner atman to obtain this very love completely then we can easily renounce all requirements and say: Yenāha nāmṛtā syam kāmaṇaḥ tena kuryām.

---

58 Tagore makes a pun on amrita; at one instance he gives the literal meaning of the word and again he gives the mythical meaning. See “The Prayer,” note 50.

When this very utterance has emanated from the mouth of a woman, it has sounded so clear, so true and so pleasant indeed. By being free from all thought and reason, how easily these words have been sounded. ‘O dear, I don’t want any house or property, I want love’\(^\text{60}\)--what a cry is this!

That simple cry of Maitreyī had taken the form of a prayer and had become awakened. Has such a wonderful perfect prayer been heard anywhere ever in this world? This ultimate prayer of entire mankind, eagerly voiced by this woman, has become immortal for all time to come. This very prayer is the only prayer of each one of us, and it is this very prayer which has been uttered for ages in the vast history of mankind.

_Yenāha nāmrta syam kimaha tena kuryām\(^\text{61}\)—by uttering these words with great force, had that Brahmovādinī\(^\text{62}\) stood up with folded hands and with her face drenched in tears looked up towards heaven and said—_

\begin{align*}
\text{Asato mā sadgamaya} \\
\text{Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya} \\
\text{Mrtyormamrta gamaya,}\(^\text{63}\) \\
\text{Āviravirma edhi}\(^\text{64}\) \\
\text{Rudra yatte dak i a mukha} \\
\text{tena mā pāhi nityam?}\(^\text{65}\)
\end{align*}

---

\(^{60}\) Here Tagore interprets Matreyi’s desire for “immortality” as desire for “love”. See “Sin,” note 31.


\(^{62}\) A Brahmovādinī is a woman who is the knower of Brahman.

\(^{63}\) Brhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, 1. 3. 28. “Lead me from the unreal to the real. From darkness lead me to light. From death lead me to immortality.”

\(^{64}\) Aitareya Upanishad, “ Invocation”. “Āviravirma edhi” means “O self-luminous Brahman, be manifest to me.”
In the Upanishads, we have heard about many utterances of profound realization through the male voice. But this is the only female voice through which we have attained such a deep prayer. The Supreme Realization of what we truly want, yet what we lack, has been manifested very easily from the heart of a lovelorn woman—O Truth, take me away from all that is not True and accept me within You, otherwise our love will remain starved! O Light, deliver me from the deep darkness and take me within You, or else, our love will remain imprisoned! O Immortality, accept me through ceaseless deaths, or else our love will be sick of roaming shelterless like travelers in the approaching night! O Manifestation, be manifested unto me, only then will all my love be fulfilled. Āviravirma edhi—Ye Āvī, O Manifestation, You are ever manifested indeed, but be mine once, be manifested as my own—may Your manifestation be fulfilled in me. O Rudra, O the most Terrible, You are that unbearable Rudra in the darkness of sin, in the form of estrangement, yatte dak i a mukha, reveal to me Your graceful, beautiful and loving countenance—tena mā pāhi nityam, protect me by manifesting that, save me eternally—that manifestation of Your love, that very grace of Yours is my salvation for eternity.

O Maitreyī, the female ascetic! Come hither, place your pair of holy feet within the hearts of those that are afflicted with worldly articles. With your melodious deathless

---

65 Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, 4.21. “Rudra yatte dak i a mukha tena mā pāhi nityam” means “O Rudra, may Thy benign face protect me for ever!”

66 See “The Prayer,” note 64.

67 Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 2.2.1. Āvī means luminous.

68 Rudra is the Vedic god of the storms. At later times he came to be considered as the manifestation of Śiva (the third god of the Hindu Trinity), as the destroyer.


voice utter your very prayer of immortality in my heart. May there not be even the faintest doubt in my mind as to how I would protect myself for all eternity.

2 Pau  1315

Dispersed Fair (Bhāngā Hāt)

Man’s mind only keeps saying, ‘I want this, I want that, I want that,’ following that, it says, ‘I don’t want this. I don’t want that. I don’t want that.’ At this moment it says, ‘I cannot do without it’, but the very next moment it says, ‘There’s no need for it.’

Last night, people of the dispersed mela said, ‘It would certainly do us good if we could secure some firewood and dry leaves.’ At that time it was as if they could not do without them. To build a small shelter in that wintry open field seemed to be the most important need to be accomplished in the world. There was also a great effort to make an oven somehow and to light a fire with dry leaves, and try to cook whatever meal one could manage to have. All other worldly matters became trivial in comparison to these needs and efforts.

Somehow these firewood and dry leaves were procured. But, even before the night is over, we hear, ‘Where are the carts? Yoke the bullocks to them.’ We have to go, we have to go back to the village now. This very necessity to depart is now the urgent need. The pressing necessities of the previous night are left as waste today; what they had said to be indispensable yesterday, they are fretfully busy to desert that today.

In this very manner the universal man also prepares to move from one age to another. When the new dawn sets in, when the night is just about to show the first light of

---

71 The phrase ‘to them’ was added to the sentence to make the sentence meaningful.

72 Universal man here could mean the man (human race) eternally prevalent in all ages (time) and throughout the universe (place).
the day, then they shove each other, saying, ‘Let’s go! Where are the bullocks?’ Where are the carts?’ Those items of utmost necessity of that night have already been rendered extremely worthless by the first light of the day. Smoke is still rising from the dry leaves, their ashes are still getting accumulated. The whole field is littered with broken earthen pots and cups, sal leaves. The rest huts being abandoned by their occupants are left in quite ugly and tattered condition. All is being left behind—the eastern sky is turning a crimson hue, now they have to set out on their journey. Again, once again we will have to secure the needs for another age. Then it will seem as if the needs of the present will be the final ones, they will never again have to venture out at dawn to harness the bulls to the carts. Saying this, they again proceed to collect branches, twigs and leaves. But, even then, of those immediate needs yet to be met, there comes the message through a doleful tune of Bhairavī which plays, ‘There is no need for it, there is no need for it.’

73 Tagore uses the present continuous tense here but I used simple present tense.

74 The Bengali word Tagore uses is ‘garu’ meaning ‘cow,’ but in India a cow is not used for hard labour, it is the bull which is used for this purpose. So, I translated “garu” as “bullock.”

75 The original Bengali word is “lajjita.” It is used twice in this essay and I have translated it as “worthless” though the literal meaning is “shameful.”

76 Plates are made by sewing or attaching the sal leaves by either thread or twigs in single or double layers.

77 The original Bengali word is “lajjita.”

78 The Bengali word is “yūg.” Sanskrit “yūga.” There are 4 yūgas or ages: Satya, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kali (the present yūga). Possibly Tagore is making pun on the word.

79 See “Dispersed Fair,” note 74.

80 Bhairavī refers to a particular rāgi in Indian classical music. This rāgi is sung or played in the morning.

81 The phrase ‘for it’ has been added to bring out the complete sense of the sentence.
If this tune had not been present, if there were no dispensable wants within the indispensable ones, could we then have survived? If the want was truly overwhelming, then who would have been able to put up with its terrible pressure? Just because the days and nights of extreme dispensable wants have taken away the burden of these extreme indispensable wants that we are able to keep moving around in spite of the strong gravitation of wants.\(^{82}\) That is why just on seeing the light of dawn, dumping the piled up burden anywhere and anyhow, we are able to get on the cart\(^{83}\) again. Saying, ‘nothing remains’ we heave a deep sigh; likewise, saying, ‘nothing moves’ we do not fall into despair. It remains yet it does not, but in between these two conditions we have got space as well as refuge—we have also got a house, light and air have not been lost as well.

\(8\) Pau 1315

End of Festivity (Uṭsav Śe )

Many a time, we go bankrupt holding festivities. Much of our days are spent in paying off our debts. When a person of modest means tries to fulfill his desire to be a king for a day, then there is no other option for him than to spend some days of his life in a beggarly fashion.

So, the day following the festivity is very glum to us. On that day brightness of the sky is lost, on that day our heart grows heavy with fatigue.

But, there is no alternative. At least once a year man ceases to be miserly and tries to forge a relation of sharing with that generous One. Through wealth he wants to realize\(^{84}\)

\(^{82}\) The original Bengali word is ‘darkār.’ I have translated it as ‘wants.’

\(^{83}\) Here the original Bengali word ‘gā i’ refers to ‘cart’ in the essay.

\(^{84}\) The word ‘upalabdhī’ (here translated as ‘realize’) and its derivatives have been used seven times in this essay.
that God.

There are two kinds of realization. One kind is—like that of the poor man who realizes the wealth of the rich man through the gift he receives from him. In this realization, the disparity felt is more. Another kind of realization is that of equality. In that case I do not have to sit outside the door, it is somewhat possible for me to sit on the same jajim.\(^{85}\)

Every day when we are in a miserable state, our cheerless mind goes on to beg the Blissful One. On the day of festivity it tries to say, ‘Today is not a day only to take, but also to rejoice as You do—today I have no poverty, no miserliness, my joy and my renunciation are as boundless as Yours.’

In this manner, if I understand what wealth means, and what is meant by infinite abundance, then I would demonstrate to myself that God not only grants me grace, but is my very own.

But, in order to understand and to proclaim this, one has to suffer ultimately on many occasions. Our mind becomes dispirited over the scattered leavings of food, melted candles and withered garlands seen on the day following the festivity; then the heart loses its magnificent generosity; the mind becomes pained when the matter of settling up our accounts arises.

However, he who saves a little everyday does not have to endure that kind of suffering.\(^{86}\) He who makes preparations daily to welcome the festivity of mankind, for him there is no distinction between the day of festivity and every other day—there is an intimate connection between the two.

\(^{85}\) *Jajim* is a thin embroidered carpet of Persian origin woven with coloured threads spread on the floor for people to sit on. It can alternatively be used as a bedcover.

\(^{86}\) The original Bengali word ‘du kha’ also means ‘sorrow’ as well as ‘suffering’ in English, here the word ‘suffering’ is more appropriate.
If that is not so, then we have to incur debts to celebrate festivities. It is true that we rejoice, but fifteen annas of the money spent in that joy is not through our own resources, the major part of it is managed on borrowing. We borrow from the invited guests; from the flower garland, the lighting, the decoration of the hall; from the song, the music and the speech. Amid the excitement of that day we never remain conscious that we have borrowed. On the following day when the flowers wither, the lights are extinguished and the guests depart, at that instant the massive void of debt becomes apparent and makes the heart restless.

In this utter misery of ours, we immerse the God of festivity as soon as the festivity is over, we make no attempt to establish this very Lord of festivity at the helm of affairs in our everyday life.

It was our privilege that a few of us used to go to the temple premises everyday at dawn and save a little together. We have not come to this festival like uninvited strangers,\(^{87}\) and have not simply wasted all the fruits\(^{88}\) of our daily morning worship. It seems that we have been able to say to the Lord of festivity, ‘I have a little acquaintance with You and have received Your invitation.’

Then we will not let our festivity come to an end in a day all of a sudden, we will let this festivity flow into our daily celebration. Every day at dawn this festivity of a handful of us will go on. Amid all the trivialities of our daily life and in self-oblivion, at least once at the beginning of the day we will continue to realize the wealth of the eternal festivity of the universe. Every day when Dawn will appear in the east holding Its light in

\(^{87}\) The Bengali word was ‘bideśi’ which if literally translated into English means ‘foreigner.’ But the sense implied in this context is that of ‘stranger.’

\(^{88}\) The words ‘the fruits’ were not there in the Source Text but I have included them in my translation to convey the meaning properly.
Its hand, the few of us will calmly sit and realize that each day of our lives is indeed glorious, full of wealth—the trivialities of our lives have not in the least soiled It--every day It is novel, It is luminous, It is that very supreme wonder-- the pot of amrita\(^9\) held in Its hand is totally upturned, not a drop of it is wasted.

9 Pau 1315

**Ferry Me Across (Pār Karo)**

On that very day at dawn, when the mela had dispersed amidst various fun, frolic and gossip, a song was sung: ‘O God,\(^90\) ferry me across!’ I simply cannot forget that song. It amazes me even today.

It is surprising that man has been consistently uttering these words ‘ferry me across’ for so long. I cannot even understand whether this wish of his is completely known to him or not.

If a sādhaka\(^91\) renounces all worldly efforts and stands on the bank of his sea of sadhana and says, ‘O Benefactor of attainment, ferry me across to the shore of attainment!’ then I can understand the meaning of that. But, a person who has no aim, no sadhana before him—where is his boatman, where is his sea, what does he want to ferry across? Where itself lies his this shore and where else lies his other shore?

Amidst the crowd of activities we perform, we say, ‘O God, ferry me across!’ As the coachman drives his coach he says, ‘ferry me across’, when the grocer weighs the rice and pulses, he too says, ‘ferry me across.’

---

\(^9\) Here the word ‘amrita’ has been retained as it connotes to the mythical drink of immortality. But wherever ‘amrita’ signifies ‘immortality’ the latter has been used as per context.

\(^90\) In the original Bengali, Tagore uses the word “Hari.”

\(^91\) A sādhaka is a spiritual aspirant.
Do not presume that they are saying, ‘We want to be ferried away from this very work of ours.’ They want to stay amid their work and be ferried across and that is why their work is not being neglected as they sing.

O Sea of Bliss! This very shore is Yours, the other shore too is Yours. But, when I term one shore as mine then there arises a separation between the other shore and this. Then it is deprived of the realization of its completeness, inwardly its heart keeps wailing for the other shore. The ‘I’ of my shore becomes estranged\(^{92}\) in the absence of that ‘You’ of Your shore. That is why there is so much outcry to be ferried across.

As this is my house, so the person ‘I’ toils endlessly for it day and night. Until he is able to say, “This is also Your house,” the immense suffering, severe bondage and acute loss that he suffers are limitless. During the time of performing his duties at home, his inner atman cries out, “O God, ferry me across!” Whenever he is able to make his house as Your house, then it is by being in his house itself that he is ferried across. When the person ‘I’ gasps for breath day and night while thinking that whatever he does is his own work, then he not only gets hurt, but also hurts others in turn, only then he sings, “Ferry me across.” The moment he can say, “It is Your work,” he has already been ferried across.

You and I can unite only when I make my home as Your home, my work as Your work. This utterance that I shall leave my home for Your home, leave my work for Your work, is not the utterance of our heart. This is because this too is the utterance of separation. That ‘I’ devoid of You, and that ‘You’ devoid of ‘I’, both mean the same to me.

That is why within our very home, within the very fair of our activities, day and night

---

\(^{92}\) In the Bengali text the word “bira\(i\)ṇī” is written which is used in case of a female who is estranged from her lover.
there is the cry of ‘O God, ferry me across!’ Here itself lies the sea, here surely lies the shore.

11 Pau 1315

This Shore--the Other Shore (E pār o pār)

Even if the person with whom I have only a little acquaintance sits right beside me, there lies a sea of distance between the two of us—that distance is the sea of ignorance, the sea of indifference. If ever that person becomes my closest friend, only then do I ferry across the sea. Then the distance in space\(^{93}\) becomes untrue, even the distance between the bodies does not remain a distance, so much so that even the estrangement from death does not create any distance. That egotism builds a wall from all sides to keep a distance between us in spite of our being very close to each other, the very person for whom it makes way becomes our very own.

That is why I said yesterday that to ferry across the sea is not simply a matter of going across a far-off place, it is to bring that which is indeed close even closer.

In fact, the object which is so close to us when remains so far away, its distance too is terrible to that very extent. It is for this very reason when we make our relative a stranger, we distance him farther than even the one who is unfamiliar to us. When we are in close contact with someone for whom we do not have any feeling at all, then that lifelessness is much worse than the inertness of death.

It is for this reason, when we know only the One who is the very inmost in the whole universe as being far, then He remains the farthest from all in the world; He who is the Heart of our hearts stands even farther than that gross wall, then there is no distance in

\(^{93}\) The original Bengali word is “ākāśa” which generally means the “sky,” but it also means “space.” So, “space” is apt in this context.
this world which He does not surpass. Though we do not clearly realize the pain of this distance, it is due to the burden of this distance that our daily existence, our household, our activities, all our social relations become burdensome.

Yet, the seashore for which we are wailing about, is so very near—it is even nearer to this very side of the shore, and those who know about it have stated that very clearly. We are suddenly surprised when we come to hear of it—we feel, that which is so very close, we had regarded it to be so very distant. This is what we termed as unreachable, shoreless and impossible.

What do those that have ferried across the sea say? They say, “E āsyā paramā gati, e āsyā paramāsampat, e āhasya paramo loka, e ohasya param ānanda.” 94 E a 95 means He—the person who is truly before us, the one who is really close to us. Asya means its—that too is very close. It is He who is its supreme motion. He who is the Supreme Motion is not in the least away from it. 96 He is so close that He can be termed as ‘this person’, there is no need to call Him even by His name—apart from saying, ‘Here, this is He’, He does not need to provide any further introduction. He Himself is its everything. In fact, who ‘He’ is and whose is ‘its’ is ever left untold. One who is on this side of the shore does not address the one on the other shore of the sea as esah, does not call him ‘He’.

He Himself is its supreme motion. That we are in motion, who makes us move? We think that it is money which makes us move, fame which makes us move, man who makes us move. He who has been ferried across says, ‘It is He who is ‘its’ motion’—it is by His pull that it moves—there is the pull of money, pull of fame, pull of man, but

94 Brhadāra yaka Upanishad, 4.3.32. “This is its supreme attainment, this is its supreme glory, this it (sic.) its highest world, this is its supreme bliss.”

95 The word “e a ” means “this.” See “This Shore—the Other Shore,” note 94.

96 This “it” refers to “asya,” that is “its.”
amongst all the pull, the supreme pull is His—all the pull may go but His pull will remain—because in all the movements, the urge to go to Him is inherent. Even Money does not say, ‘You remain here’; neither does Fame nor does man say so—all say ‘You move on’. He who is the Supreme Motion itself is providing motion, who else would dare to create obstruction on the path of its motion permanently?

Perhaps we may think that the earth that attracts me is the attraction of the earth itself. But, if that be so, who attracts the earth? Who attracts the sun? The fact that this very universal force of attraction through which the planets, the stars, the constellations are made to revolve and none is allowed to remain static, the centre of that vast centripetal attraction is, in fact, not there within the earth. There is one Supreme Motion, that motion is also my motion, also the motion of the earth, the motion of the sun as well.

Keeping this Supreme Motion in view, the Upanishads said, ‘kohyevānyāt ka prā yāt yadesa ākāśa ānanda na syāt’—if the space were not completely filled with that Bliss then who else would have cared to make even the least effort? It is that Bliss which has rendered that infinite motion to the universe. It is because there is the very Bliss throughout the space that I am able to open my eyelid.

So I say, my supreme motion is not far away, it is within all those minute movements of mine. For instance, there is the universal force of gravitation in the falling of the apple onto the ground. In all the movements of my body, and in all the efforts of my mind, He who is the Supreme Motion, He is e a, it is this He. The centre of that motion is not far—it is here itself.

---

97 Taittirīya Upanishad, 2.7.1. The words “ko hyevānyāt ka prā yāt. Yadesa ākāśa ānanda na syāt” mean “Who could direct the prāna and the apāna [to perform their functions] if this Bliss (Brahman) did not exist in the ākāśa [of the heart]?” Here ākāśa means space.
After that, He who is our supreme glory, our supreme refuge, our supreme joy—He Himself remains within all our everyday glory, all our everyday refuge and all our everyday joy. Amidst our men and money, our house, our entire enjoyment of essence, the One who is there in His Supreme Form is this ēṣa—He is indeed this person—He is here itself.

I will know all motion as that supreme motion, all my wealth as that supreme wealth, all my refuge as that supreme refuge, all my joy as that supreme joy and will know it as ēṣa—this itself is said to be ferried across.

12 Pau  1315

Day (Din)

Everyday our life moves on through light and darkness, sleep and wakefulness, contraction and expansion—once it ebbs, again it flows. At night when we sleep, all the powers of our sense organs and mind get withdrawn within us. In the morning they rush towards the whole world.

Is it when power is collected within ourselves that we know ourselves more, we attain ourselves more? And, when in the morning our power starts getting dispersed towards others in all directions, do we then lose ourselves?

It is just the opposite. When we are only within ourselves we are unconscious, when we move towards all, we are awakened. It is only then that we know ourselves. When we are alone we are no one.

Our true significance does not lie within us, it pervades everything in the world. That is why with our intellect, with our heart, with our action, we are only in search of the whole; we are continuously trying to unite ourselves with the whole; or else we do not
find ourselves. I will realize the atman everywhere—this is the only aspiration of the atman.

When the knower observed this power of falling of an apple in all things of the universe then his intellect was immensely satisfied. That is because, when Truth is observed everywhere it is only then that its true form is manifested and that form itself bestows joy upon us.

Similarly, when we see ourselves as pervaded everywhere, only then do we see ourselves in the true form. The more we know this truth of ours as far-reaching, the more joy we obtain. Whoever brings our inner self outwards and manifests it to us in its truer form, it is he who we call our very own, it is he who gives us joy.

That is why from ancient times whatever the man has been creating in terms of home, society and state, the only inner significance of all those is that by rejecting loneliness, by extending his diverse powers through different connections, man will realize himself in a vast realm amidst the many, amidst the variety—that is his true happiness. That is why it has been said ‘bhūmaiva sukha, nālpe sukhamasti’\(^98\)—that which is infinite is happiness, there is no happiness in the finite. This is because within the finite the atman also becomes finite.

Just because, the society which is civilized connects the many in different ways with the atman, it becomes the glory of the society. Otherwise, only the excess of goods and the collection of facilities are not its fulfilment.

In a civilized society where knowledge, love and effort to do work are always active in the far-extended sphere, the man who lives there does not remain insignificant. Even if the power of that person is limited, that power easily gets the opportunity to attain its own

\(^98\) Chāndogya Upanishad, 7.23.1. The actual quotation is “nālpe sukhamasti bhūmaiva sukham” which means “There is no bliss in anything finite. Only the Infinite is bliss.”
fulfilment. That is why through the union with all, through the union with the Infinite, each inhabitant of a civilized society becomes strong as much as possible.

In that society which is not civilized, even he who is strong by nature becomes weak. That is because the people of such a society do not attain their own selves in enough measure. All the institutions that exist in that society are suitable only for the home and the village. There is no connection of the Omnipresent with those narrow institutions—the high tide of the sea of mind does not reach there. That is why man cannot attain power by realizing his own truth, his own glory, everywhere he remains defeated. There lies no end to his poverty.

It is only for this reason that we have to do sadhana of civilization, not for the sake of railway or telegraph. This is because, man is also the ultimate destination of railway and telegraph—not any particular local station.

The fundamental concept of this sadhana of civilization is the knowledge of dharma. The less the degree of progress one has, the lesser it does for him to have the knowledge of dharma. When we work in a confined place in our homes even if the knowledge of dharma is narrow, it does not do much harm. But, the knowledge of dharma must be strong where innumerable people are to be bound in numerous bonds. There patience, might, perseverance, renunciation, service to others, benevolence—all these qualities are absolutely necessary in considerable measures. A substance can never become great if the appropriate dharma used to bind it is also not great. Whenever dharma is weak, it is only then that the large society gets disintegrated and scattered in all directions, never can one bind it together.

Hence, whenever we observe some civilized society that is eventful, widely extended and with diverse powers, at that very moment, it is to be assumed at the beginning that there lies a strong knowledge of dharma within it—otherwise, not even for a moment can
there be such a strong faith in each other, strong bond with each other among so many people.

In the society of our country too, if it is not possible to establish the Omnipresent through knowledge, love and action by dispelling all smallness and alienation, then the atman can never be strong and be full of joy. The more the connection of common people with everyone gets obstructed due to various customs and practices, the more our sadness, inability and poverty goes on increasing. In our country, if we cannot create various opportunities for union with the many, then our endeavour for greatness will not be fruitful.

We are trying to create such opportunities from various directions. But small or big, whatever we are trying to put together, if disjointedness is always observed in that, then surely we have to understand that at the root of it all there is weakness in the knowledge of dharma—definitely there is lack of Truth, there is dearth of renunciation, there is lethargy of will; certainly respect has lost its power and from the articles of puja, our self-conceit is trying to steal away a large amount for itself; surely there is jealousy for each other; there is no forgiveness; and being unable to consider the good as the ultimate fruit of the good itself, our perseverance is being prevented even by a small obstacle.

Hence, we must be careful. Where success gets obstructed, may we not try to be unmoved by accusing the mute articles. There is sin, so nothing binds, there is lack of dharma and so we cannot hold on to anything. That is why by being separated, by being insignificant, we wander about being futile in all respects; that is why neither does our knowledge perfectly unite with knowledge, nor heart with heart, nor effort with effort to

---

99 The Bengali word is “upakara.”

100 The Bengali word is “upakara.”
create an appropriate temple of man— by no means is our atman able to assume its great form worthy of uniting with that Great Being, Viśvakarmā.  

13 Paus 1315

Night (Rātri)

Yesterday, I did not cover a topic about night and day, sleep and awakening. That itself is the main topic.

When we stay awake, there is a sport between our power and Power. There is a union of our action with the Universal Action of Viśvakarmā. It is by guiding our efforts through those very diverse chains of numerous divisions of the power of He who is ‘bahudhā śaktiyogād var ānanekāṇṇihitārthodadhāti,’ that we discover the wonderful flow of our powers and become joyous. At one time where we thought power had ended, as we proceed we see that from that point the path has taken a new turn again; in this way, within that diverse power of the universal phenomenon, by diversifying our own power as well, our mind gets inspired to attain equal motion with that in every respect.

This is how our awakened consciousness by casting the net of all the powers of the senses and the mind in all directions, fulfils itself by various motions, touches and gains.

---

101 In the Hindu mythology Viśvakarmā is considered to be the “Divine Architect.” A parallel could be drawn with Vulcan. The name Viśvakarmā first featured during the Vedic times and was used as an epithet for Indra and Surya. There are several references in the Rg Veda regarding him: as Father and Generator (Rg Veda, 10.81-82), as Creator (Rg Veda, 10.81.3).

102 Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, 4.1. The words “bahudhā śaktiyogād var ānanekāṇṇihitārthodadhāti” mean “who by the manifold application of His powers produces, in the beginning, different objects for a hidden purpose.”
But, the fisherman cannot survive merely by casting the net. The net gets knotted, gets almost torn and becomes dirty. Then in order to mend the net again, the practice of casting the net has to be totally stopped.

At night during the time of sleep we completely stop casting the net of our prana, of our consciousness. That is the time to mend and to pay for damages. At that time we have to surrender our torn, knotted and soiled net into His hands, ‘Ya e a supte u jāgarti kāma kāma puru o nimirmā a’,¹⁰³ to the One who is creating all the necessary things by being awake when everyone has fallen into a slumber.

Hence, for once, by restraining all our efforts, we have to completely surrender our prana to the hands of that Universal Prana--at that time we become identical with the vegetation, there is no alienation between nature and us, our egotism gets completely suppressed, only then do we attain the profound ease lying within the entire universe. When we wake up, we realize that the repose we enjoyed for so long was not simply a form of emptiness, but a complete entity. It is an ease even in the midst of our inactivity and unconsciousness--that is the fundamental ease of this vast universal nature, amidst the sprouting foliage of a large silent tree we observe the image of greenness and silent manifestation of that very ease.

The manner in which we surrender our prana to nature every night to get prepared again for new efforts of prana the following morning, likewise, during the day there is a need for us to completely surrender our atman to the Supreme Atman at least once. Otherwise, wastes start getting accumulated, the broken pieces never get repaired, the

---

¹⁰³ Ka ha Upanishad, 2.2.8. ‘Ya e a supte u jāgarti kāma kāma puru o nimirmā a ’ means “He, the Purusha, who remains awake while the sense-organs are asleep, shaping one lovely form after another,” here Yama begins to tell Naciketā about Brahman.
heat goes on increasing—by exceeding their needs, the desires of lust, anger, greed, among others, rise in revolt both internally and externally.

That is why at dawn during upāsanā, by stopping all our efforts and by calming all our inherent cardinal passions, we need to establish a perfect harmony with the Supreme Atman for some time. At that time, we have to make way for the Supreme Atman wholly within our heart; then due to extreme self-sacrifice there will be an infusion of health in our ailing mind on that occasion of profound peace. Only then will all the contractions be relaxed and all the knots in the heart will tend to become loosened.

After that, by being separated and pervaded through various ways and means when that inner nature of ours, calmed by upāsanā, will get engaged in self-realization amidst the variety and the many of the world, then it will be able to devote itself to all work with solemnity and purity; then it will not continue to hurt all things every now and then; peace will then prevail over all its efforts. As there is an amazing harmony within the diverse phenomena of this vast universe, the existence of which has made all forms of effort to be peaceful and forms of power to be beautiful—the presence of which has not turned the universe into a rigid form of a scientific laboratory or an enormous factory building—that harmony will be there in our efforts, that beauty will be reflected in our work. By surrendering all our ego to Him for a while, we shall learn that supremely beautiful manner in which God works. We will place ourselves at Her feet and say, ‘O Mother! Do touch us once with Your able hands in the morning, then whatever wounds that have been received by us due to the blows of the world of yesterday will all be healed.’

If daily at the beginning of the day, we receive the touch of Her holy hands on our foreheads and if we remember that, then we will not be able to soil our foreheads with dust any more. May the tune of this upāsanā, like the tune of a tanpura, continue to play
within us throughout the day—so that we may match and judge every word and action of ours with that tune and by turning the whole day into this pure music, we can transform the realm of work of the world into the realm of joy.

14 Pau 1315

At Dawn (Prabhāte)

At this pure and serene hour of dawn, for once see your atman as completely enclosed within the Supreme Atman, may all distances between them dissolve. Let us be completely engrossed and deeply absorbed. Let us derive complete fulfilment from this realization that He has accepted our atman intimately and intensely.

Otherwise, we do not have true identity of our self. If we do not see ourselves as one with the Omnipresent, we are under the illusion that we are small and under the false belief that we are weak. Great men of the human race have proved that we are in no way small or weak—their attainments are, in fact, the attainments of each one of us—the power of each of our atman has been manifested in them. When the upper portion of the candle has been lighted, then that benefit is of the entire candle. Even the lowest portion of the candle has the capacity to burn—when the time comes it too will burn, till then, it will continue to support the burning of the upper portion.

Every day during upāsanā at dawn, may we be able to see the greatness of the atman within us as completely unobstructed. May we be able to dispel the very illusion that we are utterly destitute. May we dispense with the belief that we have only been born at the corner of a room and clearly realize that this body of mine is born in the realms of bhūrbhuba sva. 104 That is why, from many millions of miles away from us, our family

---

104 Rg Veda, 3.62.10.
of the effulgent heavenly bodies are sending their messenger of light to enquire about us. Again, it is not that the ultimate abode of my atman is within my very egotism itself—the spiritual realm in which that dwells is the Brahmaloka.\textsuperscript{105} We have come to the court of this world, our claim here is to rule and not to serve as slaves. It is the Supreme Being who has sent us with the royal tilak\textsuperscript{106} on our forehead. Hence, let us not feel ourselves to be inferior and hang down our head in shame and move around in this world with unease—may we be able to secure our esteemed place in the glory of our eternal nobility.

Just as the darkness of the night sky gives way to the light of dawn before our eyes like an imaginary object, let all the stock notions in our minds dissolve in a moment. May our soul, like the rising sun, manifest in our mind sky its liberated effulgent form—let

---

\textsuperscript{105} Brahmaloka is the “Abode of Brahman.”

\textsuperscript{106} Tilak is a vertical mark worn on one’s forehead made with one’s finger dipped in sindoor. It is the sign of victory.
our worldly realm be completely illuminated everywhere in its effulgent consciousness, in its pure light.

15 Pau  1315

The Unique (Biše )

In a general way, I have similarity with the people of the world; I have similarity with the fine dust particles and stones, I have similarity with the grass and tree; I have similarity with the animals and birds; I have similarity with the common man; but at one point there is no similarity at all—there I am unique. That which I refer to as ‘I’ today has no second.\(^{107}\) Amidst the infinite universal creation of God, this creation is completely wonderful—this is only I, I alone, the incomparable, the unparalleled I. The world of this I belongs only to me. In the realm of this utter solitariness no one has the opportunity to enter but my Indweller.

O my Lord! In that very solitary I, in that unique I, lies Your unique bliss, Your unique manifestation—that unique manifestation is not there in any other time and place.\(^{108}\) Lord, I will fulfil that uniqueness of mine! The fact that You have such a completely independent unique sport named I, I shall join You in this particular sport. It is here that one unites with One.\(^{109}\)

In the realm of the world, let my human birth consciously bear that unique sport of Yours with beauty, with music, with purity, with greatness. May it never, by no means,

---

\(^{107}\) Tagore uses the present continuous tense here but I used simple present tense.

\(^{108}\) Here the original sequence of the words was place and time which has been reversed in the translation.

\(^{109}\) Tagore uses the present continuous tense here but I used simple present tense.
be forgotten that You have a particular abode in me. This very ‘I’ which has come into
being in this infinite universe, may this “I” be fulfilled in human life.

Since time immemorial You have borne\textsuperscript{110} this ‘I’ along as independent from others.
Holding it by the hand You have brought it through the sun, the moon, the planets and the
stars, but have involved it with none. This “I” that You have manifested in me today has
evolved through numerous developments, changes and evolutions, by sifting atoms and
molecules out of the luminous cascade of vapours of a certain nebula. That association
with You since ancient times has been saved in this body of mine. From time immemorial
to the present day, in the midst of this infinite creation, a particular line has been traced,
that is the mark of this very I—I have treaded the path of that line by always walking
beside You. You are the guide of my eternal path, the only friend in the endless path, I
will realize You in the form of that lone friend in my life. May nothing else equal You,
nor be greater than You. And, this very ordinary life of mine, through which I experience
various kinds of hunger and thirst, thought and effort, along with all the trees, creepers,
animals and birds, may it never become overwhelming from different directions—the fact
that within me there is Your unique touch, unique action, unique joy, in the form of
eternal friend and guide—may my life not veil them. Where I am similar to this universe,
there I acknowledge You as the Supreme Lord. I try to abide by all Your rules and if I
fail, I accept Your punishment—but, in the form of “I,” I want to know You as my only
One. There You have made me free—because, without freedom love will not be fulfilled,
will shall not unite with will, there will not be any union between one sport and the other.
That is why in the independence of this realm of I, of all my sorrows my supreme sorrow
lies in being separated from You, that is, the sorrow of pride; and, among all other joys,

\textsuperscript{110}Tagore uses the present perfect continuous tense here but I used present perfect tense.
my supreme joy lies in my union with You, that is, the bliss of divine love. Meditating upon how to dispel the sorrow of this pride, Buddha practised tapasyā, and proclaiming how this sorrow of ego could be dispelled, Christ gave up his life. O dearer than the offspring, dearer than wealth! O the Indweller! O, the Dearest! In this very abode of “I” is Your ultimate sport indeed. That is why here itself there is so much of intense sorrow and such boundless cessation of that sorrow; that is why here itself there is death, and amrita springs out by rupturing the chest of that death. The very sorrow and joy, separation and union, immortality and death are Your right and left arms—may I completely accept them and be able to say, ‘All my wants have been fulfilled, I don’t want anything else.’

16 Pau 1315

Beauty (Saundarya)

God is ‘Satyam.’ We are bound to accept His Truth. There would not be any freedom if we do not accept even a little bit of Truth. Therefore, we see the infallible Truth everywhere—in water, land and sky.

But, He is not just Truth, He is ‘ānandarūpamrtam.’¹¹¹ He is the form of bliss, the form of immortality. Where do we see His form of bliss?

I have already given a hint before that by nature itself bliss is liberated. No force can be applied to it, no estimate can be made of it. That is why on the day when we celebrate the festival of bliss, we relax¹¹² the routine of our daily life. On that day we lessen¹¹³ our

¹¹¹ Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2.2.7. “Ānandarūpamrtam yadvibhāti” denotes “the blissful and immortal Ātman,” “in all things.” In this context, the words “ananda” mean “bliss” and “amrtam” means “immortal.”

¹¹² The original Bengali word is “śithil.” I have translated it as “relax,” “lessen” or “ease off” depending on context.

¹¹³ The original Bengali word is “śithil.”
self-interest, lessen\textsuperscript{114} our need, relax\textsuperscript{115} the difference between oneself and others, ease off\textsuperscript{116} severe restriction of the world--only then within our abode a little free space is created where the revelation of bliss is possible. Truth accepts only bonds, bliss does not accept any bonds.

That is why in the universal nature we see the image of Truth in rules, and the image of bliss in beauty. So it is essential for us to know the form of Truth, we may do even without knowing the form of bliss. It is extremely necessary to know and to make use of the fact that there is light at dawn when the sun rises. But it does no harm to any of our activities if we do not know this much that dawn is beautiful, so very peaceful.

Water, land and sky confine us with various bonds. But in water, land and sky, the collection of vast variety of beauty in its various colours, fragrances and music does not force us in anything. If we go away without looking at it, it does not even abuse us for our lack of appreciation.

Hence we see, in this universe we are bound in the realm of Truth, we are liberated in the realm of beauty. We can prove Truth indisputably through logic, there is no means to prove beauty except through our boundless joy. When a person says with disregard, ‘Fie upon your beauty!’ even the Lak ṛmī\textsuperscript{117} of this great universe has to remain completely quiet before him. There is no law, no bailiff by whom he may be compelled to accept this beauty.

\textsuperscript{114} The original Bengali word is “śīthil.”

\textsuperscript{115} The original Bengali word is “śīthil.”

\textsuperscript{116} The original Bengali word is “śīthil.”

\textsuperscript{117} Lak ṛmī is the Hindu goddess of fortune and the consort of Viṣṇu.
Hence, this very arrangement of God’s incomparable mysterious beauty throughout the universe does not collect any fees or dues from us, it wants our free will—it says, ‘May there be joy between you and me; accept me of your own accord.’

That is why I was saying, in the unusual realm of this ‘I’ within our inner atman, there is going and coming of that Blissful One and there is evidence of that throughout the universe. Indeed everywhere His footprints are seen in the blueness of the sky, in the greenness of the forests, in the fragrance of the flowers. If He had arrived there in the attire of the king I would have obeyed Him with folded hands; but, He in fact comes gently in the guise of a friend, He comes all alone, none of his infantry holding the symbol of authority and beating drums of victory comes along with Him—that is why the slumber of sin does not want to break at all, the door continues to remain closed.

But, this will surely not do. If that unfortunate being does not willingly accept his obligation towards love just because he has no obligation towards rules, then birth after birth he will only wander about aimlessly and be the slave of a slave. He will never know that human birth is, in fact, a birth of joy. O dear! In that very innermost abode where the rays of the sun and the moon do not reach, where even the most intimate person cannot gain access, where only His seat is placed, open the door of that place, turn the lights on. Just at dawn I clearly see that His effulgence has surrounded my whole being, I directly perceive that His bliss, His will, His love have enveloped my life closely and firmly in all respects. He too has made a firm resolve that He will not reveal His image of bliss to us by force—rather He would return daily again and again, rather His manifestation of this universal beauty would seem futile to me every day, yet He would not force me in the least. The day my love would awaken, that day His love will not the least remain concealed any more. The very reason why this I, in spite of being ‘I,’ rambled from door
to door for so long with so much sorrow, the mystery behind that sorrow of estrangement will be unveiled in a moment on that day.

19 Pau 1315

Law (Bidhān)

Whenever the topic of will, love and bliss is raised, its opposite topic continues to strike the mind. It says, ‘Why then is there so much of discipline and restriction? Why do I not get what I want? Why do I get burdened by that which I do not want?’

Here man has tried to answer this not by means of reason, he has tried to answer this only through faith. He has said: Sa eva bandhurjanitā sa vidhātā. It means He who has manifested me ‘sa eva bandhu’, is bound to be my friend. If His bliss had not been manifested in me then I would never have existed. Again, ‘sa vidhātā,’ God is second to none—He who is the Progenitor, is Himself the Friend, again it is He who is the Law-giver. Hence, whatever be the law, essentially there is no fear.

But, it would not do if the law is inconsistent. It cannot be that today it is of a sort, tomorrow it is different, one law for me and another for others, there is no constancy in time and manner—this is certainly not law. Law is in fact the Universal Law.

From the dust of this earth to the stellar region, all are wreathed in an unbroken thread of this law. If I say for my own comfort and convenience ‘Sever the link of Your law at one place, at one place draw a special distinction between the law meant for others and

118 White Yajur Veda 32.10. “Sa eva bandhurjanitā sa vidhātā” means “He is our kin, our Father and Begetter”.
119 See “Law,” note 118.
120 See “Law,” note 118.
121 The Bengali word is ‘biśe’.
for me,’ if that be so then we indeed say, ‘While going across that mud, my clothes are getting soiled. Hence tear away the connecting link of this universal necklace and scatter all the suns and stars on the path.’

This law is never meant for any individual and it is not so for any particular fraction of time—it is due to this connection of the Universal Law that each one of us is united with the whole, and at no point in time will this union get separated. The Upanishads said, ‘He who is the Lord of this universe, He is ‘yathātathyatoharthān vyadadhāt śāśvatībhya samābhya.’’\textsuperscript{122} He has been making all laws appropriately since time immemorial and for all eternity. The root of this law is eternal—this law is without beginning or end. After that, once again this law conforms to ‘yathā tathyata’;\textsuperscript{123} from beginning to end, it is accurate, nowhere is there any break and inconsistency. Modern science has not stated anything with more force and more clarity than this regarding the Universal Law.

But, if only that is so, if He only sits on the iron-throne of that infallible law in the form of God, then we become only like particles of wood and stone, sand and dust before Him. If that happens, we just become captives kept in chains.

But He is not only God, ‘sa eva bandhu’;\textsuperscript{124} He indeed is the friend.

I, in fact, see the manifestation of God throughout the universe, but where is His manifestation as a friend? His manifestation as a friend is certainly not within the realm of law—where else will that manifestation be if not in the realm of love within me?

\textsuperscript{122} Īśa Upanishad, 8. The words “yathātathyatoharthān vyadadhāt śāśvatībhya samābhya” form the last portion of this sloka. It means “He has duly allotted to the eternal World-Creators their respective duties.”

\textsuperscript{123} See “Law,” note 122.

\textsuperscript{124} See “Law,” note 118.
The realm of God’s action is within this universal nature, and the abode of bliss of the friend is within my individual atman.

Man is on one hand nature and on the other hand atman—one hand he pays the dues of the king and on the other hand arranges the basket of offerings for his Friend. On one hand with the help of Truth he has to attain goodness, on the other hand through goodness he has to become beautiful.

Nature lies in the direction in which God’s will gets manifested in the form of law, and the atman lies in the direction where God’s will gets manifested in the form of bliss. The dharma of nature is bondage while the dharma of atman is liberation. This truth and bliss, this bondage and liberation, represent His left and right arms. It is with these two arms that He has held man.

On the side in which I am equal to brick, wood, tree and stone, in that general direction God’s all-pervading Law not in the least allows me to be different from the ordinary. Again in that direction where I am uniquely “I,” in no way does God’s unique bliss allow me to merge with all. God has made me belong to all and the Friend has made me His own—the thing that belongs to all is my nature, and the thing that is His own is my individual atman.

21 *Pau* 1315

---

125 The Bengali word is ‘mangal’.
126 The Bengali word is ‘mangal’.
127 The Bengali word is ‘biśe ’.
128 The Bengali word is ‘biśe ’.
Three (Tin)

Towards nature there is rule and towards our atman there is bliss. It is only by means of rules that we can unite with rules and it is only through bliss that we can unite with bliss.

Hence, where I am on the side of the common man, of universal nature and of human nature, if I do not conform myself to the rules there then I only become unsuccessful and create unrest. I cannot cajole even a particle of dust into doing something for me; if I observe its rules only then does it observe mine.

So, our first lesson is to learn the rules of nature and to learn to follow the rules ourselves. It is through this education that we get acquainted with Truth.

He who is the culmination of this knowledge is Himself ‘Śāntam.’ Wherever there is distortion of rules, wherever there has been no union of one rule with another, there itself is unrest, wherever there has been complete union, there itself is the complete realization of He who is Śāntam.

Which form of God do we see in nature? It is His śānta130 form. There, those that see it narrowly see effort, those that see it broadly are able to see only peace. If the rules were fragmented, if the rules were not eternal and accurate then within a moment this vast universal peace would have been destroyed and would have given rise to a violent dance of meaningless and endless destruction; then in the whole world, contradiction would have emerged victorious and would have torn apart everything with its teeth and nails.

---

129 Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, 7. The words śānta śiva advaitam mean “It is all peace, all bliss, and non-dual.”

130 The word ‘śānta’ is a variation of the Sanskrit word ‘śāntam’ having the meaning “all peace,” as in the context of śānta śiva advaitam: “It is all peace, all bliss, and non-dual.” (Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, 7).
But take a look, amid this powerful excitation in the realm of the sun and the stars, the great peace exists in the unwavering seat of rule. The very form of Truth is śāntam. It is because Truth is Śāntam that It is Śivam. It is because He is Śāntam that He accepts all, protects all and everyone has got eternal refuge in Him. Wherever we too have not been restrained, that is, where we have not known the Truth and have not remained true to Truth, there we have unrest within and without, and it is that unrest which is ominous—the separation of one rule from another is, in fact, inauspicious.\textsuperscript{131}

He who is Śivam, it is in Him indeed that advaitam is manifested. Where Truth is in the form of śivam, there itself He is full of bliss, full of love; there itself is His union with all. There is no union except in goodness;\textsuperscript{132} evil itself is the demon of contradiction and separation.

At one end there is Truth and on the other there is bliss, in between them is goodness.\textsuperscript{133} So, it is through the good\textsuperscript{134} that we have to go to the abode of bliss.

The three stages of life that we had in our country—brahmacharya,\textsuperscript{135} gārhasthya\textsuperscript{136} and vā aprastha,\textsuperscript{137} they are established on these three forms of God—the forms of śānta, śiva\textsuperscript{138} and advaita.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{131} The original Bengali word is “amangal.” Tagore used the noun form of this word twice in this essay. I have translated it as either “inauspicious” or as “misfortune” depending on context.

\textsuperscript{132} The original Bengali word is “mangal.” Tagore used this word five times in this essay. I have translated it as “goodness” in this essay but in other essays I have translated it as “goodness,” “the good,” or as “auspicious” depending on context.

\textsuperscript{133} The original Bengali word is “mangal.”

\textsuperscript{134} The original Bengali word is “mangal.”

\textsuperscript{135} According to the Hindu scriptures there are four stages of human life. The first stage is that of the student-life, brahmacharya, where a student leads a life of complete celibacy, devoting himself to the study of the scriptures and other books of knowledge. The second stage is that of the gārhasthya, the life of a
If the form of śānta is attained through the practice of brahmacharya only then it becomes possible to realize the form of śiva within household dharma; otherwise, gārhasthya becomes the source of misfortune. To establish that goodness in the world, all self-interests get completely defeated and we understand to what extent the nature of true union is established upon pure self-sacrifice. When we understand that completely, only then it becomes possible to attain all kinds of unobstructed union in love with advaitam who is that Supreme Atman in the form of Oneness. In the beginning there is acquaintance with Truth, in the middle with goodness and at the end with bliss. First it is knowledge, followed by action and then love.

That is why as our mantra of dhyana is ‘śānta śiva advaitam’ similarly, the mantra of our prayer is: Asato mā sadgamaya, tamaso mā jyotirgamaya, mṛtyor āmṛtam gamaya.' Take me from untruth to Truth, from vice to virtue and from attachment to household. The third stage according to the scriptures is vā aprastha where a man leaves his home at the age of 50 and goes to the forest to spend the rest of the days of his life doing spiritual meditation. He could go to the forest with his wife. And the fourth is that of sannyāsa, a stage when man renounces the world and lives a life of an ascetic.

---

138 The word śiva is the variation of the Sanskrit word śivam having the meaning “all good,” as in the context of śānta śiva advaitam: “It is all peace, all bliss, and non-dual” (Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, 7).
139 The word advaita is a variation of the Sanskrit word advaitam having the meaning: “non-dual,” as in the context of śānta śiva advaitam: “It is all peace, all bliss, and non-dual.” (Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, 7).
140 The original Bengali word is “amangal.”
141 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
142 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
143 See “Three,” note 129.
love. Only then, O Manifestation, You will be my manifestation; only then, O Rudra, You will become gracious in my life.

The end does not lie in Truth, it does not lie in goodness,\footnote{The original Bengali word is “mangal.”} it culminates only in \textit{advaita}. The end lies not in universal nature, not also in social order, it ends in the Supreme Atman, this is the message of our \textit{Bhāratavarṣa}—may we be able to make this message fruitful in our lives, may this be our prayer.

\textit{22 Pau 1315}

\textbf{The Whole (Samagra)}

The One who has awakened us this morning has done so from every direction. This very light which has unfolded itself is also providing us with light in the sphere of our action, as well as in the sphere of our knowledge—it is also illuminating the sphere of our beauty. He has not sent separate messengers for all the different paths that we tread; it is His very same messenger who has appeared before us as messenger of all the paths with a smiling face.

But, the nature of our understanding is such that we do not see Truth as a whole in a moment. At first we see It in parts and then we connect the parts to see It as a whole. In this manner when we try to see Truth in terms of Its fragments, we undoubtedly make the mistake to see It as a whole. In a picture there is a theory of perspective; according to that, the one which is far away is drawn smaller and that which is nearer is drawn bigger. If we do not do that then the picture does not appear true to us. But, in case of the whole Truth there is nothing like far and near, all is of equal nearness. That is why after we

\footnote{See “The Prayer,” note 63.}
complete our seeing the near as big and the far as small, we need to rectify that seeing within the whole Truth.

When man attempts to see the whole all at once, he really sees the whole as indistinct. So at first he tends to see it in parts, after that he merges the parts into the whole. For this very reason, if he sees only the parts and completely denies the whole, then he has to be seriously answerable for that mistake; again, if he only aims at the whole and completely ignores the parts then that emptiness becomes totally futile for him.

These few days we were observing the physical realm and the spiritual realm as independent of each other. If it is not done in this manner, their clear pictures cannot be seen directly by us. But, when knowing each part becomes complete, then there comes a time to rectify a great mistake. Then again there is danger if we do not see these two within one.

Where these physical and spiritual realms have attained a complete harmony, may our aim not deviate from there at all. Where both have established a relation with each other amidst Truth there may we not cause any internal discord between them due to untruth. May we not build a wall through only speech, only reason, only delusion and make the mistake of regarding only that to be the matter of Truth.

Just as the east and the west are held firmly together in an unbroken sphere, so the physical and the spiritual realms are firmly held together in an unbroken whole. Amidst this, the moment we would try to reject any one of them we would become guilty before the whole, and the punishment for that offence is inevitable.

The extent to which Bhāratvarṣa has inclined towards spirituality and has lost its weight towards physicality, till today it has to count and pay the fine to the same extent, so much so that it is about to give away whatever possession it has. That Bhāratvarṣa has lost its prosperity today, the reason for this is like that of a single-eyed deer which was
not aware that the hunter’s deadly arrow would strike it on the very side in which it had lost its sight. On the physical side it was blind in a carefree manner; the physical realm has shot a death-arrow to it.

If it is true that the Western race is out and out crazy in order to attain complete success in the physical sphere only, then it certainly has to know for sure that one day the divine missile of its defeat will hit the inner core of its heart from the other side.

Those that have unity at the root, on being separated from that united root they not only get alienated, they become opposed to each other. Those who remain as kin due to inherent attraction, through separation they get attracted to the impact of widespread destruction.

Arjuna\textsuperscript{146} and Karṇa\textsuperscript{147} were brothers born of the same mother. In between, if they had not lost the bond with Kuntī\textsuperscript{148} then by being united with each other they would have been extremely powerful. Due to that forgotten original bond, they repeatedly said,

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{146}] Arjuna is a famous character from the \textit{Mahābhārata}. He is the son of the god Indra and Kuntī. As it was not possible for Pāndu to have children, Kuntī made use of her boon and was granted sons, Arjuna was the third of the Pāndavas. The Bhagavad Gītā which is considered to be a part of \textit{Mahābhārata} is about Krṣṇa’s instruction to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kuruksetra. Krṣṇa instructs Arjuna to uphold the path of duty and forgo everything else.
\item[\textsuperscript{147}] Karṇa is also an important character of the mahā-kāvyā \textit{Mahābhārata}. He was born of Kuntī’s union with the god Surya. He was born with armour ('Kavaca') and a pair of earrings ('Kundala') attached on his person. As Kuntī was a maiden she put her new born son in a basket and floated it in the river. That child was later found and brought up by Adhiratha, a charioteer and Rādha his wife. He was a great archer. He became a general in the war of Kuruksetra.
\item[\textsuperscript{148}] Kuntī was the daughter of Śūrasena and her initial name was Prthā. She belonged to the Yādav clan and was the aunt of Krṣṇa. As King Kuntībhoja was childless she was adopted by him and thus she was named Kuntī. She is an important character in the \textit{Mahābhārata} and was the mother of Karṇa and the first three Pāṇḍavas. She was the first wife of King Pāṇḍu.
\end{itemize}
‘Either I will die or else you would.’

Similarly, if we place our sadhana either extremely towards the physical realm or towards the atman then that results in a conflict between our inner physical realm and the atman. Then the physical realm says, ‘Let the atman die, let me live.’ The atman says, ‘Let the physical realm be utterly ruined, let me exercise sovereignty.’ Then those belonging to the group of the physical sphere try to highlight action as great and its constituents as immense; there is no further room for compassion and affection, cessation and rest. On the other hand, those belonging to the group of the atman, completely stop the provision for physicality, totally do away with the role of action, try to completely uproot the physical sphere by devising various odd means—they do not know that the well-being of their atman also rests upon the same root.

In this manner, those two spheres that are most intimate with each other, are supreme support to each other, it is man who creates a separation between them and turns them into formidable enemies. There is no such terrible enmity like this—because, both these sides indeed are extremely powerful.

Hence, when we have seen the physical and the spiritual sides of man as two independent parts then as soon as possible it is necessary to see these two as a perfectly united form within complete wholeness. May we not attempt to wrongly pull the thread of friendship of these two eternal friends so as to enrage them both.

26 Pau 1315
Wherever the three streams of knowledge, love and power are united, there itself lies the holy place of bliss. The extent to which there is the complete union of knowledge, love and action within us, to that very extent lies our complete bliss. Whenever there is separation, there is suffering.

So, tempted by any short-cut method where we would deceive one, there we would simply deceive ourselves. If we think that we would bypass the doorkeeper to meet the king, then we would be so disgraced at the main entrance that to meet the king would itself become impossible. If we think that by discarding rules we will go beyond it, then we would certainly undergo immense sorrow in the hands of irate rules.

When we accept a law completely only then do we obtain any authority over it. The person who wants to become the head of a household has to conform to rules and regulations of the household more than that of all others--it is through that acceptance alone that he attains the right to authority.

That is why I was saying, it is by staying in this world itself that we can go beyond the world, it is by staying within action itself that we can be greater than action. That is in no way possible through renunciation and by running away.

This is because, that mukti of ours attains Truth only by means of our innate nature, not by the lack of it. If it is done only through completeness it attains success, if done through emptiness it attains only fruitless results.

Hence, aim towards that Brahman who is by nature liberated. He is not at all liberated in the form of ‘No,’ He is liberated in the form of ‘Yes’ only. He is Om; that is, He is ‘Yes’.
That is the reason why the knowers of Brahman did not term Him inactive, they have very clearly called Him active. They said—

\[\text{Parāsya śaktirvividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñānabalakriyā ca.}\]

I have heard that His supreme power and His diverse power, and also His action of knowledge and His action of power are all innate.

For Brahma, action is innate, that is, the root of all His actions is within His nature itself and not without. He is doing, no one is making Him do.

In this way He is liberated only through His action, because, this action is innate to Him. There is also the innateness of action within us. Our power wants to get liberated within action—not only for external necessities, but for internal revelation.

It is for that reason, our innate mukti lies in our action itself. It is through action alone that we come out and get manifested. But, that which causes mukti can also cause bondage. The tow rope by which a boat is towed away, it is that very tow rope which can be used to keep it tied. When the tow rope pulls it outwards only then it moves, when it pulls towards itself, it remains fixed.

When our action also goes on moving round only within the narrowness of our self-interest then action becomes a terrible bondage. At that instant our power moves against that supreme power, against that diverse power. Then it does not move towards the Omnipresent, it does not move towards the many, it becomes confined within its own smallness. Then this power does not give us mukti, does not give us bliss, it only takes us in the opposite direction. The person who is devoid of action, who is lazy, it is only he

---

149 Tagore used the present perfect tense here but I use the past tense.

150 Śvetāśvatara. Upanishad, 6.8. “Parāsya śaktirvividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvikī jñānabalakriyā ca” means “The Vedas speak of His exalted power, which is innate and capable of producing diverse effects, and also of His omniscience and might.”
who is confined. The person who does a trifling action and is selfish, undergoes rigorous imprisonment in the whole world. Day and night, in the prison of self-interest, he continues to go round in circles about a fixed point within a limited periphery, as in a grinding mill and does not have the capacity to hold on to the fruit of this labour forever; he has to give it up, it is only toil that he is left with.

Hence, only to direct action from self-interest to the Supreme Truth is mukti, to renounce action is not mukti. Whatever action we do, whether small or big, if we connect that with the innate universal action of the Supreme Atman, then that action cannot confine us any more--that action will become the action of Truth, the action of good and the action of bliss.

28 Pau 1315

Prana (Prān)

Ātmaṁ kriyāṁ ātmakṛīḍa atmaratiṁ a brahmaṁ ātmāṁ variṁ ha.¹⁵¹ Those that are the greatest among the knowers of Brahman, their sport is in the Supreme Atman, their bliss is in the Supreme Atman, and they are active.

Not only do they have bliss, they have action as well. By referring only to the first half of this sloka, the meaning of this utterance will be clearer.

Prā ahye a ya sarvabhūtaṁairvibhāti vijānanāṁ vidvān bhabate nātivādī.¹⁵² He who

---

¹⁵¹ Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 3.1.4. These words mean “Revelling in the Self, delighting in the Self, performing actions, he is the foremost among the knowers of Brahman.” The following words form the second part of the sloka—

Prā ahye a ya sarvabhūtaṁairvibhāti vijānanāṁ bhabate nātivādī

Ātmaṁ kriyāṁ ātmakṛīḍa atmaratiṁ a brahmaṁ ātmāṁ variṁ ha.
manifests Himself as Prana within all, he who knows Him does not make any utterance beyond Him.

In prana, both bliss and action remain united together. In the very effort of prana lies its bliss, and in the bliss of prana itself lies its effort.

Hence, if Brahma Himself is the form of Prana of the entire creation, if amidst the creation He Himself is infusing bliss through motion and motion through bliss, then he who is the knower of Brahman will not merely rejoice with Brahma, but will also perform action with Him.

He indeed is the knower of Brahman. It is not that he knows only Brahma but he also speaks of Brahma. If he does not speak then how would his bliss restrain itself? He takes Brahma, the manifestation of Prana of the universe, within his prana and is ‘bhabate nātivāḍ’. That means, he does not want to speak of anything else but Brahma, he wants to speak only of Brahma.

How does man speak of Brahma? It is just in the manner the string of a sitar speaks to a song. It is through all its motion, vibration and action that it speaks--by manifesting the song in every respect it attains its own fulfilment.

How does Brahma speak of Himself? He speaks through His own action by pervading the infinite space with light and form, with rhythm and resonance! Ananda rūpamrta yadvibhāti. Within action itself He utters His own word of bliss, sings.

---

152 Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 3.1.4. These words are the first part of the sloka mentioned in note 151 and they mean “He indeed is Prāna; He shines forth variously in all beings. The wise man who knows Him does not babble.”

153 See “Prana,” note 152.

154 See “Beauty,” note 111.

155 The Bengali word is “bolchen” which means to “say” or to “utter” but in this context “sing” is appropriate.
His own song of immortality. That very bliss and action of His have completely mingled together and have pervaded the realms of heaven and earth.

Even when the knower of Brahma speaks of Brahma, how else will he speak of Him? He has to speak of Him through action alone. He has to be active.

What kind of action is that? Well,\textsuperscript{156} it is that action through which he gets manifested as ʿĀtmakrī a ātmarati\textsuperscript{157} that his sport is in the Supreme Atman, that his bliss lies in the Supreme Atman. He who is manifested in action, his bliss is not in fulfilling his own self-interest, not in spreading his own glory. He is ʿnātivādī\textsuperscript{158}—in his action, he does not want to manifest anyone else other than the Supreme Atman.

That is why that ʿBrahmavidā vari ha\textsuperscript{159} in every action of his life, through different languages and forms, is echoing this music of ʿśanta ʿśivamadvaitam.\textsuperscript{160} The universal action with his individual action is singing in the same rhythm and in the same rāginī.\textsuperscript{161}

That sport of the atman which is the sport with the Supreme Atman within, that indeed is the action of life without. The bliss which is within is surging into the action which is without, that action which is without is repeatedly returning again to that bliss which is within. In this way within and without there continues a wonderfully graceful cycle of bliss and action, and due to that speed of rotation, newer realms of the good are being created. Due to that cyclic motion, light is being illuminated, love is being welled up.

\textsuperscript{156} The Bengali word is “nā” which literally means “no” but here I use “well” depending on context.

\textsuperscript{157} See “Prana,” note 151.

\textsuperscript{158} See “Prana,” note 151.

\textsuperscript{159} See “Prana,” note 151.

\textsuperscript{160} See “Three,” note 129.

\textsuperscript{161} The word rāgi ṭī refers to the feminine form of raga. In Indian classical music, it is said that each of the six basic ragas has six wives termed as rāgi ṭī.
In this way He who is manifested in the whole universe in the form of Prana, that is, manifested simultaneously in the form of bliss and action, it is that very Prana which the knower of Brahman manifests through his own prana itself.

So my prayer is this, ‘Ye manifestation of Prana, may the string of my sitar not get rusted, may it not collect dust—with the rhythm struck by the Universal Prana may it keep playing day and night—may it keep playing in the music of action— may it keep playing in Your very name. Due to the powerful stroke even if the string gets torn at times, that too is good, but may it not be slackened, may it not be unclean, may it not become futile. Gradually may its tune become stronger, become deeper, may it dispense with all obscurity and become True—may it pervade through nature and may it echo within the human atman—Ye Āvi, may it be blessed by Your manifestation!’

29 Pau 1315

Place for Pilgrimage (Tīrtha)

Today I say once again: meditate on He who resides within! There is, in fact, a need to say this every day. When will the need to say that we have the eternal refuge within ourselves come to an end?

Words get old and indistinct, their inner meanings gradually become worn out to us; at that time we regard them as unnecessary and give them up. But, does the need ever cease?

In this world, it is only the outside which is very familiar to us, that is why our mind considers the outside as our sole refuge. It seems that the infinite universe within us which always moves along with us does not exist for us at all. If our acquaintance with it had been very clear then the sovereignty of the outside over us would not have been so intolerable. Then just when a harm had been done outside, we could not have considered
that to be such a great loss, and by considering the rule of the external world as the ultimate one, we would not have decided to conform to that alone as our only goal.

Today our yardstick, balance and touchstone are all outside. On the basis of what people will say, what people will do, we have already decided everything as to what is right and wrong for us—that is why the words of people hurt us so deeply, the actions of people disturb us in such a way, fear of public opinion is such a great fear, public disgrace is such an extreme disgrace. So, when people abandon us, we feel that we have no one else in the world. At that time we do not have the confidence to say—

He whom all have deserted, has none to call his own,

You are with him, there lies Your love—

Shelterless is he, whose home is the road

He too is there in Your abode.

He, whom everyone has abandoned, not even for a moment is he forsaken within his atman; the inner shelter of he, whose home is the road, cannot be snatched away for a moment even by any great, powerful tyrant; the man who has not erred against the Indweller, people outside can in no way punish him by putting him in a prison, by sending him to the gallows.

We exist in this world like subjects of an anarchical kingdom, no one protects us, we remain outside, many a power of ours is being snatched away from many directions, there is no trace as to how much is being unnecessarily robbed; he whose weapon is sharp is piercing our inmost conviction, he whose power is more is keeping us under his feet. For happiness and prosperity, for self-protection we move from door to door to seek refuge from various people. We do not for once know that our King is seated in the unwavering throne of our inner atman.
Simply because we do not know that, we have given outsiders all the responsibility to judge, and I too am judging others externally. I am unable to forgive anybody truly and to love him eternally, the wish to do good is constantly becoming narrow and is getting obstructed.

Until I achieve that Truth, that good, that love with complete ease, every day I have to say: meditate upon He who is within. If I do not truly realize the Truth within my inner atman then I would not be able to see that Truth within others as well and I will not be able to establish a true relationship with others. When I know that I am within the Supreme Atman and that the Supreme Atman is within me, then when I see others I will surely be able to see that he too is within the Supreme Atman and the Supreme Atman is within him—then it would be easy for me to show forgiveness, love and tolerance towards him, then self-restraint would not merely be an external observance of rule. Until that happens, as long as the outside is everything to us, as long as the outside puts a veil thoroughly across everything and obstructs all space—we only have to say—

Meditate upon He who is within—

Leave out every other thing.

In crisis of the world there’s no relief anyhow

Without His sadhana.

This is because, if one only knows the world to be the sole entity then it becomes full of crisis—it is only at that point that anarchy takes advantage of the helpless being and utterly ruins him.

Come every day, come within. May all uproar cease there, may no harm reach there, may no defilement touch that place. There do not let anger harbour, do not give indulgence to distress, do not fan the desires into flame—because, that is the very place

---

162 The original Bengali word is “kolāhal.”
for your pilgrimage, your temple. If you do not obtain a little solitude there, there is not a place on earth where you can obtain any, if you harbour any defilement there then the gates of all holy places on earth will be closed on you for ever. Come into that unperturbed pure heart, come to the shore of the ocean of that Infinite, come to that mountain peak of the very high One. Stand there with hands folded together. Bow there and make namaskar. Every day, after worship, carry the holy water from that vast mass of ocean-water, from that water perennially flowing from the waterfall of the mountain peak and sprinkle over your external world; all sins will be cleansed, all burning will be ceased.

4 Phālgun 1315

Observer (Dro tā)

Save your inner realm from the attacks of the external one. Do not mix and see the two as one. Do not consider everything to be solely intrinsic to the world. If you do so, you will not find any way out of the crisis of the world.

Time and again, in the midst of violent clashes of actions, realize your heart to be detached. Every now and then realization has to be made repeatedly in this manner. Amidst immense uproar\(^\text{163}\) it has to be seen once in an instant that no such noise reaches the heart. That place is peaceful, calm and pure. Well, in no way would we allow the external turmoil to enter there. Amid this very huge crowd of coming and going, social formalities and playfulness, delve deep into your heart of hearts with lightening speed—go there to see the lamp burning steadily, the sea devoid of high waves is still in its own

\(^{163}\) The Bengali word is “kolāhal.” I have translated it as either “uproar” or “noise” in this essay depending on context.
bottomless depth, the cry of sorrow does not reach there, the roar of anger is silent over there.

In this whole world there is nothing as such, not even a grain, which the Supreme Atman has not pervaded; but in spite of that, He is an Observer, He is under the control of none. This universe is undoubtedly His, though He is undoubtedly Omnipresent, yet He is beyond it.

Know our inner atman in a similar manner—the world is His, the human body is His, the intellect is His, the heart is His. He indeed pervades the world, the body, the intellect, the heart, yet our inner atman transcends this world, this body, this intellect and this heart. He is the Observer. This very “I” that has been born into this world, has assumed a particular name and has experienced various pleasures and sorrows, He continues to see this external aspect of His solely in the form of a Witness. When we become the knower of the Atman, when we have perfect realization of our inner atman, it is then that we realize our eternal form with full conviction and despite being in the midst of all joys and sorrows, we go beyond joys and sorrows, observe our own life and the world in the form of an observer.

In this way when we know the Atman in its purest form by being detached from all actions, from the world, from distress, then we can see that it is not a void; then we see the pure, calm Supreme Space, that Supreme Being within us, where there is ‘Satya jñānamanta Brahma nihita guhāyām.’ I come to know of that wonderful Supreme

---

164 Tagore had used the present continuous tense but I have used simple present tense.

165 Taittirīya Upanishad, 2.1.3. Satya jñānamanta Brahma nihita guhāyām means Brahman is “Reality [Truth], Knowledge, and Infinity, hidden in the cave of the heart.” As in several of the Upanishadic quotations, Tagore alters this one too to suit his lecture.
Sheath immersed in luminous light within myself, where there is that extremely bright Light of lights.

That is the very reason why the Upanishads have repeatedly said, “Know your inner atman, only then you would know the Immortal, only then would you know the Supreme One. Only then, in spite of being in the midst of everything, by entering all indeed, you would attain mukti without renouncing anything at all. Nānya panthā vidyate ayanāya.¹⁶⁶

6 Phālgun 1315

The Eternal Abode (Nityadhām)

The Upanishads say: Ānanda brahma o vidvān na bibheti kadācana.¹⁶⁷ The one who has known the bliss of Brahman never fears.

Where will we look for that bliss of Brahman? Where will we know it? We will know it within the inner atman.

For once, see the atman in the inner abode, in its eternal abode—where the atman is beyond external pleasure and sorrow, beyond all the restlessness of the world. Enter that secret innermost cave and see--you will see that within the atman the bliss of the Supreme Atman is manifested day and night, it has no rest even for a moment. The Supreme Atman is full of bliss in this individual atman. Where there is the never-ending union of that love, enter there, look at that place. Only then would you realize within the

¹⁶⁶ Śvetāśvatara. Upanishad, 3.8. The words “Nānya panthā vidyate ayanāya” mean “there is no other way to the Supreme Goal.” Some commentators have translated ayanāya as “immortality.” Also see Swami Lokeswarananda trans., Śvetāśvatara. Upanishad.

¹⁶⁷ Taittirīya. Upanishad, 2.4.1. The sloka “Ānanda brahma o vidvān; Na bibheti kadācaneti” means “He who knows the Bliss of Brahman,” “he never fears.”
very depth of your heart what the bliss of Brahman is, and only then would you never have any fear from anything else any more.

Where lies your fear? It is where anxiety and ailment, infirmity and death, separation and union prevail; it is where arrival and departure, pleasure and pain exist. If you see the atman only in the outer world--if you realize it solely from one work to another, from one object to another--if you know it by completely merging and mingling it with variety and flux--only then would you see it as extremely poor and soiled, only then would you see it encompassed by death and would continue to mourn. That which is not true, not permanent, you would then connect that itself with the atman and would mistake it to be true and permanent, and in the end when all those would continue to fall off due to the rule of the world, you would think that the atman itself is undergoing decay, undergoing destruction. Time and again, in this way you will get scorched in mourning and despair. Since you have willfully given a higher position to the world alone, the world will overwhelm and defeat your atman at every step with that power given by you. But, see the atman in the inner abode, in the midst of the eternal, in the midst of Brahman; only then will the entire power of pleasure and grief go away. Why then is there any fear of harm, of criticism, of sickness, of death or of anything else at all? The atman is ever triumphant. The atman is not a slave of any other slave in the transient world, the atman is established in the infinite, in the immortality. The bliss of Brahman is manifested in the atman. For this reason, those that know the atman as the form of Truth, know the bliss of Brahman and those that know the bliss of Brahman are ‘na bibheti kadācana’.

Parame Brahma i yojitachitta
Nandati nandati nandatyeva.\(^{168}\)

---

\(^{168}\) Bhaja Govindam (Moh Mudgara) is an eighth century devotional song composed by Ādi Śankarācharya. Tagore juxtaposed a few sections of Bhaja Govindam in his speech. The words “Parame
Those that have seen themselves as liberated in the Supreme Brahman, they become happy, happy, truly happy! And in the world those that know themselves as attached, are ‘śocati śocati śocatīyeva!’

7 Phālgun 1315

Three Levels (Tintalā)

We observe three phases in us. Human life is being shaped into three broader levels—the physical, the religious and the spiritual.

In the first phase nature is everything to us. Then we simply remain outside. Then nature becomes the only realm of all our experiences. At that stage, all our inclinations, thoughts and efforts are towards outside. Even whatever takes shape in our mind, we

---

Brahmaṇi "to the Supreme Brahman" taken from verse 7, "yojitachitta " means "whose mind is given up" taken from verse 22, “Nandati nandati nandatyeva” means “He alone is happy, happy, verily happy,” taken from verse 19. So, what Tagore said was the one whose mind is given up to the Supreme Brahman is “happy, happy, verily happy.”

169 “He alone laments, laments, verily laments!” (My translation). The word “śocati” is found in several places in the scriptures such as:

śocati — laments; Bhagavad Gītā 12.17, 18.54, 18.54,
śocati — lamenting; Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.17.27,
śocati — laments; Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.30.2,
śocatī — while lamenting; Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.14.35,
śocati — he was also lamenting; Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.25.57-61,
śocati — lamenting; Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.28.47,
śocati — laments; Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 6.10.9, 10.85.48-49,
na śocati — he does not lament; Śrī Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya 8.65,
śocati — laments; Śrī Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya 23.110, 24.132,
śocatī —grieves; Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 3.1.2.
cannot do without establishing that too externally; even the matters of our mind assume external object in our imagination. We call Truth to be only that which can be seen and be touched by us. That is why by confining our God also to an external form or by giving Him an external form, we make Him similar to the physical matter itself. We try to appease this external god by external means. We conduct sacrifices before it, make offerings of food to it and dress it. Then the injunctions put forward by that god are also external by nature. To take a dip in which river is holy, to take which kind of food is a sin, in which direction the head has to be laid while sleeping, which mantra, in which manner, in which lunar day and in which measure of time has to be chanted—all these are then religious rituals.

In this manner through the senses of sight, smell and touch; through mind, through imagination, through fear, through bhakti, we explore the outside. By causing injury to it in a variety of ways and in turn getting injured by it, we reach the limit of our acquaintance with the outside. Then we no longer consider the exterior as the sole entity. So we no longer regard that as our sole refuge, only hope and only wealth. Just because one day it had awakened our complete hope and had attracted our entire mind, we developed utter disrespect for it when we saw its limitations. Then we started to abuse nature as an enchantress, there arose a feeling of revolt to completely deny the world in every possible way. Then we continued to say, “It is this in which there are only ailments, death and unceasing movement like that of an ox yoked to a grinding mill, which we regarded as the Truth and had completely surrendered ourselves to it--shame on this ignorance of ours!”

Then we totally gave up the outside and tried to set up home on the inside. By defeating in a difficult battle that outside which we had one day honoured as a king, we declared only the inside to be victorious. Those desires which drove us like a bailiff for
so long in the pursuit of all that was external, we engaged ourselves in an effort to uproot them completely by throwing them into jail, by impaling them and by sending them to the gallows. With whatever threat of sufferings and wants the outside had kept us in fetters of slavery, we had completely ignored those sufferings and wants. After performing the rājasūya yajña, by defeating all the kings of mighty power outside, in the north, in the south, in the east and in the west, we hoisted the victory flag at the pinnacle of the high palace of the capital of our inside. We put shackles on the feet of desire. We kept our sorrows and happiness under strict guard. We only stopped after overturning the previous kingdom all over.

In this way when we have already established ourselves on the inside by curbing the extreme superiority of the outside, what then do we see in the innermost cave? It is not, in fact, the pride of victory. It is not just a fully detailed and an effective means of imposing self-control. It is not just the bondage of the outside in place of the bondage of rules of the inside. In the tranquil, restrained, pure sky of consciousness we have seen such an effulgent light of bliss, which has illuminated both the inside and the outside. It is radiating rays of goodness from the innermost core towards the entire universe.

Then all the conflicts between the inside and the outside become resolved. Then there is no victory but joy; no struggle but sport; no separation but union; not I but all; neither outside nor inside, then it is Brahman: Tacchubhra jyoti ā jyoti. Then in the supreme union of the atman and the Supreme Atman, the whole universe is united. Then

---

170 Rājasūya yajña is a sacrifice performed by a monarch so as to establish his supremacy over other kings.

171 The Bengali word is “mangal.”

172 Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 2.2.9. Tacchubhra jyoti ā jyoti, “It [Brahman] is pure; It is the Light of lights.”
there is compassion free from self-interest, forgiveness devoid of arrogance, love without
egotism; then there is uninterrupted fulfilment in knowledge, in bhakti and in action.

10 Phālgun 1315

Philosopher’s Stone (Paraśratan)

His name is the Philosopher’s Stone
He alleviates the anguish of sinners
His grace awakens in the devotee’s heart as peace!

Do we attain that Philosopher’s Stone during this upāsanā at dawn? If we attain only a
grain of it then may we not confine that only within the pleasurable sensation of our
mind. It must be made to touch me, through its touch my entire day will have to be turned
into gold.

During the day, every now and then that Philosopher’s Stone must be made to touch
the words that I utter, must be made to touch the thoughts of my mind, must be made to
touch my actions in the world.

If that be so, that which was trivial will be glorified within a moment, that which was
dull will become bright, that which was valueless will be high-priced.

We will allow it to touch this morning upāsanā of ours, to touch everything all
through the day, to touch His name, to touch His dhyana—to touch this ‘śānta śiva
advaitam’ mantra. We will not let upāsanā be the prized possession of our heart, we
will make it the support of our nature; we will not attain only mildness through it, but will
establish ourselves.

There is a saying that morning clouds are futile, they do not rain. Likewise, may our

\[^{173}\text{See “Three,” note 129.}\]
upāsanā at dawn being manifested for a moment not be blown away by the morning wind itself.

This is because, when the sun is severe only then is there a need for mildness, when thirst is intense only then is there a need for rainfall. It is only in the midst of a more arduous task of the world that there is dryness which causes burning. When it is immensely crowded, when the uproar is great, only then do we lose ourselves; if during that time itself we cannot use that which we saved at dawn, if like an endowed property it is solely engaged in the act of puja at the temple, if there is no opportunity to make it work for the needs of the world—then it becomes useless.

There are certain times in a day which are extremely dull, extremely intolerable. At the time when the Omnipresent is more invisible than anyone else, when either we completely become creatures of the office or when the radiance of our inner atman becomes extremely dull due to the inactivity caused by digestion of food, may we not give indulgence to the attack of triviality during obsession caused by that dryness and inactivity—may we directly perceive the glory of the atman even then. May we remember at once that we stand in the realm of ‘bhūrbhuva sva,’ may we remember that the form of Infinite Consciousness is emanating consciousness within us at this moment, may we remember that this very ‘śuddha apāpaviddham’ is established in our hearts at this moment. In the innermost root of all witticisms, in all activities, in all restlessness, may the unshaken realization of fulfilment never be completely concealed.

Yet, let no one think that to completely give up all laughter and gossip, all rejoicings in this world is, in fact, sadhana. If we really fail to maintain the little natural relationship we have with someone, it takes advantage over us unnaturally—in the very artificial

---

174 See “At Dawn,” note 104.

effort to renounce that, the noose becomes tighter. A thing which is transitory and external by nature, many a time by the effort of renunciation that itself turns into an internal object of our dhyana.

I will not renounce, I will preserve; but, I will preserve it at the right place. I will not regard the trivial to be great, will not allow the desired to take the place of the beneficial,\textsuperscript{176} and at all times, in all actions, I will let the \textit{upāsanā} go on in the still court of that secret chamber within my heart. I will not allow the mind to understand at any time and by any means such an utterance that He is not there—because that is an utter lie.

At dawn, with extreme bhakti, collect the dust of His feet in your heart—that is our Philosopher’s Stone. In our rejoicing, in our activities, in our property and riches, in whatever we have, allow that bhakti to touch them. Spontaneously everything will become great, will become pure, will become worthy of oblation to Him.

12 \textit{Phālgun} 1315

\textbf{Prayer (Prārthanā)}

O Truth! Within this very inner atman of mine, You are the endless Truth—You are. That You are in this atman at this time and place\textsuperscript{177} with such profundity and closeness, there is simply no limit to it. This atman has been uttering this very mantra since time immemorial: “Satyam.” You are there, only You are there. May this very mantra that

\textsuperscript{176} In the Bengali text used for this translation, a foot note has been provided asking the following question: “The desired to take the place of the beneficial?” in the Visvabharati edition in two volumes edited by Kanai Samanta. In the Bengali Source Text, the words “desired” and “beneficial” were interchanged. But that would not be in keeping with Tagore’s line of thought in this sentence hence, they were changed.

\textsuperscript{177} The original Bengali expression is “deśkāl,” meaning “place and time,” the order was changed to “time and place” in the translation.
rises from the unfathomable depths of the atman fill my mind and fill all other sounds of the world and rise above them all and say: Satyam, satyam, satyam. Take me to that Truth, to that most secret eternal Truth of my inner atman, where ‘You are’ and nothing else is.

O the Refulgent Light! In the space of my mind You are ‘jyoti ājyoti’ — that light cannot be contained in the light of crores of solar realms of Your infinite space—in that light the consciousness of my inner atman is illuminated. Make me stand in the midst of my inner space and cleanse me with a deluge of purity and sacredness from head to toe, make me radiant. May I completely forget all my other surroundings and attain an unblemished, immaculate, sinless, illuminated body.

O the manifestation of Immortality! In the secret abode of my inner atman, You are ‘ānanda paramānandam.’ At no time indeed, is there any end to Your union there. Not only are You present there, but are united; not only is Your Truth manifest there, but also is Your bliss. You have spread that very infinite bliss over Your whole world. In motion, in life, in beauty, it never exhausts itself in anything. It is uncontainable anywhere except in the infinite space. It is that very limitless bliss of Yours which I have kept calmed upon my inner atman. There you have not allowed anyone from Your creation to enter. In that place there is no light, no form, no movement, there is only the calm intimate bliss of Yours. Standing amidst the abode of bliss give a call, O Lord! I am really scattered in all directions. Let your call of immortality be rung and echoed

178 See “Three Levels,” note 172.

179 The words “ānanda paramānandam” are in Govindaśtakam composed by Śankarāchārya. Each of the 9 stanzas ends with “paramānandam” which literally means “[He] who is supreme ananda” which means God, and “ānandam” in stanza 8 means “[He] who gives happiness.”
everywhere in my world. Let it go far away, let it enter very secretly. May I respond from all directions and say, ‘Here I come, here I come!’ Call me, ‘Come dear, come away! Come back dear, come back!’ Within the eternal bliss of this abode of inner atman, let all of whatever I have, sit at one place with oneness and calmness, with profound depth, with utmost secrecy.

O Revelation! By Your manifestation exhaust me completely, do not spare anything else of mine, nothing at all, not a trace of my egotism should be left behind. Make me become full of You. Let me be only You, You, full of You. Let there be light only full of You, bliss only full of You.

O Rudra! Let sins be burnt to ashes! Radiate your terrible heat. Let nothing be hidden anywhere, from the root to the fruit full of seeds--let all be scorched. This, in fact, is the fruit of numerous wicked attempts made over a long period of time, grown in every node of the tree, behind the leaves. The roots have gone down into the abyss of the heart. There is no such fuel to match the intensity of Your wrath. When it will burn, only then will it attain fulfilment. Then it will end amidst light.

After that, O the most gracious One, let Your graciousness continue to diffuse through all my thoughts, words and actions. May Your delightful graciousness penetrate into every pore of my body and make it a figure of divinity. May my body remain as the holy receptacle of Your grace of immortality in the world. Let that graciousness of Yours perfectly calm my intellect, purify my heart, direct my power towards goodness.¹⁸⁰ Let Your grace prevent me from the danger of separation from You for ever. May Your graciousness remain as an eternal wealth of my heart to serve as a support on the path of my whole life. When, by virtue of Your gracefulness, I shall realize Your Truth, Your effulgent light, Your immortality, Your manifestation that dwell in my very inner atman.

¹⁸⁰ The Bengali word is “mangal.”
only then would I be saved.

14 Phālgun 1315

Detachment (Vairāgya)

Yājñavalkya says—

\[ Na vā are putrasya kāmāya putra \ priyo bhavati \]
\[ ātmanastu kāmāya putra \ priyo bhavati. \]

This means, not because you desire your son that he becomes dear to you, but because you yearn for the atman alone that your son becomes dear to you.

The significance of this is that, just because the atman realizes its own self in the son, that the son becomes its own, and that is why its joy lies in the son.

When within the bounds of self-interest and egotism the atman continues to be alone, then it becomes very dull indeed, then its truth does not get revealed. That is why the atman realizes itself within the son, within the friend, within different people and continues to be full of joy, because, its truth continues to become complete.

During childhood in the Varna parichay, while learning each alphabet ka, kha, ga, independently, I derived no joy from them. That is because, I could not get any meaning in those independent alphabets. After combining the letters together when words such as ‘kara’, ‘khala’ and the like were derived, when the words revealed their significance, then

---

181 Brhadāra yaka. Upanishad, 2.4.5. These words form part of the conversation Yājñavalkya has with Maitreyī regarding the nature of the Absolute Self: ‘Verily, not for the sake of the sons, my dear, are the sons loved, but they are loved for the sake of the self.’ In the Upanishadic sloka ‘priyā bhavanti’ is inscribed instead of Tagore’s ‘priyo bhavati’ in both the cases. However, the meaning remains the same.

182 Varna parichay is the Bengali primer. Literally “varna” means alphabet or letter, and “paricha ” means introduction.
to some extent my mind started to experience joy. But, such disjointed words cannot provide sufficient essence to the mind; this brings about pain and weariness. Then, even today I clearly remember the day when I read the words ‘water drips’ ‘leaves quiver.’ I derived great joy on that day; because, the words became more complete with meaning then. Now, my mind does not derive any pleasure in merely reciting ‘water drips’, ‘leaves quiver’, it gives me a feeling of displeasure. Now I want to realize the arrangement of words as significant only within sentences with deeper meanings.

Similarly, the alienated atman is like an alienated part of speech. Its significance cannot be completely obtained in its solitariness. For this very reason the atman tries to realize its truth within the many. When it gets united with its friends and relatives it sees a form of its own fulfilment; when it knows its relatives, strangers and many more people as its own, then it no longer remains a small atman, it becomes a great atman.

The only reason for this is, the complete truth of the atman lies within the Supreme Atman. My ‘I’ attains fulfilment only in that great ‘I’. That is why knowingly or unknowingly it is in the quest of that Supreme ‘I’. What happens when my ‘I’ unites with the ‘I’ of my son? Then I attain joy by realizing that Supreme ‘I’ who is within my own ‘I’ as well as in the ‘I’ of my son.

But, then the problem is that my ‘I’, on this pretext, cannot understand clearly that it

---

183 I translated Bengali word “sukh” either as “joy” or as “pleasure.”

184 The original Bengali word “ras” comes from Sanskrit “rasa” meaning “juice” or “essence.” Throughout these essays I have translated “ras” as “essence.”

185 “Jal pariteche. Pātā nariteche,” is the eighth lesson of the first volume in Varna parichay written by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. Vidyasagar’s sentences are in present continuous tense while Tagore’s are in present simple tense.

186 The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

187 The original Bengali word is “sukh.”
moves a little towards that very great ‘I’. He thinks that he has attained the son only and that it is owing to some special quality only that the son gives joy.\textsuperscript{188} Therefore, it gets obstructed due to the bondage of this attachment itself. Then it only wants to embrace its son and friends. Then due to the pull of this attachment, it also gets involved in a number of sins.

Hence only to arouse detachment through true knowledge Yājñavalkya says, ‘We do not truly want the son, we yearn for the atman alone.’ If we understand this message properly, then the blind attachment towards our son gets removed. Then the pretext alone cannot become the goal and obstruct our path.

When we continue to feel joy\textsuperscript{189} by understanding the vast significance of literature, then every word itself, by independently uttering “I’s,” does not obstruct our mind any longer. Every word reveals just a meaning and not itself. Then it is as if the very word loses its own independence.

Similarly, when we know the Truth then it is within that undivided Truth itself that we know all the fragments. By being independent they do not obstruct our knowledge any more. This condition itself is the condition of detachment. In this condition the world does not consider itself to be the ultimate and does not go on to take hold of our entire mind and action.

When the realization of the significance of a poem becomes deep, becomes illuminating to us, only then the fruition of each of its words becomes particularly beautiful to us due to the sweetness of that entire emotion. At that time, when we look back, we see that no word is meaningless, the essence\textsuperscript{190} of the whole is being revealed in

\textsuperscript{188} The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

\textsuperscript{189} The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

\textsuperscript{190} The original Bengali word is “ras.”
every word. Then, every word of that poetry becomes the cause of particular joy\textsuperscript{191} and amazement to us. Then it is because its words help us in the realization of the whole instead of obstructing us, they become so valuable to us.

Similarly, when detachment overcomes the delusion of independence and makes us acquainted with the great Truth within the Omnipresent, then on returning from that great acquaintance, each independent entity becomes fulfilled through the essence of the Omnipresent. One day, those that had to be read by spelling the words, those that had obstructed our path at every step, each of them carries us only towards that Omnipresent and do not obstruct us.

Then the joy\textsuperscript{192} that is felt, that joy\textsuperscript{193} itself is love. That love does not bind; that love pulls us along. That love is pure and unopposed. It is that very love which is mukti—the death of all attachments. The funeral-mantra of this death itself is—

\begin{gather*}
Madhuvātā rtāyate madhu k aranti sindhava \\
Madhvīrnah santvoshadhī.\textsuperscript{194} \\
Madhu naktam utoshaso madhumat pārthiva raja \textsuperscript{195} \\
Madhumānno vanaspatirmadhumā astu sūrya.\textsuperscript{196}
\end{gather*}

\textsuperscript{191} The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

\textsuperscript{192} The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

\textsuperscript{193} The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

\textsuperscript{194} Rg Veda 1.90. 6.

“The winds waft sweets, the river pour sweets for the man who keeps the Law:
So may the plants be sweet for us.”

\textsuperscript{195} Rg Veda 1.90. 7.

“Sweet be the night and sweet the dawns,
Sweet the terrestrial atmosphere”—the first part of the seventh sloka has been quoted in the text.
The wind carries nectar, the river and ocean exude nectar. May all the herbs and trees be filled with nectar, may the night be filled with nectar, may the dawn be filled with nectar, may the sand particles of this world be filled with nectar, may the sun be full of nectar.

When the bond of attachment has been severed then water, land, and the sky; inanimate objects, animals and human beings; all are filled with immortality—then there is no limit to joy. 197

Attachment binds our mind to worldly possessions. When within those worldly possessions the mind attains the truth beyond them, then in the manner a butterfly cuts open and comes out of its cocoon, in the same manner, through detachment the mind severs the bond of attachment. As soon as the bond of attachment is severed, completely beautiful love manifests itself everywhere indeed in the form of bliss. 198 Then we can understand the meaning of this mantra ‘ānandarūpamṛta yadbibhāti.’ 199 All that is being manifested is that form of bliss, that form of immortality. No entity indeed then prides itself to say, ‘I am being manifested’: only bliss 200 is being manifested, nothing but bliss. 201 That manifestation is deathless. There is death for all others, but that manifestation itself is immortal.

15 Phālgun 1315

196 Rg Veda 1.90. 8.

“May the tall tree be full of sweets for us,
And full of sweets the Sun”— the first part of the eighth sloka has been quoted in the text.

197 The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

198 The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

199 See “Beauty,” note 110.

200 The original Bengali word is “ananda.”

201 The original Bengali word is “ananda.”
Collectedness (Śaṇharaṇ)

The second great obstacle to our sadhana is the lack of practice of sadhana. May be we have not had practice in any kind of sadhana. Whenever something appears before us, we probably get attracted towards that. By drifting, dashing repeatedly against all places, we proceed. We are moving because the current of the world is flowing without any effort from us; we have neither oar, nor helm, nor even a sail.

We have never practised to bring our power and inclination together from all sides under extreme control for a certain purpose. It is due to this that all of them have the tendency to go out of hand. There is no trace as to who is really where; there is no possibility that they would come running whenever summoned. When they are tempted by food items which they are used to and find tasteful, only then do they come together on their own or else by no means.

It has become a practice only to scatter oneself in all directions. Even thoughts get scattered, action becomes disorderly, nothing remains rooted in one place.

In such a situation it is not that there is no attainment, there is no true happiness\(^{202}\) as well. In this there is only obsession of lethargy out of ignorance.

This is because, when we associate our power and inclination with a certain purpose, then that purpose itself carries them along. Then their burden does not fall upon our own shoulders any more. Otherwise, we carry them and put them once over this, once over that, and in this way we always have to pull them in opposite directions. When we do not find any means to unburden them then we continue to create artificial means. So much are the worthless sports, worthless amusements and worthless articles indeed! Ultimately, those artificial arrangements also become a second burden to press us from all directions.

\(^{202}\) The original Bengali word is “sukh.”
This is how the burden of life goes on accumulating and we do not get any freedom from that till death.

It is for this reason, I was saying that only in the stage of sadhana there is a kind of joy, let alone the matter of attainment. In the pursuit of a noble aim if one’s diversion is concentrated and is directed towards a particular path then in that itself life seems to do us good. There lies great danger even if the little effort needed to consider my sadhana as joy and to proceed with determination and pride diminishes within us. Anyhow, in spite of facing repeated failures, the effort needs to concentrate all those powers has to be strengthened. Just as a baby learns to walk by tumbling over and getting hurt repeatedly, it has to be taught to walk. This is because, to gain attainment this faith needs to be awakened in the first place that the goal is true; then it has to be known whether the goal is within or without, whether it is at the periphery or at the centre; then there is need to learn to follow the right path. Stability and motion are both needed. The mind will become calm through faith, and effort will gain speed through sadhana.

16 Phālgun 1315

Dedication (Ni śā)

When the image of attainment is seen to a certain extent then joy spontaneously pulls us along—who dares stop us then? Then there is no weariness, no weakness.

But, in the very beginning of sadhana, the image of attainment does not manifest itself in this manner even from a distance. Yet the path is also not an easy path. By what force do we move forward?

At this point of time, that which undertakes the charge to guide us is Dedication. When bhakti awakens, when our heart is full, then there is really no worry, then the path,
in fact, is no longer felt to be a path; then we seem to fly altogether. But, when bhakti is afar and the heart is empty, who is our support during those trying times?

Then our only support is Dedication. It is the only one that can carry the dead weight of our withered heart.

The camel is the vehicle for those that have to travel across the desert path. It is an extremely tough and strong vehicle—it does not have even a little luxuriousness. It does not get food, still it walks. It does not get any drink, still it walks. Even when the desert sand becomes hot, still it walks, it walks silently. Even when it appears that the desert ahead is unending, perhaps there is no other option but death, its walking does not stop even then.

Similarly, in the dryness and emptiness of the desert path, without taking any food, even without getting anything, that which can drive us along is only Dedication—its prana is so tough that even in the midst of reprehension and weariness, amid thorns and shrubs, it can find its food. When the desert storm comes thrashing at it with a deadly vehemence, it bows its head and allows the storm to pass over it. Who else is there so steady, so patient and so persevering like it?

In this monotonous and continuous wilderness, at times a mirage of imagination comes to mislead the path. Diverse forms of success are not seen every now and then. It seems, we are at the same place as we were the day before. We try to concentrate, yet our mind wanders about; we call upon our heart but it does not respond to our call. We always feel, we are being distressed by the efforts of futile upāsanā. But by carrying the terrible weight of that futile upāsanā, Dedication can keep on walking daily—day after day.

The progress is continuous. There is no trace of doubt that little by little it is getting closer to its destination. See over there, from somewhere all of a sudden there appears an
oasis of bhakti in sight—within this vast expanse of parched paleness, there lies the pleasant greenness of the date palm bower filled with the cluster of nectarous fruit. A fountain of cold water is flowing under that lone shade. By drinking that water, by bathing in that water, by resting under the shade, we proceed with our journey again. But that sweetness and soothing freshness of bhakti does not consistently come along with us.

Then again it is that tough, parched, untiring Dedication. It has a quality—some day if by any chance it is able to drink the water of bhakti then it can save that up in a secret container within itself for many days. Even on a day of severe dryness that is the only resource to quench its thirst.

It is the very bhakti towards One who can be attained through sadhana that we call bhakti but dedication is the bhakti towards sadhana itself. It is this very austere, difficult and dry sadhana which is the highly valued treasure of Dedication. It has a deeper sense of joy in it. This joy is pure, is causeless. In this unswerving joy it keeps despair away, does not even fear death. The day this Dedication, our only companion in the path of the desert, reaches its destination, it completely surrenders us in the hands of bhakti on that day and hides itself in its servant’s chamber; it does not take pride in anything, it does not make any demand—on the day of success its happiness lies in keeping itself hidden from the view.

17 Phālgun 1315
The Function of Dedication (Niṣṭhār Kāj)

Not only does Dedication direct us along a dry, difficult path with tireless perseverance, it continuously cautions us. By proceeding in the same manner daily we tend to become fatigued and unmindful. Dedication never wants to forget; it propels us forward and says, ‘What is happening? What is this you are doing?’ It reminds us, ‘If you do not proceed during cold, you would suffer when it is hot.’ It shows us, ‘Water is leaking from the slit of your water-vessel. What will happen when you are thirsty?’

There is no limit to the manner in which we misuse our energy throughout the day—in so much idle talk, in so many useless activities. All of a sudden, Dedication reminds us, ‘This very thing which you are misusing in such a way is indeed very necessary—be quiet for a while, be a bit calm, do not exaggerate so much, do not cross your limit like that, do not dip your legs unnecessarily in that water which should be stored carefully for drinking.’ When we are up to our neck in triviality, being extremely self-oblivious, even then it does not forget us; it says, ‘Fie! What is this?’ It is seated close to our heart, nothing escapes its sight.

On coming close to gaining attainment the natural wisdom of love is attained, then the sense of proportion takes place on its own. Just in the manner an inborn poet naturally maintains his rhythm, we too can naturally regularize our life from beginning to end amidst beauty in its pure form. Then deviation itself becomes difficult. But in the days of destitution when that natural power of joy is no longer there, then at every step there is a break in rhythm; where we are not supposed to stop we become lazy, where we ought to stop we cannot control our speed. Then it is this firm Dedication which is our only support. It never sleeps, it is ever awake. It says, ‘What’s that? Oh, there appears a crimson hue of anger! Look, there you are trying to flaunt yourself! Well, remember that

---

203 I translated Bengali word is “śakti” as “energy” in this essay and “power” in others.
very thorn of enmity that still remains seated in your memory! Why do I suddenly see you so much distressed in secret? Now that you are going to sleep at night, where lies that peace within your heart to enter this pure, serene chamber of sleep?’

During the days of sadhana, this very eternal touch of caution of Dedication is our prime joy. The more we know that this Dedication is awake, the more we feel assured within our heart. If any day due to the misfortune of self-oblivion we fail to see it, only then do we apprehend danger. When we are unable to find our ultimate friend, it is this very Dedication that remains in the form of our supreme friend. Everyday its firm image is invested before us with pure beauty. This holy hermitess, amidst calm and devoid of any earthly enjoyment, makes our poverty pleasant by radiating power, peace and light.

When Columbus’ faith regarding his destination became very firm, it was Dedication alone which gave him confidence in the voyage through the unknown sea route devoid of any sign. His sailors did not have that firm faith in their hearts, they did not have that dedication in their voyage at sea. Daily they were busy to see some external image of success; if they do not obtain anything then their energy gets used up; that is why as the days pass, as the sea does not end, their impatience builds up accordingly. They are about to revolt, they want to get back. Yet, without any sign of certainty from outside, Columbus’s dedication proceeds silently. But such was the case that there was no way to stop the sailors any longer, they were about to reverse the course of the ship. At such a time, a sign was seen, there was no doubt that there was a shore. Then everyone was full of joy, all wanted to proceed enthusiastically. Then all considered Columbus as friend, and all thanked him.

During the first stage of sadhana there is no support—all express their doubts, all obstruct. Even externally I do not see any clear sign that I can show as the clear proof of

\[204\] I translated the Bengali word “śakti” as “energy” here.
my true conviction to everyone and to myself. Then in that mid-sea, amidst doubt and opposition, may Dedication not leave us even for a moment. When the coast will come closer, when the birds of the coast will fly and perch on your mast, when the flowers of the coast will dance upon the sea waves, then there will be no lack of praise and favour. But till then only Dedication, the Dedication that overcomes hopelessness, the Dedication which has the capacity to withstand shock, the Dedication indifferent to external encouragement, the Dedication unmoved by criticism—at no cost, for no reason should that Dedication renounce us. May it continue to gaze at the compass, may it continue to firmly hold on to the oar.

17 Phālgun 1315

The Obverse (Bimukhatā)

That very Viśvakarmā, the great Atman who works by dwelling in the hearts of the people, works in great secrecy indeed. There is no doubt that His work is truly progressing; there is unhappiness only because we do not know that the work keeps going on. Just because we did not take part in the little we had to do for that work, our lives seemed to have become insignificant. In spite of that every day, every moment Viśvakarmā is working in the joy of His innate action of knowledge and power. He strings a sunbeamed day of my life with a moon-and-star-studded night, and again continues to string that night with another luminous day. His joy is profound in the making of this gem-studded necklace of my life. If I had joined Him, this joy would have been mine as well. In this wonderful creation of art, so many holes are being drilled, so many bores are being made, so much is being burnt, so many blows are being struck—it is

\[205\] Kaṭṭha Upanishad, 2.3.17. Here Tagore has alluded to the following words in his text janānāṁ hṛdaye sannivi which means "dwell in the hearts of men."
amidst these blows that my claim to Viśvakarmā’s joy of creation would have been born.

But, I did not even give a look towards that cave within, where the blissful Viśvakarmā is engaged in working day and night; all my life I went on gaping only at the outside. I mingle with many, laugh and gossip with them, and think that the day is being spent somehow—it is as if the main aim to obtain the day is to merely pass it. It is as if the day has no meaning.

It seems on entering the theatre of human life we sit turning our back like fools towards the direction in which the dramatic performance is taking place. We see only the columns, the cots and the crowd of the theatre. Later on when the lights have gone off, the curtain has dropped, we cannot see anything any more, there is deep darkness—then perhaps I ask myself, ‘What did I come here to do, why did I pay for the ticket at all, what is the meaning of these columns and cots, why at all have so many people gathered here?’ Everything is a deception indeed, everything is, in fact, a meaningless child’s play. Alas, no information at all was available regarding the acting of joy being performed on the stage.

The One who is performing the sport of joy of life is, in fact, doing so being seated within—those columns and cots are only external, they are not the main things. For once, turn your gaze within; only then would you be able to understand all the meanings.

Whatever is happening is, in fact, taking place within. Is it only outside you that this darkness is getting dispelled and that the sun is rising gradually? If it were only outside you then from which direction would you have entered there? At this moment Viśvakarma indeed has flooded your sky of consciousness completely with the colour of the rising sun. Observe within you an emerging sun that is raising its head like the bud of

---

206 The Bengali word is “udddeśya” means “purpose” but it also means “aim” in certain cases. Here I translated it as “aim.”
a golden lotus, is about to spread its luminous petals gradually everywhere—within you
indeed. This itself is Viśvakarma’s joy. It is in the land of your life itself that He is
incessantly weaving such a vast, wonderful cloth, with so many golden threads, silver
threads and its multi-coloured threads, it is truly within you—that which is completely
outside is, in fact, not yours.

So see it right now. See this dawn as the dawn of your very inner self, see it as His
creation of joy within your consciousness alone. This does not belong to anyone else, this
is not there anywhere else—this dawn of yours is only there within you and it is only He
who alone dwells there. Amidst this profound solitude of yours, within this infinite space
of your mind, is His wonderful, vast sport—it goes on day and night. If you turn your
back against this wonderful dawn, if you want to see it only externally, you will not
derive joy, you will not obtain any meaning in it.

When I was in England I was a boy then. I had an invitation at a place a little away
from London. I boarded a train in the evening. It was winter then. On that day everything
was covered by fog, it was snowing. The stations that came after London were on the left
side. Whenever the train stopped, I opened the window, stuck out my head to the left and
amidst that haze of fog I called someone to know the name of the station. My destined
station was the last station. When the train stopped there I looked only to the left—when I
looked at that side there was no light, no platform, I sat back at my seat without any
worry. A short while later the train started back towards London again. I said, ‘What’s
this?’ In the next station when the train stopped, I asked, “Where is such and such
station?” The reply I heard was, “It is exactly from where you are coming right now.” I
got down from the train quickly and asked, ‘When will the next train arrive?’ ‘At
midnight,’ was the reply I received. My destined station was on the right side.
In the journey of our life we always seek those stations that are on the left. We are completely confident that there is nothing on the right. One after the other we went on passing through them. The place where I had to get down, even there too I looked towards the world, looked only to the left. I saw that there was total darkness, everything was hazy due to the fog. The opportunity I had obtained was lost; the train was going back. Where there was the invitation, there the merriment and joy started to become a thing of the past. When will the train be available again? That I had obtained such an opportunity, when again will I be able to obtain such an opportunity—at which midnight?

The ultimate place is one such station that we can reach through human life. If we do not get down there, if we do not look at the side where its platform is, then the whole journey to me becomes extremely foggy meaningless matter, there is no doubt about it at all! Why did I pay the fare for the ticket, why did I board the train, why did I travel in the dark night, what did really happen—I did not understand any of it. “Where was my invitation, where was the arrangement for the feast made, where would my hunger be appeased, where would I obtain shelter”? Without obtaining any answers to these questions, I had to end the journey by being utterly confounded.

O Truth, I want nothing else, turn my face towards that direction where You are, where the Truth is—in fact, I only look towards the untruth! On the stage of Your sport of joy You have lighted lamps in rows; I stare at the darkness opposite to that and think hard, what is all this? Turn me towards Your light. All I can see is death—I cannot make any meaning out of that, I am being overwhelmed with fear. Just on the other side of it is the immortality, within it lies all meanings, who will make me understand that? O Āvi! That You are always there as the form of manifestation, it is in the direction of that very manifestation that my look is absent—I am unfortunate. For that reason I see You only as Rudra, I am simply unable to know that Your graciousness has continuously enveloped
my atman. When an infant turns its back towards its mother, it cries hard on seeing darkness; once it turns around it comes to know that its mother is, in fact, there embracing it. O mother, turn us around in the direction of Your graciousness, only then would I come to know in a moment that I have already been protected, my protection is for eternity—else the wails of the fear of defenselessness will not cease by any means.

18 Phālgun 1315

To see the Truth (Satyake dekhā)

Through the mantra of our dhyana, we do dhyana on the Creator in the midst of His creation. Bhurbhūba sva are continuously being created by Him; at every moment the sun, the moon, the planet, the star are being manifested through Him; at every instant our consciousness is emanating from Him; it is He who is ceaselessly manifesting all--this is what our dhyana is.

Seeing this itself is called “To see the Truth.” We see all events as external events only. We do not derive any joy from them. They become old and take the shape of a wound up machine to us; just as current of water flows over the pebbles, so the flow of worldly events incessantly passes through our mind. The mind does not respond to that, all the sights appear to be trivial and the days seem to be insignificant. That is why we derive joy by keeping our consciousness awake by merely engaging ourselves in artificial excitements and by the creation of futile activities.

This is precisely what happens when we look towards the events alone. It does not give us essence, does not give us food. It only occupies our senses, our mind, our heart to a certain extent, but does not reach up to the end. So, whatever essence it has, that tends

---

207 Tagore suddenly changes the pronoun from plural to singular.

208 See “At Dawn,” note 104.
to get dried up on the surface itself and does not awaken our deeper consciousness. The
daily activity occurs in its unfailing regularity—the sun continues to rise, the river
continues to flow, the plants and the trees continue to grow, every day work continues
regularly. That is why we wish to see such a sight that we do not see every day, we are
curious to know about such events that do not match with our regular happenings.

But, when we know the Truth, our atman becomes completely fulfilled. Truth is for
ever new, its essence is imperishable. The sight attains fruition when the innermost Truth
is realized amidst the entire collection of events. Then all attain fulfilment in greatness, in
awe and in bliss.

It is because of this, in the mantra of our dhyana, at least once daily amid all the
matters of the universe, we try to do dhyana upon He who is the Supreme Truth of the
universe. Amidst the vast array of events, behold the One who is the fundamental power
of the universe, we direct our gaze inwards. Then the veil of inertness gets dispelled from
sight; then the world, like a machine, no longer remains within the usual orbit of all our
attention. This great manifestation pervading the infinite space, is emanating, is
dispersing from the Truth full of Knowledge at every moment indeed—it is by realizing
this that our consciousness attains fulfilment. Then standing in the midst of fire, water,
herbs and trees, we can proclaim that everywhere in the infinite Truth, in the infinite
Knowledge, in the infinite Brahman, His manifestation is in the form of bliss, in the form
of immortality.

We will not merely see the countless number of events simply as innumerable forms
of events; amidst them we will realize the infinite Truth steadily and calmly, it is for this
reason that our mantra of dhyana is the Gāyatrī²⁰⁹—*Om bhūrbhuba sva tat*

²⁰⁹ The Gāyatrī mantra is regarded as the essence of the Vedas, found both in the Rg Veda, 3.62.10 and
saviturvare yam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo na prachodayāt.²¹⁰ Let us do dhyana upon the venerable power of that God who is ceaselessly creating all these realms of bhūrbhūba sva²¹¹ —of He who is incessantly emitting our power of intellect as well.

3 Caitra 1315

Creation (Sr ti)

That some of us sit here early in the morning for upāsanā, even this is a creation. That Creator is in the midst of this too.

We tend to say, this is how it has turned out to be. A handful of us conferred on this matter amongst ourselves, then we sat together, thereafter this has been continuing on a regular basis.

Though this is the fact, but it is not true. If we see this from the point of view of an event it is a common matter, but to see it from the point of view of Truth it is simply amazing, everyday itself it is wonderful. It is Truth which on arriving at the centre is drawing several unfamiliar souls from various directions and is continuously in the process of creating this congregation. We think we would sit here for sometime, finish our activity here, and then would proceed for some other work elsewhere, that settles it—but that is not such a small matter. When we study, teach, eat, wander about, even then the Creator of this assembly is engaged in its very creation. Viśvakarmā, who is ‘janāna hrdaye sannivisa’,²¹² has been doing his work among us, He is arranging the articles to be offered within the minds of each one of us in different ways. It is as if He has no other work to do, just as His creation of the universe is a great work, so the creation of this

---

²¹⁰ See “At Dawn,” note 104.

²¹¹ See “At Dawn,” note 104.

²¹² See “The Obverse,” note 205.
appears to be a great work too. The realm of our upāsanā is continuously in the process of being created—day in and day out. The process still continues when we are asleep and even when we have forgotten all about it. When Truth prevails, it can never be possible that nothing happens or that even for one moment it has repose.

In the centre of the universe there is the all-pervading ‘Satyam’ and it is for such a reason that we observe the universe everyday in its proper position, according to rule. It is because a‘Satyam’ is performing its work among the few of us that we come and sit here daily every morning. The whole universe goes round that one Truth and offers pra ām to It. At a place where our telescope does not reach, where our minds do not reach, even there so many luminous realms continuously surround It and say: ‘Namo namah’. In a similar manner we too have sat down by surrounding this Truth in our realm of upāsanā. He who is seated amidst this world and the other, is seated in this courtyard. Not only does He manifest His consciousness amongst us, but also radiates the power needed to propagate this particular creation in which we select few are participants. In this particular process of ongoing creation, He is directing the minds of few of us in a number of ways on this particular matter. He is unifying the diversities of nature, stock notion and learning of the few of us at this very moment. And when we will get up from this place and go elsewhere, even then He will not cease to perform His work.

We will directly behold that Truth, that Creator of our realm of upāsanā among us here, will go round Him and offer our pra ām to Him together. We will know every day

---

Śvetāśvatara Upanishad 2.17. “Namo namah” means “let there be adoration! Yea, let there be adoration!” The words “Namo namah” are usually present at the culmination of mantras. A mention has been made regarding the explanation to this phrase: “we bow to him everywhere, and over and over again” in Tagore’s “The Realization of Life,” in Sādhana. See Das (287).
that just as the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars are His eternal creation, that He has made the few of us to sit here too is His similar creation. His incessant bliss is being manifested in this action, we will see that manifestation before we depart.

3 Caitra 1315

Loaded Boat (Tarī Bojhāi)

I wrote a poem titled “The Golden Boat,” an interpretation of it can be rendered on this occasion.

Man has cultivated crops throughout his life. The little field of his life is like an island surrounded by the unmanifested from all directions, only that little has been manifested to him. That is why the Gītā says:

\[
\text{Avyaktadīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata} \\
\text{Avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridevanā.}
\]

When time is up, when water rises from all directions, when it is time again for that very piece of land to get submerged into the unmanifested, then he can load up the boat of that world with whatever eternal fruit there is of his entire life’s work. The world will accept all, and will not reject even a grain of it. But when man says, “Take me along

---

214 The poem “Sonār Tarī” (“The Golden Boat”), (Rabindra Rachanāvali 2: 12) was composed by Tagore in Phālgun 1298 BE [1894 CE].

215 Tagore used the present perfect continuous tense here but I use the present perfect tense.

216 These slokas are from The Bhagavadgītā, 2.28. This means “Beings are unmanifest in their beginnings, manifest in the middles and unmanifest again in their ends, O Bharata (Arjun), What (sic.) is there in this for lamentation?”

217 The original Bengali word is “nebe” is a derivative of the Bengali word “neob a” which means “take” or “accept.” I have translated “nebe,” “neob a” or “nāo” as “take” and “accept” depending on context.

218 The original Bengali word is “nāo.”
with those, keep me as well’ the world then says, ‘Where is the space left for you? What will I do with you? Whatever is to be kept from the harvest of your life, I shall keep them all, but you are not really worth keeping.’

Every man contributes something or the other to this world through the work of his life; the world accepts and preserves them all, does not allow anything to get wasted--but, along with that, when man wants to make his ego eternal then his effort becomes futile. We have to surrender our ego in the form of tax unto the hands of Death to settle up accounts for the very life that has been enjoyed. It is not something which should be saved at any cost.

4 Caitra 1315

Attainment of Nature (Svabhābke Lābh)

The only sadhana in our life is that, whatever be the nature of our atman may we make that very nature free from obstacles.

What is the nature of the atman? Whatever is the nature of the Supreme Atman, it is the same for the atman. What is the nature of the Supreme Atman? He accepts not, He bestows.

He creates. The very purpose of creation is renunciation. There is no obligation, no compulsion attached to this very renunciation He makes. The very dharma of bliss is to bestow of its own accord and to renounce by itself. We know that too. Without any reason our joy and our love attain fulfilment through self-renunciation only. It is for this

---

219 Tagore uses the present continuous tense here but I use the simple present tense.

220 Tagore used the present continuous tense here but I use the simple present tense.
reason that the Upanishads say: Ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante.²²¹ This is the very nature of the Blissful One.

The atman has a likeness with the Supreme Atman. Our atman too is not joyful in receiving, it is joyful in giving. If this very surge that we will take, snatch and save awakens like the deviation caused by ailment, then there would be no limit to resentment and anger. When we say with all our heart ‘We will give’, only then it is the day of our joy. At that very moment all the resentment goes away, all the anger becomes pacified.

We have to practise sadhana to realize this form of the blissful atman. How should we do that?

The fact that there is a hungry ego, that poor one who wants to hold everything indeed in its fist, that miser who gives nothing without any intention of taking, without any intention of gaining, it is that very ego which has to be kept outside. It should not be given a warm reception as given to one’s closest relative and should not be allowed to enter into the inner chamber. It, in fact, is not the atman’s kin; because the ego is mortal, whereas the atman is immortal.

The Atman is ‘Na jāyate mṛyate,’²²² neither does it take birth nor does it die. But, that ego has had a birth, it has been given a name; if it is unable to do anything else it will at least do everything to establish its name at any cost.

This ego that I have, I should see it as an outsider. When it would be sorrowful, I would say then that it is filled with sorrow. Not only in its sorrow, I would not take the share in any of its property, riches, fame and honour.

---

²²¹ Taittiriya Upanishad, 3.6.1. Ānandāddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante means “from bliss, verily, are these beings born.”

²²² Ka ha Upanishad, 1.2.18. “Na jāyate mṛyate” means “is not born; It does not die.”
I will not say I am getting all these, but will say I am taking them. Everyday itself I will try to make this effort that I should not accept whatever my ego tries to hold on tightly. I will say repeatedly that it is not mine, that is outside me.

That which is external, the heart is not willing to keep it outside. It is because of this that I am loaded with waste, it has become difficult to get on with that burden. Due to the deviation of that deathly element, everyday I undergo death. By intertwining the atman with this very mortal ego, in its grief, in its sorrow, in its burden, I become wearied.

The nature of the ego is to pull inwards, and the nature of the atman is to push outwards—that is why if these two are intertwined, a great whirlpool is created. One force tends to move outwards while another force continues to attract inwards—a great danger becomes imminent. The atman being attracted against its nature goes on whirling; it does not move towards the Infinite, it revolves about a fixed point like an ox yoked to a grinding mill. It moves but does not progress—so, in this movement it only has pain, in this it has no fulfilment.

That is why I was saying, we have to be saved from this great difficulty. We will not be completely identical with our ego, we will maintain a distance from it. We will bestow, we will work, but when our ego will come dancing while licking and biting the fruit of that work held in its hand, we will not by any means accept that fruit soiled by eating. \textit{Karma yevādhikāraste mā phale u kadācana}.\footnote{Tagore used the present continuous tense, I use the simple present tense.} 224

5 Caitra 1315

\footnote{Bhagavadgītā, 2.47. This means “To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits”—this is one of the essential messages of the Bhagavadgītā.}
Commandment (Ādeś)

Some of the vile deeds that should not be committed have particularly been mentioned by the scriptures and proclaimed them to be particularly forbidden by God.

If proclamations are made in such a manner, it makes us think that it is God who has decreed certain laws according to His own will, if someone breaks those laws he will incur the wrath of the Lord of the universe. I cannot accept this matter in such a narrow and hollow manner. He has not given any particular commandment, He has only proclaimed a single decree—that decree is prevalent across the entire universe. That is the only commandment.

He has only said, “Be manifest.” He has said the same to the sun, also to the universe and to mankind as well. So the sun has become luminous, the earth has become the mother of life, thus man too has to manifest the atman.

In any corner of this universe wherever this commandment of His gets obstructed, there itself the bud gets withered, the river gets still by being impeded due to a mesh of moss—that is where there lie bondage, distortion and annihilation.

When Lord Buddha, overcome with grief, sat in dhyana to seek the answer to this question as to why there is bondage, deviation and destruction; sorrow, sickness and death in man, what was the answer he received then that made him full of bliss? The answer he obtained then was that man would attain mukti only by realizing the atman, only by manifesting the atman. The obstacle towards this manifestation leads to sorrow, there itself lies his sin.

That is why he has made man to initially accept some restrictions and has instructed him to follow the precepts. He said to him, ‘Do not have greed, do not be jealous, do not get attached to luxury.’ He has instructed man that by means of daily continuous practice,
he should set himself free from all those veils that have kept him enclosed. The moment
those veils are removed, the atman will attain its pure form.

What is that form? That is not emptiness, not aversion towards work. That is
friendship, compassion and love towards the whole universe. Buddha has not told us to
renounce worldly desires only, he has told us to propagate love. Just the way the sun
attains its true nature only by radiating light, it is through the propagation of this love
alone that the atman attains its true form.

The dharma of the atman is to pervade all the realms—the very same is the dharma of
the Supreme Atman. That dharma of His is complete as He is ‘Śuddha
apāpaviddham’.

He is immutable, there is no obstacle of sin in Him. That is why He is
all-pervading.

If the bond of sin is removed, our access too would be unhindered. What shall we then
become? Like the Supreme Atman we will attain the form in which He is the poet, the
sage, the Lord and the Self-born. We too will become the poet full of bliss, be the
sovereign ruler of the mind, be free from bondage, manifest ourselves in our own holy
light. Then the atman in all its thoughts, words and actions will manifest itself in the form
of ‘śānta śiva advaita’—it will not reveal itself in its agitated, tempted and
fragmented form.

Maitreyī’s prayer too is the prayer of that manifestation. The prayer which is inherent
in all the buds and tender leaves of the universe, the prayer which keeps emanating from
the unfulfilled depths of time and space, the prayer which is there in every molecule


\(^{226}\) See “Three,” note 129.

\(^{227}\) In Bengali Source Text, the phrase is “deśkāle(r)” which means “space and time” I have translated as
“time and space.”
and atom of the universe, the eternal cry of that prayer that has pervaded the space which in the Vedas has been termed as ‘krāndasī’ and ‘rodasī’ that very eternal prayer of the human atman is Maitreyī’s prayer. Manifest me, manifest me! I am engulfed in untruth, manifest me in Truth. I am covered in darkness, manifest me in light. I am obsessed with death, manifest me in immortality. Ye Āvi! O fulfilled Manifestation!

May my manifestation be only in You, may Your manifestation in me not meet with any obstruction—as soon as that manifestation is fully revealed, by the radiance of Your graceful countenance I would be saved eternally. In the obstruction to that manifestation lies Your displeasure, in that manifestation itself lies Your gracefulness.

In his own life, Buddha said this very prayer of complete manifestation on behalf of all mankind—excepting this man has no other prayer indeed.

9 Caitra 1315

---

228 “Krāndasī,” Bangla Bhashar Abhidhan. 1986 ed. Rabindranath Tagore was the first to introduce and use the words krāndasī and rodasī in Bengali. In the Rg Veda, 2.12.8, “krāndasī” (noun) means “cry.” In Bangiya Sabdakosh (695), Krāndasī means “sky and earth” (own translation). The word rodasī comes from the Sanskrit word “rodah” (“rodaś”). “Rodas” means “sky, heaven and earth” (own translation). See Bangiya Sabdakosh. Rodasī was found in Rg Veda, 9.22.5. It means “earth and heaven.” The word “rodas” is of neuter gender while “rodasī” is of feminine gender. In the Chalantika (631), “rodasī” means “heaven and earth” (own translation), in case of “krāndasī” it has been mentioned that the “(root meaning is ‘That which rains’) sky. Sky and earth” (own translation), see Chalantika (161). So “krāndasī and rodasī” would mean “The sky which rains upon the earth.”

Also see Chatterjee (142, Note 82), regarding rodasī, the following were inscribed, “This word, rodasi, from rud, “to roar, cry,”” is of the same meaning as the word “Krāndasi” occurring in Rg Veda, 2.12.8; 6.25.4; 10.121.6.”

229 See “Commandment,” note 228.
Another great man who had come to this world to proclaim his Father’s glory said, ‘Just as your father is complete, you too should be complete.’

Even this utterance is not a trivial matter. He has established the ideal of completeness of the human atman within the Supreme Atman and has instructed us to keep our aim fixed in that very direction. We have our abode of Brahman not within any limited space but amid that completeness. Just in the manner the Father is complete, the son too should always strive for that very completeness. Otherwise, how would there be a true union between the Father and the son?

It is also no small matter that he has rendered instructions regarding each one of the indications of completeness. As he said, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself,’ he did not in the least belittle those words. He did not say, ‘Love your neighbour’; what he said was, ‘Love your neighbour just as you love yourself.’ He who aspires for the abode of Brahman has to attain this level of love—he has to tread this very path.

Lord Jesus said, 230 “Love even your enemy.” He did not stop fearfully midway by saying, “Forgive your enemy.” By remarking, “Love your enemy,” he has extended our aim up to the abode of the Brahman. He has instructed, ‘He who snatches away the dress you wear, give away even your uttariya231 to him.’

To a worldly person, all these instructions are nothing but exaggerations. This is because, he has no faith in any aim higher than the world. He is prepared to give away not only the dress he wears but also his uttariya to the world if that fulfils the purpose of his worldly necessities. But, if he considers the abode of the Brahman to be a mere trifle compared to his needs then it becomes difficult for him to give away even his coat.

230 Tagore used the present perfect tense here but I use the past tense.
231 An uttariya is a cloth loosely wrapped around the upper portion of a person’s body in India.
But, those who have come to man to proclaim that Brahman, the greatest of all, did not indeed intend to show Brahman as too small as measured in terms of the weak desires of worldly people. They have made the greatest utterance of all without any hesitation till their last breath.

By proclaiming such a great message in such a magnificent manner, they have instilled great faith in us. Through this they have revealed that the ultimate goal of humanity goes up to such an extent, his love is such a profound love, his renunciation is such a great renunciation.

Hence, in this great aim and in this great path, instead of making us feel dejected, it will give us courage. It will enhance our reverence for our innermost greatness. It will completely awaken all our efforts.

If we constrict our goal by making it insignificant by untruth, if we limit our means by a fence of weakness, they diminish our faith—we do not obtain what we were supposed to obtain and are unable to do what we have the ability to do.

But when great men have placed great goals before us, they have shown respect for us at that time. Buddha never felt any disrespect for anyone of us when he said, ‘manasa bhābaye aparimā am.’232 Jesus too never expressed any disrespect even for the most wretched amongst us when he said, ‘Just as your Father is complete you too be complete.’

Due to their reverence for us, we develop respect for ourselves. Then we no longer regard the difficult path of attaining the Omnipresent as an impossible path. At that time we pay attention to their voices and follow their message of fearlessness and proceed with joy towards this great journey of the Infinite. The message of Jesus is not an

---

232 Metta Sutta, 7: “A mother loves her child.” The words mānasa bhābaye aparimā am mean “let one cultivate a boundless mind or heart.”
exaggeration. Buddha’s message is not an exaggeration. If you aspire for the good then accept the completeness of this Absolute Truth with respect.

For once, observe within –see where it obstructs every day! Even when we try to unite with a single person there are so many hindrances that come in the way. Union with him is not becoming complete. It is being obstructed by pride, self-interest, anger and greed—due to indiscretion we cause hurt to others and due to our own insolence we get hurt in turn. At no cost are we able to bring within our minds that humility which makes self-surrender extremely easy and pleasant. When we can clearly see that this obstacle exists, then is there any doubt that there are innumerable obstacles in my union with Brahman owing to my nature? That which will not allow me to unite with another person completely, will also obstruct my union with Brahman. That which makes my neighbour distant from me, also makes Brahman distant from me. The manner in which I will hurt my enemy is the same through which I would also hurt Him. This is the reason why when one talks of the abode of Brahman there is no chance to hold back anything of the world at all. Those great men have not avoided anything, have not concealed anything while speaking. They say, one has to completely die in order to be reborn in Him. By following their very path we have to completely die everyday towards egotism, self-interest and have to live infinitely towards friendship, love and the Supreme Atman. Those great souls that have given faith to man to journey on this great path, we offer our pra āms and surrender ourselves to them with extreme bhakti.

12 Caitra 1315
The meaning of the word ‘Om’ is ‘Yes’. It is an acknowledgement that it is there and has been obtained. Yesterday, we had an inkling of the significance of the word ‘Om’ while discussing the Chāndogya Upanishad.

Wherever our atman finds ‘Yes,’ there itself it utters ‘Om!’

When the gods went in search of this ‘Yes’, where did they start looking for it, and where did they ultimately find it? At first, they had knocked from door to door of the senses. They said they would find this “Yes” through the sense of sight. But, they saw that there was no completeness in seeing with the eyes—it is fragmented into ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. There is no complete purity in it—it sees good, it sees bad as well; it sees some, does not see others; it sees but does not hear.

In this way they searched everywhere indeed, the ear, the nose, the speech, the mind—there were indeed fragmentation and conflict everywhere.

At last when they arrived at the heart of the Prana, they found one ‘Yes’ within this body. It is because, this Prana itself has the hold over all the prana of the body. It is in this Prana that all the powers of all the sense-organs are united. As long as this great Prana exists, the eye also sees, the ear also hears, also the nose smells. It is not that in it only one remains as ‘Yes’ and the other remains as ‘No’; in it the senses of sight, hearing and smell all remain as ‘Yes’ in one place. Hence, it is in this very place of our body that we found Om. Thereupon, our prayers with folded palms were fully answered.

The Chāndogya says, midway between the couple, that is, at the point of union between the two there itself lies this Om. The place where on one end the Rk\textsuperscript{233} and on

\textsuperscript{233} Rk and Sāma in the Chāndogya Upanishad have been interpreted in several ways. The speech is considered as Rk while the Sāma is considered as the prana but they are again considered as the same because while singing a person holds his breath. So, they both merge into Om. See Chāndogya Upanishad,
the other the Sāma, on one side the words and on one side the music, on one side the Truth and on the other the Prana have become one, there itself is this music of completeness—Om.

The One in whom nothing has been excluded, within whom all the fragments have become a whole, all contradictions have become resolved, it is only to Him that our atman wants to accept as ‘Yes’ with folded palms. It is unable to acknowledge its own supreme fulfilment prior to that; it has to face obstacles, has to meet with deception—it thinks that this ‘Yes’ is only in sense-organs, in wealth, in fame. Finally, it sees that in all of them there is sin, there is conflict, and “No” is merged with them.

It is because the Upanishad has seen the supreme fulfilment in the resolution of all conflicts that it did not lean towards only one aspect of Truth and try to completely uproot the other. That is the reason it says—

\[ Etaj jñeya nityamevātmasa stha \]
\[ Nātahpara veditavya hi kiñcit \]

This means, He who is eternally located in the atman He alone is worth knowing, there is nothing else worth knowing beyond Him. Similarly, it says again —

---

1.3.4 and 1.7. Again the Sāma Veda is said to be “ut” of the udgītha which denotes heaven, the Rg Veda denotes the earth, that is the “tha,” the space between the two is the Yajur Veda, the “gī.” This Sāma is derived from the Rk. See Chāndogya Upanishad, 1.3.7. and 1.3.9. The Rk is the star while Sāma is the moon but they convene at one point. See Chāndogya Upanishad, 1.6.5. Again the Rg Veda is considered to be the eyes and Sāma Veda to be the self. See Chāndogya Upanishad, 1.7.3., etc. These show that the two meet at one point and become one. The Rk is one extreme and the Sāma is another, so, if the Rk is the root, the origin, the Sāma is the fruit, the derivative, the refined part (My interpretation).

234 See “Om,” note 233.

235 Śvetāsvatara Upanishad, 1.12. “This Brahman alone, which abides eternally within the self, should be known. Beyond It, truly, there is nothing else to be known.”
That means, those calm beings by becoming one with the Atman, by attaining the Omnipresent from all directions, verily pervade everywhere.

It is not ‘ātmanyevātmanaṁ pasyati,’²³⁷ it is not only to see the Atman within the atman—that seeing itself is again everywhere²³⁸ indeed.

At one end of our mantra of dhyana there is “bhūrbhaḥ svaḥ,”²³⁹ and at the the other end is our dhī,²⁴⁰ our consciousness. By binding these very two into one in the middle, there is that revered God who on one end is creating bhūrbhaḥ sva²⁴¹ and on the other end is also sending out our power of dhī. He is not there exclusive of the either--that is verily why He is Om.

It is for this reason that the Upanishad says, those that know ignorance, the world as the only truth, fall into darkness, again those that know knowledge, the Knowledge of Brahman as supreme, as alienated, fall into greater darkness. On one side there is Knowledge and on the other there is ignorance, on one side there is the Knowledge of

²³⁶ Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 3.2.5. “But if a wise man strives by means of these aids, his soul enters the Abode of Brahman.”

²³⁷ Brhadārāyaṇaka Upanishad, 4.4.23. The words “ātmanyevātmanaṁ pasyati” mean “he sees the Self in his own self (body).”

²³⁸ Brhadārāyaṇa Upanishad, 4.4.23. Here Tagore refers to the quote “sarva ātmanaṁ pasyati” which means ‘he sees all as the Self.’

²³⁹ See “At Dawn,” note 104.

²⁴⁰ Here Tagore has used the word dhī to mean consciousness (cetanā), instead of intellect (for attaining Knowledge).

²⁴¹ See “At Dawn,” note 104.
Bhattacharyya 192

Brahman and on the other there is the world. At that point where these two have been resolved, there itself dwells our atman.

By remoteness nearness is discarded, by nearness remoteness is discarded; by motion pause is discarded, by pause motion is discarded; by the inside the outside is discarded, by the outside the inside is discarded; but—

_Tadejati tannaijati taddūre tadvantike_

_ tadantarasya sarvasya tadu sarvasyāsya bāhyata_.

He moves yet He moves not, He is far away yet near, He is within everyone yet He is also without. It means, He is in the midst of all, of motion-pause, far-near, inside-outside—He is all inclusive. He does not leave out anyone—that is why He is verily Om.

He is in between the manifested and the unmanifested. On the one hand, He is manifesting all, on the other no one is able to manifest Him. For this reason the Upanishad says—

_Na tatra sūrya bhāti na candratārakā_

_Nemā vidyuta bhānti kutahayamagni_.

_Tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarva_

_Tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti._

The sun does not give light there. Neither the moon and the stars, nor even all these lightenings give radiance. Where at all is this fire? He is manifested, so everything is in

---

242 Isā Upanishad, 5. “It moves and moves not; It is far and likewise near. It is inside all this and It is outside all this.”

243 Muṇḍaka Upanishad. 2.2.10. “The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightenings, not to speak of this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light everything is lighted.” The same sloka is also present in Ka ha Upanishad, 2.2.15.
the state of being manifested, it is due to His very radiance that everything else is illuminated.

He is śānta śiva advaitam. Here śāntam does not imply that there is no connection with motion. In fact, all the opposing forces have united there peacefully. The centrifugal and the centripetal forces, the forces of attraction and repulsion want to cancel each other out; but it is because these two forces are truly unopposed in Him that He is Śāntam. My self-interest does not want to accept your self-interest, your self-interest does not want to accept mine; but in the middle where there is goodness, there your interest is truly my interest, and my interest is also your interest. He is Śiva, in Him the interest of all inheres in goodness. He is Non-dual, He is One. That does not mean that all this is not there. It means that all this is one in Him. I say I am not you, you say you are not I; He is that Advaitam who has united such opposition of you and me.

Where the couple has united, there itself He exists, where no one has been forsaken there itself He is. This completeness which is all inclusive, yet not supported by any fragment—that which is not in the moon, the sun, the human being, yet within the entire moon, sun and mankind—that which is not in the ear, the eye, the speech, the mind, yet within all the ear, eye, speech, mind—to that very One, to that very ‘Yes’, to acknowledge that very completeness with whole heart and soul is the sound ‘Om’.

15 Caitra 1315

---

244 See “Three,” note 129.
We have to obtain Brahma. But, what does obtainment mean?

In the world we have obtained food and clothing, articles and various other things every day. When we hear ‘we have to obtain’ it seems as though it would have to be obtained in the like manner. If we fail to obtain Him in that very manner, we think that we have not attained Him at all. Then we hurriedly want to make efforts to obtain God in the manner similar to our obtaining all other wants. That means the inventory which we have of our goods and chattels, in which there are entries that I have a horse, a cart, a pot, a bowl, in this it should also take that into account—I have a God.

But, there is a need to think it out very well that our atman has a profound yearning to obtain God, what is the nature of that yearning? Is it the wish to add a bigger thing to our other articles?

It is certainly not that. This is because, we feel totally lost by our act of merely adding and accumulating things. Do we not long for God because we want to escape from the endless suffering of regularly adding up the articles in that manner? Would we count Him again as a third item and add to our inventory of goods and chattels? Should we further increase the garbage?

But, that our atman yearns for Brahma simply means, it is pained by plurality and so it yearns for One, it is disturbed by restlessness and so it longs for the eternal— it does not aspire for something new, something particular. He who is ‘Nityahanityānām,’\textsuperscript{245} is the Infinite within finite, it aspires to realize that Infinite. He who is ‘rasānā rasatama,’\textsuperscript{246} He who is the Supreme Essence, it is Him that it wants—it does not want any other newer essence.

\textsuperscript{245} Ka ha Upanishad, 2.2.13. “There is One who is the eternal Reality among non-eternal objects.”

\textsuperscript{246} Chāndogya Upanishad, 1.1.3. The words “rasānā rasatama ” means “the best of all essences.”
That is why the instruction of this sadhana to us is that: īśāvāsyamida sarva yatkiñca jagatyā jagat. Whatever exists in this universe, see them all as being pervaded by God—do not seek or create any other extra thing to be seen. If only this happens then our atman will obtain refuge, will obtain bliss.

This is how you will know Him within the entire universe. And, what else shall you enjoy? It is tena tyaktena bhujīthā. You will enjoy that which He has bestowed. Mā grdah kasyasvidhanam. Do not have greed for others’ wealth.

The meaning of this is that, as it has to be realized that whatever there is in the universe He pervades them all, it has to be known that whatever you have attained have been bestowed upon you by Him. What will happen due to that? Well, your obtainment will be fulfilled out of whatever you have obtained. ‘Add something more’ is not the subject of our prayer—because, where is the end to such manner of giving? But, may I be able to realize only this that whatever I have obtained has been given to me by Him. Only then in the small itself will I find the great, only then would I find the Infinite within the finite. Otherwise, it is never possible to sum up the finite to obtain the Infinite—and even on performing crores after crores of upāsanā it is not possible to arrive at the upāsanā of that very One. All the finite manifestations of the world have achieved fulfilment in His

247 Īśa Upanishad, 1.2. The sloka—

“īśāvāsyamida sarva yatkiñca jagatyā jagat
tenā tyaktena bhujīthā mā grdhaḥ kasya svidhanam”

means “All this—whatever exists in this changing universe—should be covered by the Lord. Protect the Self by renunciation. Lust not after any man’s wealth.”

248 See “Supreme Obtainment,” note 247.

249 See “Supreme Obtainment,” note 247.
supreme manifestation and all those innumerable objects of our enjoyment have attained fulfilment just because of His bestowal. If one acquires the True Knowledge of this then one would not have to move about a particular place, nor to move from door to door to seek God in any particular form. And in order to quench our insatiable desire for enjoyments, we do not have to be particularly tempted for any particular object of enjoyment.

17 Caitra 1315

Self-surrender\textsuperscript{250} (Ātma-samarpan)

That is the reason why I was saying that the remark about attaining Brahman cannot be regarded as proper. This is because He has already surrendered\textsuperscript{251} Himself to us, He indeed has no inadequacy in any respect—one cannot say that in this place He is absent and we have to seek Him elsewhere.

Hence it is not fitting to say that we have to obtain Brahman—instead, we should say, ‘I have to surrender myself to Him.’ It is at that very point where something is lacking, that is why no union is taking place. He has surrendered Himself to us, but we have not submitted ourselves to Him. We have widely separated ourselves from Him due to barriers of our numerous self-interests, pride and narrow-mindedness, so much so that we have even kept ourselves opposed to Him.

\textsuperscript{250} The literal meaning of the Bengali word “samarpan” is “surrender” and “atma” here refers to the “individual self.” But nowhere in this whole essay has Tagore used the word “samarpan” literally except in the title.

\textsuperscript{251} The Bengali word is “deo ẏa” which literally means “give.” I have translated it as “surrender” depending on context.
It is for this reason that Lord Buddha has instructed us to gradually erode this strong bondage of separateness through various efforts. If there is no entity greater than this, no joy beyond this, then there is no reason why we should destroy this self-identity with rigorous discipline. This is because, if nothing ever exists, then this ego of ours, this individual particularity itself, becomes entirely the supreme gain—then why should we not hold on to it instead of destroying it?

But the fact is that the One who has completely surrendered Himself to us, if we in turn do not surrender ourselves completely to Him then it would mean that He has not been accepted at all. It is on our side itself that the commitment is overdue.

His upāsanā is not the upāsanā to attain Him—it is the upāsanā to surrender oneself to Him. Day after day through bhakti, through forgiveness, through contentment and through service, one has to completely surrender oneself to Him in goodness and in love devoid of any obstacles—that is our upāsanā to Him.

Hence, may we not say, ‘Why are we not attaining Him?’; instead may we be able to say, ‘Why aren’t we surrendering ourselves to Him?’ Our daily lamentation is that—

Whatever I have, couldn’t give You

All, dear Lord!

My modesty, fear, honour, dishonour,

Happiness, sorrow and contemplation!

May you continue to surrender, wear away all, exhaust everything—only then would you be fulfilled in your realization.

---

252 The Bengali word is “deoa” which literally means “give.” I have translated it as “surrender” depending on context.

253 The Bengali word is “mangal.”
All manner of veils are drawn in between You and me—

So I wail and weep, so I realize You not,

Anguish so great thus sticks in my heart.

All our sorrows and pains are only due to our inability to get rid of our ego; the very moment we can get rid of that, we would immediately be able to see, “I have already attained all my attainments since time immemorial.”

The Upanishads say: *Brahma tallak yanucyate.* Brahman is, in fact, said to be the goal. What is this goal for? It is not for procuring something and drawing it towards oneself, but to lose oneself completely. *Śaravat tanmayo bhavet.* Just as an arrow gets totally absorbed in its aim, likewise we have to be completely absorbed in Him.

I do not regard being absorbed in Him solely as a matter of dhyana. In fact, it involves the entire life. In every situation, in every thought, in every work, may there be this realization that I am within Him and there is no separation anywhere. Day by day, may this knowledge become absolutely clear in the mind that: *ko hyevānyāt ka prānyāt yade a ākāśa ānanda na syāt.* There would not have been even the minutest effort of my mind and body if there had not been any bliss pervading the space; it is His bliss which provides efforts to all our actions, small or big in the form of power. This very knowledge that I am within Him, I function with His power and I enjoy by His bestowal—has to be made as simple as breathing—this is the ultimate goal of our

---

254 *Muṇḍaka Upanishad.* 2.2.4. The words mean “Brahman is said to be the mark.” That means, Brahman is said to be the goal of the Self.

255 I translate the Bengali word “laksha” either as “goal” or as “aim” depending on context.

256 These words are from *Muṇḍaka Upanishad.* 2.2.4. They mean “Then the ātman becomes one with Brahman, as the arrow with the target.”

257 The original Bengali word is “lakṣa.”

258 See “This Shore—the Other Shore,” note 97.
sadhana. If this happens, our existence, action, enjoyment, truth, goodness and happiness in this universe—all will become natural—this is because, within our consciousness we will unite with He who is Self-created, He whose knowledge, power and action are innate. Our entire yearning lies in our attaining this.

18 Caitra 1315

Self-confidence (Ātmapratya)

With my body, prana, consciousness, intellect and heart—all taken together, I am an only one. This very totality, this completeness, knows itself as a single entity and loves itself.

Not only that, for this reason it seeks the one everywhere and the moment it obtains the one, it is filled with joy. Separation causes pain to it, it wants completeness.

In fact, whatever it wants, its quest is to achieve this completeness in some form or the other. It aspires to unite its own one with those of the many around it, and to transform this small one into the greater One.

The fact that each one of us has attained such completeness of unity within, we can realize all other unity of the universe with its power only. We can understand the society as one, can understand mankind as one, can understand the whole universe as one—so much so that whatever we cannot understand as one, we do not realize its significance at all, only our intellect tends to wander about in its attempt to figure it out.

Hence, the reason that we seek the Supreme One is solely for the sake of our own oneness. This one can never pause in the middle without taking its own oneness to that extent.

The fact that we know the society as one, the basis of that knowledge is our atman; that we know mankind as one, the basis of that knowledge is this atman; that we know
the universe as one, the basis of that too is this atman and that we know the Supreme Atman as *advaitam*, the basis of that also is this atman. It is for this very reason that the Upanishads say: “Sadhaka ‘ātmanyevātmāna pasyati’”\[^{259}\]—sees the Supreme Atman within his own atman. This is because, the oneness which is there in the atman is that oneness which seeks the Supreme Oneness and attains the Supreme Oneness. The knowledge that attains Self Knowledge with the help of its own oneness, that very knowledge gets ultimate refuge within the Absolute Knowledge of the Supreme Atman. It is for this reason that the Supreme Atman has been called ‘Ekātmapratyasāra’\[^{260}\].

This means, the innate confidence that an individual atman has towards itself, it is He who forms the essence of that innate confidence. The fact that our atman, by nature, knows itself as one, the essence of knowing that very one is to know the Supreme One. Similarly, that we have a self-love, the bliss of the atman within the Atman, it is this bliss itself which is the foundation of love towards the human atman, foundation of love towards the Universal Atman, foundation of love towards the Supreme Atman. It means, the most fulfilled and truest manifestation of this self-love itself is the love towards the Supreme Atman—the outcome of bliss of the atman is in that Supreme Bliss Itself. The ultimate stage of our self-love is bliss in that Supreme Atman. *Tadetat preya putrāt preya vittāt preyahanyasmāt sarvasmāt antaratara yadayamātmā*.\[^{261}\]

21 *Caitra* 1315

---

\[^{259}\] See “Om,” note 237.

\[^{260}\] Maṇḍukya Upanishad, 7. “The essence of the Consciousness manifesting as the self [in the three states].”

\[^{261}\] Brhadāraṇyaka Upanishad, 1.4.8. “This [Self] is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, [because] It is innermost.”
The Bonds of the Mantra (Mantrer Bandhan)

Some strings of a veena may either be of copper or of steel, may be thick or thin, may be tied\textsuperscript{262} for playing the middle note or the fifth. Yet, we have to tie them so as to awaken a pure note in it—or else, everything would be fruitless.

We have to establish some special\textsuperscript{263} kind of intimate relationship with God. We have to play some unique\textsuperscript{264} tune.

The sun, the moon, the star, the medicinal plant and the tree—all have contributed their individual strains to this great universal music. Will man not have to take part in this resounding eternal music as well?

But, even now I have not tied\textsuperscript{265} my life like a string—there has not been any manifestation of music in it yet. This life has become fruitless due to an unconnected array of trivialities. In whatever manner possible, I have to establish some constant eternal tune amid this.

How will I tie\textsuperscript{266} the string?

There are many ways in which God’s veena can be attuned,\textsuperscript{267} out of which one has to select something of one’s own liking.

\textsuperscript{262} The original Bengali word is “bandhan.” Tagore plays on the meaning of the word. The root word “bandha” could mean “to tie,” “tune,” “attune,” and “bind.”

\textsuperscript{263} The original Bengali word is “biśe .” I have translated the word as “special” or “unique” depending on context.

\textsuperscript{264} The original Bengali word is “biśe .”

\textsuperscript{265} The original Bengali word is “bāndhan.”

\textsuperscript{266} The original Bengali word is “bāndhan.”

\textsuperscript{267} The original Bengali word is “bāndhan.”
The mantra is a means of attunement. It is by taking the support of mantra that we are able to bind the mind with the object of thought. It is like the tuning peg of the veena—it keeps the string firmly fixed and does not allow it to come off.

At the time of marriage ritual, it is not that a knot is simply tied with a portion of the attire worn by the man and the woman, a mantra is also chanted along with it—that mantra also goes on to tie a knot within the mind.

The mantra will help us in establishing the need to tie a knot between God and us. It is by taking the support of this mantra that we will firmly establish some special relationship with Him.

_Pitā nohasi:_ is one such mantra.

If I attune my life to this tune, then in all my thoughts and actions a special rāginī will be awakened. This very image that I am His child will take shape through all of me. Within my entirety I will only manifest this fact that I am His child.

I am not manifesting anything at all today. I am taking my meal, doing my work, taking rest—up to this much. But, the fact that my Father is there in infinite time and space is in no way manifested in me. I have not been able to secure any bond anywhere with the Infinite even today.

Let the string of life be tied with that very mantra today. In eating, in sport, in sleep, in dream, may the mantra: _Pitā nohasi_ keep playing repeatedly in my mind. May this fact be concealed to none that I have a Father in this world.

---

268 The original Bengali word is “bāndha.”

269 In the Bengali original it was “strīpurus’ which I have translated as “man and woman” maintaining the sequence of the Target Language instead of the more literal “woman and man”.

270 The White Yajur (Sa hitā), 37.20. _Pitā nohasi_ means “Thou art our Father.”

271 See “The Bonds of the Mantra,” note 270.
Lord Jesus played that very tune in the world. The string of his life was tied in such a manner that in spite of undergoing severe suffering of unbearable pain, that string never sounded out of tune even for a moment, it went on playing the tune: *Pitā nohasi.*  

Along with that very ideal of the tune which he has showed to us, with that genuine ideal we have to tie the string with such extreme care that we no longer have to think about it ever again, so that in joy, in sorrow and in temptation, it automatically sings: *Pitā nohasi.*  

O dear Father! It is no mean task to properly manifest myself as Your child. This is because, *ātmā vai jāyate putra.* The child is without doubt the manifestation of the father. It is within the child that the father himself becomes continuous indeed. If I am unable to manifest Your very untainted blissful fulfillment, then this tune of ‘*Pitā nohasi*’ will not be played.

For this very reason, may my daily earnest prayer be: *Pitā nobodhi. Namastehastu.*  

27 Caitra 1315

---


274. The words “ātmā vai jāyate putra” are taken from Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya 12.56. It is indicated in the scriptures that “his self appears as the son.” Here “his” refers to the father. These words were uttered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself.

275. See “The Bonds of the Mantra,” note 270.

The End of the Year (Bar aše)

The world is a union of departure and arrival. There is no separation between the two. We imagine the separation in our mind. Creation, preservation and universal dissolution have all become completely one. They are always merged as one. To remain merged as one itself is said to be the whole world.

There is no separation between the ending of the year today and the beginning of the year tomorrow--this ending enters into that beginning with complete silence and great ease.

But, it is necessary for us to pause once between this ending and this beginning. Once we have to know departure and arrival separately, else we will not be able to know these two as united.

It is for this reason that today, on the last day of the year, we have turned our face only towards departure. By keeping the setting sun before us, today our worship is by facing westwards. Yat prayantyabhisa višanti—He into whom all the very departures enter, to whose feet everyone prostrates silently at the last moment of the day, it is to Him that we shall make namaskar this evening today.

Today we will know ending, departure, death deeply with bhakti--we will not do injustice to it. We will know it only as His shadow, ‘Yasya chayamrta yasya mṛtyu ’.

Death is exceedingly beautiful, extremely sweet. It is death which has kept life very sweet. Life is extremely difficult; it wants everything, it grabs everything. Like a miser, it

---

277 Taittirīya Upanishad, 3.1.1.”Yat prayantyabhisa višanti” means “That into which [at the time of dissolution] they enter, they merge—seek to know That.”

278 Mahānārāya opanisad, Hiranyagarbha-sūkta, 1. 3. “Yasya chayamrtaṁ yasya mṛtyu ” means “whom immortality and death obey like shadow.”
does not want to let anything slip from its firm grip. It is only death which has made the
difficulty of life full of essence, has relaxed the attraction of life; it is only death which
brings tears to its unfeeling eyes, gives mobility to its immobile existence.

There is nothing as mercilessly difficult as attachment; it knows only itself, it shows
mercy to none, it does not want to make even a little way for anyone at all. This
attachment itself is the dharma of life; it fights with everyone because it wants to take
everything.

Renunciation is very beautiful, very tender. It opens the door. It does not permit
savings to be piled up only at a place and to become arrogant. It disperses, it gives away.
It is only death which has that generosity. It is death indeed which serves, which gives
away. That which tends to pile up at one place, it makes that to spread out everywhere.

We can forgive only because death prevails over the world. Otherwise our heart would
not have softened by anything. All pass away, all depart, we too depart. This shadow of
sadness has layered all places with compassion. By playing the soft tunes of Pūrvārī279
rāgi ī all around, it has made our heart cry. When this tune of departure reaches our ears
then forgiveness becomes very easy. Then detachment comes silently to transform our
urge for accepting slowly into that of bestowing.

When we come to know that nothing exists then we do not regard sin, sorrow and
harm as severe any more. Adversity would have become a terrible threat if we had known
that it would never move from where it is. But we know that everything drifts and even
that too drifts away. So, we need not feel dejected about it. Amidst the endless journey,
sin280 is vice281 only at a particular point, but it advances from there. It moves on even

---

279 Pūrvārī rāgi ī is a mode of Hindustani (Indian) classical music. It is played or sung in the evening.
280 The Bengali word is “pāp.”
281 The Bengali word is “pāp.”
though we are not always able to see that. Its path does not end there itself—it is on the
very point of change and rectification. If the sin of a sinner remained only immobile in
him then upon that immobility Rudra’s infinite sceptre of rule would have become a
terrible burden and would have thoroughly annihilated it. But God’s sceptre is not just
suppressing it at one point, that sceptre is forcing it to move forward. This movement
itself is His forgiveness. The death granted by Him always pardons, always carries it
towards forgiveness.

Will not the end of the year bring our lives to His doorstep of forgiveness today? That
upon which there is a seal of death, that which is to depart, will we not allow it to depart
even today? If there is anger, should that anger be taken upon the shoulders and be
dragged into the new year again? Throughout the year whatever garbage of sin we have
accumulated, today when we bid farewell to the year, will we not be able to part with
even a little of that? Shall we not be able to step into the new year by forgiving, by being
forgiven, and by being pure?

May my grip be loosened today. I have not achieved any comfort or success only
by snatching and by fighting. Today, when I come before He who accepts all, may my
heart be able to say to Him, ‘I shall let go and die.’ Today I shall not be able to
completely give up and completely die within Him in a moment; yet, may my mind bow
down in that very direction, may it extend its folded palms only to offer itself to Him,
may the flute continue to play in the very tune of the setting sun, may the heart wail in the
very enchanted rāgi ḫ of death. Before accepting the responsibilities of the new year,
today in the evening, let me offload all the burden at the seashore of the release of all
responsibilities, let me immerse myself in self-surrender; let me be soothed, be free from
filth in the waveless blue mass of water; let me accept the ending of the year completely
within my heart and be calm, be peaceful and be pure.

31 \textit{Caitra} 1315\textsuperscript{282}

Mukti

The joy of this very morning which is revealed to us every day is indeed very little. This morning has become worn out due to our habit.

Habit belittles all great things due to the smallness of our mind indeed. As it thinks itself to be bound so it binds everything as well.

When we travel abroad we do not go to see any new world. We go to see this very earth, water and sky completely liberated from our habit. In this eternal world itself, by dispelling that veil and by observing this world with our eyes wide open, we can see that Inconceivable He who is never old. It is only then that we derive bliss.

Habit cannot easily envelop he who is dear to us. That is why dear ones can eternally reveal the Inconceivable, the Infinite to us. The fact that we see him, our seeing itself does not end there—he remains beyond our seeing and hearing, and all our understanding. That is why we derive joy out of that.

So the Upanishads said, ‘\textit{ānandarūpamtam}’\textsuperscript{283}—the manifestation of bliss of God is immortality. We have no joy in that which dies, that which gets exhausted. Wherever we see the Infinite within the finite, we see the Immortal, there itself lies our bliss.

This Infinite itself is the Truth; to see It is to see the Truth. Wherever we do not see that, there itself we have to understand, due to our own lethargy, ignorance, habit and

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{282} ‘On new year’s day whatever was said’ has not been written. The previous sentence is a translation of the Bengali footnote that was provided at the end of “\textit{Bar aśe}” (“The End of the Year”) of the first volume.

\textsuperscript{283} See “Beauty,” note 111.
\end{footnotes}
stock notion we have obstructed Truth, that is why we do not obtain any joy in that.

Be he a scientist, a philosopher, a poet, it is indeed their job to dispel the veil of all this ignorance and habit of man and to show the infinite form of Truth in this world, to show whatever we see as Truth—not to create anything new, not to imagine anything new. To show this Truth as liberated only means to enhance man’s claim to joy.

Just as to leave home in order to go to a faraway country is not said to be mukti from darkness, to open the door of the house itself is said to dispel darkness; so to renounce the whole world alone is not mukti—whatever we see beyond the bondage of sin, self-interest, ego, lethargy, ignorance and stock notion, whatever we see to see this truly, whatever we do to do this truly, wherever we stay to stay there truly, is mukti indeed.

If this utterance alone were true that Brahman is blissful only in His own unmanifested form, then if we had not merged into that unmanifested form of His, there would have been no escape for us from the clutches of unhappiness. But that is not so, as in manifestation itself lies His bliss. Otherwise, why did He manifest this world? Has any great external suffering forced Him to manifest Himself? Has any entity called Maya284 overwhelmed Brahman completely to manifest itself?

That, in fact, is simply not possible. So the Upanishads say: Ānandarūpamrta yadvibhāti.285 This very manifested world is nothing but His deathless bliss itself which assumes form and gets manifested. Bliss itself is His manifestation, in manifestation itself lies His bliss.

If He is blissful in getting manifested only, then should I seek out the unmanifested for obtaining bliss? If His will itself is manifestation then how shall I possibly keep away from that manifestation of His through this humble will of mine?

284 It is Maya which makes one see Brahman as the phenomenal world, having name and form.

285 See “Beauty,” note 111.
Without taking part in His bliss I can never be blissful. Wherever my union with it will be complete, there itself will I attain mukti, there itself will I attain bliss. Only by freely realizing His manifestation in this universe will I be liberated—only by making His manifestation in me freely radiant will I be liberated. By severing the worldly bondage, that is, the bondage of existence is not mukti—it is not by making existence merely a form of bondage but a form of mukti, is itself mukti. Only to renounce work is not mukti, to do work as derived out of joy itself is mukti. To accept the manifestation with that very bliss in which He is manifesting, to accept the work with that very bliss in which He is doing work—is what we, in fact, call mukti. Not by renouncing anything, but by accepting everything itself in a truthful manner is mukti.

When do this very habitual world of everyday that appears worn out to me, this very habitual dawn that appears dull to me, become new and bright to me? It is on the day when through love my consciousness awakens with a new power. Whenever it strikes me that today I will meet the One I love, all that was not beautiful yesterday becomes beautiful today. The complete power that consciousness attains through love, it is through that very completeness it sees the Infinite within the finite, the Formless within the form—it does not have to go to any new place. It is only due to that lack the Infinite, Truth was confined to it within the finite.

The universe is His form of bliss; but we only see the form, we do not see bliss. For that reason, form only hurts us at every step. The moment we would see bliss, no one would be able to obstruct us any more in any way. That itself is mukti.

That mukti is not the mukti of detachment, that is the mukti of love. It is not the mukti of renunciation, but the mukti of union. It is not the mukti of dissolution, but of manifestation.
After the holidays we have assembled here again. It is not to alienate ourselves from work that at times we take a break from work like this—this is a means to renew our relation with work.

At times, if we do not go far away from our workplace like this, we cannot understand the true significance of our work. To become absorbed in continuous work is to give too much priority to work. Then like the cobweb of a spider, work overwhelms us from all directions in such a way that we lose even the ability to understand its true purpose. That is why to gain an opportunity to see our regular work as new again, we at times distance ourselves from it. Its aim is not solely to provide rest to the spent energy.

We will not see work alone. We also have to see the master. We will not spend our days like the labourers of this factory of the world by smearing soot all over the body amidst the intense heat of fire and harsh noise of the engine. For once at the close of the day, taking a bath and changing our clothes if we happen to see the master of the factory, then we can establish a link between him and our work, we can do away with the supremacy of the machine; only then do we derive joy from our work. Otherwise, we only become identical to the machine by continuously operating the wheel of the machine.

Today at the end of the holidays we have arrived at our place of work again. Do we not see work in a new light this time again? The inherent truth of this work had become

---

286 School of Brahminic learning.

287 The Bengali word is “śakti.” In this essay I translate it either as “energy” or as “power.”

288 The original Bengali word is ‘sabda’ which means both ‘sound’ and ‘noise’. Here ‘noise’ is apt.
dull to us by regular use; do we not feel joy when we see it bright again?

What is this joy all about? Is it in having seen the image of success directly? Is it because we think that we have done what we wanted to do? Is it the joy from the feeling of pride of our self-achievement?

No, that is not so. Man realizes the pride of his own power when he considers work itself to be the ultimate and is steeped in it. But when we see the inner truth of work, we see that entity which is many times greater than work. Then just as our pride fades away, our heads bow in reverence, on the other hand our chest swells with joy. At that moment we do not see only the movement of the machine made of iron, we see our blissful Lord.

Within this school here, there is an effort to do good. But, is it only a machine to do good? Is it merely to make rules and enforce them? Is it only to teach a language, to teach how to solve sums, to toil and set others to toil? Is it only to build a huge school and think ‘I have obtained a great result’? That is not so.

It is extremely deceptive to see this effort as great, to be proud of the very fruit of this effort as great. There is no doubt that good result is gained from the celebration of goodness, but that is only a secondary result. The fact is, it is amidst the work of goodness that the manifestation of the Good becomes clear to us. If we see at the right place we can see that very Universal Good beyond the work of goodness. That is the ultimate success of celebration of the good. The work of the goodness is a

289 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
290 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
291 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
292 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
293 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
294 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
295 The original Bengali word is “mangal.”
sadhana to see Viśvakarmā in the light of Truth. He who is lazy cannot see Him. His manifestation is hidden in the heart of he who is slothful. That is the reason why there is work, or else there cannot be any glory of work within work itself.

If we know in our heart\textsuperscript{297} that this work of ours is a sadhana to attain the benevolent Viśvakarmā, then whatever obstacle, lack and opposition that exist in our work cannot disappoint us. This is because to go beyond obstacle is, in fact, a part of our sadhana. Our very sadhana remains incomplete unless we encounter obstacles. At the time when we see opposition we do not become anxious for the fear of destruction of work; because there indeed is a result much greater than the result of work. It would not do to determine that if we struggle against opposition we would surely succeed; in fact, we do not know whether we would succeed or not—but by struggling continuously against opposition, the obstacles of our mind diminishes; due to that our fire\textsuperscript{298} becomes free from ashes, and gradually becomes radiant and in that very radiance He who is the Universal Manifestation, starts to get revealed within my mind. Rejoice that there is obstacle in work. Rejoice that you have to bear several blows from different directions as you do your work and that which you contemplate would repeatedly be defeated. Rejoice that people will misunderstand you and will insult you. Rejoice that you will repeatedly be deprived of that pay you greedily awaited. This is because that itself is sadhana. The person who wants to light a fire, how would it do if he mourns for the burning of wood? Forget about the miser who only wants to pile up dry wood. For this reason in spite of all the obstacles, complete lack and incompleteness of work, we resume today after the

\textsuperscript{296}The original Bengali word is “mangal.”

\textsuperscript{297}The Bengali word is “man” which means either “mind” or “heart.” I translated it depending on context.

\textsuperscript{298}The original Bengali word is “tej.”
holidays with joy. We do so by observing whom? It is by observing He who is seated beyond work.

To have a look at Him enhances the power of work, yet insolence persists no more; we no longer see the form of effort through effort, only its image of peace is revealed; the work continues yet there is stillness like the water of full high tide, everything continues to be dreadfully still. All calling and shouting, proclamation and rumour, completely come to an end. There is no excess in thoughts, words and actions. Then power veils its own self and becomes beautiful—as beautiful as the constellation in today’s evening sky. It has immense power,\(^\text{299}\) intense speed, tremendous enthusiasm, what a complete image of peace it spreads out, what lovely smile it smiles! In order to see that peaceful, extremely beautiful form of the Supreme Power from the seat of our actions, we will calm our insolent efforts, we will adorn the extreme pain of work with beauty and overwhelm it. Our work—Madhu dhau, madhu naktam, madhumat pārthiva raja.\(^\text{300}\) will unite with all these and will become nectarous.

1316

\(^{299}\) The original Bengali word is “tej.”

\(^{300}\) The Rg Veda, 1.90.7. Tagore rearranged the words in the slokas of the Rg Veda. “Madhu dhau” means “Sweet be,” “Heaven to us.”
In a song there is terminal point of a measure, in prosody there is a caesura, and even in this very writing, the authority of the full stop is in no way inferior to the other parts of this writing. These very full stops have steered this writing—they are not allowing this writing to meander constantly into aimlessness.

In fact, when a poem comes to an end, even that ending itself is a big part of the poem. This is because a good poem never ends in a void. Even where it ends, it speaks; scope must be given to allow these unspoken words to express themselves.

If, where a poem ends, all its strains and words run out, then the poem becomes ashamed of its poverty. When a person turns completely bankrupt celebrating a particular occasion with utmost pomp, the pomp ends up revealing not his wealth but his conspicuous poverty.

A river stops where it does because the sea begins there—so, there is no harm in its stopping. In fact, this is a stop only from one direction, not from the other.

There are many such stops in people’s lives as well. But it is often seen that man feels ashamed to stop. That is why we often hear from Englishmen that to die in harness by falling flat on one’s face while running at full speed is a glorious death indeed. Nowadays we too have started to use this expression.

Whenever man denies that there is fullness somewhere, he thinks there is dignity only in movement. A person who knows neither enjoyment nor charity, knows only how to save. But, in enjoyment or charity, when one’s savings go on diminishing, the savings come to an end in one form but come to fruition in another. Where there is no fruitful end to this saving, there is shamefaced miserliness.

Those who see life as a miser do not want to stop anywhere by any means; they go on saying, “Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go.” In stopping, their movement achieves neither
completion nor profundity. They accept only the whip and the bridle; they do not accept a great and beautiful end.

Even after having passed their youth, they drag that youth along with them--and there is no end of toil and trouble in carrying out that burdensome task. Apart from that, what shame, what anxiety, what fear!

When a fruit ripens, its dignity lies in departing from the branch. But if it thinks that renouncing the branch is a sign of poverty, then there is nothing more pitiful than that fruit!

As soon as one accepts a position, one should think to oneself, “Once I fulfil the obligations of this position, I will renounce it.” ‘This position must be protected at any cost by dragging it to the end—this is my honour and my achievement’--those that have learned this lesson from their childhood, hold tight their positions with both hands, until some accidental occurrence pulls them away by force like a bailiff.

In our country, ending is acknowledged, so no disgrace is found in it. And hence, for it, to renounce is not to beat a retreat.

This is because, renunciation does not imply emptiness. We cannot truly deem it a failure when a ripened fruit falls from its branch to the ground. On the ground, the nature and field of its efforts become transformed; it is not a retreat into inactivity. There the stage of preparation for a greater birth is taking place. There lies the period of living in concealment—there is the entry from the outside into the inside.

In our country they say: After crossing the age of fifty, a man should go to the forest.\footnote{301 \textit{Laws of Manu} 6.1. “A twice-born Snātaka, who has thus lived according to the law in the order of householders, may, taking a firm resolution and keeping his organs in subjection, dwell in the forest”. Also see “Three,” note 135.}
But that forest is no forest of leisure; it is rather a forest for the practice of austerities. There man’s prolonged effort for saving enters into the field of bestowing.

The ideal to do is not man’s ideal; the ideal to become is also of immense importance. As the paddy plant was growing by struggling against sunlight and rain, it was beautiful. But with the production of grain at harvest, when its days in the field are over and its days in storage begin, it is beautiful too. Is there any disgrace that the entire history of sun and rain of the paddy field is deeply silent with that harvest?

If we see man’s life only in his field and not in its harvest, we only spoil that life by such a resolve. So I say, there comes a time in man’s life when it is time to stop. The thing we demand from a man at work, if we demand the same when he stops working it is not only to do him injustice—but to deprive ourselves as well.

The claim that we may make on a person in repose, is not the ideal to do, but the ideal to become. When everything is in motion, always in the state of making and breaking, of rising and falling, then we cannot identify, completely and calmly, the ideal to become. When all motion ceases, then we are able to see the ideal to become. There is also the need for man to see this state of fulfillment, this form of calmness. We want both—the seedlings in the field and the paddy in the granary.

Men of action consider work to be the only thing of value. That is why they seek only to extract work from people until their last moment.

The worth of a person depends on the demands of society. In a society which demands war, the soldier is highly valued. Therefore, everyone gives up all other efforts and tries his level best only to become a soldier.

Where the demand for work is great, utmost effort of man is to proclaim himself
active till the last moment. It can be said that man is almost without a full-stop, only the
infinitive verbs prevail there. At that point where man stops, he gets nothing there, he
only feels ashamed. There, work is like alcohol which when consumed, brings fatigue.
Amidst the stillness there, man does not show any significant expression. There the
image of death is an ultimate void and full of horror. And there life is constantly churned,
perturbed, afflicted and gains motion by artificial impulse of hundreds and thousands of
machines.
Āśvin 1317

Awakening (Udbodhan)

On this special day of our ashram may our minds be awakened. The day of festivity
in our worldly life is different from any other day, it does not match the tune of every
other day. But, there is a connection between this day of our festivity and all the other
days; it is like a diamond pendant in the middle of a pearl necklace. There is a
connection, there is uniqueness as well. This is because man has a little aspiration for that
uniqueness. Some day man wants to come away a little from his daily life and wants to
have the taste of its joy. For the same reason we go out for a picnic to have our home-
made meal at a distance. We try to get the very item of our everyday use in a newer way,
different from its regular habit. It is for this reason that we have made the preparation to
enjoy the food of our ashram by moving a little away in a special manner today.

But, in the preparation for a picnic when the food items are kept quite far away from
the picnic spot and have to be carried there in huge amounts, then in a moment the stock

---

302 It is a verb with incomplete predication.
303 The original Bengali word is “biše .”
304 The original Bengali word is “biše .”
of our storehouse comes to our notice. If there has been a waste every day, we will see a shortage on that day.

In our preparation for an extremely delicious meal\(^{305}\) in this picnic today perhaps we will find something lacking. If that be so, how else would we then externally cover that lack which is within? Those that live in the city do not have any lack of implements, it is only by means of that they can save the honour of their festivity. At our place over here, the path to all such accomplishments is blocked. But, there is no fear. The demand has been placed for the festivity of our ashram on a daily basis. Here in the nest of the birds of the sal forest, here in the sky as a place for the wind to play over the vast expanse of land, every day the tune of our festivity has accumulated at least to some extent. But due to absent-mindedness of every day, the symphony has not reached our heart properly. Today we have to do away with the lethargy of habit and to pay attention to it just once, we do not have to procure anything else from outside. Let us calm our mind and sit; let us extend our folded palms in prayer, then from the forest of nectar, the fruit of nectar will fall of its own in our palms. To enjoy that preparation which prevails everywhere on its own is indeed our festivity. We did not see Him as we did not call Him everyday, the moment we call Him from the bottom of our heart today, we would see Him indeed. We have no need to stimulate our mind by the impact of any external excitement. This is because there is no gain in that, rather there is loss of power in it. When the sap inside a tree gets the touch of spring, only then the flower blooms, that flower itself is Truth. The momentary delusion which is evoked in the external excitement is but a mirage; we should take care not to be deceived by that. Let us awaken the power which is within us. Even if we get its response for a moment then its fulfilment is for ever. Even if we can be true for a moment, then that Truth will never perish; that seed of immortality will be

\(^{305}\) The original Bengali word is “amrita.” I translated it as “extremely delicious meal” in this context.
sown forever in the field of our eternal life. If we can properly bring the wick of the lamp of our mind to touch the holy sacrificial fire which is eternally burning at the place of sacrifice of this universe then at that moment itself our wick could be enkindled.\textsuperscript{306}

May our awakening be fulfilled today amidst Truth, may the light of this dawn not be a veil to us today, let the eternal Light be manifested today, may the green canopy of the earth not conceal anything today—may the eternally Beautiful Being reveal Himself today! Just in the manner an infant embraces its mother completely, may our consciousness unite with the Supreme Consciousness in the like manner. While reciting poetry, as our mind attains the poet’s joy through his rhythm and language, in a similar way today within this dew-drenched calm and holy universal beauty, may we directly perceive that universal joy with all our heart and mind.

7 Pau 1320

The Day of Initiation (Dik ār Din)

That day when we have to see the ashram in its true light, the music of joy will begin to play, garland of flowers will swing, rays of the sun will become brighter—because, it is only through joy that it is possible to see the Truth, not through any other means. Through our extreme attachment we hold on to everything externally. It is for this very reason that a day comes for us to see the inner form of joy by getting rid of that attachment.

Which day did Maharsi,\textsuperscript{307} the founder of this ashram, choose as the day of festivity to see this true form? It was the day of his\textsuperscript{308} initiation. The day of initiation is on that very day when man accepts that which is great within him, the Eternal Life within him.

\textsuperscript{306} The Bengali word is “udbodhita.” I translated it as “enkindled” depending on context.
No effort is put by man for his being born into the world; the preparation has been made long before his coming there. But, when man goes beyond himself on his own and accepts initiation from the light of the sun; from the entire sky, from the holy air, from the right hand of this great universe—the day when he says, “I am an eternal being with an immortal life, it is within me that the Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Supreme God is manifested”—that is the day of festivity of entire mankind. Very similar was the day of initiation, the day Maharishi offered pra āms to the Infinite within the universe, the day he realized the Immortal Life within himself and dedicated himself to Him as an offering, he realized that that very day was really the day of festivity and he has bestowed that upon us. It is by taking refuge in Maharishi’s initiation that we are here. This ashram is the external form of that day of his initiation. This is because, here there is initiation in action, initiation in learning, initiation in teaching—initiation into that eternal life. That supreme mantra of initiation prevails within this ashram. If we forget that fact every day, at least today in the light of joy of festivity, be prepared to clearly realize that form of immortality of the ashram. Be awakened today, see the Truth. Listen to that mantra of initiation in the air today—

िसवास्यामिद अवयाम यत्कर्म जगताय जगत;

307 Here Mahar i refers to Debendranath Tagore. The word “Mahar i” has been entered in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as “Maharishi,” a noun, meaning “a great Hindu sage or spiritual leader.” See “Maharishi” in COD 11th edition.

308 A moon dot (°) was put over the pronoun “tār,” translated into English as “his,” as a mark or sign of respect.

309 Tagore had used the simple present tense here but I have used simple past tense.

310 The Bengali word here is ‘udbodhito’ having a similar meaning with ‘jagrato’ which means ‘be awakened.’
‘The Supreme Will through which the whole universe is preserved and governed, the Supreme Will through which the sun, the moon and the stars are regulated and the infinite ārti lamps all over the sky are never extinguished, realize this that all the universe is pervaded due to that very Supreme Will!’ All vibrate with the throbbing of His will, with the spark of His bliss. See that bliss. He renounces so we enjoy. It is because He renounces that the fountain of life flows in every direction, the river of bliss flows through various branches and sub-branches, there is no end to the flow of sweetness in the pure love between husband and wife in every house—in the deep love of parents towards their children. That life, that joy, that love moves in an endless flow; enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself in joy. In the blueness of the sky, in the greenness of the forest, in knowledge, in love, in joy—enjoy it, enjoy it completely! Mā grdha. May there be no filth, no greed in the mind—let there be freedom from all bondage of sin and greed. This is the mantra of his initiation.

This mantra has created this ashram, this mantra has protected this ashram. Today’s celebration in the sky of this ashram, in its holy air, in its pure light, in the vast expanse is to see, to listen, to accept this mantra in our perfectly united lives. Let the mind be awakened, let the God of this ashram be manifested, may He open the door of His temple. May His love and blessing be bestowed upon these young lives who are as tender

---

311 See “Supreme Obtainment,” note 247.
312 “Ārti lamps” are lighted by dipping a wick in ghee (purified butter) in an earthen or brass lamps to worship a deity.
313 See “Supreme Obtainment,” note 247.
314 A moon dot (ঁ) was put over the pronoun “tār,” translated into English as “his,” as a mark or sign of respect.
315 The original Bengali word is ‘utṣab.’
as flowers, may they bloom in holiness, love and purity; may they remember this auspicious day, may they accept this mantra—this support for life. The whole path of life lies before them—may they accept the blessing of immortality and proceed with their journey, may they progress by attaining the initiation for their whole life. May this mantra of initiation help them to overcome all the dangers and obstacles in their paths. Be awakened, your life!

Morning

7 Pau  1321

More (Āro)

We want more, we want more—this song is the song of festivity. We have come to that storehouse where we will obtain more. The earth is full of food and riches, man’s home is full of love and affection, he is born in the lap of Lakṣmī. There we spend our days meeting our needs. Man’s festivity lies in coming out of that to the courtyard of the storehouse of more.

At one time man greatly feared the gods on earth. Man could by no means decide as to whom to appease to lead a life of happiness and ease, who if displeased would bring about trying times. To appease that power which had no connection with the atman, terror-stricken men had assembled with the sacrificial animal. The puja performed out of

---

316 The original Bengali word is ‘udbodhan.’
317 The original Bengali word is ‘udbodhan.’
318 Tagore uses the Bengali word “āro” fourteen times in this essay apart from its title. I have translated “āro” as “more.” Tagore uses this word as an adjective, adverb or as a pronoun depending on the context.
319 In the original Bengali sequence if translated into English will literally read as “riches and food”.
320 In the original Bengali the sequence was such that if it were translated into English will literally read as “affection and love.”
fear is certainly not festivity. Just as a coward who falls into the clutches of a dacoit says, ‘Whatever I have I give you all, but don’t kill me,’ to appease the unseen power of the world, that day man said, ‘I will give you all, do not put me in danger.’ But that is surely not a gift of joy. There is nothing to fear once the God of joy is realized. That is because, this God of joy is, in fact, much ‘more’—it is He who transcends all—whatever I have obtained and known, He is more than that too; what I have not obtained, what I have lost, He is much more than that; He is more than wealth; more than fame; more than comfort. That is why in the puja of that More, in the festivity of that More, man says with joy, ‘Take my wealth, my life, my fame.’ Man’s knowledge of this very more, within and without, is not at all a knowledge that offers much comfort. The day man discovers that he is not a beast, his god is not a beast, he is great, and his God is great, on that very day he accepts supreme sorrow. That day man is truly victorious, man is truly brave—so a celebration of victory will not take place on that day. Just in the manner a bird begins to sing with causeless joy at the very touch of light at the edge of darkness, man too begins to sing on the day at the touch of the Supreme Light. On that day he says, ‘I am the child of the Immortal.’ He says, ‘Vedāha meta.’\(^{321}\) I have attained.’ With that power of attainment he realizes that Immortal within himself, he is afraid of fear no more, pays no heed to death; in the face of danger he says, ‘My path is before me, I’ll not step back, I have no defeat—Rudra, Your grace is endless.’

Just give this a thought once, at this very moment when we are celebrating the festival of joy here, what a terrible battle is being fought among men overseas! What does this light of dawn see there today—what a horror of destruction! There, in this horror, man is preaching humanity—there a summons has come from history, all have come out when they heard that call. Those that have erred, those that have not erred—in this war which

---

\(^{321}\) Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, 3.8. “Vedāha meta” means “I know”—that is, I know the Great One.
side is responsible to what extent—this is a matter of distant future. But, there is a summons from history—that call has been heard by the German, the English, the French, the Belgian, the Austrian and the Russian. It is through history that the God of history will accept His puja; in the midst of this battle is His festivity. This is the commandment of the God of history that it will not do for any race to amass its national interest in order to make its nationality narrow. Man has arranged to offer human sacrifice at the feet of that demon of national interest for such a long time, that is why an order has been issued to demolish the temple of that demon today. The God of history said, ‘Well!’\footnote{The original Bengali word is “nā,” literally meaning “no.” But here the sense is not that of negation. In colloquial Bengali “nā” is used for assertion as well.} The walls of the temple of this demon of national interest should be crushed and knocked down to the ground by all of you. This human sacrifice cannot continue any longer.’ As soon as this order was given, the cannon-balls from both sides dashed against that wall.\footnote{Tagore uses the present perfect tense here but I used past tense.} The group of brave men is taking its offering of blood-red lotus\footnote{Blood-red lotus here refers to the heart.} for the puja of the God of history. Those that were leading a life of comfort have shunned that comfort and said, ‘We will not hold on to our life, there is much more\footnote{The original Bengali phrase was “āro āro beśi.” I have translated this phrase as “much more.” The word “beśi” here also implies “in excess.”} within man than just life.’ In the roaring of the cannon that victory song of humanity has rung. Mother is wailing, wife and children have become orphaned and are beating their breasts. Amid that wail the festivity is going on. When business and trade were going on, money was being amassed at home, power was being pervaded throughout the royal kingdom—there was a summons to come out. When Śiva\footnote{Śiva is the third god of the Hindu Trinity, known as the destroyer.} filled His trident with scorching breath, mother had to weep and say,
‘Go!’ With her own hands the weeping wife had to dress her husband with the coat of mail. Today in the oblation of death overseas, there is that great festival of life.

Has the sound of that festivity not yet reached our festivity today? Who has uttered this mantra, ‘Leave everything—come out,’ into the ear of the man who is a coward, who yearns for comfort, who snatches and fights every day for some petty self-interests! He who has the storehouse of ‘more’ said, ‘Go! Disregard death and do come out!’ Would we not be able to know that great man of valour today, the man who has become ecstatic by drinking the immortality of more? Did we not erect the temple of an ignorant god, a lesser-god in this country to perform his puja with all the necessary sixteen articles? Did we not sacrifice human intellect and power to him? Should we not destroy that temple of delusion, of ignorance, due to which one man avoids another with hatred and keeps him at a distance? Do we not have that fight before us? We have to receive ill treatment from our friends and relatives. We will accept sorrow and will be struck by insult, criticism, ridicule—we will not be afraid of that.

In our Śāntiniketan, the God of history has pointed out that very mantra of immortality through which we would obtain that power. Īśāvāsyam ida sarvam. There is nothing to fear, everything is pervaded by fulfilment. That very immortality is beyond death. See it as being pervaded by God—that abode of bliss will be revealed everywhere. There will be no fear! Discard all that is useless and come out.

---

327 The 16 articles necessary for the ritualistic worship of Hindu gods are: A seat [Āsana], welcome or auspicious arrival [Śvāgata], water for washing the feet [Pādya], offerings [Arghya], water for purification [Ācamaniya], articles required for ceremonial ablution [Snānīya], dress [Basana], ornament [Bhū a a], scent or sandal-paste [Gandha], flower [Pu pa], incense [Dhupa], lamp [Dīpa], an oblation of a mixture of honey, ghee, milk, curd and sugar [Madhuparka], betel-leaf [Tāmbula], the sacrament of offering drinking water to the manes or deities [Tarpa a] and bending down [Nati].

328 See “Supreme Obtainment,” note 247.
Enjoyment of pleasure and guilt of delusion have entangled us at every step, without any fear leave them all, purify yourself in the ablution of valour and come out. The wail that has sounded throughout the universe today has no tune of fear in it; history is being created through this—it is within this, that the God of history derives His bliss. That wail is quiet within Him. Within that ‘śānta śiva advaitam’ death has ceased to exist. With His own hands He has applied the tilak of victory on the forehead of man. He has stood amidst separation and opposition. The place where the travellers have journeyed, where the loud and sharp noise of death has echoed, there, see that ‘śānta śiva advaitam’.

Today accept the blessings of Rudra out of His right hand. The gracious smile of Rudra is seen only when He sees that His valourous children have defied sorrow. Only then does that smile of his gracious countenance radiate and get immersed in the light of Truth. May that graciousness of Rudra be radiated all over our lives in today’s festivity.

In the morning.

7 Pau 1321

---

329 See “Three,” note 129.

330 See “Three,” note 129.
Innermost Peace (Antaratara Śānti)

Your look indeed pervades the entire sky.

You see me with steadfast gaze day and night.

Will I realize this here, within the core of my heart—that He continues to look upon my face? Should all these words be uttered amidst this uproar\(^{331}\)? In the starlight, in the soothing darkness, when from the infinite sky the steadfast gaze of an eye falls upon the realm of silence in a bhakta’s heart, then in the midst of that very solitude of silence this profound message of supreme bliss can awaken—this is what it appears to be. But, that is not so. It is certainly not true that in the midst of that very solitude a sādhaka’s\(^{332}\) festivity becomes complete. It is in this noisy\(^{333}\) fair of man, amidst this wonderful sport of buying and selling, within this very uproar\(^{334}\) itself that the hymn of His puja rises.\(^{335}\)

To move far away from this is never his festivity. The music which rises\(^{336}\) from every star in the sky, keeps repeating itself throughout the ages. There is no noise,\(^{337}\) no crowd, no pushing and shoving—it is as if in the galaxy, the Baul\(^{338}\) in His universal form,\(^{339}\) is

---

\(^{331}\) The Bengali word is ‘kolāhal,’ a word which occurs fifteen times in the talk itself. I have translated ‘kolahal’ as ‘uproar,’ ‘noise,’ ‘din,’ ‘din and bustle’ and ‘tumult’ depending on context. It also has a derivative in this talk.

\(^{332}\) A sādhaka is a spiritual aspirant.

\(^{333}\) The original Bengali word is a derivative of “kolāhal.”

\(^{334}\) The original Bengali word is “kolāhal.”

\(^{335}\) Tagore had used the present continuous tense here but I have used simple present tense.

\(^{336}\) Tagore had used the present continuous tense here but I have used simple present tense.

\(^{337}\) The original Bengali word is ‘kolāhal.’

\(^{338}\) Baul is a class of devotees originally Hindu, especially of the Vaiṣṇava sect but later on went on to include sufis as well. The bauls are wandering minstrels singing and dressing in a specific manner to express their doctrine.
repeatedly playing a particular tune on His ektārā. But, is the music that is rising in the human world of a single string? So many varieties of strings, of hostility and warfare, of opposition and struggle are being clattered--there is no limit to their diversity. But, amid these diversities and conflicts, the tune of peace is being played. The six cardinal passions\textsuperscript{340} are attacking man from all directions, the frantic dance is going on, but even so many discordant notes could not, in fact, wipe out this single tune! This very tune: \textit{śanta śiva advaitam}\textsuperscript{341} has started playing in the midst of all these conflicts, all revolutions and all hostilities.

Do we not see in today's mela itself a reflection of this very festivity which continues in the history of mankind? Here, some are engaged in shopping, some are playing games while others are listening to the yātrā.\textsuperscript{342} But no prohibition has indeed been made—it has not been said, ‘Worship is being performed here, all of you sit quietly and be good.’\textsuperscript{343} May the tremendous uproar\textsuperscript{344} that continues\textsuperscript{345} within the human society throughout the world, defile the quiet peace of Śāntiniketan. Only man causes uproar,\textsuperscript{346} no one else does. But, has man’s uproar\textsuperscript{347} ever been able to stop his music? God, in fact, wills to reclaim the gem from the core of the mine, He would

\textsuperscript{339} The Bengali word was ‘viśvarūp.’ Viśvarūpa is Lord Kṛṣṇa's universal form. One instance when the Lord revealed his universal form to Arjuna is in chapter XI of the Bhagavadgītā.

\textsuperscript{340} Six cardinal passions are lust, anger, avarice, delusion, pride and envy.

\textsuperscript{341} See “Three,” note 129.

\textsuperscript{342} It is an open-air folk dramatic musical performance of rural origin. The closest urban equivalence of this term in English would be the opera.

\textsuperscript{343} The Bengali word “sādhu” as a noun means a “pious or holy man,” but in this sentence it is used as a verb, meaning “good.”

\textsuperscript{344} The original Bengali word is ‘kolāhal.’

\textsuperscript{345} Tagore uses present continuous tense. I have used simple present tense.

\textsuperscript{346} The original Bengali word is ‘kolāhal.’

\textsuperscript{347} The original Bengali word is ‘kolāhal.’
really reclaim His puja from within this very uproar\textsuperscript{348} of disharmony—because, when man, the creature of this uproar,\textsuperscript{349} attains peace then what else can be compared to that supreme peace? That peace is not there in the unpeopled ocean, not in the silence of the desert, not at the inaccessible mountain peak—that profound peace is within the atman. The noise from all directions gets defeated while trying to attack it—that peace is kept well-protected within the depths of this tumult.\textsuperscript{350} The market\textsuperscript{351} has already been set up, there is noise of buying and selling—amidst that itself every man is carrying a seat for yoga within his own atman. Ye yogi, wake up, your seat for yoga is ready, take your own seat—sit where there is uninterrupted peace in the midst of this din and bustle,\textsuperscript{352} amidst distress, agitation and conflict of the inherent six cardinal sins. There light your lamp of festivity, no untamed gust of wind will be able to put it out. Do not be scared of uproar\textsuperscript{353}—as the kernel is protected by being inside the bitter covering of the shell within the ovary of a fruit, in the same manner peace sought by man has always been protected by being surrounded by this uproar.\textsuperscript{354} Man has indeed always placed his personal god above his earthly possessions. Where his attachment has entangled all the threads of life, it is in the midst of that itself the pinnacle of his temple looks up to the abode of God.

There is no harm in the fact that our mind has not become propitious today. Let go, let the mind of one wander wherever it wants to—there is no prohibition. In spite of this unlimited independence, man’s place of puja has always been carefully protected. We have come to realize that utterance in the midst of this din.\textsuperscript{355} Irrespective of one who has

\begin{footnotes}
\item[348] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\item[349] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\item[350] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\item[351] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft hāt\textquoteright which also means \textquoteleft fair.\textquoteright In this context \textquoteleft market\textquoteright is appropriate.
\item[352] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\item[353] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\item[354] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\item[355] The original Bengali word is \textquoteleft kolāhal.\textquoteright
\end{footnotes}
bhakti, one who does not have bhakti, the worldly person, the businessman, the sinner—
His puja is being performed amidst everyone. It is in this mela itself that His puja has
taken place, it is amidst this very uproar\footnote{The original Bengali word is ‘kolāhal.’} that His hymn has risen. It is at this very place
we hear that sound of footsteps of ‘śānta śiva advaitam,’\footnote{See “Three,” note 129.} It is on the path of this
marketplace\footnote{The original Bengali word is “hāt.”} that His footprints have been left. He frequents Himself in this very fair of
man’s coming and going—it is here itself that He reveals Himself.

Night

\textit{7 Pau} 1321