CHAPTER VII: DIGGING THE FOUNDATION

All the great teachers who could help their disciples to realize the Ultimate Reality, they were themselves in living communion with the Supreme. In all the scriptures the signs of the Holy Ones, for the inward, real experiencing of communion is exoterically expressed in several of the great affirm

Joseph and Moses see or speak with the Lord face to face. Moses and Elijah go up into the mount of the Lord forty days and nights. The "mount of the Lord" of the Old Testament has its counterpart in the Zarathustical Ushidaraena; the Hindu Meru, the Sahasrar Cakra of Kudalini - Yoga, the brahma - loka of Buddhist meditation. The Buddha and his great disciples can spend seven days and nights continuously in the deep samadhi or communion called the cessation; and they can visit and converse with Brahmā the Greater-Zarathustra sees God with his eyes, knowing him in Truth to be the Wise Lord of the Good Mind and of good deeds and works. Lao-Tze knows the origin of things by knowing Tao.

Various are the approaches to the Supreme Communion in Silent aloneness. When the heart grows still with the touch of Beauty, when self so surrenders that Passion meets Love as the river meets the sea, when the mind is so free of all images that Truth shines shadowless, or when the votive act flows into the heart of infinite Grace, there are no gates to bar the Path. Before the
complete immersion into the Silence, there is a state of discriminative consciousness characteristic of the holy one's approach on each separate occasion. It influences the form or nature of the consciousness which will emerge after the Silence. The Silence itself is devoid of both discriminative consciousness and unconsciousness, for here Awareness and Being identical. As the emergence out of the Silence proceeds that Awareness - Being suffers limitations into form, a form distinguished by attributes traditionally associated with one or other of the divine. Names which are the springs of power and benediction in the scriptures of the world. This mode of consciousness is the fount of inspired teachings which the holy One presents in the shape of the divine dialogue. Every sentence of this Prophetic speech is the milk of deep prayer and the bread of Contemplation for his disciple.

The named divinities are products of man's mind, temporal and unreal, labels so to say, of the immortal real. So merely to read the letter of the Scriptures easily misleads the reader into regarding the named divinities as independent personal Beings, other than him who is in communion. If he who reads the known a loosening of the bonds, better still the dissolution of the limitations imposed by separative self-consciousness, he will be free of the confusion-making conflict between the "I" and the "Thou". Then he will not mistake the
named divinities as a Transcendent Being wholly other than the self-conscious 'I'. Then too he will become aware, provided his thought processes do not interfere, of the living meaning hidden in the words of scripture.

"I am that I am"; "I am Brahman", "The Tathāgata (the Buddha) is a name tantamount to Truth (dhamma) tantamount to Brahman, and again, 'The Tathagata is the dhamma-become, to brahma become', 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'; 'I am the truth - anal haqq'; I am the I that has given up I'.

The supreme communion is not the communing of an 'I' with a separate 'Thou'. In the Supreme Communion there is a vanishing of the opaque barrier of separative self-consciousness. Phenomenally, the separate psychophysical organism which bears the Teacher's name is there, a tangible, living man visible to all. But with the vanishing of self-consciousness, he who erstwhile was conscious as 'I am myself and not you' is no longer conscious in those terms, nor in the terms, 'Thou and I are one'. He is in the state of I AM - the one and only I AM which is the one, total, absolute reality. He does not know - in the ordinary sense of a perceiving subject knowing an observed object - that he is in the I AM state when the I AM shines unobstructedly through him.

Thus the Supreme Communion is in actual fact the disappearance of all that dismembers the Unity. There is no separative consciousness of discrete particulars to
sunder the unity of the I AM. Here the word "I" is not a personal pronoun, nor does it represent a blownup self-become-superself by union with a God born of man's imagination. In this Communion where self-ness is not, the word "I" may be spoken of as transpersonal: 'I am the I which has given up I' as Siva said to Kumara the Karttikeya (Tejobindu Up. 3.3).

So as long as we are self-conscious we are as opaque matter obstructing the light. When we are reduced to our no-thingness, the Transcendent is there. In this experiencing of the Infinite we are unself-conscious. We do not know God, but God knows us. We cannot know God for our kind of knowing is incapable of grasping the Infinite; the knowing by the Infinite of us is other than what we can mentally perceive.

Experiencing the immeasurable is indescribable. The Unknown, the Infinite, cannot be crammed into the known and finite mould of thought-speech. Thinking-speaking about the Transcendent only forges mental images of the imageless - a game of make-believe like the fantasy-play of an imaginative child. The Living Experience is Truth in the religious sense; It is the real knowing of God. The images made by the mind, the verbal formulations set down in a book, even in Holy Writ, however stimulating or inspiring, are but expressions of conceiving and bringing forth, excrescences of the uneffable Reality. They are but a tomb of the Truth. Man the Living Immortal, must rise out of this tomb, leaving in it merely a bundle
of clothes, an astonishment to the unawakened.

Form, nevertheless, must not be despised. Its very limitations are the goads that move us to transcendence. Thought itself can serve the purpose of laying bare the fact that all images are but idols; and speech itself can sound the alarm that deflects us from the rape of truth. If thought-speech be pure, the human dialogue can lift our eyes to the stars. Then, if it is possible to empty the mind of all its images, its illusions and delusions, the divine dialogue can take place, for the emptied mind, spacious and silent, does not hinder the experiencing of the transcendent. This unclouded vision is shapeless and formless. It is not finite. After the unself-conscious experiencing in which the total mind was wholly silent, the surface mind again sets up the self-conscious experiencer. The verbalizing faculty intrudes upon the beatitude of silence; finite images of the imageless Infinite materialise the unclouded vision, and thus the word of scripture comes into being.

The act of conceiving and the act of verbalizing must be as pure as possible. What sullies the purity is our conditioning; the conditioning of the psycho-physical organism through natural evolution for over a thousand millennia, and the cultural conditioning by the particular society in which we are born and bred and educated. The great teachers were those who, to the highest degree possible in their circumstances, had grown free of their
conditioning. This freedom is pre-eminently marked by the fact that each saviour or enlightened one outgrown the tradition in which he was brought up and the disciplines in which he was trained, without seeking to deliberately oust or destroy the faith and religious practice of his own fellow men ("I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" - Mat. 5.17).

His teaching, nevertheless, inevitably shakes, even cracks, a fossilized old order. But for his true listeners, the Word which he utters is the Bread of Life, for he who has rightly outgrown his conditioning is a creator. His Word is the affirmation of the living experiencing of the Transcendent. Such speech is prophecy, Prophetic speech. It inspires, it moves, it fecundates; but it cannot communicate, meaning that it cannot hand-over the Ultimate Reality to the listener. Each man has to realize the Transcendent for himself, even as the newborn babe has to breath for himself in order to live as an individual. Such realization is possible if the quickening light of Spiritual insight plays upon the Word, for thus there is revelation of living truth.

This living truth-religious truth - is not a doctrine or belief or mental cognition or intuitive perception or verbal statement. It is the unself-conscious, immediate awareness of the here-now. It is the actual state of fully awake BEING, without separatively perceiving
being as self and the environment as not-self, without interpreting the Infinite Reality as idea, shape, form, sound, touch, smell or feeling. Let Reality BE. Let there be no disturbance of the Silence, of the Peace of God which passes understanding. Just live that Life Eternal. That is the experiencing. That is the 'substance' of Religious Truth. It is totally lived by whole being. Springing out of that timeless ineffable into time - and into experience and event - the mind, if holy, will give expression to prophetic speech.

The holiness of the mind depends on spiritual insight, and insight depends on purity of mind and heart. Thus religious understanding is not superficial verbal understanding nor simply sensibility. It is "knowing" by at-one-ment, by a "soul-union" which transcends intellectual ideation and intuitive grasp. The perfection of the subsequent verbalization depends first upon the purity of the mind and this purity is none other than the freedom from all the conditioning by natural evolution and by socio-cultural influences, and next upon the training and skill of the intellect.

The Ultimate Reality is not a matter for critical analysis or engaging exposition. It has to be lived with our total being. Reader and writer together embark upon a genuine enquiry, a wholehearted honest experimenting, a ceaseless searching. There is no end to this, no
final answer, for all ends are dead-ends, all man-declared finalities are denials of the non-finite Transcendent. Our enquiring and experimenting and searching is simply our love - gift to Life Abundant; through motiveless outpouring of this gift there is measureless discovery of the Unknown.

Being serious means, therefore, that neither reader nor writer may embark on this voyage with any ulterior motive. A defined motive is no other than a fixation by the mortal in terms of the limited and particular. Thus we merely tread the wretched round of mortality and miserably fulfil the mortal motive, predestined, an illusion where sad fate is death. How can ever-dying mortality compass or reveal ever living immortality?

Many a high-sounding motive may lure the unwary writer: to expound the true meaning of Holy Scripture; to comfort the sorrowing; to enlighten those in darkness; to serve God; to love one's neighbour; to save man from destruction; to exalt the true faith; to leave the world a better place than one found it; to show the underlying reality of the world's religions; and so on. Can we not see that they are all rooted in self-ness, delusion, pride, conceit, ignorance, hate, power, lust and greed? That they all are modes of exploitation of man by man? And yet, if a writer writes because care-free thoughtless love carries him on the crest of a creative life-wave might not all pure motives find sweet and unpremeditated fulfilment?
So let every calculated motive be eschewed, and let reader and writer approach the Ultimate Reality as beggars, stripped, dispossessed. Our greatest qualification when we approach the Unknown is that we know nothing. The mind is empty. The attention is blind — waiting to be shown; deaf — waiting the Word; bisexed and unproductive — waiting the immaculate conception and Virgin birth; lame — waiting the leading of divine hand. In this clean state of primordial Newness, we may beg for our Daily Bread in all seriousness.

The mind is empty. The attention glows, white hot. This emptiness does not mean the blankness of total ignorance. We do still have our knowledge through the experience of our whole past in the form of technical skills, intellectual perceptions, aesthetic faculties and any other forms that make up our psychological content. But whereas in the past we felt we possessed knowledge, when in actual fact we were possessed and imprisoned by beliefs and ideas and in short our total experience; whereas in the past we were in the unenlightened state, the state of avidya as taught in India, we have now the facility of complete dying to the past and to every flickering mortal moment. So the attentiveness lives immortally at white heat, unbound by the psychological movement of sense, impressions, perceptions, conceptions or ideas through the whole of chronological time. This is the enlightened state, the state of vidya of the Indians, the state of creative emptiness, of the Void which filled with the per-
petual flashing of the Plenum. This is the state of freedom. This is the open mind, the mind that unbiased and unprejudiced, the mind whose light never darkened by any preconception or assumption.

With this mind, serious, one can fearlessly approach the Ultimate Reality. We can now be true scholars, that is true disciples, which means true learners. The true learner is a ceaseless discoverer of the new, not just a modifier, however brilliant, of the past. Unto him, the infinite Unknown continuously moves into a temporal beatitude of the known. He, the bereaved beggar, holds out a bottomless bowl, an invisible fiery song of adoration through which the endless stream of divine beneficence flows. He is aflame with enlightenment. To him, in love with Truth, Transcendent wisdom is an open book, and his blind attentiveness fills the world with streaming light. He, true scholar, neither clings to ideas or beliefs or doctrines, nor does he impose them on any man. Free of self-ness, with its endless conflict of grasping vainly for self-perpetuation against the implacable destruction regeneration wrought by the death-rebirth of the becoming process, he is free of fear.

Let we, thus prepared, study the religions of the past, and study religion which is now present, never forgetting that for the study of religion, the spirit demands a renunciation by intellect which is not required by any worldly study. The holy books of the world which
state the Word of God or Truth or Wisdom or Love, will remain stumbling monuments painfully bruising us, unless we read them with the eye and the heart with which we read, must read, the wordless holy book, the Book of Life in which indeed "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psalms 19.2).

He who reads the Book of Life, only reads, Reading, he understandd. Out of his understanding arise the verbal forms which express his comprehension. His Word of Wisdom is his compassionate response to his children hungry for truth. How significant is his final word - AUM - (Svet. Up., 1.13,14; Prasna. Up., 5.1-7, Mandukya Up. 1-12). For this sound has no meaning in terms of thought speech. The reader of the Book of Life freely relinquishes the verbal forms of comprehension. He does not fix them; he does not commit the sinful, folly of attempting to organise Truth into final system. Finalities are corpses. Therefore he transcends all fixations of thought. He who is serious and fearless will, scatheless, blunt the wounding edge of bondage. He will see light.