I have seen sorrow every day,
Seen sin, in various guise,
I have found from moment to moment,
In the eddy of ceaseless moments,
In the streaming flow of life
All over the world,
Death is playing the game of hide and seek.

When in the cruel night of sorrow
By the stroke of death
Man breaks into pieces
The walls and limits of his mortal sphere,—
Will not the immortal glory of God
Shed light on him?

Here we find that the poet believes in finite immortality, though he is not sure of the exact form in which it would make its appearance. But this immortality is not limited to us human beings only; to the poet it seems as if the whole world in its forward march is moving towards an unknown destiny, from unknown to the unknown; there is a speechless movement and silence is only broken by the flutter of the wings.

We thus find that in two different moods he indulges in two different fancies. In some verses and writings occurring at different times of his life, he feels assured of the immortal existence of our finite being and individuality, while in sturdier, and probably more rational, moments he is satisfied to see the destiny of this finite individuality merging in the ceaseless cosmic activity.

In one of his recent publications the poet describes his vision, when through a very grave illness people had almost despaired of his life. He says that the prison walls of old ignorance vanished like mist in a moment. The creation of new life became unveiled in the first gleaming dawn of pure effulgent consciousness. He perceived himself as boundless and as crossing the milky way of the distant eternal sky in the transcendent region of light on the banks of the subtlest destruction.

But there is again a particular mood of the poet in which
he felt absolutely sceptic about the ultimate destiny. Thus in a letter in verse written to the writer the poet says:

I do not know what day awaits
Beyond the death.
Shall the shadow of this life,
With its last glimmering rays,
Create a new phantom show,
Some new colour,
In the land of the setting sun?
What I have known of this life
Is not little,
It may have a limiting line,
Still it is limitless,
It's deep truth in my life
Knows my self
As pervading the whole universe.

In the same poem the poet says that before the eternal question the mind remains absolutely speechless, but sometimes it so happens that we perceive its tender touch and receive that with a lowly forehead as its greatest price. We feel that the strings of our lyre can never express the music of the transcendent. In a momentary flash we seem to perceive the heart of the beautiful but we cannot reach it. The door of this earth opens for a moment and the secret room is visible for the twinkling of an eye. The shadow of the transcendent is there, in the heart of the mortality the vessel of the immortal lies covered.

Thus in poetic inspiration he feels the deep relation that exists between the here and the beyond, but as to what exactly the relation is, the oscillating mind of the poet has given different expressions in different moods of his life. It is this undeciderness in detail and a decided condition as a general attitude, that marks the humanity of the poet. He is not a professional philosopher, who is professionally bound to give any dogmatic or logical opinion about the mystery of this universe and he is in no need of making any compromise with any particular religion.
He feels the pulsation of the world around him in his emotional ecstasy and gives such intellectual interpretation of it as appears to him to be correct for the moment. But of one thing he is certain throughout the conviction of his life, that this world is a part of the immortal, through whatsoever mortal phases it might pass.

Immediately after his vision at the time of writing the Prabhūt Sangīt the poet wrote his drama Prakritir Pratisodh (Nature’s Revenge) in which he tried to show that abstract quest after the infinite, as in the case of the Ascetic, leads us nowhere. It was only when the Ascetic’s heart was touched by love of a woman and its infinite yearning that he really became happy and realised the purpose of his life. The infinite must descend into the finite, before it can attain its real fulfilment. Up to the end the poet has been loyal to this perspective of life and this forms the keynote of his mental temperament. The poet in his “Reminiscences” says that the beauty of nature is not merely a mirage of the mind but is an expression of the joy of the infinite itself and it is for this reason that we forget ourselves before this beauty. This intuition is a real apprehension which is greater than all logic. It is through this emotional path that nature drew the Ascetic from out of the sphere of the finite to the royal presence of the infinite. The poet himself says that this drama was a sort of preface or introduction to all his future literary efforts.

In the devotional songs of the poet published as a collection of religious songs written at different times, the poet stretches his faith very definitely on a personal God, full of faith and trust. These songs are no doubt very charming but somehow or other we do not find here the poet in his full self-consciousness and his inner passions were moving more or less in the traditional ways of religious worship. In Naivedya, however, written about the age of forty, the poet’s religious attitude was gradually taking an independent shape. The same reverence and love for a personal God and the same resignation appear in a deeper form. There is
a feeling that the music of the eternal God is always heard in our lives with its power of removing all unholy feelings from our mind. The greatness of God is such that once we realise it there is no scope for our petty egotism.

If the gates of my heart remain ever closed, break open the gate O Lord! . . . If by your call on any day, my sleep is not broken, awake me in thundering pain.

The poet is filled with delight as he looks on the world but still he is deeply conscious of his failings and prays for the destruction of his egotism. He feels sure sometimes that in our journey towards God there is no death or separation. His, however, is not an attitude of a retiring ascetic. He wishes to be harnessed to work, for he feels that our call to work is the mission of God and that, unless we entangle our hearts with passion, we can keep ourselves holy and pure even in the dust and mud of our daily interest:

Take me by your call through the open portals into the assembly of the world . . .

The poet was now more than forty years old and it is not improbable that he was feeling in his mind the reflection of the world-wide fame that he was to acquire in future and the urge in his inner soul for a higher destiny in the life of the world; yet we do not anywhere find any sign of pensive disappointment that he was not yet having the recognition from the world at large that he so richly deserved. He had the broadness of heart to take pleasure and pain in the same happy spirit as being gifts of God. Thus he says:

Whosoever has given me pleasure, has brought me near to God, and whosoever has given me pain has done the same. I bow to them all. Whosoever has loved me has lighted His candle, whosoever has come near to me has brought God into my soul and whosoever has left me has drawn me towards God,—I bow to them all. I may or I may not know, I may or I may not admit, yet wherever I open my eyes I always find God before me.

Though anxious to be harnessed to public work, he had none of the self-conceit of the politicians and public men.
Save me, O Lord, from my work. I shake from fear of my own shadow. My selfish thoughts swallow me. I weave my net of falsehood and deception everyday; my egotism shuts the door of my heart. Save me, O Lord, from myself, save me O Lord!

Yet he is not like a devotee of the older type, who wishes to enjoy God only in his private meditation. He did not wish to realise God only in subjective emotionalism, but to see Him and realise Him in His works, in Nature and, above all, in humanity. Thus he says:

I shall admit you among all—not merely in my mind and in the corner of my heart or in my own composition, but among all in the whole earth and the sky shall I accept thee, O Lord. By giving up my all I shall accept thee, and by taking all that is given to me I shall accept thee. Not merely in the hymns of adoration or in the sounds of music or in solitary contemplation, but I shall accept thee where the world is awake—in whatever is pleasant and unpleasant. I shall accept thee as I do not know you, and I shall accept thee because I know you. Not merely in the pleasures of life, not merely in my beaming face, not merely in the days of advantage and opportunity, but when misery and sorrow darken like clouds around me I shall humble my head and accept thee with tears in my eyes.

This spirit of perceiving God everywhere gradually deepens as we pass to the songs of Kgjñi (1907). But from the time of the publication of Sāradotsav (1909), we find gradually a deeper realization of the joy of nature as flooding the heart of the poet—Nature not merely in its self-sufficient aspect of lovely beauty but as revealing God through it. That through all nature there is a shower of God’s joy is a creed with which we are very familiar from an early period of the poet’s life. But there it is not so concrete and definite, as we find from the time of the publication of Sāradotsav. He finds the mad showers in the dancing clouds and feels within himself a yearning. In a stormy night he feels that through the whole nature his beloved was coming nearer and nearer to him and the yearning for a distant meeting becomes vivid through his lines. This is entirely a new attitude with which we were not familiar before. Whatever he felt about nature, its blessings and
its joys, were hitherto expressed in a stereotyped manner, as coming from God, and this God was introduced to us more or less in the traditional perspective. But to see God in the yearning that is produced in us by the phenomena in nature, sweet and calm, terrible and devastating, is a view which is at once untraditional and unique. We do not find it in the life-history of the great mystics of the past, either of India or of the West. It is here that we may assign the great originality of Rabindranath. To identify God with the inward psychological yearning that is produced as an echo from nature suits very well his theory of art and spirituality.

The secret of the poet's great confidence and optimism is discerned in a beautiful song of his in which he says that the worship that is not completed is not lost; the flower that falls down before blossoming, the streamlet that is lost in a sandy desert—they also are not lost. "What is behind me is not all false, for what is unrealised here is already realised and completed in the Lord."

But with all the ravishing charms of nature through which the poet realises his deity, he is always true and loyal to his older idea that mere emotionalism and subjectivity is not the way of realising God. Thus in one of his songs he says:

It is only there where you are in tune with the whole world that
I am in contact with you—it is not in the lonely solitariness of the
forest or in the corner of my own mind that I am to find my Lord.
But where you are dear to all you are dear to me. Where you
extend thy hands to others, it is there that my love also wakes up.
Love cannot remain in secret, it spreads out like light.

From about 1920 the oscillations of his mind seem to have
come to a pause and we but seldom hear of his struggles and
failures. Behind all the flowers, herbs and the trees and the
different seasons and their characteristic behaviour, he feels a
divine presence that speaks to him the message of the unknown.

I shall sing thy name alone and under the shade without any
language and without any hope. I shall call thy name in vain, and
without any need, for the mere intoxication of it, like the infant calling his mother merely for the sake of calling, merely for the pleasure of lisping.

Again,

You are so so rich, O Lord! yet you wish to take little grains of corn from my hands. The world is laughing at you that to make me a donor you will be a beggar and that from your chariot you will come down on the ground and walk with me in the fields for ages and ages.

The faith and trust manifested in songs like these is deep and fathomless. In morning and evening, through the sky and the earth he manifests within him an experience of a divine presence in love that is inimitable. But, all the same, the poet also feels that the realisation of the deity is but another name for the greater and greater realisation of his own self. Thus he says: "This my increasing knowledge of myself will never end and it is in this way alone I know Thee."

We thus see that the philosophy that slowly developed and permeated through the various stages of the poet's life was neither a logical rationalism nor a re-statement of any traditional philosophy, but is rather the echo of the spiritual experience through which the poet passed, and which, despite outside influences, is in reality a creation of the music of the soul, the inspiration of which came from within and from without. It gradually dawned on him that the divinity which danced in the outside world on the wings of the flying seasons, through his personal joys and sorrows, his yearnings and musings, is the same within and without. His own personality was but a reflection of this deity and, standing before the world and before his own mind, he discovered the super-person not as a metaphysical substance or a theological God but as a deep reality and person whom the poet experienced through all his thoughts and writings, whom he always felt as the master-musician who blew his flute through him, and filled him with joy unspeakable. Based on such an experience the philosophy of Rabindranath becomes concrete and
living; becomes the faith of a devotee, the faith of a poet who has a vision of the unseen.

It should be unwise for us to bring the conviction of the poet in line with the convictions of other great saints and to pass any comparative judgment on it; for that could only be the subject of a separate endeavour and, indeed, it would be as rash and as unthinking as to botanise over a flower blooming in the light of the sun. But we can only say that the depth of the poet's feelings regarding his relation with the universe, as his deity, is at least as rich as any of the passions of the great saints for their Master that the religious history of the world has made us familiar with. There is, however, a great difference between the songs of other saints and mystics and those of Rabindranath in this, that here the emotions lose their abstractness and subjectivity. It is no longer the mystic ecstasy that burns the heart and destroys the individuality but a communion which holds within it the beauty of the external nature and the breath of humanity. Our intensity of emotion has mingled with the stream of love that flows through nature and man: the individuality merges in the absolute and yet asserts itself not merely in resignation to, and deep enjoyment of, the divine, but in the spirit of the age that he incarnates, the spirit that is prepared to take humanity as its God, but yet assembles within it the depth of meditation of the Yogin and the ecstasy of love of a Nam. Arvâr, a St. Francis, a St. Catherine or a St. Teresa. It is virile yet humble, self-centred yet all-pervading; and its expression does not imply any psychopathic debility, or the aridness of a metaphysician. It is simple and straight, and a profundity of sincerity is at the root of it all.
GURUDEVA

By Gurdial Mallik

Only when the gong is sounded in the Hall of Heaven does there take place a true meeting of one soul with another on earth. And such a contact is always a compact of deep love and life-long loyalty. It is like Sakuntala’s ring of recognition. This is exactly what happened to the writer over a quarter of a century ago, when he was at College, in Bombay. One morning he read in a leading local daily that the Poet of Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore, had been awarded the Nobel Prize for his Gitanjali. The paper had also published his photograph. The moment my eyes fell on his handsome face, some one within me exclaimed in a tone of ecstasy, “This great man will exercise a transforming influence on your life.”

But some years had to elapse before I could have the rare privilege and pleasure of touching his feet in reverence, at Santiniketan. I went there as a pilgrim in August 1919 and stayed in the Ashrama for about a fortnight. As ill-luck would have it, the Poet was ill and no visitors were ever allowed at the time into his presence. And I would have returned home sorely disappointed had not that good man of God, Mr. C. F. Andrews, very kindly arranged for me a five-minute interview with the Poet.

At the appointed time I was ushered into his private apartment. He returned my humble greetings with a smiling nod. We sat for the remaining few minutes in silence without exchanging a single word with each other. When the allotted time was about to be over, Mr. Andrews beckoned to me to rise and take leave of the Poet. I obeyed. And then the miracle happened! As I was about to depart from his presence, he looked up and said, “Your seat here has been vacant for long; so come and occupy it whenever you can.” Whereupon I was
moved to the depths of my being. I felt I was re-born and I experienced at the time an expansion of consciousness which seemed to touch the uttermost ends of the universe. And he, whom I had known till then as a Poet, now became my Gurudva, my Master.

Since then, off and on, I have been honoured with opportunities to serve his ideals and institution in my own humble way. But, strange to say, my lips have ever remained sealed whenever I have found myself in his presence. This may be due to a lamentable lack of the interrogative faculty in me, or because I feel overawed by the majesty of his Himalayan mind. One thing, however, I cannot help truthfully testifying to, that, sitting near him, I have invariably found that my soul is mysteriously unveiled to me.

Looking back, however, and trying to assess what I owe to him, I would like to observe, in a brief compass, that the transmuting touch of his personality has helped me to sense and see that Truth is circular, that it has its nest as well as its sky. And this has deepened my understanding and appreciation of its various aspects and expressions. I have realized that the world is larger than the well of the frog in the fable and that life is both a symphony and a synthesis. The joy of being all the time on the road and travelling is far greater than worshipping at a wayside shrine, no matter how self-satisfying might be the sense of steeled security in its shadow. Man is the focus-point and the fulcrum of the Eternal Truth, Beauty and Goodness. And so I have learnt to love humanity.

Blessed am I that the Freedom of the City of His Love has been conferred on me through his grace. I feel blessed like the bamboo piece which the flute-player has fashioned into a vehicle for pouring forth “melodies eternally new”. To-day I salute him with grateful love and say to him, in all humility, “Master, my debt to you is of a nature which can never be paid. But, may I just tell you that your magic touch has made me a singer and a servant of the Spirit ?”
THE POET AS EDUCATIONIST

By K. R. Kripalani

Of the many priceless gifts which the great Poet of India has given to his people and to his age, the educational experiment at Santiniketan is by no means the least. Among his inimitable creations, it occupies a unique place. Unlike his other compositions he did not release it in a finished and perfect form, but, like Nature herself, gave it life and impulse, and has since watched and tended its growth, inviting all those who may to share in the creation. Its defects and imperfections, therefore, reflect the defects and imperfections of ourselves in so far as we have failed to justify the trust he has left to us; for it is as much a gift to his countrymen as a test of their worthiness to receive it. That test is being worked out and only the future can measure its results.

This strange entity that has grown for forty years and seems still to grow, has been variously described as an asrama where the “forest ideals” of the ancient Indian sages are sought to be revived; as an experiment in child education; as a centre of Indian Renaissance in art and music; as an international seat of learning; as a social and economic movement for the uplift of Indian village life. Even more variously it has been judged, some over-estimating its actual contribution, others dismissing it as a mere poet’s fancy. Some have even sneered at it as a haunt of lotus-eaters. No criticism has been adequate, and, none, we hope, entirely malicious; for an achievement that has not been worked out, an ideal whose possibilities are still struggling, is difficult to judge. A poet’s dream, it undoubtedly is, for who but a poet can “attract the voice which is yet inaudible in the air”, or “bring the earliest tidings of the unborn flower to a sceptic world”? A haunt of lotus-eaters, it may easily become, for a thing of beauty, though it may inspire
sincere man to noble endeavours, does surely attract many idlers. Those who would understand Santiniketan must therefore suspend their judgment for a while and view it as a growing, struggling thing, with many a scar on its form, left by its forty years of strife in an unbelieving world. It has grown from such humble beginnings that not even the great planter knew what the seed he was watering would finally grow into.

Indeed, we do not know if, had the Poet known that he was creating such a vast and many-sided institution, he would have fixed its form in its present shape, or would have selected the present site for the purpose. For materially the soil seems hostile to the purpose. Barren and inhospitable, it yields even drinking water grudgingly and at great cost. But this hungry and parched soil must have hid a great spiritual secret, for it drew to it the footsteps, and caught the imagination, of a great man of uncommon spiritual sensitiveness, the Mahārṣi Devendranath Tagore. One may still see the memorable spot sheltered by the two aged ebhatim trees, where the great sage used to sit and meditate on the One Eternal. His youngest son was then little more than a babe, and the Mahārṣi, with that unconscious prophetic insight which we associate with spiritual men, prepared the future field of his son’s endeavours by filling that obscure, neglected spot with his benediction and by giving it its first habitation and a name. It was natural, therefore, that many years later when the son, who had already made his mark as a great poet and a daring thinker, was looking about for a quiet place, remote from the daily distractions of city life, where he could conduct his first experiments in child education, his choice should fall on a place, near at hand and hallowed by its association with his great father. Thus began in 1901 Santiniketan’s career as an educational centre. How humble the beginning was may be gauged from the fact that the poet-teacher’s first batch comprised less than half a dozen pupils.
II

This fact has never ceased to surprise me that a great poet, in the prime of manhood, when his creative powers were in their full swing, should have chosen to adopt the vocation of a schoolmaster—the latest among the despised castes of India—in a neglected corner of Bengal. That he did so and preferred the hardships of a life of stark simplicity (Bolpur then had little to offer by way of what are known as the amenities of life) to the easy ways and splendid society of his family in Calcutta, is one more proof, if such were needed, of Rabindranath’s deep and passionate interest in problems affecting the welfare of his country. And of such problems none seemed to him more deserving of attention than the system of education which had established itself in the country under the patronage of the British rulers. As early as 1890, when the Poet was not yet thirty, he wrote an essay—Sikshār Her-phēr, in which he pointed out the tortuosities of the then prevailing system of education which, instead of developing, stunted the minds of the growing generation. Forced at a very early age to master the intricacies of a foreign language, the Indian child expends all the resources of his mind in trying to balance himself on crutches and in the meanwhile forgets the use of his legs. He is worse off than the unlettered savage who at least knows how to enjoy the use of his limbs.

The Poet knew by his own bitter experience that of all the handicaps he had to overcome in his struggle to educate himself, the greatest was the system of education then prevailing in the country, a system admirably suited to turn out a race of half-grown, literate, docile subordinates, answering to Aristotle’s description of ideal slaves, men able to understand reason without possessing it. To liberate the children of the next generation from this mechanical and degrading “education factory,—lifeless, colourless, dissociated from the context of the universe, within bare white walls staring like eye-balls of the dead”, became the mission
to which the Poet dedicated the best years of his life. Describing
his own school days, he recalls: "We had to sit inert, like dead
specimens of some museum, whilst lessons were pelted at us from
on high, like hailstones on flowers." An apt simile. For children
to him are the flowers of humanity who must be allowed to grow
in freedom and beauty. The arrogant school master must help,
and not thwart, the direct influence on the child's mind of the
great teacher Nature. The child's mind is extraordinarily aware of
the things he sees around him and is much more receptive than
his teacher's to sense-impressions. The wise teacher must there-
fore provide him with the environment which will stimulate and
feed this receptivity. The child learns with his limbs and with his
senses, long before he is able to understand with his full mind.
And so this poet, who was a great lover of children, set out to
create for them an environment which would make their "intro-
duction to the great world of reality easy and joyful." And
therefore in his School it was "no impertinence for the boys to
be boys."

Side by side with free physical development and constant
and direct imbibing of the influences of Nature, music and the arts
must be directed to train the child's emotions and his budding
sensibility. It is interesting to observe how close in this particular
is this Indian sage's approach to education to that of the Greek
thinkers. Both Plato and Aristotle attached tremendous signifi-
cance to the moulding influence of music and the arts on the soul
of the citizen in training. Not only did they regard a well
thought-out system of education as the greatest moulding influence
in society, but they conceived of education in terms of a full and
harmonious development of the individual. The one-sided
emphasis on mere learning is a bias characteristic of modern
Western universities and their caricatures in India, and none has
condemned it more passionately than Rabindranath.

Permeating and guiding all these various influences on the
growing child's mind are the wise sympathy and understanding of
the teacher. The teacher must share the life of the pupil and
watch his activity, not only in the class room but outside as well. For the child is learning all the time and the teacher who knows him only in the class room for stated periods in the day can hardly know him. A good school must therefore be residential. The Poet himself shared the life of his pupils and by his wise example created a tradition at Santiniketan which is one of its enduring glories. Today his age and health prevent him from giving that practical guidance, and those of us to whom he has entrusted this tradition are little men, lacking his great sympathy and wisdom. But the tradition nevertheless sustains us and we avail of it according to our varying capacity. But even today one has only to watch Nandalal Bose at work with his students to realise how great are the results when a wise teacher with sympathy, insight and imagination is there to carry on the Poet's ideals.

Santiniketan, however, was destined to become much more than a School and was to grow with its Founder's ideals. The very first few years of the century discovered in India a ferment of new ideas and political aspirations. His own province, in particular, was the centre of a great and growing revolutionary movement. The Poet whose passionate and uplifting writings had done much to create those aspirations now felt the responsibility of shaping them as well. His experience of those agitated times taught him, however, that a true and lasting basis of a people's national aspirations could only rest on their own creative and constructive activities. We must purge our moral, social and economic life of its evils and establish our own self-respect before we can truly claim the respect of others. In his own School he had already taught his boys the great lesson of human equality and had abolished the social distinction between the Brahmin and the so-called untouchable, the Hindu and the Muslim. Now he strove consciously to link the educational activities at Santiniketan to the reconstruction of the social and economic life of the villages near by. In 1913 some land was purchased by him near the village Surul, which served as the nucleus of what today is known as Sriniketan. Today that modest
beginning has grown to large dimensions and many and varied are its activities, of which the latest is the good work it is doing to relieve the suffering of the poor victims of this year’s famine.

Meanwhile the conviction had been growing on the Poet that the new generation of his countrymen was very much like the branches of a tree, eagerly stretching out for life and expression, while the soil from which the roots had sprung was daily being repudiated. The so-called intelligentsia of that generation, and to a lesser extent even of this, were borrowing their patterns of thought, of conduct, even of their feelings, from the West, thereby justifying the Poet’s charge that the “educational institutions in our country are India’s alms-bowl of knowledge; they lower our intellectual self-respect; they encourage us to make a foolish display of decorations composed of borrowed feathers.” “Once upon a time,” he reminded his countrymen, “we were in possession of such a thing as our own mind in India. It was living. It thought, it felt, it expressed itself. It was receptive as well as productive. That this mind could be of any use in the process, or in the end, of our education was overlooked by our modern educational dispensation.” “Life never imitates, it assimilates”, and so he warned them that “if the whole world grows at last into an exaggerated West, then such an illimitable parody of the modern age will die, crushed beneath its own absurdity.” It was an obvious truth and yet it needed reiteration by him that “for proficiency in walking, it is better to train the muscles of our own legs than to strut upon wooden ones of foreign make, although they clatter and cause more surprise at our skill in using them than if they were living and real.” And so the Poet set about to build up a centre of indigenous learning and culture, “to break open the treasure-trove of our ancestors and use it for the commerce of life”. Thus were established the Vidya-Bhavana (Institute of Oriental Research) and the Kala-Bhavana, (the Home of Fine Arts), for without the arts, “which are the spontaneous overflow of our deeper nature and spiritual magnificence”, knowledge is “a dead load of dumb wisdom”. 
But though Rabindranath thus became the most earnest exponent of a full and complete national renaissance, he was no narrow nationalist, who distrusted foreign culture and influence as such. On the contrary, if ever there was a seer whose range of sympathy knew no bounds, racial or geographical, it is he. What he objected to was "the artificial arrangement by which foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind." His many world tours had revealed to him the dangers of a narrow and self-complacent nationalism and he was one of the earliest thinkers to give passionate utterance to these fears. What he had prophesied then is being borne out today to the very letter. As usual, he was not content with mere talking, but wanted to fulfil his own share of the responsibility. He therefore declared open his own centre at Santiniketan to the whole world and invited thinkers, scholars and artists, irrespective of any distinction, to come and collaborate in the task of interpreting the different cultures and religions of the world, and thereby help in creating that mutual sympathy, understanding and tolerance on which alone can the unity of mankind rest. Thus was laid the foundation at Santiniketan of Visva-Bharati, as a seat of International Learning and Culture.

III

In conclusion the Poet’s ideals of education may be summed up as follows:

First: The child should be brought up in such environments as would provide him with opportunities of direct and close contact with Nature. Civilized existence in society imposes, in any case, such severe restraints on the first, fresh and vital impulses of life that human nature tends to be perverted unless its impulses are renewed and revitalised with constant reference to Nature.

Second: The child’s senses being more alert than his mind, teaching in its early stage should be, as far as possible,
through play and activity, so that the child enjoys as he learns. He should be encouraged to do things himself and to lean as little as possible on his teacher.

Third: Both through their work and through their play the children must be constantly trained in self-reliance and hardihood,—two virtues on which the Poet lays great emphasis, and the lack of which, alas! tends to make the average middle-class Indian boy such a mollycoddle. They are best developed by simple living, by looking after one's own needs, by learning to "rough" it and by the necessity of drawing on one's own resources and having to improvise one's own games and entertainments. As a further training in self-reliance the Poet had also introduced at Santiniketan the practice of students' self-government. Matters concerning dormitory discipline, picnics, organised entertainments and literary and other creative activities are even now mostly regulated by the students themselves.

Fourth: Equal emphasis should be laid on individual initiative and on group- or corporate-action, so that, along with self-reliance, a sense of community service and esprit de corps should also grow. The students must not only learn to act in common but should also feel and claim the community or the institution as their own. Those who have seen the students of Santiniketan either on excursion or engaged in some group-activity at Santiniketan, like fresco-painting, stage-decorating, etc. or seen them quietly take their turn by day and by night when one of their comrades, or indeed any ashrama resident, falls seriously ill, or ever heard them sing lustily their local anthem—Āmāder Santiniketan (She is our own, the darling of our hearts, our Santiniketan), will appreciate the strength and beauty of this spirit.

Fifth: All teaching should be through the mother-tongue so that the child's natural urge for self-expression should not be impeded by the obstacles of unfamiliar sounds.

Sixth: When the child's senses have been trained to a proper awareness of his surroundings and he has learnt to observe
and love Nature, his experiences should then be made intelligible to him, at a later stage, in terms of scientific categories. (For the Poet is a great advocate of scientific knowledge, though he denounces its misuse by men as an instrument of greed for power. He has himself written a general introduction to science for Bengali readers, entitled Visva-Parichaya.)

Seventh: Education to be real must be of the whole man, of the emotions and the senses as much as of the intellect. Music and the arts which refine and heighten sensibility, purge emotions and train one in the exquisite use of his natural instruments of self-expression, must be made to exercise their influence on the child from his infancy.

Eighth: While the child’s growing sensibility should be well grounded in an adequate appreciation of the best traditions of his people’s cultural heritage, his activities, as he grows up, should be linked with the economic life of the great mass of his countrymen. Hence the introduction and evolution at Santiniketan of the beautiful seasonal festivals, of the Festival of Tree-planting and Ploughing, of an almost uninterrupted succession of cultural activities, and the development at Sriniketan of the various schemes of rural uplift.

Ninth: Though well-rooted in its own indigenous soil, the citizen-in-embryo’s social and moral consciousness should be extended to an appreciation of other peoples’ cultures and ideals of life as well. To bound the mental horizon by national frontiers is not only to sow the seeds of discord among mankind but is an abridgment of the human personality itself. To foster an international and world outlook is, therefore, one of the most emphasised aims of the Poet’s scheme of education at Santiniketan.

And last but not least: To ensure that the emphasis on individual self-expression and the development of the personality does not degenerate into a sharpening of the ego, with its inevitable passions of cupidity and self-aggrandizement, and thereby defeat the very aim of true education, the individual consciousness must be charged with that sense of the one,
impersonal and universal Brahman (or God, Over-soul, Mind, Will or Law, whichever term one prefers), pervading and making akin all life and nature, which is the common and, one may say, the one redeeming feature of the religions of mankind. Mere intellectual conviction of the unity of mankind or of the common destiny of any particular race or class, however effective as instruments of policy, are insufficient by themselves to subdue the tempest of man's overweening ego. Thought has to be realized as religious feeling before it can gain access to that basement of the consciousness where operates in silence the power-house of the mind.

These are the great ideals which this great poet, sage and friend of mankind has tried to realise at Santiniketan, against tremendous obstacles. How far the seeds he has planted have borne fruit, is yet difficult to estimate. He has done his part, given us great ideals and has not only indicated the means of working them but has actually set them going. No man ever left a richer or a nobler heritage of great possibilities to his people than he has done. If his people do not acknowledge the trust, if they let these possibilities wither for want of nourishment, or, worse still, if they mutilate and distort them by working them to lesser ends, then they will only prove their own unworthiness as heirs. If the high proves too high and the heroic too hard, it will be because we are little men, with small minds and puny shoulders. This is the answer to the persistent critic who asks, "What will happen to Santiniketan, when the Poet is no more?" What has happened to all the great ideals, bequeathed to humanity by its great men? Men live and grow on them or perish in betraying them, as they are perishing before our very eyes.
THE GENIUS OF RABINDRANATH—
ITS CHARACTER AND LINEAGE

By Kshitimohan Sen

BIOLOGISTS consider all living things as the evolved outcome of their previous organic stage; variants there might occur but nothing could appear all of a sudden as something born of itself. Every living object constitutes the continuity or extension of some unbroken stream of life. That is why, in the world of men, every one has a generic or family name, along with his specific personal name. The two together introduce him to others in the most complete manner. In this respect the Sanskrit word santāna (offspring) is wonderfully significant.

The most precious possession of a nation is its literature. Wherever that literature is truly living and great, most assuredly it has always maintained a vital connection with the literary expression of the preceding ages. The vast literature of Rabindranath is one of the greatest fortunes of India to-day. A literature so keenly pulsating with life must reveal the closest relationship with the deepest thought traditions of ancient India. The exquisite expression of his genius, although original, is nothing accidental nor does it stand all by itself. His genius, too, may be said to have a name both personal and lineal. In this article we shall try to trace and discuss the unbroken connection that Rabindranath's literature has maintained with the undying thought traditions and literary expressions of ancient India.

The most ancient literature of India are the Vedas. A major portion of them are mainly concerned with rites and rituals, hymns and psalms, connected with religious observances. And yet through them flows a thin stream of poetry which the lovers of literature would consider to be the very soul of the Vedas. It is like the thin line of water trickling along the edge of the vast sand-bed and constituting the life of the river. To the thirsty
souls the vast heaps of sand have no meaning as compared to that refreshing little stream of water.

The inner poetry of the Vedas is to be found in their verses and songs, and it is with the songs and poems of Rabindranath that they often have the greatest affinity. Nobody should imagine that by affinity I mean that the Poet has directly drawn upon the Vedas for his literary inspiration. His genius is beyond all comparison and needs no plagiarism to bolster it. I mean no more than that there is a vital connection between his literature and that of the ancient India—a continuity of life as inevitable as in the world of biology.

Very early in life Rabindranath had made a careful study of the Upaniṣads; his own spiritual career, his “sādhanā” had found in them inspiration and sustenance. No wonder that many of their ideas have often crept into some of his sermons and religious songs as well. What is really surprising is that some passages in the Saṁhitā, with which Rabindranath had the remotest chance of contact, appear to contain the earliest seeds of some of his deepest poetic ideas. In such instances we see that, however great a genius might be, if his works are instinct with life they cannot be wholly accidental. Whether we know it or not, in their basic ideas they are all imperceptibly connected in a sequence with the parent stream.

The early initiation of Rabindranath in the faith of the Upaniṣads finds its reflection in profound utterances in the poems 57, 58 and 60 of Naivedya.

The poem 57 begins thus:

हे सकल ईश्वरे परम ईश्वर

The mantra 6/7 of Svetāsvatara is:

सामिष्टज्ञानां परमं सयथ्रम्॥

The poem 57 continues:

तपोवन तुरुच्छारे सेषमक्षारे

दोषणा करियालिंह सबार उपरे
Herein is reflected the well-known mantra of the Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad:

यो देवोधिनी योषयस्तु
यो विस्वेश्वर्मनमःस्वेशि ।
य अग्निधीपो यो वनस्पतिः
तस्मात् देयवाय नमो नमः || (२,१७)

In the 38th poem of Naivedya Rabindranath writes:

ताहरा देखियाँछनौ—विस्तारचर
अरिहत अनन्द हृदेन अनन्द-मिर्गैरः
अपितु प्रतेक शिखा भएः तत् काशे
बायु र अर्द्धस्तुर शास तोमारै, प्रवत्तेपे,
तोमार आदेश बहि शुच्या दिवारात
चराचर मर्यादा करे यात्तात;
गीते उठियाहे उँचे 'तोमार इनिते
नयी धाय दिके दिके तोमारै संगीते;
शुद्धे शूप चर्म चूति एह तारा यए
अनन्द मारे कापिचे निवित।

Here one meets with three distinct messages of the Upaniṣads. The first one is from the Taittiriya:

मानवनाथ छेव ब्रजमां न्यूतासि जायन्ते,
मानवनाथ जातासि जीवति, मानवनाथ पवयोविभान्ति ॥ (२,६)

The next one is from the Kaṭhopaniṣad:

भवाक्षालिकित्तति, समतूमति भुवे: ।
मयाकृत्त्तम बायुम शूल्यपायति पंचम: ॥ (६,१)

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The cosmic image in the poem is also from another mantra of the Kaṭhopanisṭad:

यदि व फियो जागृत सत्य प्राण पवनति नि:सृतम्॥ (६,२)

In the poem 60 of Naivedya the Poet proclaims:

...शोन विषयन
शोन अमृते पुत्र यष देवगण
विख्यातिवानी, ...

It is the same message as in the Svetāsvatara Upanisad:

स्वेतस्वतर विशीर्य आमुतस्य पुत्रा
आ ये धामानि विवधानि तस्युः॥ (२,७)

This mantra is also found in the Rigveda (१०, १३, १) but it is more likely that the Poet came across this in the Upanisads with which he has been more familiar since his boyhood days.

That same poem of Naivedya has the following lines:

... आमि जेनेन्छि ताहारे,
महान्य पुरुष जरि आँध्रेरे पारे
ख्यातिमय; टाँके जेने, टाँक पाने चाहि
युक्तृे राखिते पारे, अपघान नाहि॥

The exact original of this is to be found in the following message from the Svetāsvatara Upanisad:

वेदांतेतुक्षः महान्तम्
आदित्वयों तमसः परस्ततात्।
साभव विविधाति सुत्वयमुसि
नात्मः पत्थि विप्रेपनाय॥ (३,८)

Each and every mantra of the Isopanisad has ever been deeply fixed in the mind of Rabindranath. ैशाज्यास्वप्निं संगृहः (४५, १)
“All things in this life are pervaded by God”; जिज्ञासेवित प्रमाणनिः स्वसंस्कृत ज्ञानिनी क्षत समा: ( इश, २ ) “One should desire for an active life lasting for hundred years in order to perform the duties thereof”;—these are the ideals that constitute the very basis of Rabindranath’s life. “Whatever that moves remains unmoved, that which is distant is very near as well, and being within remains outside” ( Iśo. ५ ). “Realise thyself in this creation and the creation within thyself” ( Iśo. ६ ). “The knowledge of the Brahma shorn of all other knowledge of this world is imperfect, and every other knowledge also is fruitless without the knowledge of the Brahma” ( Iśo. ९ ). “One who realises both these types of knowledge in their true harmony transcends Death and attains Immortality” ( Iśo. ११ ). “The rich and many-coloured garb that hides the truth should be removed and the Eternal Truth is to be seen face to face” ( Iśo. १५ ). “One perfect form evolves out of another, yet there is no decay or loss to the ever perfect One” ( Iśopaniṣad, closing mantra ).

These truths permeate the whole of Rabindranath’s literature. His sermons and religious expositions collected in the Santi-niketan series have freely drawn upon the thoughts and ideas of the Upaniṣads and have reclothed them into things of everlasting freshness and beauty. Some of the anecdotes of the Upaniṣads have also moved him deeply, e. g. the story of Satyakāma, son of Jabālā in the fourth part of the fourth chapter of the Chhāndogya Upaniṣad. This story of an ideally truthful Brahmachāri, born of uncertain parentage, has been beautifully retold by the Poet in the poem named Brāhma in Chitrā.

He has been immensely attracted also by the Tapovanas or the forest abodes which in the days of the Upaniṣads were the centres for practising Brahmacharya. The underlying falsities of the modern civilization that flourished round the towns and cities had pained him very much. That was why at first he retired to Shelaidah and then, deciding to found a centre of peaceful activity for the people of the country at large, he started
the 'Brahmacharyasrama' in the Tapovana founded by his father Maharsi Devendranath, at Santiniketan.

In Chaitali how deftly the Poet puts in one poem the story of the Ramayana. So long as Rama lived in the forest he had a living Sita as his mate, but as soon as he came to the city he lost her and had only the golden image of Sita to console him. A similar tragedy resulting from the neglect of the clean and fresh life of the Tapovanas is retold in the story of Sakuntala and Dusyanta in the poem Baner O Rajye. In the poem Sabhyatār Prati the Poet has painted the picture of the Tapovanas of olden times. Even in the language of these and several other poems of Chaitali the Poet has consciously maintained a classical quality akin to that of the ancient poets of India. The poems 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, of Uttarga must also be mentioned in this connection as further illustrations where the ideas and the language of an ancient age reveal the mystery that is common to both.

In Khyanika Rabindranath gave up the classical style and experimented with the language of everyday use. But there too in the poem Sekal pictures of Kalidasa's Meghaduta have been painted in the most colloquial language.

His essays in Prachin Sabitya illustrate how even in the realm of prose he has followed the same principle of describing the classical age in an appropriate classical language. It is this sublime language that has largely enabled him to bring once again into life the ages of the Epics and of Kalidasa in the mind of his readers.

So far we have traced the connection of Rabindranath's literature with the Upanishads with which his acquaintance has always been direct and intimate. He had almost no occasion to come across the text of the Vedic Sanhitās which deal chiefly with sacrificial rites and rituals and hymns and prayers intended to please gods. But the ancient sages of the Vedas did not write only on the gods and heavens: descriptions of the Universe, Nature, the seasons, the dawn (Usha) and men also occur in the Vedas. There one often comes across utterances of very deep
significance that baffle even a modern mind. Rabindranath seems to have an inner relation with the ideas contained in many of such passages. His implicit affinity with these richest thoughts and ideas of the Vedas without any previous acquaintance with them clearly reveals that, however universal his genius might be, it maintains its lineal connection with the ancient traditions of India,—and this was quite natural.

In \textit{Kheya} Rabindranath describes the dawn in the following words:

\begin{quote}
আজ রুকসের বসন ছিড়ে কেলে
লাড়িয়েছে এই প্রভূতখানি।
আকাশেতে সোনার আলোয়
ছড়িয়ে গেল তাহার বাণী। (বিকাশ)
\end{quote}

This Dawn has torn open the cover of her breast and stands before us in her full glory. The sky is flooded with her message of golden light.

The Poet had no possible chance of knowing that some thousands of years ago Visvāmitra had worshipped the dawn in almost similar language:

\begin{quote}
অথ স্যূমেশ বিন্নতী মহন্যুপা যাতি স্বসর্স্য পশ্চা।
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Having thrown away the cover of her breast there walks the glorious Dawn—the queen of heaven. (Rigveda; 3, 61, 4).
\end{quote}

In the 30th suktas of the 5th mandal there is a wonderful description of dawn in a prayer. The whole of it is magnificent poetry:

\begin{quote}
পশ্চা বুদ্ধি ন সত্যে বিভ্রান্তচন্দ্র স্নাতি হৃদয়ে নো মন্ত্র। (যন্ত্র; ৬, ৮০, ৬)
\end{quote}

The stainless milk-white Dawn arises like a lady freshly bathed revealing all her beauty and glory to our eyes.

\begin{quote}
অথ স্বেতব্যতীতো না সংহিতো
বিভূতি হৃদয়ার রহণায় পেথামু। (যন্ত্র; ৬, ৩২, ১)
\end{quote}
The bright and beautiful Dawn has arrived. Night is her black sister. She steps aside from her path and in tears bids adieu to the glorious Dawn.

Whenever we read this hymn, we remember the poem Sesh Upabār in Rabindranath’s Mānasī:

आमि রাত্রি, তুমি ফুল ... 
যখন ফুটিলে তুমি ... 
তখনি প্রভাত এল, ফুরাল আমার কাল 
... 
... তখন পড়িল যদি' 
আমার নয়ন হতে তোমার নয়ন পরে 
একটি শিশিরকণা। চলে গেছু পরপার। ...

I am the night, you are the flower; As you blossomed there appeared dawn; with that my days came to their close.

A dew drop of tear fell from my eyes into yours and I left for the other shore.

The description of the rains in the Vedas is magnificent. The 83rd sukta of the 5th mandala in the Rigveda is in itself a wonderful picture of rain.

र्योधा कश्यपाम् अभिक्षिप्तापिशवूंतात् हृदये शर्मः भ्रात | 
दूरात् सिन्धु स्मरया उदितं तत्र परग्नं: हृदये शर्मं नमः || 
( अच्छ. ५, ८३, २ )

The Lord of rain has come like a brave charioteer lashing the clouds with the golden whip of lightning. One can hear the distant thunder roaring like a lion. The sky is overcast with cloud and the rain is pouring in torrents.

Those who are familiar with the beautiful rain songs of Rabindranath will easily sense the deep inner sympathy between
his poetic emotion and that of the Vedic sages across the incalculable distance of time.

The graphic description of autumn in the Yajurveda also reveals the sympathetic imagination of the ancient sages. One would hardly expect Rabindranath to know these scattered pieces of poetry in the Vedas, although in his Sāradotsava (The Autumn Festival) he has adopted the following picture of the autumn from the Yajurveda:

अक्षिणु:कोलिप्तस्यैव निस्माते कलरिनकोः ।
आंके आतुर्गणं नापि क्रमुणां नविबोधत ।
कलकामानि वास्तवि अहताति निबोद्यत ।
अमससहित मृज्यसीत जाति जो जीवनमचः ।
Pata Vach: Purushatwa Sarab Vachapadyate II (कैलासिय आरण्यक । २, ४, १)

The eyes are now free from their grief. With the ceasing of rain they have received the pleasant touch of fresh light in them. It is a magic touch that has removed all darkness. All this is God's own grace. His garment is of golden colour, stainless and perfect. Enjoy ye all food in plenty. Wash your bodies and anoint them with fragrant oil, for I, the life-giving Autumn, have come.

In Gitājali we have the following song:

कथा छिल एक तराते केवल तुम्हि आमि ।
याब अकारणे भेसे केवल भेसे न।
तिन्नेवास नाकु आवरा तीर्थगामी ।
कोटियां नेतिहाय कोन देशे से कोन देशे ।
कूलहारा नेइ समुद्र मार्गाने ।
खोना गान एकला तेंद्रार काने, ।
चौदेरस मत्त भाषा वाङिलहारा ।
आमार नेइ राजिली गुलेर नीरव हेले। (गीताज्ञानी । नं ८४)

This reminds us of one of the songs of Vasistha in the 7th mandala of the Rigveda. There is no word for word resemblance between the two songs yet one cannot deny their similarity in
idea. So far as our knowledge goes, Rabindranath had no occasion to come across this song. This community of idea between the poets of two widely different ages surely signifies unity of their inner being.

When God (my beloved) and I floated far into the sea on the same boat; when in great joy we have swung to and fro in our boat on the crest of the waves.

My God gave me a seat in his boat and most graciously honoured me with the right of singing to him. It was a rare occasion when my heavenly Lord asked me to fill my mornings and days with songs of prayer.

Where has disappeared that deep love of ours? My mind now searches in vain for the tranquil and unhindered love of those days.

In our present age the excellence of a literature is adjudged by its closeness to realities of life. We are not sure whether such a test was in vogue in ancient India. But there is no room left for doubt that the science and duties of the everyday world were not treated with indifference by the sages of the Isopaniṣad. According to them life attained its perfection through the proper wedding of spiritual culture to material knowledge. In ancient days the soundness of even the highest spiritual ideas was tested by observing how far they were in harmony with the realities of the material world.

This is why Lord Buddha touched the ground (Bhumisparsa mudrā) while preaching his highest spiritual principles. He perhaps wanted to suggest to his disciples—"the truth of my
statements will be verified in your life on this earth that I touch with my hand." We do not know what surer test of reality even a modern mind could have suggested.

The sages of the Vedas Rik, Yaju and Sāma, have contemplated mostly on heaven and the gods. The Atharvaveda appears as though to supplement them with its forceful treatment of ideas connected with the world and humanity. Even in the Rigveda one occasionally comes across such ideas as service of humanity (Rik; I, 31, 14). Heaven and earth are mentioned jointly in such oft-repeated phrases as—चावाचधिविरि. (I, 139 sukta; II, 36 sukta; VI, 170 sukta). V, 84 sukta is an exclusive hymn to the Earth. But the extolment of the earth has reached its high watermark in the Atharvaveda. The 1st sukta of the 12th kānda of the Atharvaveda consists of 63 slokas. The whole of that sukta is a long continued song in praise of the great Earth. Studied side by side with this Vedic hymn such well-known poems of Rabindranath as Vasundhara (The Earth), Svarga Haitk Vidāy (Farewell to Heaven) and Viśva Nritya (Cosmic Dance) appear to strike almost a parallel note.

A common bond of love that Rabindranath's soul ever perceives with the different races and the people of the different countries in this world finds its best expression in his poem Vasundhara. His heart longs for friendship with the people of the desert, Tibetans, Persians, Tartars, Chinese and even with the aboriginal tribes. Within his inmost being he has heard even the call of the turbulent Bedouines of Arabia (Duranta Atā, in Mānasi.) This longing for union with the greater humanity is traceable in the Brātya-kānda of the Atharvaveda. Brātyas were an uneducated class of people who did not perform any elaborate sacrifices which were so common in those days and sought after truth along Nature's own path.

The whole of the 2nd sukta of the 10th kānda in the Atharvaveda is composed in praise of the greatness of mankind. नृत्य (A hymn to Mankind) is its name. The 8th sukta of the
11th kānda is again a discussion on man. The 7th sukta of the 10th kānda is known as Ṛgveda or in other words a description of the basic framework of the cosmic universe. There too the principal point that has been elaborated is the greatness of humanity. The argument has been concluded with the following magnificent words:

शे पुरोषे शाले चिदृस्ते चिदृष्टः परमेश्वरेत्॥ (अध्यायः १०, ७, १७)
तस्मादू शे विश्वास पुरुषमित्रेण वहां ति मन्यते॥ (अध्यायः १२, ८, ३२)

Humanity is the very epitome of the wide and varied universe. To know it properly is to realise the highest manifestation of Brahma, since in all its world-wide aspects humanity is permeated with the spirit of God. This universal greatness of humanity has truly found its triumphant poetic expression in our age in the literature of Rabindranath.

When we hear Rabindranath sing even the glory of the uncivilized savage tribes we are reminded of the Brātyakānda in the Atharvaveda of which a reference has already been made. The Poet sings:

अरुण बलिघ हिंस्र नया बर्षरता—
नाहि कौनो धर्मार्थस्य, नाहि कौनो अथा,
नाहि कौनो बाधवस्य, नाहि चिदास्य अर, नाहि किष्ठ चिदास्य, नाहि यस पर;
उत्सुक कीर्तिक्रियात वहे निर्मातः
समुद्रे आघात करि सहिया आघात
अकाँठे। ... ... ... (बशुद्दल, सोनार तली)

The sages of the Atharvaveda have, in the same manner, sung in their Brātyakānda the glory of Brātyas or those simple and so-called ‘fallen’ folk who were initiated to no elaborate religious system. The whole of the 11th kānda in the Atharvaveda is nothing but an elaboration of the ideas and unsophisticated spiritual practices of those Brātyas who refused to observe any hard and fast code or tradition of religion.
When people had lost themselves in the complexities of sacrificial observance and elaborate religious rites, these uneducated and unsophisticated Brâtyas preserved in them the primal simplicity and strength of human life. Truly the Earth is the perennial source of life and vitality. Against the sophistry and artificialities of a so-called civilized life the Brâtyas, and with them the sages of the Atharvaveda, had maintained a most intimate contact with the soil. That was the sole reason why they were so rich in life—a life instinct with such wide human interest.

It is very interesting to trace even in some of the great Vedic composers this contact with the soil. The composer of the Aitareya Brâhmana —the best of all Brâhmanas in the Rigveda, was the son of a lowly woman (रत्रा: Itarā—a sudra) and a veritable child of the soil. According to the current legend he had received his education, a perfect one no doubt, at the hands of the Earth. Hence he received the name Mahidâsa—the servant of the Earth.

One of the distinct features of the Aitareya is its expression of the ardent desire for journeying freely on an uninterrupted endless course. As for Rabindranath's poetry one of its keynotes is this restlessness for an onward march. Very early in his boyhood this restless longing had found exquisite expression in the poem Nirjharer Swapna Bhanga (The Fountain Awakened from its Dream) in Prabhût Sangît (Morning Songs). There in another poem Srôt (The Stream) his call is:—अग्नि-स्रोते भोजन चल, ये येषां आहु भई।

In the Ābhūn Geet of Kaḍi O Komal one feels this same dynamic urge. In Mānasi, in the poem Durânta Aśā, his soul cries out—কোথাও যদি ছুটিতে পাই বাঁড়িয়া যাই তবে... In the poem Dui Pâkbi (Two Birds) in Sonâr Tari the agony of a caged bird that has lost its freedom of flight finds poignant expression. In Vîśva Nritya (Cosmic Dance) the poet's soul wants to keep its pace with the rhythmic flow of life that runs through beasts, birds and the minutest insects. In that well-known song Vidây (Farewell) of Kalpanâ he sings in the following strain:
In the poem *Bilambita* (Belated) in *Kshanika* he cannot see any end to the prolonged course of life. *Vidai Abhisap* narrates the pathetic and futile effort of Devajani to stop the journey of Kacha, the pilgrim eternal. In *Dakghar* (Post Office) the child Amal has heard the call of the road. *Achaldyaatan* is a drama that depicts the futility of all attempts to kill the dynamic urge in human life. In *Phalguni* this same urge for progress has found wonderful expression. In the poem no. 21 of *Naivedya* the Poet sings:

> ঘরের ঠিকানা হ’ল না গে।
> মন করে তবু যাই যাই।

In poem No. 36 it is said that through births and rebirths man travels eternally like a pilgrim. Hence in poem No. 84 the Poet earnestly prays—May none of the bonds of the innumerable active duties of worldly life stagnate that steady journey of the human soul. Even in *Khayali* this feeling of a wayfarer lingers on and in the poem *Pather Seete* the road calls him once again. There, of course, while marching, he dreams of the final meeting with God, his beloved. In his *Utsarga* we hear the poet say:

> কেবল তব মুখের পানে চাহিয়া
> বাহির হইতে তিনির রাতে অর্গীণ বাহিরিয়া (ঃ ২)

He further says:

> আমি চঞ্চল হি, আমি মুন্দীর পিয়াসী (ঃ ৮)

> I am restless. I am athirst for far away things.

It has already been described how he often sails in the same boat with his God (*Gitajali*; No. 84). It is the eternal voyage of a lover for his beloved. The worst tragedy of this voyage is that even here one’s little and limited ‘self’ never leaves him for a single moment (*Gitajali*; No. 104).

In *Gitimalya* the Poet sings:

> অনেক কালের যাতৃ আমার অনেক দুঃখের পথে। (ঃ ২৪)
He expects that his comrades should cheer him when he starts on this journey of pursuit of his love (No. 21). The Poet says:

তুমি জানো ওগো অন্তর্ধানী
পথে পথেই মন সিপাহামে আমি। (নং ৫৯)

When the wind strikes favourably on his sail of music his mind is set free on that open path (No. 76). In Gitali his soul cries out for this freedom:

দাও ছেড়ে দাও ওগো, আমি
তুফান গেলে বীরচি। (নং ২৪)

If he ever feels tired and stops short in his journey somewhere on the way then he would ask his God to forgive him (No. 59). Immediately after that he says:

আমার আর হবে না দেহী—
আমি শুনেছি ঐ বাঞ্ছে তোমার তেরী। (নং ৬০)

On the boat of his song he has left the shore and has sailed on the limitless ocean (No. 75). His own introduction to the world is that of an eternal wayfarer:—আমি পথিক, পথ আমারি সাথী (নং ৮৩). As he arrives at the end of one road a new road beckons him, as it were (No. 94). He sings forth:

পাস্ত তুমি পায়ঞ্জনের সথা হে,
পথে চলাই সেই ত তোমায় পাওয়া। (নং ২৪)

At this stage to walk undaunted is to pay respect to the Lord of the journey:

জীবন-রথের হে নার্থি,
আমি নিত্য পথের পথী,
পথে চলার লহ নমস্কার। (নং ৮৮)

In Balâkâ the poet has boldly refused to submit to the supremacy of chains, the symbol of bondage:
The poem No. 3 is nothing but a song of onward march. In the poem No. 8 the poet has a vision that nothing is static in this world and thus creation has the continuous flow of an endless river:

हे बिराट नली
अदृश्य निशाच तं जल
अविच्छिन्न अविरल
चले निरबधि।

In the poem No. 18 he says—the moment we cease to move there accumulate heaps of dead matter. Therefore he sings:

ওগো আমি যাত্রী তাই
চড়িম সমুদ্রের পানে চাই।

... ... ...

যাত্রার আনন্দগুলো পূর্ণ অজি অনস্ত গোন। (ং ১৮)

His whole life is a voyage towards the unknown; in that is his greatest joy ('No. 30'). The sound of the flight of swans (Hansa Balaka) quicken within him an urge of speed and lends a motion, as it were, to all that stands still. At the inmost heart of the universe rises the yearning cry:—হেঁথা নয়, হেঁথা নয়, আর কোনো কাল। When the days at the harbour of life are over and the anchor of the boat is weighed the helmsman shouts:

তুফানের মাঝখানে
নৃতন সমস্তীর পানে
দিতে হবে পাড়ি। (ং ৩৭)

Thus the poetry of Rabindranath is permeated through and through with this note of deep longing for an endless voyage in pursuit of the great unknown, a note which is unique and beyond all compare in the vast literature of the world. Let us, however, quote in this connection the hymn of ‘Onward March’ in the
Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (ैतरेय ब्राह्मण) with that well-known refrain भरें भरें —

नाना भ्रमय अर्थलित द्रत रोहित शुभ्रम
पायो गृहियो जन हत्र स्फरतः सत्यः || भरें भरें —

One who is weary of long journey acquires a grace incomparable. However, important and great one might be, if he sits idle in this world he is reduced to insignificance. He who walks endlessly has God as his comrade and co-traveller. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

पूष्पिण्यीं चरो जहू भृष्टरत्रात्मा फलमाहि: ||
श्रेयं वर्त्य सर्वं पापमान: अभेण प्रपचे हतस: || भरें भरें —

A traveller’s body blooms in grace and beauty. His soul becomes greater every day. Isn’t that life’s greatest achievement? As he marches along the open road his sins are automatically destroyed and they fall dead. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

आतो भग आसीनत्वोऽभ्यंतिशत्यि तिजयतः ||
श्रेयं निप्पमानस्य चराति चरतो मभः || भरें भरें —

An idle man’s fate sits idle too. When one rises and stands upright his fate also rises and stands up. As he lies down his fate lies down with him. He who marches along has his fate marching with him. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

कलि: शापायो भावति बलिहानस्य द्राप: ||
चिद्रो स्वेता भलित केन्त्रियधारर्कर्षु भरें भरें —

While one sleeps it is Kali-yuga; when he merely awakes it is Dwāpara; as he stands up it is Tretā, but the moment he steps onward there is Satya-yuga. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

बर्तन् ब्रह्मचारित स्तंबं स्वाभू मुदुम्बर: ||
सुर्वस्य प्रथम श्रेष्ठां योग तत्सहस्तर: भरें भरें —

To march along is to gain immortality; marching by itself is the sweetest fruit of the journey. Look at the sun—the ever glorious and eternal traveller, who once having started on its journey has never felt drowsy. Hence, O Traveller, march along.

In this creation, every human soul feels in its deepest
recess the pining call of the Eternity. The sages have thus asked in the Atharvaveda:

कथ्य बालो नीलवति कथ्य न रमले मनः।
किमः लत्ये प्रेमवल्ति नीलवति कारावलः॥ (१०, ७, ३७)

Why cannot the wind remain still; why has the human mind no rest? Why, and in search of what, does the water run out and cannot stop in its flow even for a moment?

The call of the Eternal is at the heart of the creation and at the same time is all pervasive. He who once responds to that great call throws off with ease all bonds and shackles.

The call of life's greater truths is too strong for petty domestic ties and the sanctions of Society. Those who hear that call very often turn into rebels. In the ancient days many such rebels renounced Society for good and took to the forest. They tried to resolve their differences with the prevailing social order by becoming sanyāsīs i.e. by renouncing the world. Rabindranath is a rebel too, but he has never even dreamt of renouncing this world. Living in society he will seek the fulfilment of his personality:

বৈরাগ্যা সাধনে যুক্তি, সে আমার নয়। (নৈবেদ্য, নং ৭০)

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. (Gitanjali No. 73).

Herein he is unique in his conception. He has lived in the heart of the world and has bravely borne all the sufferings and agonies of worldly life. This experience lends fire to the voice that he raises in protest against all artificial and invidious social differences:

মূর্তি কর, মূর্তি কর, নিন্দা প্রকাশে।
চূদ্ধে মূখল হ'তে। সে কঠিন ভার
বদল হিয়ে তবে মাঝের মাঝে
সহজে ফিরিব আমি সংসারের কাছে,—
চোঙারী আদেশ শুধু অহং হবে, নাথ। (নৈবেদ্য, নং ৮৪)
This revolt signifies an open defiance of authority of all the lesser rulers and the humble submission to the laws of the King of kings. This attitude is comparable to the attitude of a truly chaste woman who for the sake of her honour refuses to owe wife’s allegiance to a servant of her husband:

তোমার ক্ষারের দণ্ড প্রত্যেকের করে
অর্পণ করেছ নিজে, প্রত্যেকের পরে
দিয়েছ শাসন তার, হে রাজাবিপ্লব।
সে গুরু সম্মান তব সে ছুরুহ কাজ
নবিন্দে, তব কার্যে বদন নাহি দেবি
কতু কারে। (১৯২৭, ৬৭)

A similar loyalty of man towards God has been proclaimed by Rabindranath with still greater force in the poems No. 54, 55, 56, and 57 of Naivedya. In the poem No. 56 he has said:

অপরমে নবিন্দে ভয়ে তীর্থন
মিথ্যার ছাড়িয়া দেয় তব সিংহাসন।

He has insistently tried to wake his countrymen from their death-like slumber into the realm of eternal truth. In that heaven of ideal that his imagination has conceived:

...তুমি আচারের সকল বিধির বিচারের হোক পথে ফেলে নাই আসি?
পৌরুষের করেনি শক্তি; ... (১৯২৭, ৬২)

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost his way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit. (Gitanjali No. 35).

Rebels against the petty traditions and customs of society were not rare in ancient days. Besides the opinions of Mahāvīr and Buddha similar strong ideas are also found in the Jāvalopaniṣad, Sanyāsopaniṣad and Maitreyī Upaniṣad (c.f. 108 Upaniṣad Nirṇāya Sāgara; pp. 131, 416, 203).

In his thoughts and ideas Rabindranath belongs to the same class as these spiritual rebels. Against the colour and
caste prejudices and all other deadly ideas that tend to break humanity into fragments Rabindranath has said:

যেখায় পাকে সবার অধম নীরের হ’তে দৌন
সেইখানে যে চরণে মোহার রাজে
সবার সিকে, সবার নীচে,
সবহারাদের মাঝে।

(গীতাজ্ঞানি, নং ১০৭)

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest,
and lowliest, and lost. (Gitanjali No. 10).

Immediately after that he says:

হে মোর হৃদয়ে দেশ, যাদের করেছ অপমান,
অপমান হতে হবে তাহাদের সবার সমান।

(গীতাজ্ঞানি, নং ১০৮)

The Maitreyī Upanisad also says almost in similar words:

মাত্যায়নাচারুতা বিমূঢ়া কর্মচারীতাতে পতন কমতে।
মাত্যায়নাচারুতা পরিত্যাজ্যতা: স্বামীত্বতুমা: নেত্রা ভবলিত।

(১১২, সং: ২০২)

Those poor creatures who submit themselves to the traditional
caste system must suffer the consequences of their action. He is the
ture man who renounces all petty caste distinctions and leads a
blessful life in the joy of his soul.

God spreads His own seat in the midst of the humanity at
large. He accompanies them in their rise and fall and their
joys and sufferings. One must serve and worship Him there
in the proper place of His residence. But we remain ever
blind to this fact and seek Him in vain in man-made temples
and ideals. The voice of Rabindranath therefore reminds us:

তিনি গেছেন যেখায় মাটি ভেঙে
করছে চাষা চাষ
পাখির ভেঙে কাটছে যেখায় পথ,
খাটছে বারো মাস।

(গীতাজ্ঞানি, নং ১১১)

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where
the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in
shower, and his garment is covered with dust.... (Gitanjali
No. 11).
When, instead of serving God there, we sit with our eyes tightly shut in front of lifeless idols made of stones in closed temples he whispers in our ears:

ভক্তি পূজন সাধন আরাধনা
সমন্ত থাকু পড়ে।
কব্যের দেবালয়ের কোণে
কেন আঘাত ওরে?
অন্ধকারে চুকিয়ে আপন মনে
কাহারে তুই পূজিস সক্রিয়নে,
নয়ন মেলে দেখু দেখি তুই চেয়ে
বেশের নাই ঘরে। (ট্রাংশালি, স। ১১৯)

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy god is not before thee (Ibid.).

In a painful voice he says similar things in his Naivedya:

সম্ভাব্য তোমার যা হের তা গাঁজাবেলা।
তোমার লাইনা থাকু করে পূজা-খেলা।
মূর্তডাব তোগে,—সেই মূর্ত শিক্ষাল,
সমসত্তা বিন্দুর আঁজি খেলার পূজাত। (নৈরুদ্র্, ৫০)

Here one is reminded of the words in the Maitreya Upaniṣad:

পাণানন্দসিদ্ধাস্তমায়বিভক্তঃ
পুজা পুরাণনোগতচ্ছ মুদ্রিত।
সত্যমায় বসি: স্ত্রীহর্ষ্যস্তেবং কুরাত; 
বাহালীন পরিহারতপরমিবায়। (২, ১৬)

If you truly desire Muktì then why worship idols made of stone, metal, jewels and earth? A true satikaka renounces all external paraphernalia and worships God in the quiet recess of his heart.

Rabindranath thus bears a very close relationship with the seers of ancient India who gave utterance to the greatest truths that they had realised in their own life. Needless to say, it will be a futile effort to try to trace out in his literature the thoughts
and ideas that are contained in those ancient Shāstras which deal with narrow traditions and thoughts of ancient times. Those Shāstras suffer from want of a wider vision of life and waste their words on threadbare analysis and unintelligible discussions on trifling matters. Rabindranath has very well said:

ওদের কথায় বাঁধা লাগে
তোমার কথা আমি বুঝি,
তোমার আকাশ তোমার বাতাস
এই তো সবি সোজাস্বজি II (১৯৫৯ ডে না, ৭৩)

Thus for the truths of life Rabindranath has relied upon the Vedas and the Shāstras that he has himself realised within his soul, and in this he ranks with the great prophets of the world who have been born age after age.

In the ইতিহাসগুলিতে it has been said:

মনো হ য়ো বেদ ন বেদ বেণান পদ্ধতি য়ো বেদ ন বেদ রহমাম।
সামাজি য়ো বেদ ন বেদ সর্ব য়ো মানসে বেদ ন বেদ শাখা II

. (Adyar—Unpublished Upaniṣads; page 11)

If you have studied Rigveda then the utmost that you may have known is about the gods; if you have studied Yajurveda then you have learnt the details of all sacrificial rites: if you have studied Sāmveda then you perhaps have known everything else that is external, but if you have mastered the Veda of your inner mind, "Mānas Veda," only then you have realised the Brahma.

Rabindranath is a follower of this "Mānas Veda," and thus he spiritually belongs to one family with those seekers after truth who in ancient India had followed and realised this Veda of their inner mind. This is why in Rabindranath's literature one so often meets with ancient ideas and truths which seem to have taken there a new birth in our own age.

1 Translated from the original Bengali by Nirmal Chandra Chatterjee.
A TAGORE CHRONICLE

1861—1941

INTRODUCTION

We are grateful to Sj. Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee whose labours have made possible the following chronological summary of the Poet’s life, as also the bibliographies appended thereto. Mr. Mukherjee is the author of a two-volume biography in Bengali of the Poet. As, however, that biography was published some years back and does not deal with the last ten years of Rabindranath’s life, he has had to undertake considerable extra labour to make it up to date, as well as to revise and verify some of the previously published data, for the sake of this Special Number. We are also thankful for the help we have received from Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis’s “A Tagore Chronicle; 1861-1931” published in the Golden Book of Tagore, and from Mr. Amal Home’s excellent treatment of the theme published in the recent Tagore Birthday Special Suplement of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette.

We have tried to avoid loading the Chronicle with too many details of the Poet’s extraordinarily rich and varied activities spread over four-score years, and have confined ourselves to such main events as are likely to indicate the development of his career or are of special public interest. For fuller details the readers are referred to the various books written on the Poet, given in one of the appended bibliographies.

The Editor