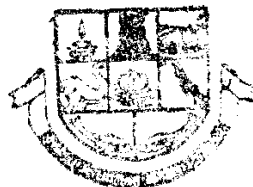


The Inner Meaning of Human History The One Increasing Purpose That Runs Through The Ages

(Principal J. Dhanakoty Sixty-fifth birthday
Endowment Lectureship—by Honourable Justice
Thiru S. Maharajan)

Justice S. MAHARAJAN

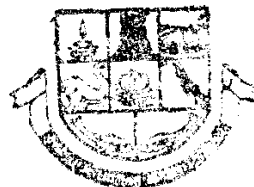


MADURAI UNIVERSITY
Madurai-21

The Inner Meaning of Human History The One Increasing Purpose That Runs Through The Ages

(Principal J. Dhanakoty Sixty first birthday
Endowment Lectureship—by Honourable Justice
Thiru S. Maharajan)

Justice S. MAHARAJAN



MADURAI UNIVERSITY
Madurai-21

First Edition—April, 1974

PRINCIPAL T. DHANAKOTY SIXTY FIRST
BIRTHDAY ENDOWMENT LECTURESHIP

BY

JUSTICE S. MAHARAJAN.

Price Rs. 2.25

PRINTED BY
NEW CENTURY PRINTERS,
Madras-600 058.

First Edition—April, 1974

PRINCIPAL T. DHANAKOTY SIXTY FIRST
BIRTHDAY ENDOWMENT LECTURESHIP

BY

JUSTICE S. MAHARAJAN.

Price Rs. 2.25

PRINTED BY
NEW CENTURY PRINTERS,
Madras-600 058.

The Inner Meaning of Human History as Disclosing the One Increasing Purpose that runs through the Ages.

(Justice S. Maharajan)

Lecture No. I.

R. G. Collingwood, an outstanding English theorist on history, says that history is self-revelatory and that history exists in order to tell man what man is by telling him what man has done. In other words, history tells us about man's achievements in the past, so that we may judge his nature and then proceed to predict his future potentialities. Before understanding man's achievements, we must understand what man is. It is impossible to gather the meaning of history without understanding the meaning of man. It is at this juncture we have to step out of history into metaphysics. Does man's life begin with his birth and end with his death? A Belgian philosopher said that the true history of a man begins with his death and ends with his birth. In other words, the temporal history of man would have no meaning except against the background of Infinity. Does man represent the passage of Eternity through the corridors of time, the imprisonment of Infinity in the Finite? Does he have a soul which is deathless and which survives the death of the body? Is the Earth only a theatre in which his embodied Soul is given an opportunity to accumulate Karma or redeem himself of

The Inner Meaning of Human History as Disclosing the One Increasing Purpose that runs through the Ages.

(Justice S. Maharajan)

Lecture No. I.

R. G. Collingwood, an outstanding English theorist on history, says that history is self-revelatory and that history exists in order to tell man what man is by telling him what man has done. In other words, history tells us about man's achievements in the past, so that we may judge his nature and then proceed to predict his future potentialities. Before understanding man's achievements, we must understand what man is. It is impossible to gather the meaning of history without understanding the meaning of man. It is at this juncture we have to step out of history into metaphysics. Does man's life begin with his birth and end with his death? A Belgian philosopher said that the true history of a man begins with his death and ends with his birth. In other words, the temporal history of man would have no meaning except against the background of Infinity. Does man represent the passage of Eternity through the corridors of time, the imprisonment of Infinity in the Finite? Does he have a soul which is deathless and which survives the death of the body? Is the Earth only a theatre in which his embodied Soul is given an opportunity to accumulate Karma or redeem himself of

the effect of Karma accumulated during his previous births? If the Earth is only a theatre, who is running that theatre and directing the play? Does the Director give man only one chance to redeem himself and then despatch him to hell or heaven after a scrutiny of the balance-sheet of his good and bad actions performed in the course of a brief life-time? These questions arise and the answers to these questions depend upon the value-system in which we believe. In this lecture, I propose to present to you, first, the view-point of a distinguished scientist, and second, that of a distinguished mystic, both of the Twentieth Century.

The scientist I have chosen is Pere Teilhard De Chardin, a celebrated French Palaeontologist. Sir Julian Huxley, the distinguished British Biologist, thinks that Teilhard's influence on the world's thinking is bound to be important, for Teilhard enables us to understand the special significance of Man in the tree of evolution—Man as the axis and leading shoot of evolution. Man is not, as Bertrand Russell would have it, a brief episode in the history of a small planet in a little corner of the Universe. On the contrary, Man contains within himself all the achievements of life in the past, and all the possibilities of the earth's immense future.

Some thousands of millions of years ago, an unbelievable accident occurred. Maybe, it was the result of a brush with another star or due to an internal upheaval in the sun. A fragment of matter composed of particularly stable atoms was detached from the surface of the sun. This fragment remained at the right distance from the mother-star to receive a moderate radiation. Then, the fragment began to condense, to roll itself up, to take shape. It contained within its globe and orbit the future of man. What aroused the physicists' interest in this globe is the presence of composite chemical bodies not to be observed anywhere else. At the extreme temperatures occurring in the stars, matter can only survive in its most dissociated states. Only simple bodies exist on these incandescent stars. On the earth, this simplicity of the elements still obtains at the periphery in the more or less ionised gases of the atmosphere and the stratosphere and probably far below in the layers of the

the effect of Karma accumulated during his previous births? If the Earth is only a theatre, who is running that theatre and directing the play? Does the Director give man only one chance to redeem himself and then despatch him to hell or heaven after a scrutiny of the balance-sheet of his good and bad actions performed in the course of a brief life-time? These questions arise and the answers to these questions depend upon the value-system in which we believe. In this lecture, I propose to present to you, first, the view-point of a distinguished scientist, and second, that of a distinguished mystic, both of the Twentieth Century.

The scientist I have chosen is Pere Teilhard De Chardin, a celebrated French Palaeontologist. Sir Julian Huxley, the distinguished British Biologist, thinks that Teilhard's influence on the world's thinking is bound to be important, for Teilhard enables us to understand the special significance of Man in the tree of evolution—Man as the axis and leading shoot of evolution. Man is not, as Bertrand Russell would have it, a brief episode in the history of a small planet in a little corner of the Universe. On the contrary, Man contains within himself all the achievements of life in the past, and all the possibilities of the earth's immense future.

Some thousands of millions of years ago, an unbelievable accident occurred. Maybe, it was the result of a brush with another star or due to an internal upheaval in the sun. A fragment of matter composed of particularly stable atoms was detached from the surface of the sun. This fragment remained at the right distance from the mother-star to receive a moderate radiation. Then, the fragment began to condense, to roll itself up, to take shape. It contained within its globe and orbit the future of man. What aroused the physicists' interest in this globe is the presence of composite chemical bodies not to be observed anywhere else. At the extreme temperatures occurring in the stars, matter can only survive in its most dissociated states. Only simple bodies exist on these incandescent stars. On the earth, this simplicity of the elements still obtains at the periphery in the more or less ionised gases of the atmosphere and the stratosphere and probably far below in the layers of the

barysphere, but between these two extremes comes a long series of complex substances harboured and produced only by stars that have "gone out". Arranged in successive zones, they demonstrate from the start the power of synthesis contained in the Earth. It is not merely a power of synthesis that is at work but also a power of complexification. Pere Teilhard's idea is that one of the mechanisms by which life evolves is that of complexification. This is an original concept and it is used to indicate the method by which sub-atomic units become transformed into atoms, atoms into inorganic molecules, and later into organic molecules, then into the first sub-cellular living units and then into cells, into multi-cellular individuals, into cephalized metazoa with brains and finally into man. He speaks of complexification as an all-pervading tendency, involving the whole of the universe in all its parts. He says that in this process the world-stuff is "rolled up" or "folded in", upon itself. This folding-in upon itself produces further complexification and increases the psycho-social temperature of the Earth.

From the organic point of view, the whole metamorphosis leading to man depends on the question of a better brain. How was man's cerebral functioning perfected? Four-footedness retards the growth of the brain. When a four-footed animal becomes a biped (a two-footed one), its hands become free to release the jaws from their prehensile function, and the thick band of maxillary muscles, which had imprisoned the cranium, become relaxed. Thanks to two-footedness, the brain became able to grow, and the eyes, brought closer together on the diminished face, were able to converge and fix on what the hands hold—this is the very gesture which is the external counterpart of reflection. Evolution took a giant step forward when man began to reflect. From an experimental point of view, reflection is the power acquired by consciousness to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself as of an object endowed with its own particular value: no longer merely to know, but to know oneself; no longer merely to know, but to know that one knows. (*"Non plus seulement connaitre, mais se connaitre; non plus seulement savoir, mais savoir que l' on sait"*).

As Tirumoolar says,

barysphere, but between these two extremes comes a long series of complex substances harboured and produced only by stars that have "gone out". Arranged in successive zones, they demonstrate from the start the power of synthesis contained in the Earth. It is not merely a power of synthesis that is at work but also a power of complexification. Pere Teilhard's idea is that one of the mechanisms by which life evolves is that of complexification. This is an original concept and it is used to indicate the method by which sub-atomic units become transformed into atoms, atoms into inorganic molecules, and later into organic molecules, then into the first sub-cellular living units and then into cells, into multi-cellular individuals, into cephalized metazoa with brains and finally into man. He speaks of complexification as an all-pervading tendency, involving the whole of the universe in all its parts. He says that in this process the world-stuff is "rolled up" or "folded in", upon itself. This folding-in upon itself produces further complexification and increases the psycho-social temperature of the Earth.

From the organic point of view, the whole metamorphosis leading to man depends on the question of a better brain. How was man's cerebral functioning perfected? Four-footedness retards the growth of the brain. When a four-footed animal becomes a biped (a two-footed one), its hands become free to release the jaws from their prehensile function, and the thick band of maxillary muscles, which had imprisoned the cranium, become relaxed. Thanks to two-footedness, the brain became able to grow, and the eyes, brought closer together on the diminished face, were able to converge and fix on what the hands hold—this is the very gesture which is the external counterpart of reflection. Evolution took a giant step forward when man began to reflect. From an experimental point of view, reflection is the power acquired by consciousness to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself as of an object endowed with its own particular value: no longer merely to know, but to know oneself; no longer merely to know, but to know that one knows. (*"Non plus seulement connaitre, mais se connaitre; non plus seulement savoir, mais savoir que l' on sait"*).

As Tirumoolar says,

சாத்திரம் ஒதும் சதிர்களை விட்டு நீர்
மாத்திரைப் போது மறித்துள்ளே நோக்குமின்.
Leave aside the vain reading of scriptures;
Send your mind back upon itself.

The man, who is the object of his own reflection, in consequence of that very doubling back upon himself, becomes in a flash able to raise himself into a new sphere. In reality, with the birth of thought, another world is born. Abstraction, logic, reasoned choice and inventions, mathematics, art, calculation of space and time, anxieties and dreams of love—all these activities of inner life are nothing else than the effervescence of the newly-formed centre as it explodes on to itself.

It is this fact of reflection which distinguishes man from animal. Admittedly, the animal knows, but it cannot know that it knows: that is quite certain. If it could, it would long ago have multiplied its inventions and developed a system of internal constructions that could not have escaped our observation. Consequently, the animal is denied access to a whole domain of reality in which man can move freely.

We now see the direction of evolution:— from the grain of inanimate *matter* to the grain of *life*, and from the grain of *life* to the grain of *thought*. This marks a new era in evolution. A glow ripples outward from the first spark of conscious reflection. The point of ignition grows larger. The fire spreads in ever widening circles till finally the whole planet is covered with incandescence: Only one name can be found worthy to describe this grand phenomenon of reflection and Teilhard coins a word and calls it *noosphere*. This sudden deluge of cerebralization, this biological invasion of a new animal type subjects all forms of life that are not human. Now begins a tide of fields and factories, matter and ideas; these things proclaim that there has been a change on the earth — a change of planetary magnitude. To a Martian, capable of perceiving sidereal radiations psychically, the most marked characteristic of our planet would be, not the blue of the seas or the green of the forests, but the phosphorescence of thought.

சாத்திரம் ஒதும் சதிர்களை விட்டு நீர்
மாத்திரைப் போது மறித்துள்ளே நோக்குமின்.
Leave aside the vain reading of scriptures;
Send your mind back upon itself.

The man, who is the object of his own reflection, in consequence of that very doubling back upon himself, becomes in a flash able to raise himself into a new sphere. In reality, with the birth of thought, another world is born. Abstraction, logic, reasoned choice and inventions, mathematics, art, calculation of space and time, anxieties and dreams of love—all these activities of inner life are nothing else than the effervescence of the newly-formed centre as it explodes on to itself.

It is this fact of reflection which distinguishes man from animal. Admittedly, the animal knows, but it cannot know that it knows: that is quite certain. If it could, it would long ago have multiplied its inventions and developed a system of internal constructions that could not have escaped our observation. Consequently, the animal is denied access to a whole domain of reality in which man can move freely.

We now see the direction of evolution:— from the grain of inanimate *matter* to the grain of *life*, and from the grain of *life* to the grain of *thought*. This marks a new era in evolution. A glow ripples outward from the first spark of conscious reflection. The point of ignition grows larger. The fire spreads in ever widening circles till finally the whole planet is covered with incandescence: Only one name can be found worthy to describe this grand phenomenon of reflection and Teilhard coins a word and calls it *noosphere*. This sudden deluge of cerebralization, this biological invasion of a new animal type subjects all forms of life that are not human. Now begins a tide of fields and factories, matter and ideas; these things proclaim that there has been a change on the earth — a change of planetary magnitude. To a Martian, capable of perceiving sidereal radiations psychically, the most marked characteristic of our planet would be, not the blue of the seas or the green of the forests, but the phosphorescence of thought.

In Pere Teilhard's view, we must infer the presence of potential mind in all material systems, by backward extrapolation from the human phase to the biological phase, and from the biological phase to the inorganic phase.

This conclusion reached by Teilhard by a process of scientific ratiocination was arrived at several centuries earlier by Pattinathar by a sheer flash of intuition. In fact, Pattinathar goes farther and says that the compulsive force or conation behind all evolution is the will of God.

The tomato seed is a tiny particle. But when we plant it in the earth, manure it and irrigate it, it grows into a big plant and yields hundreds of tomatos. Did this sizeable quantity of fruits come out of that wee little seed? The root of the plant absorbs the minerals and the moisture from the soil. The leaves of the plant absorb sunlight and nitrogen from the atmosphere. Due to this process, a double advantage is gained; the tomato plant increases in size and fertility; the inorganic substances like water, salts and nitrogen become enriched by climbing the ladder of evolution and becoming endowed with life, by becoming transformed into organic matter. This is what Teilhard would call biogenesis or evolution of life from matter. Pattinathar had a penetrating insight into this miracle of transformation and he saw: "Water and air, that are lifeless, beg of the tomato for life and entreat her to make them part of her tomato personality and in *response* to this request, the tomato initiates them into life". But, who is it that put this longing into inorganic matter—this longing to become organic? It is God, declares Pattinathar.

Addressing God, he sings,

“ஊன்றேடும் உயிரேயோ!”

“Are you not that longing
that sets matter
searching for life?”

Pattinathar has now another vision. A man, who has suffered from typhoid for four weeks, gets a relapse. His body becomes mere skin and bones. His faculties fail and his sight and

In Pere Teilhard's view, we must infer the presence of potential mind in all material systems, by backward extrapolation from the human phase to the biological phase, and from the biological phase to the inorganic phase.

This conclusion reached by Teilhard by a process of scientific ratiocination was arrived at several centuries earlier by Pattinathar by a sheer flash of intuition. In fact, Pattinathar goes farther and says that the compulsive force or conation behind all evolution is the will of God.

The tomato seed is a tiny particle. But when we plant it in the earth, manure it and irrigate it, it grows into a big plant and yields hundreds of tomatos. Did this sizeable quantity of fruits come out of that wee little seed? The root of the plant absorbs the minerals and the moisture from the soil. The leaves of the plant absorb sunlight and nitrogen from the atmosphere. Due to this process, a double advantage is gained; the tomato plant increases in size and fertility; the inorganic substances like water, salts and nitrogen become enriched by climbing the ladder of evolution and becoming endowed with life, by becoming transformed into organic matter. This is what Teilhard would call biogenesis or evolution of life from matter. Pattinathar had a penetrating insight into this miracle of transformation and he saw: "Water and air, that are lifeless, beg of the tomato for life and entreat her to make them part of her tomato personality and in *response* to this request, the tomato initiates them into life". But, who is it that put this longing into inorganic matter—this longing to become organic? It is God, declares Pattinathar.

Addressing God, he sings,

“ஊன்றேடும் உயிரேயோ!”

“Are you not that longing
that sets matter
searching for life?”

Pattinathar has now another vision. A man, who has suffered from typhoid for four weeks, gets a relapse. His body becomes mere skin and bones. His faculties fail and his sight and

hearing become dim. He fails to recognize his near and dear ones. His sensitive ear, which once identified and enjoyed the nuances of music, has become as good as deaf.

In this state of inanimation, the Doctors feed the sinking patient with dribblets of tomato soup. Slowly and gradually, the patient regains strength. In a fortnight, his lack-lustre eyes recover their lustre and his inert mind recovers consciousness; he starts identifying friends and he hails them with gusto. He recovers the faculty of hearing, and listening to the Sankarabharana raga, he jumps with joy. What is the magic that has produced this consciousness? It is the tomato soup that has merged with this man's personality, and given light to his eyes, hearing to his ears and consciousness to his mind. Even as air, water and salt merged with the tomato and became endowed with life, the tomato has merged now with man and become endowed with consciousness. The tomato has now acquired feeling and has now learnt to enjoy music, to discriminate between truth and untruth, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. Who is it that gave the tomato the longing for consciousness? God, declares Pattinathar. It is God, who is behind the search of matter for life, behind the search of life for consciousness.

Pattinathar sings;—

ஊன் தேடும் உயிரேயோ
உயிர்தேடும் உணர்வேயோ!
Are you not That
which makes matter
search for life?
and That
which makes life
search for Consciousness?

Even after matter has searched for, and acquired life and even after life has searched for, and acquired consciousness, the search continues for higher and higher states of being. Even after water and air become tomato and even after tomato

hearing become dim. He fails to recognize his near and dear ones. His sensitive ear, which once identified and enjoyed the nuances of music, has become as good as deaf.

In this state of inanimation, the Doctors feed the sinking patient with driblets of tomato soup. Slowly and gradually, the patient regains strength. In a fortnight, his lack-lustre eyes recover their lustre and his inert mind recovers consciousness; he starts identifying friends and he hails them with gusto. He recovers the faculty of hearing, and listening to the Sankarabharana raga, he jumps with joy. What is the magic that has produced this consciousness? It is the tomato soup that has merged with this man's personality, and given light to his eyes, hearing to his ears and consciousness to his mind. Even as air, water and salt merged with the tomato and became endowed with life, the tomato has merged now with man and become endowed with consciousness. The tomato has now acquired feeling and has now learnt to enjoy music, to discriminate between truth and untruth, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. Who is it that gave the tomato the longing for consciousness? God, declares Pattinathar. It is God, who is behind the search of matter for life, behind the search of life for consciousness.

Pattinathar sings;—

ஊன் தேடும் உயிரேயோ
உயிர்தேடும் உணர்வேயோ!
Are you not That
which makes matter
search for life?
and That
which makes life
search for Consciousness?

Even after matter has searched for, and acquired life and even after life has searched for, and acquired consciousness, the search continues for higher and higher states of being. Even after water and air become tomato and even after tomato

becomes man, God implants in man the longing to become Super-man. He studies in the Universities, researches into the arts, sciences and Scriptures and wishes to unravel these mysteries of life by searching for the secrets embedded in esoteric literature. Men, who have sharpened their consciousness in this manner, were called “வானவர்” in Tamil.

வான்தேடும் மறையேயோ!

Are you not That
which the Super-men search for
in the hidden scriptures!

It is in this search of Super men for the hidden secrets that God resides. And what about those secret scriptures? They are themselves engaged in a search for God, and God hides Himself behind that search and is immanent in that search.

மறையேயும் பொருளேயோ!

Are you not That
which the hidden Scriptures
are searching for!

Thus, in Pattinathar’s vision, there is an eternal quest going on—a race in which the lower searches for and becomes the higher, and God and the entire Universe take part in this endless searching and becoming.

A thief has burgled a house, and made away with the booty. A whole crowd of men run helter-skelter in hot pursuit of the thief. The thief adroitly mingles with the crowd; he joins the crowd and cries, “Catch the thief, the thief!”; he is intensely engaged in searching for himself.

தான்தேட, ஜகமெலாம்

உடன் தேட

He searches for Himself,
and the whole Universe
Joins Him in this search.

becomes man, God implants in man the longing to become Super-man. He studies in the Universities, researches into the arts, sciences and Scriptures and wishes to unravel these mysteries of life by searching for the secrets embedded in esoteric literature. Men, who have sharpened their consciousness in this manner, were called “வானவர்” in Tamil.

வான்தேடும் மறையேயோ!

Are you not That
which the Super-men search for
in the hidden scriptures!

It is in this search of Super men for the hidden secrets that God resides. And what about those secret scriptures? They are themselves engaged in a search for God, and God hides Himself behind that search and is immanent in that search.

மறையேயும் பொருளேயோ!

Are you not That
which the hidden Scriptures
are searching for!

Thus, in Pattinathar’s vision, there is an eternal quest going on—a race in which the lower searches for and becomes the higher, and God and the entire Universe take part in this endless searching and becoming.

A thief has burgled a house, and made away with the booty. A whole crowd of men run helter-skelter in hot pursuit of the thief. The thief adroitly mingles with the crowd; he joins the crowd and cries, “Catch the thief, the thief!”; he is intensely engaged in searching for himself.

தான்தேட, ஜகமெலாம்

உடன் தேட

He searches for Himself,
and the whole Universe
Joins Him in this search.

Looking at this grand Comedy, the great truth flashes on Pattinathar's mind. He muses; "What a fool am I to have joined in this search! Has not my ego deluded me into thinking that I am different from Him. He is inside me and who am I to search for Myself? Is He different from Me ?

... .. தன்னைத்தான்
நான் தேடிநான் காண
நான் ஆரோ, தான் ஆரோ !
oh ! For me to search
for the Inner Self,
Am I different from Him !

Pattinathar has thus worked out the theory of evolution to its logical conclusion. His theory is more satisfying and more cosmic in its sweep than the Darwinian view, which is fragmentary, than the Teilhardian view, which is vacillating and hesitant. The luminosity of this mystical vision will become self-evident when we listen to this song as a whole

ஊன் தேடும் உயிரேயோ !
உயிர் தேடும் உணர்வேயோ !
வான் தேடும் மறையேயோ !
மறைதேடும் பொருளேயோ !
தான்தேட. ஜகமெலாம்
உடன் தேட. தன்னைத்தான்
நான் தேடி. நான் காண
நான் ஆரோ! தான் ஆரோ!

It is doubtful if in the whole range of creative literature a more magnificent song has been produced.

It is time now for us to revert back to Teilhard de Chardin and his concept of a noosphere, that is to say, a sphere of thought, which, according to him, envelops the whole earth. He sees with his mind's eye the effect of the rotundity of the Earth. If the Earth had been flat instead of being spherical, man's

Looking at this grand Comedy, the great truth flashes on Pattinathar's mind. He muses; "What a fool am I to have joined in this search! Has not my ego deluded me into thinking that I am different from Him. He is inside me and who am I to search for Myself? Is He different from Me ?

... .. தன்னைத்தான்
நான் தேடிநான் காண
நான் ஆரோ, தான் ஆரோ !
oh ! For me to search
for the Inner Self,
Am I different from Him !

Pattinathar has thus worked out the theory of evolution to its logical conclusion. His theory is more satisfying and more cosmic in its sweep than the Darwinian view, which is fragmentary, than the Teilhardian view, which is vacillating and hesitant. The luminosity of this mystical vision will become self-evident when we listen to this song as a whole

ஊன் தேடும் உயிரேயோ !
உயிர் தேடும் உணர்வேயோ !
வான் தேடும் மறையேயோ !
மறைதேடும் பொருளேயோ !
தான்தேட. ஜகமெலாம்
உடன் தேட. தன்னைத்தான்
நான் தேடி. நான் காண
நான் ஆரோ! தான் ஆரோ!

It is doubtful if in the whole range of creative literature a more magnificent song has been produced.

It is time now for us to revert back to Teilhard de Chardin and his concept of a noosphere, that is to say, a sphere of thought, which, according to him, envelops the whole earth. He sees with his mind's eye the effect of the rotundity of the Earth. If the Earth had been flat instead of being spherical, man's

thought would simply diffuse outwards. It would extend over a larger area but would remain thinly spread—dissipated. But the Earth is a sphere and the sphericity of the Earth has a confining influence. Idea will encounter idea and the psycho-social tension will go on rising, producing further complexification in the thought processes. The result will be an organized web of thought, an intellectual system operating under high pressure, a piece of evolutionary mechanism capable of generating high psycho-social energy. All that we think, our inventions, our increasing knowledge of the universe from the galaxies and stars to human Societies and individuals—all this cumulative Conscious of man, if I may use this Jungian expression, will promote the further complexification of the noosphere. The noosphere will incorporate the sum total of human knowledge and wisdom and will become a microcosm, which will influence and direct evolution. The combined result of the noosphere acting upon human thought and human thought acting upon the noosphere will be the attainment of what Teilhard calls the point Omega, where the noosphere will be intensely unified and will have achieved a “hyper-personal” organization.

Teilhard's thought becomes obscure at this stage. No doubt, he equates point Omega with an emergent divinity, but he fails to work out boldly the metaphysical implications of his scientific findings. It must, however, be said in fairness to him that the Catholic Church, of which he was a priest, threatened to ostracize him. He was forbidden to continue teaching in France. His thoughts on evolution were considered dangerous. His application for permission to publish his work was refused in Rome. In fact, his sensational book, “the Phenomenon of Man” was published by his friends only after his death. This background would show why Teilhard failed to declare candidly the philosophical implications of his findings. Evidently in his eagerness to placate the Church, he speaks of the noosphere as Christogenesis. He was apologetic because he was afraid that the charge of pantheism might be flung at him. In fact, what he taught was a genuine type of pantheism, of which no seeker of Truth need feel ashamed.

At this point, we may bid good-bye to Teilhard, and turn

thought would simply diffuse outwards. It would extend over a larger area but would remain thinly spread—dissipated. But the Earth is a sphere and the sphericity of the Earth has a confining influence. Idea will encounter idea and the psycho-social tension will go on rising, producing further complexification in the thought processes. The result will be an organized web of thought, an intellectual system operating under high pressure, a piece of evolutionary mechanism capable of generating high psycho-social energy. All that we think, our inventions, our increasing knowledge of the universe from the galaxies and stars to human Societies and individuals—all this cumulative Conscious of man, if I may use this Jungian expression, will promote the further complexification of the noosphere. The noosphere will incorporate the sum total of human knowledge and wisdom and will become a microcosm, which will influence and direct evolution. The combined result of the noosphere acting upon human thought and human thought acting upon the noosphere will be the attainment of what Teilhard calls the point Omega, where the noosphere will be intensely unified and will have achieved a “hyper-personal” organization.

Teilhard's thought becomes obscure at this stage. No doubt, he equates point Omega with an emergent divinity, but he fails to work out boldly the metaphysical implications of his scientific findings. It must, however, be said in fairness to him that the Catholic Church, of which he was a priest, threatened to ostracize him. He was forbidden to continue teaching in France. His thoughts on evolution were considered dangerous. His application for permission to publish his work was refused in Rome. In fact, his sensational book, “the Phenomenon of Man” was published by his friends only after his death. This background would show why Teilhard failed to declare candidly the philosophical implications of his findings. Evidently in his eagerness to placate the Church, he speaks of the noosphere as Christogenesis. He was apologetic because he was afraid that the charge of pantheism might be flung at him. In fact, what he taught was a genuine type of pantheism, of which no seeker of Truth need feel ashamed.

At this point, we may bid good-bye to Teilhard, and turn

to Shri Aurobindo, who has come to a similar conclusion by travelling along a different route.

When we say life emerges out of matter, and mind emerges out of life, we are merely stating a phenomenon without explaining it. We must go farther and accept that Life is already involved in matter, and that is why it arises out of it, and Mind is already involved in Life, and that is why it arises out of life. Likewise, certain higher states of consciousness like the Supramental are already involved in the Mind, and will emerge in the future. That Supramental condition is a purely spiritual condition of Sat, Chit and Ananda (Truth, Consciousness and Bliss). That condition will be reached by a double movement :— by the ascent of human consciousness to the Supramental level and by the descent of the Supramental to the Earth. Each will act upon and reinforce the other and a perfect condition of harmony among men and spiritual bliss is in store for Man. Hitherto evolution has been a process in which the things evolving were not consciously involved. Now, with the birth of consciousness, evolution has become conscious of itself and Man can consciously co-operate with the processes of evolution and accelerate the golden Age, and establish a Heaven upon Earth. How then can Man co-operate with the processes of evolution?

Says the Mother of Pondicherry :- “Every individual must constantly expand his consciousness. It is no good to have a little aspiration, a little effort and then fall back into lethargy. The Supramental world has to be created in us by the Divine Will as the result of a constant expansion and self-perfecting. This must be the constant pre-occupation of our being, the constant effort and aspiration of our being. “If five minutes in the day you happen to remember that there is something in the Universe like the supramental Force, and that after all, “it would be well if it manifested itself in me”, then all the rest of the time you think of something else and are busy with other things, there is not much chance that it would come and work seriously within you. Aurobindo does not tell you that it is you who will do it, he says it is the divine Will. So, do not come and say, “Ah! I, I can’t”. You are not asked to do it. But there must be in the being a sufficient aspiration for the

to Shri Aurobindo, who has come to a similar conclusion by travelling along a different route.

When we say life emerges out of matter, and mind emerges out of life, we are merely stating a phenomenon without explaining it. We must go farther and accept that Life is already involved in matter, and that is why it arises out of it, and Mind is already involved in Life, and that is why it arises out of life. Likewise, certain higher states of consciousness like the Supramental are already involved in the Mind, and will emerge in the future. That Supramental condition is a purely spiritual condition of Sat, Chit and Ananda (Truth, Consciousness and Bliss). That condition will be reached by a double movement :— by the ascent of human consciousness to the Supramental level and by the descent of the Supramental to the Earth. Each will act upon and reinforce the other and a perfect condition of harmony among men and spiritual bliss is in store for Man. Hitherto evolution has been a process in which the things evolving were not consciously involved. Now, with the birth of consciousness, evolution has become conscious of itself and Man can consciously co-operate with the processes of evolution and accelerate the golden Age, and establish a Heaven upon Earth. How then can Man co-operate with the processes of evolution?

Says the Mother of Pondicherry :- “Every individual must constantly expand his consciousness. It is no good to have a little aspiration, a little effort and then fall back into lethargy. The Supramental world has to be created in us by the Divine Will as the result of a constant expansion and self-perfecting. This must be the constant pre-occupation of our being, the constant effort and aspiration of our being. “If five minutes in the day you happen to remember that there is something in the Universe like the supramental Force, and that after all, “it would be well if it manifested itself in me”, then all the rest of the time you think of something else and are busy with other things, there is not much chance that it would come and work seriously within you. Aurobindo does not tell you that it is you who will do it, he says it is the divine Will. So, do not come and say, “Ah! I, I can’t”. You are not asked to do it. But there must be in the being a sufficient aspiration for the

expansion of the being, for the expansion of the Consciousness to be possible. For, to tell the truth, everybody is small, small, small, so small there is not enough room to put in the supramental ! It is so small that it is already quite filled up with all the petty ordinary human movements. One must widen out a good deal to make room for the movements of the Supramental. And then there must be an aspiration for progress; not to be satisfied with what one is, how one is, what one does, what one knows or thinks one knows; but to have a constant aspiration for something more, something better, for a greater light, a vaster consciousness, a truer truth and a more universal goodness. And over and above all this, a good will which never fails. That cannot happen in a few days."

According to Aurobindo, the supramental man of the future will undergo a physical transformation. He will be flooded with spiritual light; he will become luminous and plastic. He will lose weight and become less coarse. He will be able to displace himself freely. He will be able to appear at a dozen places at the same time. He will get a kind of illumination—not the dry light of reason, "nor the moist and suffused light of the heart, but a lightning and solar splendour." It will give Man a supernatural light, a Truth greater and truer than the knowledge given by Reason and Science, a Sense beyond the senses. This, according to Aurobindo, is the direction in which evolution is moving and the goal of human history. According to Teilhard de Chardin, Point Omega will mark the end of history, because Christ, the Cosmic Presence, will gather up all souls into Eternity, and thereby put an end to human history. But, according to Aurobindo, the Supramental condition will only open a new and glorious chapter in human history and there can be a more ultimate state later.

In the light of the Aurobindonian and Teilhardian concepts of evolution, we can approach human history from a different angle. If man has a destiny, his history ought to show how he is groping towards that destiny. We must rewrite history from this point of view, after eliminating the insignificant details and taking just those facts, which have a bearing on Man's conation

expansion of the being, for the expansion of the Consciousness to be possible. For, to tell the truth, everybody is small, small, small, so small there is not enough room to put in the supramental ! It is so small that it is already quite filled up with all the petty ordinary human movements. One must widen out a good deal to make room for the movements of the Supramental. And then there must be an aspiration for progress; not to be satisfied with what one is, how one is, what one does, what one knows or thinks one knows; but to have a constant aspiration for something more, something better, for a greater light, a vaster consciousness, a truer truth and a more universal goodness. And over and above all this, a good will which never fails. That cannot happen in a few days."

According to Aurobindo, the supramental man of the future will undergo a physical transformation. He will be flooded with spiritual light; he will become luminous and plastic. He will lose weight and become less coarse. He will be able to displace himself freely. He will be able to appear at a dozen places at the same time. He will get a kind of illumination—not the dry light of reason, "nor the moist and suffused light of the heart, but a lightning and solar splendour." It will give Man a supernatural light, a Truth greater and truer than the knowledge given by Reason and Science, a Sense beyond the senses. This, according to Aurobindo, is the direction in which evolution is moving and the goal of human history. According to Teilhard de Chardin, Point Omega will mark the end of history, because Christ, the Cosmic Presence, will gather up all souls into Eternity, and thereby put an end to human history. But, according to Aurobindo, the Supramental condition will only open a new and glorious chapter in human history and there can be a more ultimate state later.

In the light of the Aurobindonian and Teilhardian concepts of evolution, we can approach human history from a different angle. If man has a destiny, his history ought to show how he is groping towards that destiny. We must rewrite history from this point of view, after eliminating the insignificant details and taking just those facts, which have a bearing on Man's conation

towards a higher state of being. Looking back at the past, can we say there is a progressive movement towards the goal? Is there a direction in all that has happened in the past? Is man marching towards his destiny?

The true history of man must begin from before he was born. It really begins with the birth of the inorganic atom. From atom to the molecule was a great advance in organization. From the inorganic to the organic, there was a greater advance, because life became manifest. From the Animal to the Man was a dramatic advance, because thought and consciousness became manifest. Man as he is, homo sapiens, came into being only about 50,000 years ago, and it is too short a period for all men to become Supermen. During this period, individual saints and seers have become supermen and attained salvation by reaching their individual Point Omega.

Saint Manickavasagar gives the history of his individual evolution in the following song :—

புல்லாகிப் பூடாய்ப் புழுவாய் மரமாகிப்
பல்விருகமாகிப் பறவையாய்ப் பாம்பாகிக்
கல்லாய் மனிதராய்ப் பேயாய்க் கணங்களாய்
வல்லசுரராகி முனிவராய்த் தேவராய்ச்
செல்லா அநின்ற வித்தாவர சங்கமத்துள்
எல்லாப் பிறப்பும் பிறந்தினைத் தேன் எம்பெருமான்
மெய்யேயுள் பொன்னடிகள் கண்டின்று வீடுற்றேன்.

The individual soul cycle is complete with Manickavasagar perceiving the Ultimate Reality and merging with it. Many other mystics belonging to different religions and different countries have completed the cycle and reached Point Omega. That is clear from recorded history. But, does history show that mankind as a whole has been cumulatively marching towards such a destiny? The answer to this question lies in a reappraisal of history and in a scrutiny of just those broad trends which have a bearing upon the cumulative movement of mankind.

towards a higher state of being. Looking back at the past, can we say there is a progressive movement towards the goal? Is there a direction in all that has happened in the past? Is man marching towards his destiny?

The true history of man must begin from before he was born. It really begins with the birth of the inorganic atom. From atom to the molecule was a great advance in organization. From the inorganic to the organic, there was a greater advance, because life became manifest. From the Animal to the Man was a dramatic advance, because thought and consciousness became manifest. Man as he is, homo sapiens, came into being only about 50,000 years ago, and it is too short a period for all men to become Supermen. During this period, individual saints and seers have become supermen and attained salvation by reaching their individual Point Omega.

Saint Manickavasagar gives the history of his individual evolution in the following song :—

புல்லாகிப் பூடாய்ப் புழுவாய் மரமாகிப்
பல்விருகமாகிப் பறவையாய்ப் பாம்பாகிக்
கல்லாய் மனிதராய்ப் பேயாய்க் கணங்களாய்
வல்லசுரராகி முனிவராய்த் தேவராய்ச்
செல்லா அநின்ற வித்தாவர சங்கமத்துள்
எல்லாப் பிறப்பும் பிறந்தினைத் தேன் எம்பெருமான்
மெய்யேயுள் பொன்னடிகள் கண்டின்று வீடுற்றேன்.

The individual soul cycle is complete with Manickavasagar perceiving the Ultimate Reality and merging with it. Many other mystics belonging to different religions and different countries have completed the cycle and reached Point Omega. That is clear from recorded history. But, does history show that mankind as a whole has been cumulatively marching towards such a destiny? The answer to this question lies in a reappraisal of history and in a scrutiny of just those broad trends which have a bearing upon the cumulative movement of mankind.

Because of the haphazard arrangement of the Earth's surface, and the vicissitudes of climate, some regions are more favourable than others for the habitation of mankind. Vast cultivable plains irrigated by great rivers have been the cradles of human civilisation. We find human masses concentrated in such regions and leading a settled life there. We may pick out five such centres of culture :- Central America with its Maya civilization; the South Seas with Polynesian civilization; the Yellow River basin, with its Chinese civilization; the valleys of the Ganges, Indus, the Cauvery and the Tambraparni with its Indian civilization; and the Nile Valley and Mesopotannia with Egyptian and Sumerian civilization. Of these, the Indian, Egyptian and the Sumerian are the most ancient. These represented three distinct psycho-somatic currents, which were independent of each other. Each of them tried to spread and transform the earth. The Maya civilisation in Central America proved ineffective; the Polynesian civilisation was too weak to radiate. Ultimately the contest for the future of the world was fought mainly between the dwellers of Asia and North Africa.

China, inspite of its refinement and profundity, went into a long stupor from which it woke up only recently as a result of the injection of a virulent dose of Communism into its body politic. The sleeping giant has woken up, but he has nothing original to contribute to the evolutionary movement as he has merely absorbed a foreign system and killed his own through the "cultural Revolution."

As for the Egyptian and Mesopotomian civilizations, though they died, they bequeathed their virile culture to Greece, through Greece to Rome and then to the whole of Europe and America. Greece vibrated with profound thought, scientific inventions and aesthetic beauty. Rome absorbed this Greek contribution and stamped it with its genius for organization. France was inspired by the Roman legacy and she contributed through her French Revolution, the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Germany, England, Russia and the U. S. A. have taken up the torch and by their brilliant scientific achievements, widened the frontiers of material knowledge. It is Western Civilization that

Because of the haphazard arrangement of the Earth's surface, and the vicissitudes of climate, some regions are more favourable than others for the habitation of mankind. Vast cultivable plains irrigated by great rivers have been the cradles of human civilisation. We find human masses concentrated in such regions and leading a settled life there. We may pick out five such centres of culture :- Central America with its Maya civilization; the South Seas with Polynesian civilization; the Yellow River basin, with its Chinese civilization; the valleys of the Ganges, Indus, the Cauvery and the Tambraparni with its Indian civilization; and the Nile Valley and Mesopotannia with Egyptian and Sumerian civilization. Of these, the Indian, Egyptian and the Sumerian are the most ancient. These represented three distinct psycho-somatic currents, which were independent of each other. Each of them tried to spread and transform the earth. The Maya civilisation in Central America proved ineffective; the Polynesian civilisation was too weak to radiate. Ultimately the contest for the future of the world was fought mainly between the dwellers of Asia and North Africa.

China, inspite of its refinement and profundity, went into a long stupor from which it woke up only recently as a result of the injection of a virulent dose of Communism into its body politic. The sleeping giant has woken up, but he has nothing original to contribute to the evolutionary movement as he has merely absorbed a foreign system and killed his own through the "cultural Revolution."

As for the Egyptian and Mesopotomian civilizations, though they died, they bequeathed their virile culture to Greece, through Greece to Rome and then to the whole of Europe and America. Greece vibrated with profound thought, scientific inventions and aesthetic beauty. Rome absorbed this Greek contribution and stamped it with its genius for organization. France was inspired by the Roman legacy and she contributed through her French Revolution, the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Germany, England, Russia and the U. S. A. have taken up the torch and by their brilliant scientific achievements, widened the frontiers of material knowledge. It is Western Civilization that

has discovered all that goes to make the modern man. The result is that the psycho-social temperature of the Earth has risen considerably as a result of those inventions. Man has not only probed the Moon but has also forged weapons which have gone beyond the solar system to probe into the mysteries of interstellar space. In spite of these achievements, the Western Culture has failed signally to bring peace upon Earth, because it is a culture which has failed to turn inward to study the spirit of Man. In spite of its great vigour and speed that culture lacks direction. On the contrary, the Indian Civilization possesses just that which the Western Civilization lacks. For thousands of years hundreds of Indian Saints have been engaged in research in the laboratory of the spirit. Untrammelled by the Church or any secular organization they have risen to the highest in the world of the spirit and they have been most audacious in declaring the spiritual truths discovered by them. But in their pre-occupations with the Spirit, they neglected the development of material things. It was all right for a seer to say, "Remain unconcerned in action". It was a truth which could be understood experientially but not intellectually. But the great masses of Indians tried to understand this truth intellectually and succeeded only in perverting and misunderstanding this truth. Instead of being unconcerned *in* action, they became unconcerned *with* action. A supreme slovenliness became the national trait. There was an utter indifference to the welfare of the masses. Narrow caste and communal divisions divided the country vertically and horizontally.

It was at this juncture that an event of great evolutionary significance took place. I refer to the 150 year connection between Great Britain and India. It resulted in a commerce of ideas and values; the West supplementing the East, each gaining from the other and trying to achieve an equilibrium between material civilization and spiritual insight.

When I say that the West is materialistic and India is spiritual, I over-simplify the problem for the purpose of driving home a truth. I am not unaware of the spiritual strain in western culture and the materialistic strain in Indian Culture. The Judeo-Christian contribution to the Western culture cannot be under-

has discovered all that goes to make the modern man. The result is that the psycho-social temperature of the Earth has risen considerably as a result of those inventions. Man has not only probed the Moon but has also forged weapons which have gone beyond the solar system to probe into the mysteries of interstellar space. In spite of these achievements, the Western Culture has failed signally to bring peace upon Earth, because it is a culture which has failed to turn inward to study the spirit of Man. In spite of its great vigour and speed that culture lacks direction. On the contrary, the Indian Civilization possesses just that which the Western Civilization lacks. For thousands of years hundreds of Indian Saints have been engaged in research in the laboratory of the spirit. Untrammelled by the Church or any secular organization they have risen to the highest in the world of the spirit and they have been most audacious in declaring the spiritual truths discovered by them. But in their pre-occupations with the Spirit, they neglected the development of material things. It was all right for a seer to say, "Remain unconcerned in action". It was a truth which could be understood experientially but not intellectually. But the great masses of Indians tried to understand this truth intellectually and succeeded only in perverting and misunderstanding this truth. Instead of being unconcerned *in* action, they became unconcerned *with* action. A supreme slovenliness became the national trait. There was an utter indifference to the welfare of the masses. Narrow caste and communal divisions divided the country vertically and horizontally.

It was at this juncture that an event of great evolutionary significance took place. I refer to the 150 year connection between Great Britain and India. It resulted in a commerce of ideas and values; the West supplementing the East, each gaining from the other and trying to achieve an equilibrium between material civilization and spiritual insight.

When I say that the West is materialistic and India is spiritual, I over-simplify the problem for the purpose of driving home a truth. I am not unaware of the spiritual strain in western culture and the materialistic strain in Indian Culture. The Judeo-Christian contribution to the Western culture cannot be under-

estimated. Though Buddha had earlier proclaimed the message of compassion in India, the message did not receive that amount of practical application in India which Christ's message of compassion received in the West. The Christian countries of the West have organised elaborate institutions through which succour is given to the poor and relief is given to the sickly—effectively, but they have failed to go deeper into the spirit of Man to solve problems of peace. Likewise, the Indian achievement has not been exclusively in the domain of the spirit. The Pallava kings, the Cholas and the Pandyas have been great sea-farers and builders of great masterpieces of sculpture and architecture. Asoka and Akbar have made distinct contributions to the art of Government. But, as we look back upon the total achievements of the West and India, the predominant contribution of the West is in the secular field and that of India, in the deep recesses of the spirit. A synthesis of the peculiar genius of India and the West is bound to give a distinct push to the process of human evolution in the right direction. Is there not, therefore, a plan behind the forces that brought India under British suzerainty and kept her under British influence for nearly two centuries? By that material subjugation of India, Great Britain and through Great Britain, the whole of the Western World was kept exposed to the spiritual influence of India. When both these influences are absorbed and assimilated by man, there is bound to be a leap in the process of human evolution.

This process is vigorously going on now. Many Indians have migrated to the West, especially the U. S. A. and have made a mark there in technological inventions. Many Westerners are coming to India to slake their spiritual thirst. Some time back, I interviewed a number of American hippies at Pondicherry and investigated the circumstances leading to their migration. Most of them were post-graduate students of Philosophy and some of them were sons of multi-millionaires. They said :- "We suffer from too much of wealth in the U. S. A. We have enough money to buy whatever we want. But our trouble is we don't know what to buy. We are in search of peace and we cannot buy it for money". I asked them what was their reaction to India, and they said: "We find in the Indian soil a spiritual vibration. Spiritual guidance is in-built in Indian Society. We

estimated. Though Buddha had earlier proclaimed the message of compassion in India, the message did not receive that amount of practical application in India which Christ's message of compassion received in the West. The Christian countries of the West have organised elaborate institutions through which succour is given to the poor and relief is given to the sickly—effectively, but they have failed to go deeper into the spirit of Man to solve problems of peace. Likewise, the Indian achievement has not been exclusively in the domain of the spirit. The Pallava kings, the Cholas and the Pandyas have been great sea-farers and builders of great masterpieces of sculpture and architecture. Asoka and Akbar have made distinct contributions to the art of Government. But, as we look back upon the total achievements of the West and India, the predominant contribution of the West is in the secular field and that of India, in the deep recesses of the spirit. A synthesis of the peculiar genius of India and the West is bound to give a distinct push to the process of human evolution in the right direction. Is there not, therefore, a plan behind the forces that brought India under British suzerainty and kept her under British influence for nearly two centuries? By that material subjugation of India, Great Britain and through Great Britain, the whole of the Western World was kept exposed to the spiritual influence of India. When both these influences are absorbed and assimilated by man, there is bound to be a leap in the process of human evolution.

This process is vigorously going on now. Many Indians have migrated to the West, especially the U. S. A. and have made a mark there in technological inventions. Many Westerners are coming to India to slake their spiritual thirst. Some time back, I interviewed a number of American hippies at Pondicherry and investigated the circumstances leading to their migration. Most of them were post-graduate students of Philosophy and some of them were sons of multi-millionaires. They said :- "We suffer from too much of wealth in the U. S. A. We have enough money to buy whatever we want. But our trouble is we don't know what to buy. We are in search of peace and we cannot buy it for money". I asked them what was their reaction to India, and they said: "We find in the Indian soil a spiritual vibration. Spiritual guidance is in-built in Indian Society. We

have no such guidance in our country. We float rudderless in our Society.”

I have seen not only Americans, but people from the farthest corners of the West coming to India on a spiritual quest. Writing in the *Bande Mataram* on 16-4-1907, this is what Aurobindo said:

“There are periods in the history of the world when the unseen power that guides its destinies seems to be filled with a consuming passion for change and a strong impatience of the old. The Great Mother (Shakti) has resolved to take the nations into her hand and shape them anew. These are periods of rapid destruction and energetic Creation, filled with the sound of cannon and the trampling of armies, the crash of great downfalls and the turmoil of swift and violent revolutions; the world is thrown into the melting pot and comes out in a new shape and with new features. They are periods when the wisdom of the wise is confounded and the prudence of the prudent turned into a laughing-stock; for it is the day of the Prophet, the dreamer, the fanatic and the Crusader — the time of divine revelation when Avatars are born and miracles happen.

The peoples of Europe have carried material life to its farthest expression,— the science of bodily existence has been perfected but they are suffering from diseases which their science is powerless to cure. England with her practical intelligence, France with her clear logical brain, Germany with her speculative genius, Russia with her emotional force, America with her commercial energy have done what they could for human development, but each has reached the limit of her peculiar capacity. Something is wanting which Europe cannot supply. It is at this juncture that Asia has awakened, because the world needed her.”

Writing on “Spirituality and Nationalism”, he pursues this line of diagnosis and says: “The strength of Europe is in details, the strength of Asia is in synthesis. When Europe has perfected the details of life or thought, she is unable to harmonize them into a perfect symphony and she falls into the intellectual

have no such guidance in our country. We float rudderless in our Society.”

I have seen not only Americans, but people from the farthest corners of the West coming to India on a spiritual quest. Writing in the *Bande Mataram* on 16-4-1907, this is what Aurobindo said:

“There are periods in the history of the world when the unseen power that guides its destinies seems to be filled with a consuming passion for change and a strong impatience of the old. The Great Mother (Shakti) has resolved to take the nations into her hand and shape them anew. These are periods of rapid destruction and energetic Creation, filled with the sound of cannon and the trampling of armies, the crash of great downfalls and the turmoil of swift and violent revolutions; the world is thrown into the melting pot and comes out in a new shape and with new features. They are periods when the wisdom of the wise is confounded and the prudence of the prudent turned into a laughing-stock; for it is the day of the Prophet, the dreamer, the fanatic and the Crusader — the time of divine revelation when Avatars are born and miracles happen.

The peoples of Europe have carried material life to its farthest expression,— the science of bodily existence has been perfected but they are suffering from diseases which their science is powerless to cure. England with her practical intelligence, France with her clear logical brain, Germany with her speculative genius, Russia with her emotional force, America with her commercial energy have done what they could for human development, but each has reached the limit of her peculiar capacity. Something is wanting which Europe cannot supply. It is at this juncture that Asia has awakened, because the world needed her.”

Writing on “Spirituality and Nationalism”, he pursues this line of diagnosis and says: “The strength of Europe is in details, the strength of Asia is in synthesis. When Europe has perfected the details of life or thought, she is unable to harmonize them into a perfect symphony and she falls into the intellectual

heresies, practical extravagances, which contradict the facts of life, the limits of human nature and the ultimate truths of existence.

It is therefore the Office of Asia to take up the work of human evolution when Europe comes to a standstill and loses itself in a dash of vain speculations, barren experiments and helpless struggles to escape from the consequences of her own mistakes. Such a time has now come in the world's history.

Mankind has long been experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of a perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has it succeeded in realizing the ultimate secret of life. Nowhere has it found satisfaction. No scheme of society or politics has helped it to escape the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, from dissatisfaction with which it strives for an outlet; for whoever is trying to find by material means must fail.

Through all these ages, Asia has been seeking for a Light within But the grand workshop of spiritual experiment, the laboratory of the soul has been India, where thousands of great spirits have been born in every generation who were content to work quietly in their own souls, perfect their knowledge, hand down the results of their experiments to a few disciples and leave the rest to others to complete. The work we have to do for humanity is a work which no other nation can accomplish, the spiritualisation of the race."

heresies, practical extravagances, which contradict the facts of life, the limits of human nature and the ultimate truths of existence.

It is therefore the Office of Asia to take up the work of human evolution when Europe comes to a standstill and loses itself in a dash of vain speculations, barren experiments and helpless struggles to escape from the consequences of her own mistakes. Such a time has now come in the world's history.

Mankind has long been experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of a perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has it succeeded in realizing the ultimate secret of life. Nowhere has it found satisfaction. No scheme of society or politics has helped it to escape the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, from dissatisfaction with which it strives for an outlet; for whoever is trying to find by material means must fail.

Through all these ages, Asia has been seeking for a Light within But the grand workshop of spiritual experiment, the laboratory of the soul has been India, where thousands of great spirits have been born in every generation who were content to work quietly in their own souls, perfect their knowledge, hand down the results of their experiments to a few disciples and leave the rest to others to complete. The work we have to do for humanity is a work which no other nation can accomplish, the spiritualisation of the race."

Lecture No 2

Has human history an inner meaning? Does it disclose a purpose, and an increasing purpose at that? These are questions which have puzzled and fascinated man since the beginning of time. Before we try to grasp the inner meaning of human history, we must first have before our mind the whole panorama of history; we must supply the missing links with the aid of a vivid and realistic imagination; we must arrange the significant facts in the proper cosmic perspective, then we must study with reverence the march of events and the inter-connectedness of episodes; we must have the greatness and the intuition to connect effects with natural causes. And we must reduce the immensity of the historical material to intelligible order. For this purpose, it is necessary to possess a number of qualities, which rarely co-exist in the same individual. We must press into service the immense and the detailed scholarship of the historian; then we must interpret the material with the broad and deep understanding of a wholesomely constituted philosopher. Above all, we must have the penetrating vision of the mystic, and with the mystic's insight we must unveil the mystery behind the cosmic drama,

Let us select some outstanding observers of human history, and study their reactions to history in the light of their own

Lecture No 2

Has human history an inner meaning? Does it disclose a purpose, and an increasing purpose at that? These are questions which have puzzled and fascinated man since the beginning of time. Before we try to grasp the inner meaning of human history, we must first have before our mind the whole panorama of history; we must supply the missing links with the aid of a vivid and realistic imagination; we must arrange the significant facts in the proper cosmic perspective, then we must study with reverence the march of events and the inter-connectedness of episodes; we must have the greatness and the intuition to connect effects with natural causes. And we must reduce the immensity of the historical material to intelligible order. For this purpose, it is necessary to possess a number of qualities, which rarely co-exist in the same individual. We must press into service the immense and the detailed scholarship of the historian; then we must interpret the material with the broad and deep understanding of a wholesomely constituted philosopher. Above all, we must have the penetrating vision of the mystic, and with the mystic's insight we must unveil the mystery behind the cosmic drama,

Let us select some outstanding observers of human history, and study their reactions to history in the light of their own

peculiar accomplishments and limitations. Herodotus, the Father of History, presents all history as the drama of a divine Providence, rewarding the insolent prosperity of man. Thucydides, on the other hand, recognises no guiding Providence, no divine plan, not even "progress"; he sees life and history as a tragedy, at once sordid and noble, redeemed now and then by great men, but always relapsing into superstition and war. Epicurus, who lived in stoic simplicity, said: "The gods exist and enjoy in some far-off space among the stars, a serene and deathless life, but they are too sensible to bother with the affairs of such an infinitesimal species as mankind. The world is not designed nor is it guided by them; how could such divine Epicureans have created so middling a universe, so confused a scene of order and disorder, of beauty and suffering? If this disappoints you, Epicurus adds, console yourself with the thought that the gods are too remote to do you any more harm than good. They cannot watch you, they cannot judge you, they cannot plunge you into hell.

Lucian of the Second Century B. C. defines philosophy as an attempt to "get an elevation from which you may see in every direction." As he stands on such an elevation, life seems to him a ridiculous confusion, a chaotic chorus in which all the dancers move and shout each at his own individual will, "until the impressario dismisses them one by one from the stage". In "Charon", he paints a dark picture of the human scene as witnessed by superhuman eyes from some celestial peak; men ploughing, toiling, disputing, suing in the Courts, lending at usury, cheating and being cheated, running after gold or pleasure; over their heads a cloud of hopes, fears, follies and hates; over these, the Fates spinning the web of life for each human atom; one man is lifted high from the mass and then has a resounding fall; and each in turn is drawn away by some messenger of death. Lucian in his cynicism satirizes the rich for their greed, the poor for their envy, and the gods for their non-existence.

Shakespeare's "Macbeth", on the other hand, cries out in bitter anguish:

peculiar accomplishments and limitations. Herodotus, the Father of History, presents all history as the drama of a divine Providence, rewarding the insolent prosperity of man. Thucydides, on the other hand, recognises no guiding Providence, no divine plan, not even "progress"; he sees life and history as a tragedy, at once sordid and noble, redeemed now and then by great men, but always relapsing into superstition and war. Epicurus, who lived in stoic simplicity, said: "The gods exist and enjoy in some far-off space among the stars, a serene and deathless life, but they are too sensible to bother with the affairs of such an infinitesimal species as mankind. The world is not designed nor is it guided by them; how could such divine Epicureans have created so middling a universe, so confused a scene of order and disorder, of beauty and suffering? If this disappoints you, Epicurus adds, console yourself with the thought that the gods are too remote to do you any more harm than good. They cannot watch you, they cannot judge you, they cannot plunge you into hell.

Lucian of the Second Century B. C. defines philosophy as an attempt to "get an elevation from which you may see in every direction." As he stands on such an elevation, life seems to him a ridiculous confusion, a chaotic chorus in which all the dancers move and shout each at his own individual will, "until the impressario dismisses them one by one from the stage". In "Charon", he paints a dark picture of the human scene as witnessed by superhuman eyes from some celestial peak; men ploughing, toiling, disputing, suing in the Courts, lending at usury, cheating and being cheated, running after gold or pleasure; over their heads a cloud of hopes, fears, follies and hates; over these, the Fates spinning the web of life for each human atom; one man is lifted high from the mass and then has a resounding fall; and each in turn is drawn away by some messenger of death. Lucian in his cynicism satirizes the rich for their greed, the poor for their envy, and the gods for their non-existence.

Shakespeare's "Macbeth", on the other hand, cries out in bitter anguish:

“Out, out brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage;
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

Evidently, Macbeth believes in the existence of the author of the tale, though, in his fury, he calls him names.

Bruno (1548-1600) had a vision of the universe which is primarily aesthetic, a profound and wondering appreciation of an incandescent infinity. His vision is a philosophical attempt to adjust human thought to a Cosmos in which our planet is an infinitesimal part of an unknowable immensity. The earth is not the centre of the world, nor is the sun; beyond the world that we see, there are other worlds and beyond those other worlds are other worlds again and so on, endlessly; we cannot conceive an end, nor a beginning, and instead of the fixed stars being fixed, as Copernicus thought, they change their place constantly; even in the skies, all things flow. Space, time and motion are relative. There is no centre, no circumference, and no up or down.

As Saint Manickavasagar says,

“நூற்றொரு கோடியின் மேற்பட விரிந்தன,
இல் நுழைகதரின்
துன்னணுப் புரைய”

(There are over hundred and one crores of universes dancing like multitudinous particles of dust in a beam of sun-light penetrating inside a house.)

Kavi Chakravarthi Kamban says of this Infinite,

“It is neither Light nor Darkness
neither Above nor Below
It is not without ageing,
nor does it age;
It has neither beginning, middle nor end
neither Afore nor After.”

“Out, out brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage;
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

Evidently, Macbeth believes in the existence of the author of the tale, though, in his fury, he calls him names.

Bruno (1548-1600) had a vision of the universe which is primarily aesthetic, a profound and wondering appreciation of an incandescent infinity. His vision is a philosophical attempt to adjust human thought to a Cosmos in which our planet is an infinitesimal part of an unknowable immensity. The earth is not the centre of the world, nor is the sun; beyond the world that we see, there are other worlds and beyond those other worlds are other worlds again and so on, endlessly; we cannot conceive an end, nor a beginning, and instead of the fixed stars being fixed, as Copernicus thought, they change their place constantly; even in the skies, all things flow. Space, time and motion are relative. There is no centre, no circumference, and no up or down.

As Saint Manickavasagar says,

“நூற்றொரு கோடியின் மேற்பட விரிந்தன,
இல் நுழைகதரின்
துன்னணுப் புரைய”

(There are over hundred and one crores of universes dancing like multitudinous particles of dust in a beam of sun-light penetrating inside a house.)

Kavi Chakravarthi Kamban says of this Infinite,

“It is neither Light nor Darkness
neither Above nor Below
It is not without ageing,
nor does it age;
It has neither beginning, middle nor end
neither Afore nor After.”

Says Kamban,

“Let Brahma put the four vociferous Vedas
and the allied scriptures
on the huge grinding-stone of Wisdom
and let him grind them hard
for days and days on end;
Yet he cannot grasp Reality.”

Bruno, who puts us in mind of Manickavasagar and Kamban, says that as time is the measure of motion, time too is relative. Probably, many stars are inhabited by living, intelligent beings. Yet, in this endless immensity, there is an invariable conservation of matter, an eternal and inviolable constancy of law.

Since the universe is infinite, and there cannot be two infinities, argues Bruno, the infinite God and the infinite universe must be one. There is no Prime Mover, as Aristotle supposed. There is motion or energy inherent in every part of the whole. “God is not an external intelligence..... It is more worthy for him to be the internal principle of motion, which is his own nature, his own soul.” Nature is the outside of the Divine Mind; however, this Mind is not in a “heaven above”, but in every particle of reality. The world is composed of minute nomads, indivisible units of force, of life, of inchoate mind. Each particle has its own individuality, has a mind of its own; and yet its freedom is not liberation from law but (as in Spinoza) behaviour according to its own inherent law and character. There is a principle of progress and evolution in Nature in the sense that every part strives for development.

There are opposites in Nature, contrary forces, contradictions; but in the operation of the whole Cosmos, — in the “will of God”— all contraries coincide and disappear; so the diverse motions of the planets make the harmony of the spheres. Behind the bewildering, fascinating variety of Nature is the yet more marvellous unity, wherein all parts appear as organs of one organism.

That reminds us of a Tamil Saint, who declared several hundred years before Bruno : “ஒன்றாகக் காண்பதே காட்சி”.

Says Kamban,

“Let Brahma put the four vociferous Vedas
and the allied scriptures
on the huge grinding-stone of Wisdom
and let him grind them hard
for days and days on end;
Yet he cannot grasp Reality.”

Bruno, who puts us in mind of Manickavasagar and Kamban, says that as time is the measure of motion, time too is relative. Probably, many stars are inhabited by living, intelligent beings. Yet, in this endless immensity, there is an invariable conservation of matter, an eternal and inviolable constancy of law.

Since the universe is infinite, and there cannot be two infinities, argues Bruno, the infinite God and the infinite universe must be one. There is no Prime Mover, as Aristotle supposed. There is motion or energy inherent in every part of the whole. “God is not an external intelligence..... It is more worthy for him to be the internal principle of motion, which is his own nature, his own soul.” Nature is the outside of the Divine Mind; however, this Mind is not in a “heaven above”, but in every particle of reality. The world is composed of minute nomads, indivisible units of force, of life, of inchoate mind. Each particle has its own individuality, has a mind of its own; and yet its freedom is not liberation from law but (as in Spinoza) behaviour according to its own inherent law and character. There is a principle of progress and evolution in Nature in the sense that every part strives for development.

There are opposites in Nature, contrary forces, contradictions; but in the operation of the whole Cosmos, — in the “will of God”— all contraries coincide and disappear; so the diverse motions of the planets make the harmony of the spheres. Behind the bewildering, fascinating variety of Nature is the yet more marvellous unity, wherein all parts appear as organs of one organism.

That reminds us of a Tamil Saint, who declared several hundred years before Bruno : “ஒன்றாகக் காண்பதே காட்சி”.

(To see the unity of life is the only true vision). We do not know if Bruno had a spiritual experience of this vision or merely inferred it through his intellect. But he says: "It is Unity that enchants me. By her power, I am free though thrall, happy in sorrow, rich in poverty, alive even in death. Though I am subject to law, I express my own nature; though I suffer, I find solace in recognising that the "evil" of the part becomes meaningless in the perspective of the whole; though I die, the death of the part is the rejuvenating life of the whole." According to Bruno, the knowledge of the supreme unity is the goal of human life.

Pascal, the great French Philosopher, was both a believer and a doubter. He wrote his "Pensees" in 1670. His reactions to the universe are both fascinating and stupefying. Says he, "Let man contemplate Nature entirely in her full and lofty majesty; let him put far from his sight the lowly objects that surround him; let him regard that blazing light, placed like an eternal lamp to illuminate the world; let the earth appear to him but a point within the vast circuit which that star describes; and let him marvel that this immense circumference is itself but a speck from the view-point of the stars that move in the firmament. And if our vision is stopped there, let imagination pass beyond..... All this visible world is but an imperceptible element in the great bosom of nature. No thought can go so far It is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere. This is the most perceivable feature of the almightiness of God, so that our imagination loses itself in this thought."

And Pascal adds with quivering sensitivity, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me."

Contrast this sentiment with that of Tirumoolar. Being a mystic, he is not frightened by Eternity or Infinity. Consciousness of his ignorance holds no terrors for Tirumoolar. It is to him the starting point of wisdom. It is in the awareness of human ignorance that Tirumoolar sees the beginning of spiritual wisdom. Accordingly, in his prologue to his Tirumantram, he sings with characteristic humour,

(To see the unity of life is the only true vision). We do not know if Bruno had a spiritual experience of this vision or merely inferred it through his intellect. But he says: "It is Unity that enchants me. By her power, I am free though thrall, happy in sorrow, rich in poverty, alive even in death. Though I am subject to law, I express my own nature; though I suffer, I find solace in recognising that the "evil" of the part becomes meaningless in the perspective of the whole; though I die, the death of the part is the rejuvenating life of the whole." According to Bruno, the knowledge of the supreme unity is the goal of human life.

Pascal, the great French Philosopher, was both a believer and a doubter. He wrote his "Pensees" in 1670. His reactions to the universe are both fascinating and stupefying. Says he, "Let man contemplate Nature entirely in her full and lofty majesty; let him put far from his sight the lowly objects that surround him; let him regard that blazing light, placed like an eternal lamp to illuminate the world; let the earth appear to him but a point within the vast circuit which that star describes; and let him marvel that this immense circumference is itself but a speck from the view-point of the stars that move in the firmament. And if our vision is stopped there, let imagination pass beyond..... All this visible world is but an imperceptible element in the great bosom of nature. No thought can go so far It is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere. This is the most perceivable feature of the almightiness of God, so that our imagination loses itself in this thought."

And Pascal adds with quivering sensitivity, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me."

Contrast this sentiment with that of Tirumoolar. Being a mystic, he is not frightened by Eternity or Infinity. Consciousness of his ignorance holds no terrors for Tirumoolar. It is to him the starting point of wisdom. It is in the awareness of human ignorance that Tirumoolar sees the beginning of spiritual wisdom. Accordingly, in his prologue to his Tirumantram, he sings with characteristic humour,

“ஆரறிவார் எங்கள் அண்ணல் பெருமையை,
ஆரறிவார் இந்த அகலமும் நிகளமும்,
பேரறியாத பெருஞ்சுடர் ஒன்றதின்,
வேரறியாமை விளம்புகின்றேனே,”

(Whoever knows the glories of my Lord,
And who, the vastness of Infinity: (yet)
Of my ignorance of that Nameless Light
I shall sing three thousand songs.)

Coming back to Pascal, we see that he is terrified not only by the Infinite, but also by the Infinitesimal. We can go on dividing the atom ad infinitum, and reduce it to a tiny minim. We will still find that it has parts smaller than itself. Our reason wavers, stupefied between the infinitely vast and the infinitely minute. Says Pascal: “He who sees himself thus will be frightened by himself, and perceiving himself sustained between these two abysses of Infinity and nothing, will tremble, and will be more disposed to contemplate these marvels in silence than to explore them with presumption. For, in the end, what is man in Nature? A nothing, in respect to the infinite, everything in respect to the nothing, a half-way between nothing and all. Infinitely far from comprehending the extremes, both the end and the beginning of things are invincibly hidden in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing from which he has been drawn, and the infinite in which he is engulfed.”

“The French language”, said Saint Beuve, “has no finer pages than the simple and severe lines of this incomparable picture.”

How does Pascal react to this vision of the Universe? What, according to him, is the meaning of existence? He thinks that reason cannot guide us to the inner chambers of existence. He, therefore, believes that Science is a silly presumption, because it is based on reason, which is based on the senses which deceive us in a hundred ways. It is limited by the narrow bounds within which our senses operate, and by the corruptible brevity of the flesh. The misery of man is another mystery

“ஆரறிவார் எங்கள் அண்ணல் பெருமையை,
ஆரறிவார் இந்த அகலமும் நிகளமும்,
பேரறியாத பெருஞ்சுடர் ஒன்றதின்,
வேரறியாமை விளம்புகின்றேனே,”

(Whoever knows the glories of my Lord,
And who, the vastness of Infinity: (yet)
Of my ignorance of that Nameless Light
I shall sing three thousand songs.)

Coming back to Pascal, we see that he is terrified not only by the Infinite, but also by the Infinitesimal. We can go on dividing the atom ad infinitum, and reduce it to a tiny minim. We will still find that it has parts smaller than itself. Our reason wavers, stupefied between the infinitely vast and the infinitely minute. Says Pascal: “He who sees himself thus will be frightened by himself, and perceiving himself sustained between these two abysses of Infinity and nothing, will tremble, and will be more disposed to contemplate these marvels in silence than to explore them with presumption. For, in the end, what is man in Nature? A nothing, in respect to the infinite, everything in respect to the nothing, a half-way between nothing and all. Infinitely far from comprehending the extremes, both the end and the beginning of things are invincibly hidden in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing from which he has been drawn, and the infinite in which he is engulfed.”

“The French language”, said Saint Beuve, “has no finer pages than the simple and severe lines of this incomparable picture.”

How does Pascal react to this vision of the Universe? What, according to him, is the meaning of existence? He thinks that reason cannot guide us to the inner chambers of existence. He, therefore, believes that Science is a silly presumption, because it is based on reason, which is based on the senses which deceive us in a hundred ways. It is limited by the narrow bounds within which our senses operate, and by the corruptible brevity of the flesh. The misery of man is another mystery

Why should the universe have laboured so long to produce a species so fragile in its happiness, so subject to pain in every nerve, to grief in every love, to death in every life? And yet, "the grandeur of man is great in that he knows himself to be miserable."

"Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. (*L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant*). The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him; a vapor, a drop of water, suffice to kill him. But when the universe has crushed him, man will still be nobler than that which kills him, because he knows that he is dying, and of the victory the universe knows nothing."

None of these mysteries finds an answer in reason. If we trust to reason alone, we shall condemn ourselves to an uncertainty that will doubt everything except pain and death, and philosophy could be at best a rationalization of defeat. But we cannot believe that man's fate is as reason sees it — to struggle, to suffer and to die, having begotten others to struggle, to suffer and to die, generation after generation aimlessly, stupidly, in a ridiculous and superabundant insignificance. In our hearts we feel that this cannot be true, that it would be the greatest of blasphemies to think that life and the universe have no meaning. God, and the meaning of life must be felt by the heart rather than by reason. "The heart has its reasons which reason does not know", and we do right to listen to our hearts, to "place our faith in feeling". For all belief, even in practical matters, is a form of will, a direction of attention and desire." The mystical experience is profounder than the evidence of the senses or the arguments of reason.

What answer, then, does feeling give to the mysteries of life and thought? The answer is religion. Only religion can restore meaning to life, and nobility to man; without it we flounder even more deeply into mental frustration and moral futility. Pascal adds, "Religion gives us a Bible; the Bible tells us of man's fall from grace; only that original sin can explain the strange union, in human nature, of hate and love, of bestial wickedness

Why should the universe have laboured so long to produce a species so fragile in its happiness, so subject to pain in every nerve, to grief in every love, to death in every life? And yet, "the grandeur of man is great in that he knows himself to be miserable."

"Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. (*L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant*). The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him; a vapor, a drop of water, suffice to kill him. But when the universe has crushed him, man will still be nobler than that which kills him, because he knows that he is dying, and of the victory the universe knows nothing."

None of these mysteries finds an answer in reason. If we trust to reason alone, we shall condemn ourselves to an uncertainty that will doubt everything except pain and death, and philosophy could be at best a rationalization of defeat. But we cannot believe that man's fate is as reason sees it — to struggle, to suffer and to die, having begotten others to struggle, to suffer and to die, generation after generation aimlessly, stupidly, in a ridiculous and superabundant insignificance. In our hearts we feel that this cannot be true, that it would be the greatest of blasphemies to think that life and the universe have no meaning. God, and the meaning of life must be felt by the heart rather than by reason. "The heart has its reasons which reason does not know", and we do right to listen to our hearts, to "place our faith in feeling". For all belief, even in practical matters, is a form of will, a direction of attention and desire." The mystical experience is profounder than the evidence of the senses or the arguments of reason.

What answer, then, does feeling give to the mysteries of life and thought? The answer is religion. Only religion can restore meaning to life, and nobility to man; without it we flounder even more deeply into mental frustration and moral futility. Pascal adds, "Religion gives us a Bible; the Bible tells us of man's fall from grace; only that original sin can explain the strange union, in human nature, of hate and love, of bestial wickedness

and our longing for redemption and God. If we let ourselves believe (however absurd it may seem to the philosophers) that man began with divine grace, that he forfeited this by sin, and that he can be redeemed only by divine grace through the crucified Christ, then we shall find a peace of mind never granted to philosophers. He who cannot believe is cursed, for he reveals by his unbelief that God has not chosen to give him grace.

Belief is a wise wager. Granted that faith cannot be proved, what harm will come to you if you gamble on its truth, and it proves false? "You must wager; it is not optional. Let us weigh the gain and the loss in the wagering that God exists If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation that He exists."

When Pascal believed, he did so not as a gambler, but because he recognized that his intellect, brilliant as it was, was no match for the universe. He was convinced that human life is not a helpless trajectory from a filthy birth to an agonizing death. But his faith was unsteady and he was tormented by powerful doubts. He was not like Plato, who, from the Sun-like centrality of his vision, had a faith without a cloud. In his "Pensees", Pascal gives a pessimistic description of the human predicament. He says: "Picture a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death; each day some are strangled to death in the sight of the rest; those who remain see their own condition in that of these their fellows, looking at one another with sorrow and without hope, each awaiting his turn. This is the picture of the condition of Man." How shall we redeem this obscene slaughter called history, except by believing with or against the evidence that God will right all wrongs in the end?

Pascal is unable to give a convincing answer to this question. He says, "This is what I see, and what troubles me, I look out on all sides, and every-where I see nothing but obscurity. Nature offers me nothing that is not a matter of doubt and disquiet. If I saw no signs of divinity, I would fix myself in denial. If I saw everywhere the marks of a Creator, I would repose peacefully in faith. But seeing too much to deny Him

and our longing for redemption and God. If we let ourselves believe (however absurd it may seem to the philosophers) that man began with divine grace, that he forfeited this by sin, and that he can be redeemed only by divine grace through the crucified Christ, then we shall find a peace of mind never granted to philosophers. He who cannot believe is cursed, for he reveals by his unbelief that God has not chosen to give him grace.

Belief is a wise wager. Granted that faith cannot be proved, what harm will come to you if you gamble on its truth, and it proves false? "You must wager; it is not optional. Let us weigh the gain and the loss in the wagering that God exists If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation that He exists."

When Pascal believed, he did so not as a gambler, but because he recognized that his intellect, brilliant as it was, was no match for the universe. He was convinced that human life is not a helpless trajectory from a filthy birth to an agonizing death. But his faith was unsteady and he was tormented by powerful doubts. He was not like Plato, who, from the Sun-like centrality of his vision, had a faith without a cloud. In his "Pensees", Pascal gives a pessimistic description of the human predicament. He says: "Picture a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death; each day some are strangled to death in the sight of the rest; those who remain see their own condition in that of these their fellows, looking at one another with sorrow and without hope, each awaiting his turn. This is the picture of the condition of Man." How shall we redeem this obscene slaughter called history, except by believing with or against the evidence that God will right all wrongs in the end?

Pascal is unable to give a convincing answer to this question. He says, "This is what I see, and what troubles me, I look out on all sides, and every-where I see nothing but obscurity. Nature offers me nothing that is not a matter of doubt and disquiet. If I saw no signs of divinity, I would fix myself in denial. If I saw everywhere the marks of a Creator, I would repose peacefully in faith. But seeing too much to deny Him

and too little to assure me, I am in a pitiful state, and I would wish a hundred times that if God sustains nature, it would reveal Him without ambiguity."

As Will Durant says, "It is this profound uncertainty, the paralyzing ability to see both sides, that makes Pascal a fascination to believer and doubter alike."

Goethe, the great German Poet, speaks of Nature as a mother from whose breast he sucked the sap and zest of life. In a prose-poem rhapsody, "Die Natur", he expressed with religious feeling his humble surrender to, his happy absorption in, the generative and destructive forces that envelop man. He says: "Nature! By her we are surrounded and encompassed — unable to step out of her, and unable to enter deeper into her. She receives us, unsolicited and unwarned, into the circle of her dance, and hurries along with us, till we are exhausted, and drop out of her arms She creates ever new forms; what now is, was never before; what was, comes not again; all is new and yet always the old She seems to have contrived everything for individuality, but cares nothing for individuals. She is ever building, ever destroying, and her workshop is inaccessible. She has thought, and is constantly meditating, not as a man, but as nature. She has an all-embracing mind of her own. No one can penetrate it. She lets every child tinker with her, every fool pass judgment upon her; thousands stumble over her and see nothing; she has her joy in all, she is kindly. I praise her with all her works. She is wise and quiet. One can tear no explanation from her, extort from her no gift which she gives not of her own free will. She has placed me here, she will lead me away. I trust myself to her. She may do as she likes with me. She will not hate her works."

Let us contrast the attitude of the mystic with that of scientific historians like Gibbon and Herbert Fisher, both of whom have a firm grasp of history, but fail to see through it. Gibbon, in spite of the grandeur and courage of his conception, could see no design in history. According to him, events are the outcome of unguided causes; they are the parallelogram of

and too little to assure me, I am in a pitiful state, and I would wish a hundred times that if God sustains nature, it would reveal Him without ambiguity."

As Will Durant says, "It is this profound uncertainty, the paralyzing ability to see both sides, that makes Pascal a fascination to believer and doubter alike."

Goethe, the great German Poet, speaks of Nature as a mother from whose breast he sucked the sap and zest of life. In a prose-poem rhapsody, "Die Natur", he expressed with religious feeling his humble surrender to, his happy absorption in, the generative and destructive forces that envelop man. He says: "Nature! By her we are surrounded and encompassed — unable to step out of her, and unable to enter deeper into her. She receives us, unsolicited and unwarned, into the circle of her dance, and hurries along with us, till we are exhausted, and drop out of her arms She creates ever new forms; what now is, was never before; what was, comes not again; all is new and yet always the old She seems to have contrived everything for individuality, but cares nothing for individuals. She is ever building, ever destroying, and her workshop is inaccessible. She has thought, and is constantly meditating, not as a man, but as nature. She has an all-embracing mind of her own. No one can penetrate it. She lets every child tinker with her, every fool pass judgment upon her; thousands stumble over her and see nothing; she has her joy in all, she is kindly. I praise her with all her works. She is wise and quiet. One can tear no explanation from her, extort from her no gift which she gives not of her own free will. She has placed me here, she will lead me away. I trust myself to her. She may do as she likes with me. She will not hate her works."

Let us contrast the attitude of the mystic with that of scientific historians like Gibbon and Herbert Fisher, both of whom have a firm grasp of history, but fail to see through it. Gibbon, in spite of the grandeur and courage of his conception, could see no design in history. According to him, events are the outcome of unguided causes; they are the parallelogram of

forces of different origin and composite result. In all this kaleidoscope of events, human nature seems to remain unchanged. Gibbon, however, admits, "In human life the most important scenes will depend upon the character of a single actor. An acrimonious humour falling upon a single fibre of one man may prevent or suspend the misery of nations."

H. A. L. Fisher in his preface to "The History of Europe", is more diffident than Gibbon. He says, "The intellectual excitement has been denied me. Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in History a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another, as wave follows upon wave; only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations; only one safe rule for the historian; that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen. This is not a doctrine of cynicism and despair. The fact of progress is written, plain and large, in the page of history. But progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next."

Spengler, in his famous book, "The Decline of the West" refers to what he calls the morphology of world history, and says that history is a series of completed cycles. Sisyphus rolls his stone up the hill, and sooner or later, it rolls down again, not as a mere accident, but as an inescapable necessity.

From the bewildering variety of opinions, which I have quoted, it is clear that each man interprets the drama of human life, in terms of his own beliefs, temperament and character.

Some years back the World Student Christian Federation held a study conference in France on the Meaning of history. The crucial issue considered by that Conference was: has the Christian faith a definite significance for the study of history, and for the assessment of its meaning; and if so, what is this significance? The Conference agreed that in the present

forces of different origin and composite result. In all this kaleidoscope of events, human nature seems to remain unchanged. Gibbon, however, admits, "In human life the most important scenes will depend upon the character of a single actor. An acrimonious humour falling upon a single fibre of one man may prevent or suspend the misery of nations."

H. A. L. Fisher in his preface to "The History of Europe", is more diffident than Gibbon. He says, "The intellectual excitement has been denied me. Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in History a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another, as wave follows upon wave; only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations; only one safe rule for the historian; that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen. This is not a doctrine of cynicism and despair. The fact of progress is written, plain and large, in the page of history. But progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next."

Spengler, in his famous book, "The Decline of the West" refers to what he calls the morphology of world history, and says that history is a series of completed cycles. Sisyphus rolls his stone up the hill, and sooner or later, it rolls down again, not as a mere accident, but as an inescapable necessity.

From the bewildering variety of opinions, which I have quoted, it is clear that each man interprets the drama of human life, in terms of his own beliefs, temperament and character.

Some years back the World Student Christian Federation held a study conference in France on the Meaning of history. The crucial issue considered by that Conference was: has the Christian faith a definite significance for the study of history, and for the assessment of its meaning; and if so, what is this significance? The Conference agreed that in the present

predicament of Man it is necessary to reflect upon the Meaning of History. Various questions were put, though answers to the questions could not be agreed upon. One question was: Does man's real nature and destiny become fulfilled in history or not? To put it in other words; is the process of history self-redemptive or does it get its meaning from a transcendental order? The answers to these questions were formulated in the light of Biblical thinking. One speaker went the length of declaring; "Israel occupies a unique place in history. The development of history is directly related to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the chosen people. The spiritual condition of Israel is the cause of major historical events."

Though I welcome this attempt at a Christian interpretation of history, the conclusion that Israel is the centre of history appears to be rather short-sighted and extravagant. It may be true of European history, not of world history. While trying to wring meaning out of history, we must take our stand on the eternal verities of religion, and not on a local version of a legend or a purana.

It is legitimate to ask the question; is there such a being as a Christian historian or a Muslim historian or a Hindu historian? There are, of course, Christians, Muslims and Hindus, who are historians, and their interpretations of history in the light of their metaphysical or religious beliefs might supply a meaning to history. In this sense, there can be a Christian, Muslim or Hindu history. It would be interesting, I think, to reinterpret history in the light of the Hindu faith.

The human future is viewed by the Hindu as an unending sequence of cycles of rebirth. The goal of each individual is the attainment, through Gnana, Bhakti or Karma, of release from this cyclical history. The creativity of God is also regarded cyclically; there is a succession of epochs and at the end of each epoch, God reabsorbs the Universe and then creates another. God is sufficiently personal to forgive the sins of man. The law of God's grace is over-riding in its effects, but subject to that law the soul is governed by the inexorable law of cause and effect.

predicament of Man it is necessary to reflect upon the Meaning of History. Various questions were put, though answers to the questions could not be agreed upon. One question was: Does man's real nature and destiny become fulfilled in history or not? To put it in other words; is the process of history self-redemptive or does it get its meaning from a transcendental order? The answers to these questions were formulated in the light of Biblical thinking. One speaker went the length of declaring; "Israel occupies a unique place in history. The development of history is directly related to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the chosen people. The spiritual condition of Israel is the cause of major historical events."

Though I welcome this attempt at a Christian interpretation of history, the conclusion that Israel is the centre of history appears to be rather short-sighted and extravagant. It may be true of European history, not of world history. While trying to wring meaning out of history, we must take our stand on the eternal verities of religion, and not on a local version of a legend or a purana.

It is legitimate to ask the question; is there such a being as a Christian historian or a Muslim historian or a Hindu historian? There are, of course, Christians, Muslims and Hindus, who are historians, and their interpretations of history in the light of their metaphysical or religious beliefs might supply a meaning to history. In this sense, there can be a Christian, Muslim or Hindu history. It would be interesting, I think, to reinterpret history in the light of the Hindu faith.

The human future is viewed by the Hindu as an unending sequence of cycles of rebirth. The goal of each individual is the attainment, through Gnana, Bhakti or Karma, of release from this cyclical history. The creativity of God is also regarded cyclically; there is a succession of epochs and at the end of each epoch, God reabsorbs the Universe and then creates another. God is sufficiently personal to forgive the sins of man. The law of God's grace is over-riding in its effects, but subject to that law the soul is governed by the inexorable law of cause and effect.

Several chances are given to Man to reach out of his ego into Godhood.

In this setting, the Earth is only a Karma bhoomi, the theatre of activity, in which by God's grace a soul is plunged according to its deserts.

Saiva Siddhanta postulates that the world of phenomenon is real, uncreated, beginningless and endless, like the soul and God. According to the law of Karma, each soul is given a particular environment in which to work out its destiny. The soul is subject to causality only so long as he does not invoke the law of grace. The moment he invokes grace he is released from the prison of cause and effect. If he fails to get release in any birth, he is sent to other worlds after death and after waiting there for a period, is given another physical body and sent to the Earth. According to this view, history has a deeper meaning than strikes the eye. All events in history are manipulated by a transcendental law, which doles out joy and grief according to our past actions. This may mean that the great cataclysms of history like war, famine, earthquake and pestilence are sent, by divine arrangement, as a punishment for human sins.

When we ask Tirumoolar why God should have created the Universe and sent a multitudinous number of souls into it and subjected them to weal and woe, he sings, "It is all his Ananda."

ஆனந்தம் ஆடரங்கு ஆனந்தம் பாடல்கள்
ஆனந்தம் பல்லியம் ஆனந்தம் வாச்சியம்
ஆனந்தமாக அகில சராசரம்
ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தக் கூத்துகந்தானுக்கே!

Gerald Heard says: "Beyond tragedy lies Meta-comedy. The central figure of that play is known in Asiatic dram. There is no tragic goal in the Indian theatre. The very word Play they call Lila, the weaving dance that displays and resumes the universe. The central figure, who dances out of the Cosmos, Shiva, consummates laughter and tears in an ecstasis that goes beyond pleasure and pain."

Several chances are given to Man to reach out of his ego into Godhood.

In this setting, the Earth is only a Karma bhoomi, the theatre of activity, in which by God's grace a soul is plunged according to its deserts.

Saiva Siddhanta postulates that the world of phenomenon is real, uncreated, beginningless and endless, like the soul and God. According to the law of Karma, each soul is given a particular environment in which to work out its destiny. The soul is subject to causality only so long as he does not invoke the law of grace. The moment he invokes grace he is released from the prison of cause and effect. If he fails to get release in any birth, he is sent to other worlds after death and after waiting there for a period, is given another physical body and sent to the Earth. According to this view, history has a deeper meaning than strikes the eye. All events in history are manipulated by a transcendental law, which doles out joy and grief according to our past actions. This may mean that the great cataclysms of history like war, famine, earthquake and pestilence are sent, by divine arrangement, as a punishment for human sins.

When we ask Tirumoolar why God should have created the Universe and sent a multitudinous number of souls into it and subjected them to weal and woe, he sings, "It is all his Ananda."

ஆனந்தம் ஆடரங்கு ஆனந்தம் பாடல்கள்
ஆனந்தம் பல்லியம் ஆனந்தம் வாச்சியம்
ஆனந்தமாக அகில சராசரம்
ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தக் கூத்துகந்தானுக்கே!

Gerald Heard says: "Beyond tragedy lies Meta-comedy. The central figure of that play is known in Asiatic dram. There is no tragic goal in the Indian theatre. The very word Play they call Lila, the weaving dance that displays and resumes the universe. The central figure, who dances out of the Cosmos, Shiva, consummates laughter and tears in an ecstasis that goes beyond pleasure and pain."

To look at history as **Meta-comedy** we must have the joyous detachment of a **Jivan Mukta** like **Tirumoolar**. Only in that condition of detachment, we can understand the inner meaning of history, and like **Lear**, we can

“take upon’s the mystery of things
As if we were God’s spies.”

To look at history as **Meta-comedy** we must have the joyous detachment of a **Jivan Mukta** like **Tirumoolar**. Only in that condition of detachment, we can understand the inner meaning of history, and like **Lear**, we can

“take upon’s the mystery of things
As if we were God’s spies.”