

PERSONALISTIC MYSTICISM

Materialistic mysticism, as I have shown, tries to understand Nature (including its several phases of the mechanical, vital mental and intellectual forms and patterns. The mystic principle or axiom of a transcendental immediate cognitive form of experience revealed to us the fact of a Natural theology, and the plausible justification of pantheism as an experience certifiable as mystic. We however showed that a clear mystic unity is recognizable as between Nature and Spirit and this unity-pattern is ‘organistic’, not merely in an outer semblance, as Swedenberg would put it, but in a deeper functional sense of an inner godhead on whom there is an intrinsic dependence in every regard. This is further truly characteristic of any body (or entity) than the various forms and organs.

One of the flaws in any theory of Organisms is the search for organs or locations of functions rather than the mystic unity and the features luminous in and amenable to mystic vision. Organistic mysticism seizes upon this mystic unity-factor rather than the physical or physiological structure that is natural to our perception and inference.

The importance of this realization to the knowledge of oneself is brought home to man in his most elevated

moments. Preceded though by a veritable dark night of the soul, the search for oneself, the eagerness and earnestness to 'see' oneself as one is, has its finest moment in a glimpse, as pure light (*tejas, jyoti*), in a supersensation. It is perceived supersensorially not as a mere bundle or series of sensory impressions, memories, imaginations and perceptions but as a sheer luminous self-existence. It is indeed the vessel and ground of these series of impressions and memories, but these are its forms in consciousness and not its central essence.

The individual then realizes what he is not. Gradually he realizes that he is not the body, nor the mind, not even the intellect. Assuredly this is a negative inferential procedure, well-known from the earliest speculations of man. Man's consciousness of himself is at the beginning with the physical distinctness from others and his 'surround'. But with the perception of some identical features which dominate his practical thinking (for identity helps uniformity of response and obliteration of distinctnesses) the difference refuses to be abolished. He discovers his consciousness in all its ramifications to be a central fact about himself, whether in his walking or dreaming or sleeping condition. All these states are indeed transcended in his spiritual awareness wherein he feels himself is what one finds oneself to be in this depth of experience when the body-consciousness is rolled up and is seen to depend on this central consciousness. But

this consciousness no sooner than it is attained by mystic vision reveals itself an insufficient in its private character and displays itself as fused with a central cosmic consciousness or self which is seen to be the self of all else perceived in the ordinary consciousness. This insufficiency is not however an insufficiency in the sense of lack of any characteristic truly valuable to being but in its impossibility to remain alone in its personal privateness to which it was accustomed. The mystic experience of oneself is one of unconditionedness from privacy and existence in pure isolatedness which is possible in ordinary life. Truly the realization gives an enjoyment of freedom from privateness, a privateness which now becomes more and more clearly a case of deprivation. Many mystics have sought their self realization through God-realization, as that made their own self realization permanent and not short lived. Man in himself has no self-sufficiency and is a term in the Existence of God. God realization is the experience in mystic life of fulfillment or self-sufficiency. The experience of God entering within up to the finger tips, controlling every sense organ and mind, illumining every single part of one's organic being, is an expressive experience of extraordinary meaning to oneself. It is this process which is the ascent to cosmic consciousness, and a step towards divinization, 'brahmanisation' of the atman. God as indwelling cosmic will, cosmic reason

and cosmic personality makes the individual's consciousness expand to the levels of transcendence over even the cosmic level, by making it assume such proportions as to feel, to think and to experience in and through God; and by God's inward presence and penetration to gain for one's consciousness, the gift of cosmic expansion, if not absolute, transcendence itself.

In this gradual absorption and expansion, one's existence becomes fused in God and rejoices in this unity of being, consciousness and delight. It even arrives at deeper levels of experience when it finds itself to be a living temple, a bhagavata, a saint and an amsa, a living portion of Divine Being. Whilst men may not recognize their nature to be divine-and the destiny of man is to realize this inward divinity as the Universal Self, the mystic feels it to be not an ideal, something to be cogitated or thought hard after, something in the womb of the future, but a fact, and an ever present relationship. **Man's personality becomes more and more important as he pursues the divine realization and worships or meditates on the Divine as 'Tad Vanam', Garden of wonderful Excellences, or transcending auspicious infinite attributes and modes of Being.** A mystic who enjoys and meditates and loves and serves this Divine in all his parts, becomes most attractive to all creatures, and they seek him. A mystic becomes a presence of the Divine. And so closely realized is this presence that one

cannot distinguish which in him is the divine part and presence. The indivisible Godhead pervades all through and through and one perceives Him as All: *Sarvam Samapnosi tatosi sarvah.*

Again and again the centre of concentration shifts from one self to the central core of one's being which is either the heart or the crown of the head. It is this experience, which is more central than oneself, that gives it the sense of 'drinking' the immortal nectar of being, of discovering the hidden treasure of uniting with a 'Perfect Person' and 'Male'. Such an indescribable union or pairing with the Divine spirit yields a unitive or bridal ecstasy. It is discerned in many wonderful and ever-new and novel unimaginable ways. By each of these supra-conscious ways (or rather through these) the conscious existence increase in depth and steady inwardness and silent rapture. Man more and more withdraws himself in God. Alone he is for all practical purposes, but he is alone⁸ with an inner poise from which he derives all benefit, *sreyas*. Death is transfigured into silent inner union. Or Death is left behind, for death is only of the physical body. The seeker discovers in a single experience of the inner self, which is as swift as lightning, the radical difference between himself and his body and perceives that the unity granted between them is a result of a deeper activity and purpose which is not of the individual, or of an indescribable beginningless

activity and ignorance. Some mystics indeed have had glimpsed this to be due to an original fall or due to an act of essential freedom granted to the individual by the supreme Ground or Being or God. Freedom is said to be the essential truth of both the individual and God. But the difference lies in this that the Divine Freedom does not lead to bondage at all, whereas the individual's freedom or finite freedom so to speak can lead either upwards to the unconditioned Divine Existence or to the absolute negation of Freedom itself.

⁸ Much of mystical thought has found its real poise in 'loneliness'. Prof. A.N. Whitehead spoke of Religion as 'what one does with his solitude'. Obviously the experience of solitude is a real fact of Religion. Ibsen in his '*Doctor*' pleaded for this standing alone 'as a peak of courage and spirituality'. 'Ekaki' as the Nature of Brahman, 'Unenjoying na rameta' is a mystical experience. I shall examine this in another set of *Meditations*.

The personality of man gets a new dimension. Man in this experience lives in an utterly separated but sympathetic unity with his body in Nature. Nature in this sense becomes a supple instrument of the supramental will in all its parts and grants a rich integrative perception to the soul which observes, approves and enjoys the process of a truly creative silence, conferring

peace rather than war, clarity rather than abstract abolition of distinctions or discrimination.

For man there is a purpose clear and inescapable: a destiny which is from the very beginning of his career beckoning, an appetite dimly urging from within towards the divination of godhead, or realization of fullness or perfection or an attainment of real communion, 'a losing oneself in the other', or an undiminishing undisturbed peace and unshakeable strength and faith. All these and an omniscient consciousness or awareness or knowledge of all things in their eternal nature, are possible indeed only through a total dedication and complete or radical separation from Nature, so that a new approach to Nature may be rendered possible and a new evolution start from a point where both can be real to the Ultimate Being through a new relation between them.

There are several mystics who experience themselves as losing themselves once and for all time, utterly in a vast Universal Consciousness indistinguishably like rivers in an ocean, or like a light that merges in an illumination million times brighter than itself. There is a sense of dissolution of oneself in a Nihil or Supracosmic impersonal Being⁹, a dissolution which thereafter compels the utter giving up of all distinctions and differences between itself and others. Indeed it may be

that he experiences none of these and least of all himself. One ceases. He alone is. He is the 'I', the only 'I' or the 'I am or He or Thou or That'. Brahmanirvana is this losing of oneself in Brahman. This may be what Buddha might himself have meant by Nirvana, a total annihilation of the Nature that dragged itself inexorably with the soul and the soul itself. All these are experiences of unity passing on to Identity. There is however another deep kind of mystic experience which constantly reveals the alternating or simultaneous process of real transition or play between unity and identity without ever reducing it to the conflict of separation and unity, difference and identity. This is an organic experience between God and soul, the characteristic poise of the soul in a creative fusive oneness. So much so the characteristic of the soul is a finite unit, whereas the characteristic of the Divine is an eternal Oneness and an eternal supra-distinctive manyness which engages in a personal identity unity play with each of the soul in their inner depths.

⁹ Impersonalism claims a mystic status as an experience beyond Subject-object relationship or Personal Existence. This conception is of two kinds.

a. There is an experiential spiritual idealism beyond subject-object and experience of a Bare subjectless 'Objectivity or Reality, this remove the edge of the

criticism of conditionedness and reality.

b. A different impersonalism is the ethical transcendence of doer and deed or the ought to be done.

Thus personal mysticism is different from mystic personalism. The latter emphasizes the experience of personality as an ultimate category in the subjective form. Real integral personality achieved through the transcendental awareness is a category which focuses all reality and reflects it or conditions it or mirrors it so to speak.

Leibniz's conception of the monad reveals a clearer concept of mystic experience of the personality than any pluralism, or personalism.

Modern psychologists and novelists however try to make the individual almost a glorious mystic force having an ineffable excellence and superiority. We have the cult of the hero or the apotheosized human or the Dictator who achieves superiority over his fellows and seeks to maintain it through myths of all kinds. Far from being an attractive soul, breathing love and compassion, light and life, such personalities mystically claiming divine right to rule and self-power and self-legislation, breath fire, fury and force and strike terror and awe. Service of truth and light and goodness and worships to God are useful means to their glory. Mysticism of this sort is a kind of

pseudo-mysticism unless reversed.

Personal mysticism reveals the real value of the personality in and through the Divine All.