

than the heart speaks, and if the heart be dumb God will certainly be deaf.

Since a heart-felt prayer is the only potent instrument that man possesses for achieving victory in his struggle for self-improvement, it is as indispensable for the soul as food is for the body.

Success, however, does not attend the very first effort at such a living prayer. We have to strive against ourselves, we have to believe

in spite of ourselves. We have to cultivate illimitable patience if we will realize the efficacy of prayer. There will be darkness, disappointment, and even worse; but we must have courage enough to battle against all these, there being no such thing as retreat for a man of prayer.

If we continue this practice of praying, we shall thereby build, as it were, a solid wall of protection round ourselves, and our faults will gradually abate of themselves.

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## ADAMANT

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

To the sacred ideals of nations in our days the watch-words: 'Art and Knowledge', have been added with special imperativeness. It is just now that something must be said of the particular significance of these great conceptions both for the present time and for the future. I address these words to those whose eyes and ears are not yet filled with the rubbish of everyday life, to those whose hearts have not yet been stopped by the lever of the machine called 'Mechanical civilization'.

Art and Knowledge! Beauty and Wisdom! Of the eternal and still renewed meaning of these conceptions it is not necessary to speak. When but starting on the path of life, every child already instinctively understands the value of decoration and knowledge. Only later, under the grimace of disfigured life this light of the spirit becomes darkened, while in the kingdom of vulgarity it has no place and is unknown. Yes, the spirit of the age attains even to such monstrosity!

It is not the first time that I have knocked at these gates and I here again appeal to you.

Amongst horrors, in the midst of the struggles and the collisions of the people the question of knowledge and the question of art are matters of the first importance. Do not be astonished. This is not exaggeration, neither is it a platitude. It is a decided affirmation, the only road to Peace.

The question of relativity of human knowledge has always been much argued. But

now, when the whole of mankind has felt directly or indirectly the horrors of war, this question has become a vital one. People have not only become accustomed to think, but even to speak without shame about things of which they evidently have not the slightest knowledge. On every hand men repeat opinions which are altogether unfounded. And such judgements bring great harm into the world, an irreparable harm.

We must admit that during the last few years European culture has been shaken to its very foundation. In the pursuit of things, the achievement of which has not yet been destined to mankind, the fundamental steps of ascent have been destroyed. Humanity has tried to lay hold on treasures which it has not deserved and so has rent the benevolent veil of the goddess of happiness.

Of course, what mankind has not yet attained it is destined to attain in due time, but how much man will have to suffer to atone for the destruction of the forbidden gates! With what labour and self-denial shall we have to build up the new bases of culture!

The knowledge which is locked up in libraries or in the brains of the teachers again penetrates but little into contemporary life. Again it fails to give birth to active work.

Modern life is filled with the animal demands of the body. We come near to the line of the terrible magic circle. And the only way of conjuring its dark guardians and escaping from it is through the talisman of true knowledge and beauty.

The time when this will be a necessity is at hand.

Without any false shame, without the contortions of savages, let us confess that we have come very near to barbarism. For confession is already a step towards progress.

It matters not that we still wear European clothes and, following our habit pronounce special words. But the clothes cover savage impulses and the meaning of the words pronounced, although they are often great, touching, and uniting, is now obscured. The guidance of knowledge is lost. People have become accustomed to darkness.

More knowledge! More art! There are not enough of these bases in life, which alone can lead us to the golden age of unity.

The more we know, the more clearly we see our ignorance. But if we know nothing at all, then we cannot even know we are ignorant. And that being so, we have no means of advancement and nothing to strive for. And the dark reign of vulgarity is inevitable. The young generations are not prepared to look boldly, with a bright smile, on the blinding radiance of knowledge and beauty. Whence then is the knowledge of the reality of the things to come? Whence then are wise mutual relations to arise? Whence is unity to come, that unity, which is the true guarantee of steady forward movement? Only on the base of true beauty and of true knowledge can a sincere understanding between the nations be achieved. And the real guide would be the universal language of knowledge and of the beauty of art. Only these guides can establish that kindly outlook which is so necessary for future creative work.

The path of animosity, roughness, and abuse will lead us nowhere. Along that way nothing can be built. Does not a conscience still remain in human nature? The real being in man still seeks to attain justice.

Away with darkness, let us do away with malice and treachery. Mankind has already felt enough of the hand of darkness.

Let me tell you, and mind you, these are not platitudes, not mere words, I give voice to the convinced seeking of the worker: the only bases of life are art and knowledge.

It is just in these hard days of labour, in this time of suffering, that we must steadily recall these kindly guides. And in our hours

of trial let us confess them with all the power of our spirit.

You say: 'Life is hard. How can we think of knowledge and beauty if we have nothing to live on? "or" We are far away from knowledge and art; we have important business to attend to first'.

But I say: You are right, but you are also wrong. Knowledge and art are not luxuries. Knowledge and art are not idleness. It is time to remember this: They are prayer and the work of the spirit. Do you really think that people pray only when over-fed or after excessive drinking? Or during the time of careless idleness?

No, men pray in the moments of great difficulty. So too, is this prayer of the spirit most needful, when one's whole being is shaken and in want of support, and when it seeks for a wise solution. And wherein lies the stronger support? What will make the spirit shine more brightly?

We do not feel hunger or starvation; we do not shiver because of the cold. We tremble because of the vacillation of our spirit; because of distrust, because of unfounded expectations.

Let us remember how often, when working, we have forgotten about food, have left unnoticed the wind, the cold, the heat. Our intent spirit wrapped us in an impenetrable veil.

'The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; for it is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible and is not to be dried away; it is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable. . . . Some regard the indwelling spirit as a wonder, whilst some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one realizes it, although he may have heard it described.'—Gita, Ch. II.

Of what does the great wisdom of all ages and all nations speak? It speaks of human spirit. Penetrate in thought into the deep significance of these words and into the meaning of your life. You know not the limits to the power of the spirit. You do not know over what impassable obstacles your spirit bears you, but some day you shall awake, unharmed and everlastingly regenerated. And when life is hard and weary, and there seems to be no way out, do you not feel that some helper, your own divine spirit, is

speeding to your aid? But his path is long and your faint-heartedness is swift. Yet does the helper come, bringing you both the 'sword of courage' and the 'smile of daring'. We have heard of a family which in despair put an end to their lives with fumes of charcoal. Now this was intolerably faint-hearted. When the coming victory of the spirit arrives, will not they who have fled without orders, suffer fearfully because they did not apply their labour to that to which they should have applied it? It matters not what labour. The drowning man fights against the flood by all possible means. And if his spirit is strong, then the strength of his body will increase without measure.

But by what means will you call forth your spirit? By what means will you lay bare that which in man is buried under the fragments of his everyday life? Again and again I repeat: by the beauty of art, by the depth of knowledge. In them and in them alone are contained the victorious conjurations of the spirit. And the purified spirit will show you what knowledge is true, what art is real. I am assured that you will be able to call your spirit to your aid. That spirit, your guide, will show you the best paths. It will lead you to joy and victory. But even to victory it will lead you by a lofty path, whose steps are bound together by knowledge and beauty alone. . . . An arduous trial awaits the whole world: the trial by assimilation of truth. After the medieval trials by fire, water, and iron, now comes the trial by assimilation of truth. But if the power of the spirit upheld men against fire and iron, then will that same power raise them also up the steps of knowledge and beauty. But this test is more severe than the trials of antiquity. Prepare to achieve! Prepare for that achievement which is a matter of daily life. Meanwhile have care for everything that serves to advance the perception of truth. Approach with special gratitude all that shows forth the stages of beauty. At this time all this is especially difficult.

But adamant-like stands Beauty, and Culture—the only road to Peace.

Our motto is: Humanity is facing the coming events of cosmic greatness. Humanity already realizes that all occurrences are not accidental. The time for the construction of future Culture is at hand. Before our eyes

the revolution of values is being witnessed. Amidst ruins of valueless banknotes, mankind has found the real value of the world's significance. The values of great art are victoriously traversing all storms of earthly commotions. Even the 'earthly' people already understand the vital importance of active beauty. And when we proclaim Love, beauty and action, we know verily, that we pronounce the formula of the international language. And this formula, which now belongs to the Museum and stage must enter everyday life. The sign of Beauty of will opens all sacred gates. Beneath the sign of Beauty we walk joyfully. With Beauty we conquer. Through Beauty we pray. In Beauty we are united. And now we affirm these words: 'Not on the snowy heights, but amidst the turmoil of the city. And realizing the path of true reality, we greet with a happy smile the future.'

During the days of the present Armageddon I have been asked to send my message to several art exhibitions in India. My message was: Art should be protected by all means. Armageddon is roaring. Art and knowledge are the corner-stones of evolution. Art and science are needed always, but in our Armageddonal days they must be especially guarded by all powers of our hearts. It is a great mistake to think that during troubled times culture can be disregarded. On the contrary the need of culture is especially felt in times of war and human misunderstandings. Outside of Art, Religion is inaccessible, Outside of Art the spirit of Nationality is lost, Outside of Art, Science is dark. This is not an utopia. The History of Humanity gives innumerable examples of Art being the great Beacon Light in times of calamity. Scientists assert that colour and sound are a panacea. By Beauty and Harmony even wild beasts were tamed. Let the sacred flute of Sri Krishna resound again! Let us visualize that peace in which the majestic frescoes of Ajanta were created! In times of war let us think of future peace, affirmed by creativeness, labour and beauty. Travelling through India we passed along a road in the shadow of mighty chinars. Our guide told us: 'The great emperor Akbar thought of the future travellers who will be sheltered by these beautiful trees. He looked into the future'. 'To regard the Beautiful means to

improve'—said Plato. 'Man becomes that of which he thinks'—preordained the *upanishads*.

'A renaissance of art is the evidence of the renaissance of a nation. In a declining country, art becomes only an abstract luxury. But when a country is in its full prowess, art becomes the real motive power of its people. Let us imagine the history of humanity without the treasure of beauty. We will then readily realize that the epochs are felt meaningless, denuded of their soul. Without a manifestation of the spirit of the Beautiful, we shall remain amid the ugliness of death. And when we proclaim that beauty, art, is life, we speak about the coming evolution of beauty. Everything accomplished for art is an attainment for evolution. Every co-worker in this field is already a hero.

'It is great praise to this country that the roll of its creative workers cannot be expressed in one list but merits an entire great series,

even with the briefest appreciations. We are happy to feel what a vast material is before us and what a joy it is to show to the young generation the brilliant legion which has constructed the most beautiful achievements. Wherever art and knowledge flourish we may be enthusiasts. And in this joyful enthusiasm we may greet the true creative forces of the nation. An exhibition is not only a monument to the creator, the worker, but it is the best avocation for the youth to come. I am happy to greet the brilliant artists, to hail the essence of beautiful creative thought and to salute the young generation to which this creative thought brings its coming happiness.'

O Bharata, all beautiful, let me send thee my heart-felt admiration for all the greatness and inspiration which fill thy ancient cities and temples, thy meadows, thy *deobans*, thy sacred rivers and the Himalayas!

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## THIS IS HISTORY

BY PROF. SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKERJI, M.A.

It is said that when Napoleon required a volume of history, he would cry out, 'Bring me my liar'.

Sir Walter Raleigh, during his captivity in the Tower of London, once heard an uproar outside. He sent one of the guards to ascertain what the matter was. His report did not satisfy Sir Walter. Another man was sent. He gave an entirely different report. Several more were sent one after another and on the same errand. Sir Walter was treated to a new story by each. The reports of different eyewitnesses of the same incident thus varying from one another, the illustrious prisoner lost all faith in history and was about to consign to flames the manuscript of the 'History of the World' written by him. He was convinced that any attempt to ascertain historical truth was not a whit wiser than chasing the wild goose.

Evidence in plenty may be adduced to show that story sometimes passes for history. There is, of course, what is known as the scientific method of arriving at truth. Yet it cannot be gainsaid that purely personal sentiments, sympathies, and antipathies have lured

many a historian away from the path of truth. Fancy again counts many victims among the students of history, whose works can be hardly distinguished from fiction. Macaulay and Froude, for example, had no scruples to sacrifice truth on the altar of their pet theories. It must, however, be admitted that few, if any, of the modern historians do deliberately mix the alloy of fiction with the gold of historical truth. We propose to expose, in the following paragraphs, some widely prevalent historical myths—a few selected at random out of a whole galaxy.

What is the truth about the battle of Thermopylae? It has been handed down from generation to generation that the Spartan King Leonidas at the head of a valiant band, but 300 strong, opposed at Thermopylae the countless hordes of Xerxes of Persia. But we have it on the authority of Herodotus, 'the Father of History', that Leonidas had the Spartan, Thespian, and Theban contingents with him to the last. The strength of this combined army was well above a thousand, some 1,400, to be more accurate.