

service to the Lord. He is playing in various ways in the world. Think yourself blessed, if you can do a little service to Him. In this way, if you work, your little self will die and the higher Self will manifest Itself. This is as true as anything.

The above four kinds of spiritual practice are meant for four classes of men. But the aim is the same, and it is to kill the lower self. Think deeply and you will know there is hardly any difference among them. In fact, there can be none. Kill the little self and be free. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "When the little self will cease to exist, one is sure to be free. The *Jiva* becomes *Siva*, as soon as there is no bondage." When the "I" of ignorance departs, man becomes God and attains freedom. Sri Ramakrishna said: "As water is called variously, so is God."

These are the main things of spiritual practice. They are very essential in building life and in reaching the goal.

First make your thoughts consistent with your words. Then take up any course you like. Try seriously to build your life from this very day. The Lord will give you whatever you require.

"Surrendering all duties, take refuge unto Me alone. Do not grieve, for I will deliver thee from all sins." If you sincerely take refuge in Him, there can be no sin or weakness any more. He alone can save us from every ill. Pray to God that by the power of His holy name, we all can firmly believe that we are ever free from all sorts of sin and weakness.

Om Peace! Peace!! Peace!!!*

*Translated from Bengali by Swami Maithilyananda.

ARTISTS OF LIFE

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

By the sign of beauty the locked gates may be opened. With song one can approach a wild yak so that she loses her fierceness and submits to milking. With a song one may tame horses. Even the serpents hearken to a song. It is significant to observe how healing and exalting is each touch of beauty.

Often we have had occasion to write of the importance of the so-called applied arts. Many times we compared the so-called higher arts with no less significant manifestations of all branches of artistic industry. It is even dreadful to have to repeat again that the button created by Benvenuto Cellini is not only

not inferior to, but undoubtedly far superior to multitudes of average paintings and grave yard sculpture. These comparisons are old and it would seem that reminders were no longer necessary; but life itself indicates quite the opposite.

In all fields of life, the sphere of applied art, which is blatantly stamped with some such shameful appellation as "commercial art," is abruptly separated from the general understanding of art. Instead of a gradual realization of the unity of the substance of creation, humanity seems to be striving to divide itself still more pettily, and to spread mutual humiliations. It would

seem also absolutely apparent that the style of life is created not merely by the great individual creators but by the entire body of artists in the applied arts. It is not always their hands which create a poster or a work of jewelery. By some inexplicable curiosity, the products of ceramics are considered inferior to sculpture in marble, although the charm of the Tanagra has given us ample evidence of a noble folk creation.

One may still hear the sorrowful exclamation of many young people: "I cannot live by art; I have to enter the commercial field." Thus implying that by this act the artist dooms himself to the inevitable disgrace which is presumed to accompany participation in practical art.

What material, what circumstances, could deprive an artist of his quality? What manner of demand would compel him to do anything inartistic in any expression of life? What type of promoter would destroy the creative fire which gushes unrestrainedly through all materials? It is important for each promoter, even for the most elementary and inartistic one, that his product be clear, vivid and convincing and easily assimilated by the masses in their daily life. After all, which of these conditions may be regarded as disgraceful? Raphael himself, after receiving his order, was guided by the condition of conviction. Truly the quality of conviction in no way contradicts the true artistry.

Gauguin, through sheer desire for self-expression, painted the doors and interior of his dwelling in Tahiti. Vrubel placed his "Princess Swan" on a platter. The number of examples is countless, in which the most diverse artists sought for expression through the most extraordinary materials. As we have previously noted, the material

itself by its very subtle quality, lends a special conviction to the object. Is there any need to repeat the identical examples which have been mentioned as often in widely varying circumstances? Not discussion but action, should strengthen the attitude so necessary for culture. If we reach the expression of the unity of arts, we thereby affirm the need of the closest correlation of all branches of art in its various materials.

It would be difficult to indicate a defined order in which such workshops could be conducted side by side with sketching, drawing and life classes. This order must be left to life itself. In each country, in each city, and, even more, in each district of the city, there are special impressions of life. Hence to these problems one must respond first. Near a large textile factory, it would be good to provide drawing and the study of the technique of this industry. Near ceramic and porcelain factories one could lend assistance precisely to this medium: thus expanding and refining the understanding; one should correlate in the immediate neighbourhood, the practical expressions prompted by the closest possibility. Incidentally, one should not overlook the fact that the physical environment of three of these workshops will afford reciprocal assistance and provide unsuspected combinations which will afford new and fascinating possibilities. The open mind of an instructor, unhampered by prejudice, and the broad demand for creativeness from the students, will result in that living vibration which, uncongealed by monotony, will afford to the craftshops an endlessly practical variety and conviction.

Another gracious quality is gained through the manifestation of practical variety. They temper the spirit, free-

ing it from the sense of limitation, which so often constructs our dwelling of fear. But it is from fear, above all, that each aspect of creation must be liberated. In fear, creation cannot be free; it will bind itself with every chain and forget the noble and victorious discipline of the spirit. Long ago it was said: "One must be cured of fear." One must pursue such methods consciously, in order to liberate oneself from that fear of dusky pettiness, and the creeping phantoms, which caused even the stone that fell from heaven, aflame with a heavenly fire, to become opaque. Truly, opaque and veiled, when it could have been transparent for all, this Scarab of light!

The Egyptians called artists and sculptors "Seenekh" or "Revivifiers, resurrectors." In this definition is manifested a deep comprehension of the substance of art. How immeasurably broadened this concept can become if we apply it to all manifestations of life, when we acknowledge that each adorer of daily life is an "artist of life!" And this true "revivifier" of everyday life, himself will be uplifted with new power, will become imbued with creative spirit in ennobling each object of daily life. Then the shameful and hideous understanding of "commercial art" will be cast out of usage. We shall call this noble adorer of life "Artist of life." He must know life; he must feel the laws of proportions. He is the creator of the needed forms; the evaluator of life's rhythms. To him, numbers,

correlations, are not dead signs, but the formulæ of existence.

Pythagoras calculates and creates, sings praises in rhythm, prays in rhythm; because numbers were not only the earthly, but the heavenly rhythms—the Music of the spheres. With Pythagoras, the mathematician, resounds also St. Augustine, the theologian: "Pulchra numero placent," Beauty enchants by number. This magnet of numbers, proportions, correlations and technical consonances, necessary for each of life's adorners, precludes all diminishing or disintegration of the great creative understanding.

Do not let us fear to speak in the highest terms of each manifestation of beauty. A solicitous, exalted expression is a shield for all practical art, which is often exiled to the obscurity of the cellars. A country which is mindful of the future, should protect all—from the smallest to the greatest—for whose vindication it will be responsible at the great Judgment of Culture. Facilitating the destiny of these builders of life, the country of culture only fulfils the fundamental covenant of the Beautiful, so beautifully expressed by the poets of antiquity: "Os homine sublime dedit cœlumque tuen."—I gave to man a lofty forehead that he should perceive the summit.

With an exalted covenant the Bhagavat Gita confirms the multifor-
mity of creation: "By whatever path you come to Me, by that path shall I bless thee."