

"The more we try to fix our mind on God, the more quickly shall we forget ourselves and the more quickly shall we reach freedom. The best way to do this is not to think of ourselves in any way; merely to keep our minds on the presence of God."

"The man who has realized God will never lack for anything," he continued. "Whatever he needs will come to him. That is what Christ meant when he said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of

heaven, and all things else will be added unto you.' This is literally true and it has been verified by history. Those men who have given up everything for the sake of the Lord and have felt no other attraction but God, are honoured and worshipped by the world.

"Surrender yourself completely to the Lord, then freedom will be yours. A smile will always play on your lips; your face will be shining, and your mind will be calm and peaceful."

(To be continued)

REALIZATION OF THE BEAUTIFUL *

By Nicholas Roerich

PLATO ordained in his treatises on statesmanship:—

"It is difficult to imagine a better method of education than that that has been discovered and verified by the experience of centuries; it can be expressed in two propositions: gymnastics for the body and music for the soul." "In view of this, one must consider education in music as the most important; thanks to it Rhythm and Harmony are deeply inrooted into the soul, dominate it, fill it with beauty and transform man into a beautiful thinker...He will partake of the Beautiful and rejoice at it, gladly realize it, become saturated with it and will arrange his life in conformity with it."

Of course the word music, in this case, should not be understood as routine musical education, as understood now, in its narrow sense. Music had in Athens, as service to all Muses, a far deeper and broader meaning than today. This conception embraced not only the harmony of sound, but the

whole domain of poetry, the whole domain of high perceptions, of exquisite forms and creation in general, in its best sense. The great service to the Muses was a real education of taste, which in everything cognizes the great Beautiful. Just to this eternal Beauty in all its vitality we have to revert, if only the ideas of high constructiveness are not rejected by humanity.

Hippias Maior (beauty) of the dialogue of Plato is not a hazy abstractness, but verily the most vital noble conception. The Beautiful in itself! The perceptible and conceivable! In this reality is contained an inspiring, encouraging welcome to the study and inrooting of all ordainments of the Beautiful. "The philosophic moral" of Plato is animated by the sense of the beautiful. And did not Plato himself, who was sold into slavery through the hatred of the tyrant Dionisius and when liberated and dwelling in the gardens of the

* (From the book "Agni")

Academy, prove through his example, the vitality of a beautiful path? Of course Plato's gymnastics were not the coarse football or anti-cultural breaking of noses of modern prize-fights. The gymnastics of Plato were the same gates to the Beautiful, the discipline of Harmony and uplifting of the body into the spiritual spheres.

Not once we spoke about the introduction in school of a chair of ethics of life, a course of the art of thinking. Without the education of the general realization of the beautiful, these two courses will again remain a dead letter. Again in the course of only a few years the high vital principles of ethics will turn into a dead dogma, if they will not be imbued with the Beautiful.

Many vital conceptions of antiquity have become in our household belittled and vulgar, instead of the deserved expansion. Thus the wide and lofty service to the Muses turned into a narrow conception of playing one instrument. When you hear nowadays the word music, you imagine first of all a lesson of music often with conventional limitations. When you hear the word Museum, one understands it as a store-room of any kind of art objects. As every store-house, this conception creates a certain flavour of deadliness. Such limited conception of the word Museum, as a storage place, so deeply entered our understanding, that when one pronounces this conception in its original meaning—*Muzeon*—then no one understands what is really meant. Yet every Hellin of even average education would at once know that *Muzeon* means first of all the Home of Muses.

Foremost all *Muzeon* is the abode of all aspects of the Beautiful; not at all in the sense of only storing different kinds of art creations, but in the sense of most vital and creative application

of them in life. Thus one often hears nowadays that people express surprise when a Museum, as such, occupies itself with all spheres of Art, occupies itself with the education of good taste and with the spreading of the sense of the Beautiful.

Here we remembered the ordinances of Plato. But in the same way one may remember also Pythagoras with his Laws of the Beautiful, with his adamant foundations of cosmic realizations. The ancient Hellins went so far as to crown their Pantheon with an altar to the Unknown God. In this exaltation of spirit they came close to the refined inexpressible conception of the ancient Hindus, who pronouncing "Neti, neti" by no means wanted to say anything negative, but on the contrary, saying "not this, not this" manifested thereby the untold greatness of an inexpressible Concept.

It is significant that such great conceptions were not abstract, as if living only in the mind and reason; no, they dwelled in the very heart, as something living, life-bringing, inalienable and indestructible, as defined so beautifully in the Bhagavad Gita. In the heart was a flame that sacred fire, which was at the base of all flaming commandments also of the hermits of Mt. Sinai. The same sacred fire moulded the precious images of St. Theresa, St. Francis, St. Sergius and all the Fathers of the "Love of the Good," who knew so much and were understood so little.

We speak of the education of good taste, as of a matter of truly basic world significance of every country. When we speak about vital ethics, which should become the favorite school hour of every child, we appeal to the contemporary heart, pleading to it for expansion, if even only to the extent of ancient ordinances.

Can one consider as natural the fact that the conception so glorified already in the time of Pythagoras and Plato, has been so narrowed now and lost its actual meaning, after all the ages of so-called progress? Pythagoras already in the fifth century B. C. symbolized in himself the whole harmonious "Pythagorean Life". It was Pythagoras who affirmed music and astronomy as sisters in science. Pythagoras, who was called by bigots a charlatan, must be horrified to see how instead of a harmonious development our contemporary life has been broken up and mutilated and that we do not even understand the meaning of the beautiful hymn to the sun—to Light.

Today very strange formulas sometimes appear in the press. For instance that the flourishing of the intellect is the sign of degeneration. A very strange formula, if only the author does not attribute to the word intellect some special narrow meaning. Of course if the word intellect is only taken as the expression of the conventional withered mind, then to some extent this formula may have its foundation. But it is dangerous in case the author understands intellect as intelligence, which first of all should be connected with the education of good taste as the most vital principle of life.

Quite recently before our eyes in the West has been adopted the new word—*intelligentzia*. In the beginning this newcomer was met rather suspiciously, but soon it was adopted in literature. It would be important to determine whether this expression symbolises the intellect, or according to ancient conceptions it corresponds to the education of good taste.

If it is a symbol of a refined and expanded consciousness then we have to greet this innovation, which perhaps

will remind us once more of ancient beautiful principles.

In my letter "Synthesis" the difference of conceptions of Culture and Civilization were discussed. Both these conceptions are sufficiently separated even in standard dictionaries. Therefore let us not return to these two consecutive conceptions, even if some one would be content with the conception of civilization without dreaming about the higher conception of culture.

But remembering about *intelligentzia* it is permissible to ask, whether this conception belongs to Civilization, as to expression of intellect or whether it does already touch a higher region, that is to say, whether it belongs to the region of Culture, in which already the heart and spirit act. Of course, if we assume that the expression *intelligentzia*, should remain only within the limitation of the mind, then there would be no need to burden with it our literary vocabulary. One may permit an innovation only in such cases, when really something new is introduced, or at least when ancient principles are renewed in present modern circumstances.

Of course every one will agree that *intelligentzia*, this aristocracy of the Spirit, belongs to Culture and only in this connection one could greet this new literary expression.

In this case the education of good taste belongs of course first of all to the *intelligentzia*, and not only does it belong, but it becomes its duty. Not fulfilling this duty *intelligentzia* has no right for existence and condemns itself to savagery.

The education of good taste cannot be something abstract. Above all this is a vital attainment in all spheres of life, for where can there be a boundary to the service to the Muses of ancient Hellins? If in the old days this service

was understood in its full glory and adapted to life in the whole beauty of its principle, then should we not be ashamed, if in superstition and bigotry we shall cut off the radiant wings of the rising spirits?

When we propose ethics as a course in schools, as a theme most inspiring, limitless, full of constructive principles, we thus at the same time presuppose the transmutation of taste, as a defence against vulgarity and ugliness.

Andromeda said: "And I brought thee the Fire!" The ancient Hellin, the follower of Euripides, understands the meaning of this Fire and why this Agni is so precious. We, however, in most cases shall babble about this inspiring calling conception as about phosphor matches. We attach the high conception of Phosphor—the bringer of Light—to a match and try to light with it our extinguished hearth, in order to prepare the broth for today. But where is Tomorrow, this radiant wonderful Tomorrow?

We have forgotten about it. We have forgotten because we have lost the ability of searching, have lost the refined taste, which urges to betterment, to dreams, to higher consciousness. Dreams have become like dull slumber; but he who does not know how to dream, does not belong to the future, does not belong to humanity with its high Ideal.

Even the simple truth, that dreams about the future are the basic distinction of man from animal, has already become a truism. But truism in itself is no longer a generally accepted truth, as it should be, but has become the synonym of a truth of which one should not think altogether. Nevertheless, disregarding everything, even in times of greatest difficulties and world crisis,

let us not defer the thought about the education of taste, let us not put off the thought of life-bringing ethics, as of a necessary course of school education. Let us not forget the art of thinking, the art of memory and let us forever remember the treasure of the heart.

"A certain hermit left his retreat and came with the message, saying to everyone: 'Thou hast a heart.' When he was asked why he does not speak out mercy, patience, devotion, love and all other benevolent foundations of life, he replied: 'If they only do not forget the heart, the rest will adjust itself.' Verily can we appeal for love, if it has no place to reside? And where could patience dwell, when its abode is closed? Thus in order not to torture ourselves with inapplicable blisses, one must build that garden, which will flourish in the realization of the heart. Let us stand firmly on the foundation of the heart and let us understand that without the heart we are as a lost shell." Thus the Wise Ones ordained. Thus ordains Agni Yoga. Thus let us accept and apply.

Without the untiring realization of the Beautiful, without incessant refinement of the heart and consciousness, we would make the laws of earthly existence cruel and deadly in their hatred against humanity. In other words we would, when killing the Beautiful, assist the most shameful de-based downfall.

The Romans said: *Sub pretextu juris summum jus saepe summa injuria; suaviter in modo fortiter in re.* (Under pretext of justice a strict application of law is often the gravest injury. Be gentle in manner thou, resolute in execution).

Let us be broad and resolute in the realization of the Beautiful!