

Poetry's Universality and Humanity's Divinity: A Reciprocal Soul-Discovery Journey

An Approach to the Concepts of Truth, Beauty, and Delight
in Sri Chinmoy's Poetic Work

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"Each of us has an inner sun. This inner sun is infinitely more powerful, more beautiful, more illuminating than the planet sun. When this sun dawns and shines, it destroys the darkness of millennia. This sun shines through eternity. This sun is called the Self, the Transcendental Self."

Sri Chinmoy (*The Upanishads: The Crown of India's Soul*)

"The real form or soul of poetry consists of delight. The delight one gets in the realisation of the Brahman and the delight one derives from one's poetic creation spring from the same source."

Nolini Kanta Gupta (*The Poet and the Yogi*)

1. Introduction.

Poetry has existed since before the beginning of time. Among the various planes of consciousness to which man has access, the abode of poetic truth can be reached by the poet-reader who has discarded his human garments, the cloaks of his personal traits. Once these are discarded, the poet-reader treads into a realm of beauty unsurpassable, truth insatiable and delight immeasurable, which not only reveals the essence of its universe, but also the essence of the poet-reader's soul and his earthly life. For this individual soul is a faithful extension and expression of the Universal Soul.

These preceding lines need not be read as fanciful rhetoric, unreachable lofty ideals, or even chimerical dreams. Art in general and poetry in particular have throughout time and among various cultures been regarded as invaluable keys to open doors towards planes of existence higher and deeper than those of common physical, intellectual, and emotional experience; higher and deeper planes the wisdom of which can later be used for the transcendence and transformation of those previously limiting common experiences. Men who have approached poetry through devotion and humility have been endowed with intense perceptions of what has been generally rendered as

beauty, truth and delight¹. For them, poetry has become an instrument for transcending boundaries akin to multifarious walks of perception and existence.

The following paper deals with the approach three cultural standpoints give to the concepts of truth, beauty and delight as related to poetry. These standpoints differ from each other not only in their cultural bases, but also in their geographical and temporal contexts. However, despite their differences, it will be seen how they breath within a heart of unity. For the goals towards which the British Romantic tradition, the early North American Anglo-Saxon tradition, and the Indian Vedic tradition focus their impetus, all share a common aspiration towards a soul-blossoming in the boundary-transcendence-garden of universal poetic beauty, truth and delight². Further, it shall be seen how the figure of the poet-yogi Sri Chinmoy –in whom the above mentioned traditions converge–, embodies a blossom of such aspiration-seeds, as his poetry represents a means to the transcendence of boundaries on different levels of perception: transcendence of geographical, cultural and temporal frontiers through the integration of Indian, British and North American traditions; transcendence of literary boundaries through the use of spiritual and philosophical background with pragmatic application; transcendence of word-frontiers through the mantric and meditative power of his poems; transcendence of human limitations through the earthly and pragmatic yogic value of his writings; and expansion of a yogic system built on the union of different yogic disciplines such as Bhakti, Karma, Nada, and Jnana Yoga.

¹ The present choice of the terms “truth”, “beauty”, and “delight” answers to the use and significance they have within Sri Chinmoy’s work. Although in the works of other authors and critics, concepts such as “sublimity”, “pleasure”, and “bliss” can be found, Sri Chinmoy’s use of words is very meticulous in this respect and is therefore maintained in the present paper.

² The nature of poetry and its relationship to the concepts of truth, beauty, and delight, was seriously studied within the ancient Greek philosophical tradition. In his *Republic*, for instance, Plato’s main attitude towards poets is one of attack and condemnation on the grounds of their association with falsehood and non-rationality, and their imitation (*mimesis*) of the lower nature of men and gods –thus creating a negative influence on citizens through such depictions–. Nevertheless, he likewise argues in favour of a poetry that praises virtues, imitates worthy, good and beautiful objects –such as a noble type of life–, and has therefore the capacity of conveying pleasure and wisdom. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle rescues the philosophical, truth-searching value of poetry, its capacity for purging undesired feelings such as pity and fear (process of *catharsis*), and stresses the importance of the work of art’s organic unity and beauty –created by the reasonable proportion between parts and whole–. Writers such as Horace and Longinus also developed critical literary works, particularly examining the value and nature of poetry. Although Romantic British poets found a rich source of inspiration in Greek thought, the present paper will not expound on the Greek values revived by the Romantics, as the latter’s appropriation and exposition of the concepts of truth, beauty, and delight is unitary and self-sustained, thus making a deeper analysis of Greek thought dispensable in the present study. For further references, see: *Classical Literary Criticism*, pp.7-27.

2. Representative Authors from the British Tradition.

Within the history of British literature, the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) are considered to mark the beginning of the Romantic Age³. This highly revolutionary and influential joint work by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge was given a *Preface* by the former in 1802, where the nature and implicit principles of poetry were to be clarified.

The *Preface* can be rendered as a commentary on the seemingly new poetry proposed in the *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth identifies the following as the main trait of such new poetry: the search for simple language and common themes, essential to mankind, which are related to nature in a way that is permanent, durable, multiple, plain, free, natural, elementary, comprehensible and beautiful – a way capable of being communicated and lacking all vanity, complexity and falsehood⁴. About the poet, Wordsworth says:

[A poet] is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind (...) Poetry is the image of man and nature (...) It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe⁵.

Wordsworth's poet is a singer rejoicing in the presence of truth and a finer spirit of knowledge, producing a feeling of delight that is common both to man and universe through the oneness of beauty.

In his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge also deals with the concepts of truth, beauty, and delight related to poetry. He refers to the poetic mind as feeling the riddle of the world and trying to unravel it. Through his deep feeling and sense of beauty, and through his love of nature, Coleridge's ideal poet aspires towards a delight common to the entirety of existence; through poetic endeavour he brings "the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other (...) [and] diffuses a tone and spirit of unity"⁶. The full expression of this human soul, which Coleridge considered to be an echo of universal existence, is reached through imagination, described by him as "the living power and prime agent of all human

³ See: *The Norton Anthology of British Literature*, p.22.

⁴ Wordsworth, p. 239-241.

⁵ Idem, p. 246-247.

⁶ Coleridge, p. 486.

perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM”⁷.

In “What Is Poetry?” (1833, 1859) John Stuart Mill’s perception of the truth attainable through poetry is strongly related to a solitary process of observation, meditation, and contemplation, through which the poet’s inner world is apprehended with depth and elevation. Such perceptions, when given the form of poetry, are able to “paint the human soul truly”⁸, and to transcend the shallowness, emptiness, and idleness into which a life limited to exterior and superficial excitement has propensities to fall.

Matthew Arnold’s valuation of poetry in “The Study of Poetry” (1880) is of the highest order. After a close analysis of what he renders to be the works of the great masters, he describes poetry as a refuge and a salvation of the human elements of mankind – particularly in a modern industrial and materialistic society. For him, poetry has a high destiny and a potentiality to “interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us”, and is endowed with “a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can”⁹, through which man can attain not only strength and joy, but also truth and knowledge. For according to Arnold, high poetical quality can be found when the substance and matter of the poem possess truth and seriousness, and its style and manner convey a deep sense of beauty, worth, and power¹⁰.

T.S. Eliot’s conceptions of the truth inherent to poetry can be found in two of his critical essays. In “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921), he ascribes the exploration of the human soul and nature as a trait common to master poets, a process through which a deep observation of the inner aspects of the individual derives into writing. In “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1920), Eliot refers to the poet as a channel or a medium of significant emotions, impressions, and experiences, a person who has to “surrender himself to something more valuable (...) [whose] progress is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality”¹¹. This extinction of personality implies the transmission of a more valuable reality, independent from the subject, containing a high degree of truth.

To a higher or a lesser degree, all of the above mentioned British authors share a conception of poetry as that of an instrument for searching and attaining aspects of an

⁷ Idem, p. 477.

⁸ Mill, p.1141.

⁹ Arnold, p.1135.

¹⁰ Idem, p.1139.

¹¹ Eliot, p.2173.

existence deeper, higher, and more sublime than an existence bound to a common physical or sensory experience. For them, the poetic value is not limited to the use of metre or rhyme, for, as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Mill explicitly claim in their writings, poetry can be perceived both in prose and in verse; the authentic poetic experience is rather related to the expression of an intense and profound sense of beauty, truth, and delight contained in the human soul and in the perfection of nature. The satisfactory literary expression of this soul, as Eliot explicitly states it, can be achieved through self-development, following the transcendence of personality. As a whole, the poetic experience is extolled by Arnold due its invaluable aid to man in understanding, interpreting, and enduring his physical reality, while having an ever transcending ideal as the goal of true and beautiful perception.

3. The Early North-American Anglo-Saxon Tradition.

*“I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you,
And you must not be abased to the other (...)*

*Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge
that pass all the argument of the earth,
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the
women my sisters and lovers.”*

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass (Song of Myself)*

As heirs of the British lore and pioneers of North American poetry, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman¹² share a crucial valuation of the sense of poetic beauty, truth, and delight as an expression of the soul, both human and universal, and the notion of the body or form as reflection of the soul. This concept, which is addressed by the British authors treated above, finds its full disclosure in the writings of Emerson and Whitman. As Emerson explains it in his essay “They Poet”:

¹² Emerson and Whitman have been selected for the present study on a three-fold basis: they are immediate heirs of the British literary tradition; they inaugurate the North-American Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition (using and transforming what they deem appropriate from the British tradition, thus giving it new life and personality in American soil); and they share highly similar attitudes towards the nature of poetry, the individual and universal Soul, and the concepts of truth, beauty, and delight.

We stand before the secret of the world, there where Being passes into Appearance, and Unity into Variety (...) The Universe is the externisation of the soul. Wherever the life is, that bursts into appearance around it.

It is a proof of the shallowness of the doctrine of beauty, as it lies in the minds of our amateurs, that men seem to have lost the perception of the instant dependence of form upon soul¹³.

Emerson deems the poet to be the one who names and represents the universe, and the universe as the creation of Beauty. The poet thus represents beauty and reveals the union of the individual and universal soul through a high sort of seeing or insight, namely, Imagination. For Emerson, this imaginative power transcends the limits of dry intellect and makes of the mind a “flower” that heeds the direction of its “celestial life”, in order to make its discoveries translucid to others.

In his *Preface to Leaves of Grass* (1855), Walt Whitman depicts the poet as the one capable of beholding the entirety of existence through the communion with his own individual soul. This communion leads to a further union with the universal soul, and is in itself an act of absolute truth, beauty, and delight – man’s birthright due to his inherent divinity:

The sea is not surer of the shore or the shore of the sea than he [the poet] is of the fruition of his love and of all perfection and beauty (...) It is also not consistent with the reality of the soul to admit that there is anything in the known universe more divine than men and women (...) Through the divinity of themselves shall the kosmos and the new breed of poets be interpreters of men and women and of all events and things (...) They shall not deign to defend immortality or God or the perfection of things or liberty or the exquisite beauty and reality of the soul.¹⁴

As well as Emerson –whom he saw as his master–, Whitman conceives the poet as a singer capable of attaining deep visions and perceptions of the truth and beauty pervading the whole range of life. These finer perceptions are no others than the revelation of the divinity of man and the universe, hence, the unity of the individual with the Universal Soul.

¹³ Emerson, pp. 453 and 447.

¹⁴ Whitman, pp. 15, 16, 25.

4. Mysticism and Reality in William Blake.

The concepts of the simultaneous individuality and universality of the soul and the divinity of man found in Emerson and Whitman, can be considered to be an expansion of the ideology previously studied within the British tradition. The relationship between universe and individual, which had already been addressed by the British authors, finds full expression in the North American pioneer-poets. Paradoxically enough, it is an elder British poet who can be seen as expanding the disclosure of the soul's divinity. For although Emerson and Whitman sing and celebrate and thus exultantly uncover this all-pervading divinity, an explicit approach towards such a realisation is not to be found in their ideology.

A generation previous to that of Emerson and Whitman, William Blake had delved into the mysteries of the human and the universal soul through a highly personal poetic and artistic approach. His untiring, lifelong commitment to his work was the result of his absolute faith in what he called his "divine visions", in which God, angels, devils and passed-away souls would accompany him through various planes of consciousness. Blake rendered his artistic creations –both poetic and pictorial– to be spiritual teachings for the evolution of humanity, teachings whose aim was to reveal "what Eternally Exists, Really and Unchangeably." The revelation of this ultimate truth was, according to Blake, a poetic experience in which *vision* and *imagination*, the tools needed for attaining these profound inner perceptions, were awakened. Such revelation would unfalteringly end in the recognition of the individual human soul as the self-same God-Soul¹⁵. The figure of the poet was therefore the same as that of the Redeemer, hence Blake considered Jesus Christ to be a master poet.

Blake's conviction was that man's visionary and imaginative capacities had been veiled due to the faltering physical vision of separation and multiplicity. The seer-redeemer-poet's task was then to liberate, purify, and intensify man's physical senses in order to reveal the real truth of existence. As Blake described in *Jerusalem*, his last poetic work:

¹⁵ In Blake's cosmogony, the divine human soul is embodied in the figure of *Albion*, the Original Man. The fall of man from his eternal heavenly abode (named by Blake as *Eden*) is due to a division of the Original Man, and his entrance into the lower world's of *Beulah* (where there is division but neither oppositions nor conflicts), *Generation* (the realm of common human experience, with suffering, oppositions, separation, and multiplicity), and *Ulro* (a hell where blind rationality –embodied by the figure of *Urizen–*, tyranny, negation, and selfishness reign supreme). The ascent of the human soul is reached through the liberation, purification and intensification of the physical senses –with the aid of art

I rest not from my great task! To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the Immortal Eyes of Man inwards into the worlds of Thought, into Eternity, ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination.¹⁶

5. The Indian Vedic Tradition.

The Soul alone is the inner reality. And nothing but the Soul is the centre of all the universe. The diversity and manifold peculiarities in the creation have their oneness and a vast and concrete harmony in the Soul. And if we realise this Soul we can easily and without fail embrace the whole universe.

What we want to derive from poetry or any other artistic creation is a glimpse of the Infinite and the Eternal (...) The aspiration of every poet flies to an immaculate realm of Beauty and Truth, to a world beyond (...) There is no necessity of a duel between the poet and the philosopher. The poet will seize beauty through the pure sense of delight in the purified vital and at the same time intuit the absolute truth with the divine vision. The vision of the Truth breaks out of the sense of delight, while the sense of delight finds its culmination in the truth-vision. Thus the poet and the seer become united and the delightful and the good stand identified.¹⁷

These words by the Indian savant Nolini Kanta Gupta represent a compendium and intensification of the main conclusions previously reached through the analysis of the British and early North American traditions, namely, the reality of the universe as being primarily that of the soul, and the capacity of the poetic experience, through its search for truth, beauty, and delight, to unravel and disclose such reality.

Kanta Gupta's spiritual and philosophical heritage derives from the Vedic tradition. Within the Vedic vision of existence, the spiritual knowledge is the supreme knowledge, and all the rest is the ordinary knowledge. This ultimate knowledge is acquired through the discovery of the Self, or Brahman. As Kanta Gupta describes it, both the spiritual seeker (who will generally support himself on a solid scriptural or philosophical basis) and the artist striving to express his inner consciousness, can have access to the knowledge and expression of the Self through an experience of sheer delight:

and imagination—, through which the true nature of life is revealed. For further reference see Blake's *Prophetic Books, Visions of the Daughters of Albion, The Four Zoas, and Jerusalem*.

¹⁶ Blake, William: *Jerusalem*, 5: 17-20. In: *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, p. 359.

¹⁷ Kanta Gupta, pp. 96, 81 and 92.

Everything manifests itself through some truth in the core of its being. This truth is the solid delight itself, and therein lies its beauty and this itself is the image of God in it. The manifestation of this God is the aim of the artist.

If the aim of spirituality is to know the self, then the aim of art too is the same. If the seer of the spiritual truth can see the Spirit everywhere without excluding the body or any of its parts, then why should the artist not be able to manifest the glory of the Spirit through colour, sound, word and stone and thus play the role of a truly spiritual man?¹⁸

Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge, Emerson, and Blake, who had all associated the concept of Imagination with that of a deeper vision of the essence of things, Kanta Gupta, as a result of his Vedic spiritual background, is particularly explicit in mentioning the difference that can be traced between a vision resulting from an artificial imagination, and a divine vision:

The poetic genius can manifest in two ways: artificial imagination (fancy; vital, outward senses; delight of thought and critical reason), and divine vision or direct experience (vision of the soul, the Psychic Being). The seer-poet sees nothing save spirituality (...) The divine sees the Self not only in things spiritual but also in things terrestrial.¹⁹

Kanta Gupta is thus aware of the fact that any poetic act will in itself carry a knowledge deeper than sensory perception can attain, or an indication of something divine or infinite. However, he is categorical when pointing out that the poetic genius manifesting artificial imagination will convey a lesser degree of truth than that conveyed by the same genius built upon psychic or spiritual perception. The master poet will therefore be the fulfilled spiritual seeker, namely, the seer who has a direct vision of truth. These poet-seers are no others than the Rishis²⁰ of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, India's most sacred spiritual scriptures:

The poets of the Upanishads were at once seers and yogis in the fullest measure. As the Upanishads are wonderful in their poetic values, even so are they highly inspiring and soul stirring in their mantric powers. Here the poet and the seer have become one and with their mutual help they have revealed each other.²¹

¹⁸ Idem, pp. 114 and 116.

¹⁹ Idem, p. 91.

²⁰ In Sanskrit, *Kavi* is the general name given to poets, while *Rishis* are poet-seers who have attained the ultimate vision of truth.

²¹ Idem, p. 84.

6. Sri Chinmoy: The Myriad-Petalled.

Sri Chinmoy is a distinguished representative of modern Hinduism. By virtue of upbringing, study, lifelong training in meditative disciplines, and personal commitment, he is able to transmit with authenticity the essence of his spiritual heritage. He is an exemplar of the Hindu renaissance of the last 150 years, and as a Bengali, he comes from the matrix of that renaissance. Among his predecessors in the Bengal tradition are such figures as Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Sri Chinmoy's writings thus elaborate themes which are age-long in Indian tradition, and include reflections on scriptures such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and retellings of traditional stories. At the same time, they do not constitute a simple transmission of received ideas, since Sri Chinmoy has taken from tradition what he sees as most valuable for modernity, and reworked and expanded it in the light of his personal experience and insight into contemporary realities.²²

An approach to Sri Chinmoy's work constitutes an experience not only poetic, but likewise philosophic, spiritual, and yogic. His writings embody the quintessence of the Vedic wisdom. His search for the ultimate spiritual truth and his aspiration for revealing such truth through poetry make him a modern Rishi. Now, exactly which truths and under which poetic forms did the Indian Rishis of yore reveal?

The introductory insight into the Vedic truth previously studied in Kanta Gupta is fully blossomed in Sri Chinmoy. The Vedas are the most ancient scriptures in the library of consciously evolving humanity, and the Upanishads, also known as Vedanta, represent a compendium of the Vedas. Likewise, the Bhagavad Gita, one of the chapters within the Great Indian epic *Mahabharata*, written around the year 600 b.C., comprises the most illuminating truths of the Upanishadic lore. The spiritual teachings contained in these holy writings, in Sri Chinmoy's own words,

(...) make us conscious channels of God the Supreme Musician for the transformation of human darkness into divine Light, human imperfection into divine Perfection, human possibilities into divine Inevitabilities, and human dreams into divine Realities (...) The Vedas are at once the Sky of Light and the Sea of Delight. The Light-Sky is the vastness of Truth. The Delight-Sea is the immensity of Truth.²³

This truth is the Higher Knowledge –as opposed to a lower knowledge bound to the fulfilment of the physical senses– that comprises the discovery of the soul, a self-knowledge that simultaneously shelters world-knowledge and Brahman-knowledge.

²² Priscila Pedersen. Department of Religious Studies, Brown University. In: *Jharna Kala*, p. 32.

Brahman is the One without a second, the Absolute, and is Eternal, Infinite, and Immortal. The knowledge of Brahman leads to the knowledge of the Universe.

A key concept within the Vedic vision of life is that of *Lila*, the Cosmic Game through which the Brahman expresses Itself in myriad forms: Its Eternity through temporality, Its Infinity through the finite, Its Unity through multiplicity, the Formless through the form: “God was One. He wanted to be Many. Why? He felt the necessity of enjoying himself divinely and supremely in infinite forms.”²⁴ Thus the human soul takes countless incarnations until it attains its spiritual perfection, this is, the discovery of its own real Self, the realisation of its Divinity, Infinity, and Immortality.

The Vedic wisdom does not limit itself to mere philosophical speculation, for it considers the mind as incapable of unveiling the Ultimate Knowledge: being bound to form and separativity, the mind alone cannot grasp the formless and universal reality of the soul. The Vedic wisdom thus offers a systematic method for revealing and realising the individual soul universalised, and the Universal Soul individualised: yoga. The four main yogic disciplines to which Sri Chinmoy gives expression through his poetry are Bhakti-Yoga (devotion to the Brahman), Karma-Yoga (service for the Brahman), Jnana-Yoga (knowledge of the Brahman), and Nada-Yoga (approach to the Brahman through sound). As Sri Chinmoy explains it, yogic achievements find full manifestation in the individual seeker through the luminous wisdom of the soul, the pure love of the heart, the clear knowledge of the mind, the sincere dynamism of the vital being, and the simple action of the body.

Sri Chinmoy, as well as Kanta Gupta, renders the Vedic Rishis as being poets, seers, yogis, philosophers, and prophets in their fullest measure, thus having a direct access to the truth and beauty of existence through a process of poetic delight. Regarding this poet-seer-philosopher-prophet relationship, Sri Chinmoy affirms:

Each Vedic seer is a poet and a prophet. In the case of an ordinary poet, his poems are quite often based upon imagination. Imagination gives birth to his poetry. In the case of the Vedic poets, it was intuition that gave birth to their poems. This intuition is the direct knowledge of Truth. As regards the prophet, their prophecies were based on their full and conscious awareness of direct and immediate Truth. The Vedic seers gave due importance to the mind. But they never considered the mind to be the source of the highest possible experience of reality (...)

Poetry and philosophy run abreast in the Vedas. Philosophy illumined the minds of the Vedic seers. Poetry immortalised their hearts.

²³ Sri Chinmoy: *The Vedas*, pp. 16 and 31.

²⁴ Sri Chinmoy: *The Upanishads*, p. 19.

The philosopher is a poet in the mind. The poet is a philosopher in the heart.²⁵

The Vedas and Upanishads are mainly written in the form of poetry or thought-evoking, rhythmic prose, both endowed with a powerful mantric character. As Kanta Gupta explains it, “Mantra sublates speech, unveils its inner potency and gives a concrete shape to that reality. Speech does not retain its normal free individuality here, it becomes faithful by obedience to the truth beyond speech (...) Poetry is delightful speech; mantra is the Brahman manifested as sound.”²⁶ Kanta Gupta deems the highest and most perfect form of poetry to be mantric in its nature. Mantric incantation is a form of Nada Yoga, and its power is awakened through sound repetition that transcends the literary limits of the written word. The power of mantra is all-pervading throughout Sri Chinmoy’s writings.

The concepts of truth, beauty, and delight are likewise essential in Sri Chinmoy’s poetic creations. In respect to the type of truth poetry can convey, Sri Chinmoy affirms:

Poetry and spirituality go hand in hand. I feel from deep within that poetry, if it is spiritual and divine, without fail houses spirituality, and true spirituality must needs house poetry (...) Poetry is the embodiment of the highest Truth in its most subtle, most delicate, most illumining form. Poetry is the inspiration of Heaven that reveals itself through the aspiration of earth.²⁷

The presence of beauty within poetry is also of paramount significance. As Sri Chinmoy poetically describes it:

God said to His newly appointed poet-gardener: What is poetry, if not My real Beauty? (...) Beauty and Infinity are inseparable. I want to reveal the Infinity that I am through the finite that I equally am. Therefore, I am asking you to make Me a garden of beauty unfathomable and beauty unsurpassable.²⁸

Just as truth and beauty are of great value in the poetic experience, so is the presence of delight. Sri Chinmoy claims:

What is poetry? Poetry is the absolutely shortest way to delight. If you take the destination as *ananda* or delight, then poetry is the shortest road (...) God writes poetry through man. Each word in a poem carries us into the Unknowable. When we say “Unknowable”, we may think that we

²⁵ Sri Chinmoy: *The Vedas*, pp. 4-5 and 14.

²⁶ Kanta Gupta, p. 78-79.

²⁷ Sri Chinmoy: *Poetry: My Rainbow-Heart Dreams*, pp. 23 and 46.

²⁸ Sri Chinmoy: *Blessingful Invitations from the University World*, p. 9.

will be totally lost. But we are not lost; we are flying, because in the Unknowable there is tremendous joy.²⁹

According to Sri Chinmoy, this joy, being derived from an intuitive source and endowed with a satisfaction leading to a divine truth, is not to be explained by the mind but to be transported deep within and expanded in the heart, where its inner significance and truth shall blossom: “Poetry is something to discover one’s universal Reality. Poetry is something to uncover one’s transcendental Divinity.”³⁰ Thus poetry itself becomes a simultaneously profound and elevating form of meditation and revelation.

7. An Insight into Sri Chinmoy’s Poetry-Garden.

A poet sees what we cannot see – the highest Beauty’s golden crown, the deepest Beauty’s golden throne. A poet feels what we cannot feel – oneness with the sorrows of Eternity, oneness with the joys of Infinity (...) A poem starts in streaming tears and ends in soaring smiles.³¹

Sri Chinmoy’s poetry is a mirror of his yogic discoveries and spiritual realisations. It dons the cloak of the English language, and nourishes itself from the latter’s immortal literary and poetic tradition³². At the same time, it is an inner experience that leads the seeker-reader towards delight through an encounter with truth and beauty. This truth and this beauty, as the previous quote shows, are neither mere mental concepts nor products of a chimerical otherworldliness; just as the yogic system they reflect, they acknowledge man’s earthly existence, its mastery and transcendence, as the unavoidable path towards the ultimate Self-discovery. Poetry is thus not only a vehicle of a wide literary interest, but becomes an instrument towards the pragmatic and spiritual perfection of man. As Sri Ramakrishnan refers to Sri Chinmoy’s poetry:

The emotionally rich verses, pregnant with meaning, constitute an invaluable companion and guide to regulate man’s journey of life – *jeevan yatra*– and to get rid of the *shadvikaras* –the six enemies–: *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada*

²⁹ Sri Chinmoy: *Poetry: My Rainbow-Heart Dreams*, p. 19.

³⁰ Sri Chinmoy: *Blessingful Invitations from the University World*, p.15

³¹ Idem, pp. 39 and 81.

³² Throughout his writings, Sri Chinmoy pays homage to the English literary tradition through his use of quotes. In his *Commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita*, for example, he quotes writers and poets such as Milton, Dryden, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Keats, Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, R.W.Emerson, and Walt Whitman. This testifies how Sri Chinmoy has made of the English lore a part of his own literary background.

(ego), *matsarya* (rivalry), which are the real hindrances in the path towards self-realisation – *atma sakshatkar*.³³

Vedic wisdom affirms that Self-knowledge leads to Brahman-knowledge. The knowledge of the Self requires the conscious aspiration of the individual spiritual seeker to transcend his own ignorance and imperfections through the path of yoga. This individual voice and its relation to the sufferings of the world and the ecstasy of Brahman is all-pervading throughout Sri Chinmoy's poetry, and can be seen as an escalating journey of the soul from its limited individual to its expanded universal state. An overall depiction of this quest's development can be found in the poem "The Golden Flute":

In me the storm-tossed weeping night / Finds room to rage and flow. / (...) A raft am I on the sea of Time, / My oars are washed away. / (...) But hark! I hear Thy golden Flute, / Its notes bring the Summit down. / Now safe am I, O Absolute! / Gone death, gone night's stark frown".

This ascending soul-journey can be traced as starting with the experience and conscious recognition of the veil of ignorance reigning over the physical world and the limited human personality. The poems "Struggle's Gloom" and "Labyrinth" portray a striking description of the darkness and sorrow of the world, and the individual's incapability to escape such reality:

The dumb earth-waste now burns a hell to my soul. / I fail to fight with its stupendous doom / (...) Smoke-clouds cover my face of Spirit's fire; / Naked I move in night's ignorance deep and dire.

A tortuous road full of thorns; / At every step I encounter dire obstacles. / No light, no air, only a black shadow before me (...) / Long have I forgotten where my source is.

But not only is the world responsible for the pangs of existence; the individual's own limitations and false sensory perception share their part, as seen in the poems "I Fear", "Eyeless Pride", and "Human Vision":

I fear to think. My mind is wild and apt to sink. / I fear to see. I eat the fruits of Ignorance-tree. / I fear to love. A train of doubts around, above. / I fear to be. Long dead my life of faith in me.

No intelligence, no wisdom; / What I have is only eyeless pride. / The ignorance-soul in me thinks and feels / That nobody is as wise as it is.

³³ Sri S. Ramakrishnan, in: *Poems of Sri Chinmoy*, pp. xvii-xviii.

How false is human vision! / How meaningless is human vision! /
Wonder-cities of imagination-creation / are buried in the dust of
oblivion.

However, just as this world houses pain and sorrow, it as well houses beauty
and delight. Nevertheless, due to the veil of ignorance, this bliss still remains
unfathomable, as portrayed in the poem “By Whose Touch”:

By whose touch does the lily smile / And open its beauty-bud
(...) / Who is the Eye of my eye; / Who is the Heart of my heart? / Alas,
then why do I not see Him / His Face of transcendental Beauty, / Even in
my dreams?

These first perceptions of a more fulfilling reality as compared to the tortures of
the world lead to the next stage within the yogic journey: the certainty of the existence
of a goal beyond suffering and limitations. This certainty is unfold as a progressive
discovery in which the seeker encounters opposing situations between his past
ignorance-bondage and his newly awakened divinity-hopes, as found in the poems
“Waves of Your Smile” and “Hope”:

I see You touching my eyes / With the waves of Your Smile. / I
know not, Beloved, how and why / You are so close to me today. /
Perhaps all this is just a mistake.

The earth is deaf and blind, my Lord; / Its true goal it denies. / It
hears no voice, no heavenly word / From those who seek the skies. / O
yet I feel Thy kingly Grace / With my feeble mortality. / I shall win at
last the Noonward Race, / Plunge in the Nectar-Sea.

Despite the doubts, these divine hopes have the strength to become a longing for
the forgotten and now remembered source of liberation and delight. This dawn of the
divine reality is to be found within the very same earthly existence. The poems ”Wings
of Air”and “In My Earth-Life” depict this situation:

My heart longs to be dissolved / In wings of air / And fly in the
unhorizoned sky (...) / In the delight of my liberation life. / May my life
begin / With the breath of a new hope.

In my earth-life / The music of celestial hope / Is being played
(...) / I see a boundless devotion-flood (...) / The Infinite is donning /
His infinite cloaks.

Thus the seeker becomes aware of the paradoxical reality inherent to life on
earth, where both excruciating pains and divine realisations can be found. This

awareness represents an advancement in the quest for the ultimate, a next step in which the all-pervading reality of the Brahman is present, both in darkness and light, in ignorance and wisdom, in bondage and liberation. This is nothing but the display of *Lila*, the Brahman's cosmic game a hide-and-seek experience, as expressed in the poems, "In Secrecy Supreme", and "The Game of Opposites":

In the stupendous mirth of life, / In the abysmal lap of death, /
You I behold, / Your Love-Play is my world.

You are at once great and small, / You are at once the finite and
the Infinite / You are everybody's Lord / And at the same time
everybody's slave (...) / The game of opposites always I notice in You. /
The opposites always dance in You.

Following these insights into the truths of the world's mysterious reality, the seeker aspiring to reach the absolute Goal has in the yogic path or *sadhana* an invaluable aid and companion. This path is, nevertheless, an arduous path, a battle against the world's and one's own ignorance. The sincere seeker-warrior must transcend the limitations attached to his unlit mind and his ego, where pride, doubt, fear, insecurity, and jealousy abide. As mentioned earlier, the yogic disciplines to be found within Sri Chinmoy's poetry respond to a four-fold approach through Bhakti, Karma, Jnana and Nada Yoga.

The Bhakti Yogi follows the path of love, devotion, and surrender to God. For him, his Lord Beloved Supreme is his All, the very life-breath of his existence. Through his love to Him and the descent of the Divine Grace, the Bhakti is bound to attain liberation, as seen in the poem "O Light of the Supreme":

O Beauty non-pareil, O Beloved, / Do burn the fire of beauty and
splendour within my heart. / By loving You, eternally beautiful I shall be. /
May Lord Shiva's destruction-dance / Destroy all shackles of the finite. /
May the Light of the Supreme inundate me, / My heart, my heart, my all.

For the Bhakti, prayer and invocation of his Lord represent a most valuable instrument for reaching his goal. Another such instrument is meditation –issue that shall be addressed later on in the paper–, which is summoned in one of the following poems. As means for invocation, prayer, and meditation, imagination and mantric poetry embody an unparalleled tool, as seen in the poems "Invocation", "Arise! Awake!", and "O Imagination":

Supreme, Supreme, Supreme, Supreme! / I bow to Thee, I bow. /
My life Thy golden plough; / My journey's Goal Thy soulful Dream (...)
/ My world Thy Feet of Light; / My breath, Thy Vision's kite.

Arise, awake, O friend of my dream (...) / O breath of my life
(...) / O light of my eyes. / O seer-poet in me, / Do manifest yourself in
me and through me (...) / Arise, awake, O form of my meditation
transcendental (...) / O bound divinity in humanity (...) / O my heart's
Liberator, Shiva, / And free mankind from its ignorance-sleep.

Imagination, O Imagination (...) / To death's call I shall not
respond. / The soul am I; no death have I. / No more, never, shall I walk
along the wrong path. / Imagination, O Imagination!.

Karma Yoga is the path of self-sacrifice and unconditional, dedicated service.
Sri Chinmoy not only considers his poetic output to be a service to mankind, but
through it, he extols the same yogic qualities that work and service can convey to the
spiritual aspirant, as seen in the poem "Not Word but Work":

Not word, but work: / Inside work remains hidden the fragrance
of flowers. / Let work be the language of our heart and our proclamation.
/ Our only aim is progress, / Not victory and failure.

This poem not only deals with the qualities of work and service, but also
introduces two key concepts within both Karma and Jnana Yoga, that is, the
transcendence of the mind –"not word"– and the detachment from the fruits of any
action, whether positive –victory– or negative –failure–. This type of detachment is the
central theme of the poem "Happiness and Sorrow":

In my abode of light / I shall receive boundless peace / The day I
forget the attachment-bondage / Of happiness and sorrow.

Detachment and transcendence of the mind can also be reached with the true
knowledge provided by the path of Jnana Yoga. Although mental and philosophical in
its nature, Jnana Yoga transcends the mind through its illumination; the mind thus
becomes a competent instrument of the soul, and not its hindrance. Further, a rigorous
path of self-scrutiny like that of Jnana Yoga aids the seeker in overcoming his other
ego-related imperfections, such as doubt, fear, greed, and pride. The illumination of the
mind can be successfully attained by opening and perceiving the soul-reality –through
meditation or the same meditative reading inherent to Sri Chinmoy's poetry–, abiding in
the spiritual heart (known in Kundalini Yoga as the Anahata or fifth Chakra). All these

issues can be appreciated in the poems “Beyond Speech and Mind”, “Forget All Your Tempest-Fear”, “My Ego and My Soul”, and “This Little Heart”.

Beyond speech and mind, / Into the river of ever-effulgent Light /
My heart dives. / Today thousands of doors, / Closed for millennia, / Are
opened wide.

Forget all your tempest-fear; / Save your boat. (...) / Just collect
beauty’s flower / From life-garden. / Pay no attention to world-criticism.
/ Remain far from the flight of name and fame.

I am not alone; / Within my unlit self / My ego, my naked death. /
I am not alone; / Within my snow-white heart / My soul and my Spirit’s
flame.

O put an end to all my desires, / Put an end to all my desires. /
This little heart of mine / Make wide. / O hold my hands / And make me
vast and infinite.

The illumination of the mind is necessarily preceded by a silencing of the mind and a heeding of the soul’s dictates. Nada Yoga, based on the power of sound embodied in mantric incantations, is a most effective way for silencing the mind and opening the heart centre. Sri Chinmoy not only exerts Nada Yoga through his musical creations and performances, but likewise utilises the power of sound through mantric poetic elements. Such elements, generally based on rhythmic repetitions, can be found in the above quoted poems “Arise! Awake!”, “Invocation”, and “O Imagination”. As in the Vedic and Upanishadic poems, the mantric utterance of aspects related to the Ultimate Goal is a significant yogic practise, as seen in the poem “My Name, My Age, My Home”:

At last I know my name. / My name is God’s eternal Game. / At
last I know my name. // At last I know my age. / My age is Infinity’s
page. / At last I know my age. // At last I know my home. / My home is
where my flame-worlds roam. / At last I know my home.

Through decades of intense spiritual practices and disciplines, Sri Chinmoy has not only followed the yogic paths leading towards liberation, but has also attained a high degree of spiritual perfection and of union with his soul, both individual and Universal. Through the poems in which he portrays the state of self-realisation, he not only sings the immortal song of the soul, but also gives the spiritual seekers a first-hand view of their Ultimate Goal of truth, beauty, delight, and peace. Such is the case in the poems “Revelation”, “Immortality”, and “The Absolute”:

No more my heart shall sob or grieve. / My days and nights
dissolve in God's own Light. / Above the toil of life my soul / Is a Bird
of Fire singing the Infinite. // (...) Drunk deep of immortality, / I am he
root and boughs of a teeming vast.

Though in the world, I am above its woe; / I dwell in an ocean of
supreme release. / My mind, a core of the One's unmeasured thoughts, /
The star-vast welkin hugs my spirit's peace.

No mind, no form, I only exist; / Now ceased all will and
thought. / The final end of Nature's dance, / I am It whom I have sought.
// My spirit aware of all the heights, / I am mute in the core of the Sun. /
I barter nothing with time and deeds; / My cosmic play is done.

8. Final Considerations.

Poetry not only constantly transcends its own frontiers; it incessantly helps man to transcend his own. The previous journey through time, space, cultures, literary traditions, and human realisations, is a proof. The issues addressed by representative authors of the British tradition deal mainly with the way in which the truth and beauty commonly shared by nature and man can be successfully attained through poetry. The early North American Anglo-Saxon tradition celebrates this truth and this beauty as the delightful experience of the divinity of the Soul, both individual and Universal. A mystical and artistic approach to this all-encompassing reality such as Blake's, claims the need for not only celebrating the Soul, but for consciously becoming it with the aid of poetry. Vedic tradition fuses the soul-wisdom of philosophy, the heart-vision of mysticism, and the beauty-perfection of poetry. All these different views on the nature of poetry and its truth can be seen as a garden of blossoming buds, becoming ever more beautiful, emanating an ever expanding fragrance that transcends historical, geographical, and literary frontiers.

Sri Chinmoy is the master artist-gardener of an ever expanding and fragrant garden. In this garden are to be found the fully blossomed buds of the British, early North American, and Indian literary and spiritual traditions. This garden has therefore overcome geographic and cultural frontiers, with eastern spiritual blossoms on western grounds, and western literary blossoms on eastern grounds. From their spiritual roots the poetry-flowers obtain an unending source of truth, and through their literary stems

they are endowed with resilient and sound bodies of beauty. The myriad colours of their literature-petals enrich and embellish the yogic aspiration towards the supreme delight, simultaneously housing Bhakti, Karma, Jnana, and Nada crowns. Finally, the soul-fragrance emanating from the garden's innumerable flowers, when deeply inhaled and assimilated by the seeker-reader, are bound to reveal the ultimate transcendence that the master-gardener has harvested in his land: the transformation of human life-suffering-thorns into divine wisdom-ecstasy-fruits.

"Poetry has three very special names: inspiration-mind, aspiration-heart and beauty-life"

"Yoga reveals the supreme secret: man is the God of tomorrow and God is the man of today"

Sri Chinmoy

ANNEX 1: Mantric Poems from the *Upanishads*³⁴.

*Aum bhur bhuvah svah
Tat savitur varenuam
Bhargo devasya dhimahi
Dhiyo yo nah pracodayat.*

We meditate on the transcendental glory of the Deity Supreme, who is inside the heart of the earth, inside the life of the sky, and inside the soul of the heaven. May He stimulate and illumine our minds.

*Purnam adah, purnam idam,
Purnat purnam udacyate.
Purnasya purnam adaya
Purnam evavasisyate.*

Infinity is that. Infinity is this.
From Infinity, Infinity has come into existence.
From Infinity, when Infinity is taken away,
Infinity remains.

*Asato ma sad gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya.*

Lead me from the unreal to the Real.
Lead me from darkness into Light.
Lead me from death into Immortality.

*Anor aniyam mahato mahiyan,
Atmasya jantor nihito guhayam.*

Smaller than the smallest life, larger than the infinite Vast,
The soul breathes in the secret heart of man.

*Anandadd hy eva khalv imani bhutani jayante,
Anandena jatani jivanti,
Anandam prayantya bhisam visanti.*

From Delight we came into existence.
In Delight we grow. / At the end
of our journey's close, into Delight we retire

*Hiranmayena patrena
Styasyapihitam mukham;
Tat tvam, puan, apavrnnu,
Satya-dharmaya drstaye.*

The Face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden orb.
Remove it, O Sun,
So that I who am devoted to the Truth
May behold the Truth.

*Yo vai bhuma tat sukham,
Nalpe sukham asti,
Bhumaiva sukham.*

The Infinite is the satisfying happiness.
In the finite no happiness can ever breathe.
The Infinite alone is the fulfilling happiness.

*Vidyam cavidyam ca yas
Tad vedobhyam saha
Avidyaya mrtyum tirtva
Vidyayamrtam asnute.*

He who knows and understands knowledge and ignorance as one
Through ignorance passes beyond the domain of death,
Through knowledge attains to an eternal Life and
Drinks deep the Light of Immortality.

³⁴ Here printed in the original Sanskrit (Westernised spelling), with Sri Chinmoy's English rendering. In: Sri Chinmoy: *The Upanishads: The Crown of India's Soul*, pp. 59-72.

ANNEX 2: Poems by Sri Chinmoy.

The Golden Flute

A sea of Peace and Joy and Light
Beyond my reach I know.
In me the storm-tossed weeping night
Finds room to rage and flow.

I cry aloud, but all in vain;
I helpless, the earth unkind!
What soul of might can share my pain?
Death-dart alone I find.

A raft am I on the sea of Time,
My oars are washed away.
How can I hope to reach the clime
Of God's eternal Day?

But hark! I hear Thy golden Flute,
Its notes bring the Summit down.
Now safe am I, O Absolute!
Gone death, gone night's stark frown!
(*My Flute*, p. 87)

Labyrinth

A tortuous road full of thorns;
At every step I encounter dire obstacles.
No light, no air, only a black shadow before me.
With a giant body he frightens me.
Alone I walk along an unlit, lightless labyrinth.
Long have I forgotten where my source is.
(*Selected Poetry*, p.25)

Eyeless Pride

In a dark room
A small candle is burning.
No intelligence, no wisdom;
What I have is only eyeless pride.
The ignorance-soul in me thinks and feels
That nobody is as wise as it is.
It always speaks of its own existence –
All in hyperbole.
(*Selected Poetry*, p.30)

By Whose Touch

By whose touch does the lily smile
And open its beauty-bud?
Whose moonlit beauty
Do I see in the lily–
Who is the Eye of my eye;
Who is the Heart of my heart–
Alas, then why do I not see Him,
His Face of transcendental Beauty,
Even in my dreams?
(*Selected Poetry*, p.6)

Struggle's Gloom

With a blank sorrow heavy I am now grown;
Like things eternal changeless stands my woe.
In vain I try to overcome my foe.
O Lord of Love! Make me more dead than stone.

Thy Grace of silent smile I never feel,
The forger of Evil stamps my nights and days.
His call my sleepless body ever obeys.
My heart I annihilate and try to heal.

The dumb earth-waste now burns a hell to my soul.
I fail to fight with its stupendous doom,
My breath is a slave of that unending gloom.
For Light I pine, but find a tenebrous goal.

Smoke-clouds cover my Face of Spirit's fire;
Naked I move in night's ignorance deep and dire.
(*My Flute*, p.12)

I Fear

I fear to speak, I fear to speak.
My tongue is killed, my heart is weak.

I fear to think, I fear to think.
My mind is wild and apt to sink.

I fear to see, I fear to see.
I eat the fruits of Ignorance-tree.

I fear to love, I fear to love.
A train of doubts around, above.

I fear to be, I fear to be.
Long dead my life of faith in me.
(*My Flute*, p.82)

Human Vision

How false is human vision!
How meaningless is human vision_
Wonder-cities of imagination-creation
Are all buried in the dust of oblivion.
Yet human souls derive much joy
From hoisting the victory-banner,
Garlanding the heroes
And offering heart's love-world.
(*Selected Poetry*, p.51)

Hope

Thou art my Lord, my golden dream,
Thou art my life in death,
O bless me with Thy Hope Supreme,
Lord of the Eternal Breath!

Agelong the vision of Thy Sun
For darkness have I sought.
I know the evils I should shun
And quickly bring to nought.

The earth is deaf and blind, my Lord;
Its true goal it denies.
It hears no voice, no heavenly word
From those who seek the skies.

O yet I feel Thy kingly Grace
With my feeble mortality.
I shall win at last the Noonward Race,
Plunge in the Nectar-Sea.

(*My Flute*, p.26)

In Secrecy Supreme

In secrecy supreme I see You.
You live in my eyes, in my sleep,
In my dreams, in my sweet wakefulness.
In the stupendous mirth of life,
In the abysmal lap of death,
You I behold.
Your Love-Play is my world.

(*Selected Poetry*, p.4)

O Light of the Supreme!

O Beauty non-pareil, O Beloved,
Do burn the fire of beauty and splendour
within my heart.
By loving You, eternally beautiful I shall be.
May Lord Shiva's destruction-dance
Destroy all shackles of the finite.
May the Light of the Supreme inundate me,
My heart, my heart, my all.
Having loved the Infinite,
The heart of gloom is crying for the bloom of Light.
O Life Infinite, give me the eternal hunger,
aspiration-cry.
The tiniest drop will lose its *raison d'être*
In the heart of the boundless ocean.
In fire and air You Life of the Spirit I behold.
O Beauty, O Beauty's Gold,
O Light of the Supreme!

(*My Flute*, p.25)

Waves of Your Smile

If and when I think that I shall not
invoke You any more,
I shall not even look at You,
But shall keep my eyes shut
And thus derive happiness,
I see You touching my eyes
With the waves of Your Smile.
I know not, Beloved, How and why
You are so close to me today.
Perhaps all this is just a mistake.

(*Selected Poetry*, p.17)

Wings of Air

My heart longs to be dissolved
In wings of air
And fly in the unhorizoned sky.
I long to open up
All my heart-doors
In the delight of my liberation-life.
May my life begin
With the breath of a new hope.

(*Selected Poetry*, p.1)

In My Earth-life

In my earth-life
The music of celestial hope
Is being played.
In my earth-life
I see a boundless devotion-flood.
In my earth-life
The Infinite is donning
His infinite cloaks.

(*Selected Poetry*, p.31)

The Game of Opposites

You have made me discover
In the depth of my heart
That You are at once great and small.
You are at once the finite and the Infinite,
You are everybody's Lord
And at the same time everybody's slave.
Smiles and sorrows in one tune
Are being played inside Your Heart.
The game of opposites always I notice in You.
The opposites always dance in You.

(*Selected Poetry*, p.15)

Invocation

Supreme, Supreme, Supreme, Supreme!
I bow to Thee, I bow.
My life Thy golden plough;
My journey's Goal Thy soulful Dream.
Supreme, Supreme, Supreme, Supreme!
I bow to Thee, I bow.

Arise! Awake!

Arise, awake, O friend of my dream.
 Arise, awake, O breath of my life.
 Arise, awake, O light of my eyes.
 O seer-poet in me,
 Do manifest yourself in me and through me.

Arise, awake, O vast heart within me.
 Arise, awake, O consciousness of mine,
 Which is always transcending the universe
 And its own life of the Beyond.

Arise, awake O form of my meditation transcendental
 Arise, awake, O bound divinity in humanity.
 Arise, awake, O my heart's Liberator, Shiva,
 And free mankind from its ignorance-sleep.
 (*My Flute*, p.30)

Not Word, But Work

Not word, but work:
 This sweet message awakens strength in our heart,
 Inside work remains hidden the fragrance of flowers.
 Let work be the language of our heart
 and our proclamation.
 Our only aim is progress,
 Not victory and failure.
 (*Selected Poetry*, p.20)

Beyond Speech and Mind

Beyond speech and mind,
 Into the river of ever-effulgent Light
 My heart dives.
 Today thousands of doors,
 Closed for millennia,
 Are opened wide.
 (*Selected Poetry*, p.21)

My Ego and My Soul

My ego needs,
 My soul has.

My ego tries,
 My soul does.

My ego knows the problem that is,
 My soul becomes the answer that is.

Supreme, I am Thy glowing Grace.

My world, Thy Feet of Light;
 My breath, Thy Vision's kite.
 Thou art one Truth, one Life, one Face.
 Supreme, Supreme, Supreme, Supreme!
 I bow to Thee, I bow.
 (*My Flute*, p.90)

O Imagination

Imagination, O Imagination!
 You are my life's adoration.
 You I shall not keep afar.
 Imagination, O Imagination!

In false, binding lies I shall not cry;
 I shall not welcome the life of impurity's ugliness.
 With paltry victory I shall not smile and rejoice.
 Imagination, O Imagination!

To death's call I shall not respond.
 The soul am I; no death have I.
 No more, never, shall I walk along the wrong path.
 Imagination, O Imagination!

(*My Flute*, p.68)

Happiness and Sorrow

A man of sorrow thinks
 That there can be nobody
 Who will surpass him in suffering.
 The fire of suffering dances inside his heart.
 A man of joy feels
 That he alone is happy.
 There can be nobody else
 Who can have even an iota of happiness;
 He alone is flooded with happiness.
 In my abode of light
 I shall receive boundless peace
 The day I forget the attachment-bondage
 Of happiness and sorrow.
 (*Selected Poetry*, p.13)

Forget All Your Tempest-Fear

Forget all your tempest-fear;
 Save your boat.
 You can stand behind everyone.
 The mother bends her head,
 Therefore she is taller than everyone.
 True, your world is full of thorns—
 You can forget this experience.
 Just collect beauty's flower
 From life-garden.
 Pay no attention to world-criticism.
 Remain far from the flight of name and fame.
 (*Selected Poetry*, p.54)

I am not alone;
Within my unlit self
My ego, my naked death.

I am not alone;
Within my snow-white heart
My soul and my Spirit's flame.

(My Flute, p.75)

My Name, My Age, My Home

At last I know my name.
My name is God's eternal Game.
At last I know my name.

At last I know my age.
My age is Infinity's page.
At last I know my age.

At last I know my home.
My home is where my flame-worlds roam.
At last I know my home.

(My Flute, p.3)

Immortality

I feel in all my limbs His boundless Grace;
Within my heart the Truth of life shines white.
The secret heights of god my soul now climbs;
No dole, no sombre pang, no death in my sight.

No mortal days and nights can shake my calm;
A Light above sustains my secret soul.
All doubts with grief are banished from my deeps,
My eyes of light perceive my cherished Goal.

Though in the world, I am above its woe;
I dwell in an ocean of supreme release.
My mind, a core of the One's unmeasured thoughts,
The star-vast welkin hugs my spirit's peace.

My eternal days are found in speeding time,
I play upon His Flute of rhapsody.
Impossible deeds no more impossible seem,
In birth-chains now shines Immortality.

(My Flute, p.10)

This Little Heart

O put an end to all my desires,
Put an end to all my desires.
This little heart of mine
Make wide.
O hold my hands
And make me vast and infinite.

(Selected Poetry, p.46)

Revelation

No more my heart shall sob or grieve.
My days and nights dissolve in God's own Light.
Above the toil of life my soul
Is a Bird of Fire winging the Infinite.

I have known the One and His secret Play
And passed beyond the sea of Ignorance-Dream.
In tune with Him, I sport and sing;
I own the golden Eye of the Supreme.

Drunk deep of immortality,
I am the root and boughs of a teeming vast.
My Form I have known, and realised,
The Supreme and I are one – all we outlast.

(My Flute, p.47)

The Absolute

No mind, no form, I only exist;
Now ceased all will and thought.
The final end of Nature's dance,
I am It whom I have sought.

I realm of Bliss bare, ultimate;
Beyond both knower and known.
A rest immense I enjoy at last;
I face the One alone.

I have crossed the secret ways of life.
I have become the Goal.
The Truth immutable is revealed;
I am the way, the God-Soul.

My spirit aware of all the heights.
I am mute in the core of the Sun.
I barter nothing with time and deeds;
My cosmic play is done.

(My Flute, p.1)

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