

AGNI-TRANSMUTOR

By Nicholas de Roerich

*"And then in the roaring sphere
of unheard-of fire
The radiant glare shall open
The Gates to the dazzling Day."*

THE poet Alexander Blok many times refers to the visions of rays, of light, of the fire that transmutes the world. And when Blok was asked why he had ceased visiting the Religious Philosophical Society, he replied briefly: "Because they talk there of the Ineffable." I remember how Blok came to me for a frontispiece for his book "Songs of Italy," and we spoke of that Italy which already no longer exists, but the essence of which had created so many unforgettable fiery milestones. And of these unheard-of fires, of the thundering spheres, of the radiant sword that blossoms in fires of all these milestones Blok knew well, as of absolute realities. He would, of course, not speak of them in chemist's terms, but he knew well their outer unspeakableness and inner immutability.

When one remembers the Great Fires of Reality, then one inevitably recollects those recently departed images of Blok, Scriabin, Leonid Andreev; everyone in his own way, everyone in his own tongue relating and warning against the great realities, which again powerfully fill our life. From the far-off past, people speak again of Amos, the roaring lion of the desert.

*"And the fire will devour the
palaces."*

"For it is an evil time."

*"Shall not the land tremble for this
And everyone mourn that dwelleth
therein?" (Amos, IX, 8).*

Thus convincingly prophesies Amos, the herdman of Tekoa. Once more are being remembered and transmuted in their inspirations the parables of Solomon, the most ancient Commandments of Genesis, the fiery pages of the Rig-Veda, the flaming chalice of Zoroaster and all that multitude of immutable and already historical material, which tells us of the same fire, the same blinding Tomorrow. Some abyss has been traversed; the consciousness has come closer to the Revelation (Apocalypsis) in which are expressed quite clear indications of historical and geographical meanings. People have begun to remember especially the once half-forgotten Nostradamus, and suddenly, as if removing wax seals which concealed the real meaning, become convinced of a whole series of absolutely evident historical facts, already fulfilled or taking place before our very eyes,—facts which the seer prophesied three hundred years ago. The visions of Swedenborg are to be found on pages of scientific works. An Austrian Professor publishes Paracelsus. People seem to approach as if through newly opened Gates the treasure-trove of old eternal ordinances. Instead of repulsive intolerance, which leads nowhere except to evil and decay, there dawns the creative synthesis. There becomes manifested the perception of that great Truth, which exists preternally and which is expressed in the multiformity of transmutations of centuries. After the depressing conception of condemnation, there manifest themselves the conceptions of the Heart, of Fire and of that Infinity, in which are widely embraced all seeing souls.

Tolstoy said: "Did you ever happen to cross a fast stream in a boat? One should always set one's course much above the place to which one wants to get, otherwise the current will carry one far below. So also in the domain of morality one should always steer much higher—life anyhow will carry one down." "Let him aim very high, then he will reach," was

Tolstoy's advice to my "Messenger". "Do not look into fast running water," say the Mongolian Lamas, and from our own experience we know when crossing the upper parts of the Blue River (Yangtze-Kiang) during the floating of the ice, how one should not look into the fastly running stream, filled with crackling ice. One must regard a far-off point on the horizon in order not to lose one's balance. These two fundamental principles "as high as possible" and "as far as possible", always rose before humanity and rise now with especial acuteness.

Oh, the particles of rushing ice, sharp pointed, cold and brittle, frightening the horses, are as some frozen human hearts, which break themselves in anguish, trying to undermine the firm step of everything that aims "far" and "high". Does not the human consciousness at present striving against the icy hearts, walk towards the fire? What else is to oppose the ice, the cold and the mirage of the stream, if not the fire which lights and warms, and on which the radiant sword is forged! The search for heating warmth for those creative warming beacons, which are stressed in the approach to the Great Mother of the World, will leave the light bringing seeds also for our time. And in the search for warmth, in the appeal for the woman's great heart, we shall again turn to the search for the centre. We shall feel in our heart that one cannot live longer on the outskirts, one cannot dissipate, but one can create, only realizing the centre, the very centre, the Radiant City, of which so much has been said in innumerable symbols.

It seems that the vials of the Apocalyptic Angels have already been poured out. And even if the most bitter of these chalices will not awaken the human heart, then whither will the great Flame turn? Perhaps it will scorch humanity? And will the unawakened heart be able to transmute this burning flame into a purifying fire? And if humanity will not choose to realize why it should mightily unite, then it will be carried away like the broken up cold ice of the great Blue River of Life. If this example of broken up particles of ice has been shown to us by the Blue River Yangtze-Kiang, then how muddy, terrible must be the streams of the Yellow River (Hwang-Ho), which continually carries many corpses. Both the Blue and Yellow Rivers remind us of the examples of loss of the centre, of loss of unity, of the loss of the most primitive and sound feeling of spiritual enlightenment and accumulation.

The examples of history on the one hand, the inspired words of the poet on the other,—they are not metaphysics, nor abstractness—are the very same in whose name the voice of prophets sounded severely and appealingly warning in most brilliant and calling terms humanity, which had forgotten, what is "highest" and "farthest."

Thus humanity stepped into the crisis. Humanity has no one to whom to sell its goods. Humanity does not know what to do and has no work. The question of the unemployed is the most terrible seal of our age. Unemployment is first of all the loss of meaning of existence, and is the result of the horrible tying of one's existence to ice, which is doomed to melt away.

Man has learned to turn in one single screw, and this screw has taken away his consciousness from the meaning of existence. In poverty men reach the most vulgar forms of life, which are often coarser and have less form than the implements of the stone age. And in his spiritual impoverishment man does not even try to resist the stream of

doomed particles of ice, which will carry him towards the shoreless ocean of chaos.

In his terror, man attacks the Beautiful. He tries to belittle and lower everything that has once been built by real upliftment of spirit. Man tries to destroy Temples. So does the ice try to cut the legs of the horses that swim across the stream. Man ceases to read and looks with surprise when some, from his point of view, out-of-date youth movements still turn to the great Commandments. It would take a long time to enumerate all those particles of ice which constitute the horror of our contemporary existence—those particles of ice which in their desperation try to destroy everything on their ice-cold path.

There has never been a time that had no way out, because this could not conform with Infinity. As a great beacon the mighty Fire rises, which can transmute ice into purified energy. This is why the present time is so great. It is a terrible time, but like opposing ice to the Eternal Fire, one can also find a way out. Of course everyone is also at liberty to remain in the shameful surroundings which probably cause most of the suffering. "Neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm" is said of those expelled from Heaven. The spheres that found the centre begin to sing, for chaos cannot sing. The music of the spheres is there, where rhythm has already been found, where the number already exists, and in this lawful calculation is born the Great Rhythm which opens the Heart. The heart that does not know the rhythm can easily be scorched to ashes, but the co-worker of the creative rhythm of existence reconstructs that flaming heart, heart becomes imperishable and eternally ascending, like the great Fire of Space Itself.

Despite all the disturbing news in the papers, one wants to think of Fire, of creativeness, of the flaming heart and of flaming thoughts.

"He who is unafraid to remain misunderstood, is with us. He who is unafraid to unite riverbeds of great currents, is Our friend. He who is not afraid to see the light, has an eagle's eye. He who is not afraid to enter the fire, is of fiery birth. He who is not afraid of the unseen, can pierce the darkness. He who is not afraid to encircle the world, can perceive the far-off world. He who is not afraid to know the covenants of Wisdom, will be with Us. We renounced and We profited. We gave away and We received. He who knows walks like a lion of the desert. Who will answer the roar of a lion? Only a lion free of fear.

Where are the bonds? Where are the chains? The knowledge of the far-off worlds will forge the crown of achievement." (Signs of Agni Yoga, 481).

"Three flames. The Chalice of Attainment." (Signs of Agni Yoga 465). Agni Yoga calls to valour and knowledge.

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BOOK REVIEW

A. R. P.

THE fate of H. M. I. S. Pathan and the news from Aden and Hong Kong have shown us that the days of immunity for India are over. We are very near the war-zone now, and may actually enter it at quite short notice. In anticipation Air-Raid Precautions of sorts were started months ago in Karachi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. We hope they are being polished up.

But they should not be confined to the principal ports, though these are the most obvious targets. The impossible has a way of coming off after all—who can use the word impossible in 1940? The ways of the totalitarian warlord are mysterious. Anywhere is a possible object of his wrath, and no town of any size should be