

7th March 1980.

" MY SOURCE OF INSPIRATION "

By SVETOSLAV ROERICH

Above the grey insipid smog of our everyday life there are beautiful moments of Inspiration and Fulfillment when we reach out towards something more Perfect, something more Beautiful to inspire and guide us towards a richer and better tomorrow.

Inspiration is a very difficult concept to define. It can be on so many planes and embody so many complex facets of our existence. From day to day our outlook and attitude change. We change and our entire attitude or reaction to certain conditions changes with us. That which had a profound influence upon us sometime past, fails to evoke in us the same emotions and feelings which seemed so stable and paramount. In some cases there is a complete reassessment of values, as we emerge into a new cycle of life and that which we often overlooked before suddenly acquires great significance and purpose. This transformation comes sometimes quite suddenly as if we were reborn into a different world. Yet, there are many experiences which remain with us throughout our entire life unchanged and even grow in importance and clarity as time passes. As I have said there are so many aspects and facets to the very concept of inspiration, that it would be difficult to generalise and classify some of the sudden flashes of inspiration and try to analyse and explain them. It is a subject which has so many venues of approach - a subject that could be treated at great length, but as I have been specifically asked to say something about my own sources of inspiration, I shall try to give you a short outline of my experiences, the sources of my inspiration.

Looking back over many years, I can see a definite central thread passing through and uniting all the highlights of my inspiration and striving.

Having been surrounded by Art from my earliest days, Art was that wondrous world of Inspiration which provided an ever widening circle of experiences and reactions. Again from my early days I was closely aware of spiritual values and they have always served as great wayside signs and sources of inspiration and realisation. And then there was always my love of Nature. My constant studies and contacts with the marvellous, breathtaking World of Nature manifesting itself in thousands of examples of supreme beauty, be it in the wonderful crystals of minerals or sparkling wings of butterflies, the plumage of birds, or marvellous flowers and plants which left me spellbound before the indescribable beauty and intricacy of examples of Life's infinite Wisdom moulding Living Matter according to the needs and circumstances that arise from conditions of life.

In 1928 I was returning to India after an absence of several years. And as I came off the boat in Bombay I was filled with a feeling of having come back to something so familiar and near to me, as if I returned to the soil I knew so well. I went to Calcutta and from there to Darjeeling. From Siliguri I went by car and a great happiness filled me as we drove through the wooded foothills until suddenly at a certain turn of the road I saw the peaks of the Great Himalayas bathed in the orange rays of a glorious Sunrise. There are no adequate words to describe the feeling of transport and joy at the sight of these glorious folded masses reaching out towards Heaven, like a symbol of our own striving rising towards the Infinite bathed in the Light of Divine illumination.

These beautiful moments of our existence are like beautiful stars shining in the firmament of our existence each one beautiful, each one unique and unrepeatable.

Spellbound is a weak word to describe the sensation which grows in one from the feeling of wonder at the realisation of the beauty, harmony and perfect balance of nature's manifestations. Every moment of our life we are surrounded by infinite miracles of nature and that sense of inspiration and transport is ours for only a small effort to understand and appreciate that, which is so lavishly spread before us by the bountiful hand of nature. Beautiful flowers, beautiful birds and insects, beautiful intricate symmetries of crystals, the play of light on distant clouds and mountain peaks ever beckoning to us and revealing harmonies of transcendental Beauty. Or the human face with all its multifaceted characteristics and the human body as the apex of an ultimate evolution - The world is literally filled with the most beautiful images and concepts, the most inspiring examples of ultimate perfection. We must only try to open our eyes and keep our mind ready to receive the more perfect impressions. So, to me this world was always a source of the most wonderful Inspirations, and with it of revelations on the Spiritual Plane.

From my early years I was surrounded by people who were deeply concerned with the search of spiritual values, whose aim in life were the higher values, with all the wonderful vistas which these values unfold. It is the study of Philosophy, the study of the teachings of such great Personalities as Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo which constantly provided a living source of inspiration and fulfillment. Comparative Philosophies lighting up the great Paths of Human striving and achievement

filled my Life with new understanding and approaches. These searches in turn brought me in contact with Men who have travelled this Glorious Path long before me and through them I have seen the hidden corridors of our Evolution and Life.

All these great Teachings were my greatest inspiration as they provided a powerful and unified direction which remained with me all my life. Our inner striving towards something more perfect, more beautiful, is that great inner force which will transform us and transform our lives as well. Without that inner flame one cannot awaken our hidden energies and one cannot rise to a higher plane of realisation and experience. This inner striving culminates in the development and activation of certain nerves which are the conductors of subtle energies.

My Father and Mother, Prof. Nicholas Roerich and Mme. Helen Roerich, were my constant guides and through them I learned the great values of life and through them, made contacts with Personages who had advanced far along the great and Royal Path of Self Emancipation. Among the many experiences as sources of inspiration, I vividly remember a most moving experience when I was a boy of fourteen. It was the memorial service in the underground crypt of two great Russian Saints conducted by all the Recluses and Anachorites who come out from their retreats on that day. Here in this crypt, around the granite sarcophagi stood in their solemn garments of recluses, the Elders who have renounced the world and came out to pray in a most beautiful service to mark the day of the two great Saints. Their ematiated, stern and kind faces were hidden under the hoods of the Anachorites attire, and only their grey beards could be seen while their thin fingers held long wax candles. What greater experience then to stand with men who have attained Sainthood and join them in their prayers during the divine service.

This experience stands out in my mind today as fresh as when I have seen it, so many years ago. An experience never to be forgotten, never to grow dim and to ever radiate its Blessed Influence over long, long years of my life.

When a memorable experience is remembered with special joy and reverence it can be called an Inspiration. It becomes a special light and an integral part of our existence.

Speaking of Art, Rabindranath Tagore said: "In Art the person in us sends his answer to the Supreme Creator who reveals himself to us in a World of infinite Beauty across the lifeless world of facts". Is it not a very beautiful and profound analysis of the function of Art and the great Poet and Artist gave us a most lucid and beautiful description of Art's great purpose.

My Father, Nicholas Roerich, speaking of Art said:

"Art will unify humanity. Art is one - indivisible. Art has its many branches, yet all are one. Art is the manifestation of the coming synthesis. Art is for all. Everyone will enjoy true art. The gates of the 'Sacred source' must be wide open for everybody, and the light of art will influence numerous hearts with a new love. At first this feeling will be unconscious, but afterwards it will purify human consciousness. How many young hearts are searching for something real and beautiful! So, give it to them. Bring art to the people - where it belongs. We should have not only museums, theatres, universities, public libraries, railway stations and hospitals, but even prisons decorated and beautified. Then we shall have no more prisons.

The values of great art are victoriously traversing all storms of earthly commotions. Even the 'earthly' people already understand the vital importance of active beauty. And when we proclaim: Love, Beauty and Action, we know verily that we pronounce the formula of the international language. And this formula, which now belongs to the museum and stage must enter every day life. The sign of beauty will open all sacred gates. Beneath the sign of beauty we walk joyfully. With beauty we conquer, through beauty we pray, in beauty we are united. And now we affirm these words - not on the snowy heights, but amidst the turmoil of the city. And realising the path of true reality, we greet with a happy smile the future."

Have you ever experienced the wonderful feeling which fills you when you stand before a great work of Art, and when you partake of the wonderful emanations which flow from a great masterpiece? Rembrandt, the great Dutch Master told Leibnitz that the emotions of the Artist stay captured in the surface of the painting and flow out upon the onlooker and influence him as - a participant of the Artist's creative experience.

There is a certain inexpressible aura of glory which emanates from great Masterpieces, which is an outflow of all the subtle vibrations which are locked within the fabric of a great work of Art. It is the magic of the emotions, thoughts and aspirations of the great Masters which stay captured within the masterpiece and radiate upon the onlooker awakening

in him similar responses besides the purely aesthetic and spiritual appreciation of the subject treated. We respond to more perfect combinations and call them beautiful. We appreciate a more perfect balance and harmony as we respond to the natural evolutionary trend of evolving more perfect forms and combinations of colour, sound, words, and form. These great masterpieces are the storehouses of vast energies which may activate and change millions of onlookers - and influence countless generations through the message of Beauty which radiates from them.

Such is the transcendental power of Art, the hidden force which is ever present and active in a great Masterpiece.

These great masterpieces of whatever race or period were my great inspirations and they evoked in me the joy of partaking of the great feast of Beauty and Perfection, a feast which would leave me enriched and refreshed and evoke new thoughts and emotions. It is not possible even to begin to enumerate the great masterpieces which influenced my life, and often gave me new directions, but one can definitely say that my love of Nature, my love of Art and my study of Philosophy and inner striving towards the Realms of the Spirit, provided me with my greatest Inspiration, were the guidelines and constituted the most priceless treasures of my Life.

Over two thousand years ago, Plato gave us this beautiful message:

"From Beautiful Images we shall go to Beautiful Thoughts, from Beautiful Thoughts to a Beautiful Life and from a Beautiful Life to Absolute Beauty."

And today as I speak to you my memory projects before my inner self, the beautiful images and scenes I have seen,

the words and music I have heard and again I live through the same emotions and feelings, which inspired me and lived within my heart all these years as great experiences, - my great Inspirations.

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SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Svetoslav Roerich

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vote would have been taken, and the computer would have instantly reported that the three required nations/people/budget majorities had been met. (I have checked with some computer experts as to whether there would be any technical problems with the NPB Triad voting system, and on its probable cost. Apparently the technical problems are quite manageable and the « software » relatively routine; the cost would be under \$100,000. Before the computer age, the NPB Triad voting system would have been forbiddingly cumbersome, probably impossible).

The NPB Triad system decision would have been supported by the traditional U.N. two-thirds majority of the nations present and voting. Within that majority would be member states representing two-thirds of the people in the nations present and voting. (This population leg of the Triad is really the most democratic of the three — not the nations leg. The combining form « demo » in Greek means « populace », not « nation »). Also within that majority would be nations representing two-thirds of the contributions to the regular U.N. budget of those members present and voting, meaning that a preponderance of the countries with the political/economic/military clout to implement the decision would be included. Finally, the decision would be binding, and would have been formally recognized as being binding by the five permanent members of the Security Council because they would have ratified the NPB Triad system amendments. With all this going for it, the decision would surely represent a strong and broadly balanced world opinion with sufficient political force behind it so that it would actually be carried out.

How would the NPB Triad system work in some specific cases? Perhaps the most obvious one is the notorious « Zionism is racism » resolution passed by the General Assembly. It would have failed badly on the budget leg of the Triad, as the U.S. and Western European negative votes would easily have killed it. But let us speculate on how the NPB Triad system might have operated in the three cases we analyzed earlier under the consensus cum vote threat system.

In the case of the Law of the Sea, the LOS Conference might well have saved years of onerous negotiations and have written a much better treaty under the NPB Triad system. To begin with, it could have reasonably left the ultimate decision-making authority right in the General Assembly instead of having to go to such tortuous efforts to get around the deficiencies of the one nation, one vote system. If it had incorporated the NPB Triad system into its own conference, it could have sweated

out compromises on the various issues, and then voted them up or down. Whenever it got a favorable vote, even though it might not represent the unanimity of « consensus », it would indicate deep and wide world support.

With the nuclear test ban, the recent vote in the General Assembly referred to earlier raises two critical questions as to how the Assembly would function under the NPB Triad system: what would be the role of abstentions? would nations vote the same way when resolutions are binding as when they are only recommendations?

If the NPB Triad system had been in effect at the time of the test ban vote, the resolution would have passed, with 95 Yes votes to one No vote — abstentions are not counted among those present and voting. Thus the world would suddenly have made a binding decision to cease nuclear testing, and there would be no need to continue the 17-year-long hassle over trying to get a CTB. But if the Soviet Union alone, recognizing that it would be facing a binding global decision to stop testing, switched from abstention to a No vote, then the resolution would have been defeated on the budget leg of the Triad. (The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. together contribute 37 per cent of the regular budget, more than enough for a blocking third.) Thus it can be seen that to abstain under the NPB Triad system could be a highly political act, and that when decisions are going to be binding the vote could be very different on an identical resolution from what it would be as a recommendation.

With the North-South negotiations under the NPB Triad system, one can imagine all kinds of scenarios involving hard all-night bargaining sessions and a lot of cliffhangers as the various resolutions come to a vote to see if they could garner the Triad voting majorities.

The game is endless: choose your own scenario for any global problem and play it out. But remember, with the NPB Triad system, the decisions made must represent overwhelming world public opinion (but not unanimity) and will be binding.

Richard Hudson, Executive Director of the Center for War/Peace Studies, is editor of both *Global Report* and *Disarmament Times*.

NOTE

1. At this writing in late 1980, there are 154 members in the United Nations. The figures here are based on 149 members, but the percentage results would not be significantly different were the five newest members included.

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Svetoslav Roerich, a distinguished painter, lives in India where he carries on his family's interest in the art and culture of Himalayan peoples.

