

To the Women of Japan

TO SPEAK of children to the women of Japan is, I think, to speak to them of their dearest, their most sacred subject. Indeed, in no other country in the world have the children taken such an important, such a primordial place. They are, here, the centre of care and attention. On them are concentrated — and rightly — the hopes for the future. They are the living promise of growing prosperity for the country. Therefore, the most important work assigned to women in Japan is child-making. Maternity is considered as the principal role of woman. But this is true only so long as we understand what is meant by the word maternity. For to bring children into the world as rabbits do their young — instinctively, ignorantly, machine-like, that certainly cannot be called maternity! True maternity begins with the conscious creation of a being, with the willed shaping of a soul coming to develop and utilise a new body. The true domain of women is the spiritual. We forget it but too often.

To bear a child and construct his body almost subconsciously is not enough. The work really commences when, by the power of thought and will, we conceive and create a character capable of manifesting an ideal.

And do not say that we have no power for realising such a thing. Innumerable instances of this very effective power could be brought out as proofs.

First of all, the effect of physical environment was recognised and studied long ago. It is by surrounding women with forms of art and beauty that, little by little, the ancient Greeks created the exceptionally harmonious race that they were.

Individual instances of the same fact are numerous. It is not rare to see a woman who, while pregnant, had looked at constantly and admired a beautiful picture or statue, giving birth to a child after the perfect likeness of this picture or statue. I met

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several of these instances myself. Among them, I remember very clearly two little girls; they were twins and perfectly beautiful. But the most astonishing was how little like their parents they were. They reminded me of a very famous picture painted by the English artist Reynolds. One day I made this remark to the mother, who immediately exclaimed: "Indeed, is it not so? You will be interested to know that while I was expecting these children, I had, hanging above my bed, a very good reproduction of Reynolds' picture. Before going to sleep and as soon as I woke, my last and first glance was for that picture; and in my heart I hoped: may my children be like the faces in this picture. You see that I succeeded quite well!" In truth, she could be proud of her success, and her example is of great utility for other women.

But if we can obtain such results on the physical plane where the materials are the least plastic, how much more so on the psychological plane where the influence of thought and will is so powerful. Why accept the obscure bonds of heredity and atavism — which are nothing else than subconscious preferences for our own trend of character — when we can, by concentration and will, call into being a type constructed according to the highest ideal we are able to conceive? With this effort, maternity becomes truly precious and sacred; indeed with this, we enter the glorious work of the Spirit, and womanhood rises above animality and its ordinary instincts, towards real humanity and its powers.

In this effort, in this attempt, then, lies our true duty. And if this duty was always of the greatest importance, it certainly has taken a capital one in the present turn of the earth's evolution.

For we are living in an exceptional time at an exceptional turning point of the world's history. Never before, perhaps, did mankind pass through such a dark period of hatred, bloodshed and confusion. And, at the same time, never had such a strong, such an ardent hope awakened in the hearts of the people. Indeed, if we listen to our heart's voice, we immediately perceive that we are, more or less consciously, waiting for a new reign

of justice, of beauty, of harmonious good-will and fraternity. And this seems in complete contradiction with the actual state of the world. But we all know that never is the night so dark as before the dawn. May not this darkness, then, be the sign of an approaching dawn? And as never was night so complete, so terrifying, maybe never will dawn have been so bright, so pure, so illuminating as the coming one.... After the bad dreams of the night the world will awaken to a new consciousness.

The civilisation which is ending now in such a dramatic way was based on the power of mind, mind dealing with matter and life. What it has been to the world, we have not to discuss here. But a new reign is coming, that of the Spirit: after the human, the divine.

Yet, if we have been fortunate enough to live on earth at such a stupendous, a unique time as this one, is it sufficient to stand and watch the unfolding events? All those who feel that their heart extends further than the limits of their own person and family, that their thought embraces more than small personal interests and local conventions, all those, in short, who realise that they belong not to themselves, or to their family, or even to their country, but to God who manifests Himself in all countries, through mankind, these, indeed, know that they must rise and set to work for the sake of humanity, for the advent of the Dawn.

And in this momentous, endless, many-sided work, what can be the part of womanhood? It is true that, as soon as great events and works are in question, the custom is to relegate women to a corner with a smile of patronising contempt which means: this is not your business, poor, feeble, futile creatures.... And women, submissive, childlike, lazy perhaps, have accepted, at least in many countries, this deplorable state of things. I dare to say that they are wrong. In the life of the future, there shall be no more room for such division, such disequilibrium between the masculine and the feminine. The true relation of the two sexes is an equal footing of mutual help and close collaboration. And from now, we must reassume

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our veritable position, take again our due place and assert our real importance — that of spiritual former and educator. Indeed, some men, perhaps a little vainglorious of their so-called advantages, may despise the apparent weakness of women (although even this exterior weakness is not quite certain) but: “Do what he may, the superman will have to be born of woman all the same”, someone said very rightly.

The superman shall be born of woman, this is a big unquestionable truth; but it is not enough to be proud of this truth, we must clearly understand what it means, become aware of the responsibility it creates, and learn to face earnestly the task which is put before us. This task is precisely our most important share in the present world-wide work.

For that, we must first understand — at least in their broad lines — what are the means by which the present chaos and obscurity can be transformed into light and harmony.

Many means have been suggested: political, social, ethical, even religious.... Indeed, none of these seem sufficient to face with any reliable success the magnitude of the task to be done. Only a new spiritual influx, creating in man a new consciousness, can overcome the enormous mass of difficulties barring the way of the workers. A new spiritual light, a manifestation upon earth of some divine force unknown until now, a Thought of God, new for us, descending into this world and taking a new form here.

And here we come back to our starting point, to our duty of true maternity. For this form meant to manifest the spiritual force capable of transforming the earth's present conditions, this new form, who is to construct it if not the women?

Thus we see that at this critical period of the world's life it is no longer sufficient to give birth to a being in whom our highest personal ideal is manifested; we must strive to find out what is the future type, whose advent Nature is planning. It is no longer sufficient to form a man similar to the greatest men we have heard of or known, or even greater, more accomplished and gifted than they; we must strive to come in touch mentally,

by the constant aspiration of our thought and will, with the supreme possibility which, exceeding all human measures and features, will give birth to the superman.

Once again Nature feels one of her great impulses towards the creation of something utterly new, something unexpected. And it is to this impulse that we must answer and obey.

Let us try first to discover where this impulse of Nature will lead us. And the best way for that is to look back on the lessons given to us by the Past.

We see that each progress of Nature, each manifestation of a new capacity and principle upon earth is marked by the appearance of a new species. In the same way, the progressive forms of the life of races, of peoples, of individuals, follow each other through the human cycles, ceaselessly inspired, fecundated, renewed by the efforts of the guides of humanity. And all these forms aim at the same goal, the mysterious, the glorious goal of Nature.¹

It is to this call of Nature that we must answer, to this

¹ *It seems that the following paragraphs from an earlier draft were intended for insertion here:*

Which is this goal? Toward what unexpected realisation of the future does Nature aim? What does she seek since her dark origins?

Each form that she creates is a fresh affirmation of that which through her will be born, of that which it is her mission to manifest.

Each species preparing the others, making them possible, bears witness to her untiring perseverance, is a proof of her solemn vow; in each one is a little more matter transfigured, announcing future dawns of intelligence. Through innumerable cycles how many paths has she had to follow in order to reach at last the cave of the anthropoid, the primitive man?

It is before him that will open the royal avenue leading to the palace of spirit. But how many races, how many generations will pass on the earth without discovering it, how many wrong paths will Nature follow in the footsteps of man. For, believing himself the masterpiece of the universe, he knows not that he has a further stage to pass through.

Could the idea of man be conceived, before he existed, in the obscure brain of even the nearest of his ancestors? Can the idea of the superman, before he exists, penetrate into the brain of man?

And yet, in every child of man which comes into the world, in every growing intelligence, in every effort of the emerging generations, in every attempt of human genius, Nature seeks the way which, once again, will lead her further.

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magnificent, to this grandiose work that we must devote ourselves. Let us try to make as clear as we can the steps of our advance on this difficult and as yet unexplored path.

First of all we must be careful, in our attempt to conceive the future man or superman, not to adopt an actual type of man, perfecting or aggrandising him. To avoid as much as possible this mistake we should study the teachings of life's evolution.

We have already seen that the appearance of a new species always announces the manifestation on earth of a new principle, a new plane of consciousness, a new force or power. But, at the same time, while the new species acquires this formerly unmanifested power or consciousness, it may lose one or many of the

Fifteen hundred million men since perhaps fifteen hundred centuries wander without finding this way.

Among the multitude of the ways over which all the efforts of their progress are scattered, in this domain as in all the others, only one is good: it is the way of synthetic perfections. Where to discover it?

And who among men dares to venture elsewhere than on the easy and well-beaten tracks? Who, knowing that there is another path which goes further, accepts to lose all in order to find it perhaps, to lose all in walking alone, in thinking alone, always apart among the others, not even certain of attaining what he seeks.

Try not to discover this one among the men who excel and shine, for these excel and shine only in being, somewhat more perfectly, similar to their own kind.

Precious stones also excel and shine among all the other stones, but the most beautiful gem is outside the series of chemical combinations from whence comes forth life. In the same way, ascending the series of forms, the most beautiful tree of the forest is outside the lines of evolution which lead the biological process up to the animal, up to man.

And once again, among men, the most admired, the most famous, the most artistic, the most learned, the most religious, may well find himself far off the way leading from man to superman.

Each race, each civilisation, each human society, each religion, represents a new attempt of Nature, one more effort adding to the long series of those she multiplied during countless time.

Now, as among all the animal forms there was one from which man was to come forth, so also, among the social and religious species, must one be born from which some day will come forth the superman.

For it is this which Nature seeks in all her successive attempts, from the first germination of life until man, until the God who shall be born of him.

In the multitude of men she seeks the possibility of the superman; and in each one of them, she aims towards the realisation of the divine.

perfections which were the characteristics of the immediately preceding species. For instance, to speak only of the last step of Nature's development, what are the greatest differences between man and his immediate predecessor, the ape? In the monkey we see vitality and physical ability reaching the utmost perfection, a perfection that the new species had to abandon. For man, there has been no more of that marvellous climbing up trees, somersaults over abysses, jumps from summit to summit, but in exchange he acquired intelligence, the power of reasoning, combining, constructing. Indeed with man it is the life of mind, of intellect which appeared on earth. Man is essentially a mental being; and if his possibilities do not stop there, if he feels in himself other worlds, other faculties, other planes of consciousness beyond his mental life, they are only as promises for the future, in the same way as the mental possibilities are latent in the monkey.

It is true that some men, very few, have lived in that world beyond, which we may call the spiritual; some have been, indeed, the living incarnations of that world on earth, but they are the exceptions, the forerunners showing the way to the race, leading it towards its future realisation, not the average man. But that which was the privilege of a few beings scattered through time and space, shall become the central characteristic of the new type which is to appear.

At present, man governs his life through reason; all the activities of the mind are of common use for him; his means of knowledge are observation and deduction; it is by and through reasoning that he takes his decision and chooses his way — or believes he does — in life.

The new race shall be governed by intuition, that is to say, direct perception of the divine law within. Some human beings actually know and experience intuition — as, undoubtedly, certain big gorillas of the forests have glimpses of reasoning.

In mankind, the very few who have cultivated their inner

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self, who have concentrated their energies on the discovery of the true law of their being, possess more or less the faculty of intuition. When the mind is perfectly silent, pure like a well-polished mirror, immobile as a pond on a breezeless day, then, from above, as the light of the stars drops in the motionless waters, so the light of the supermind, of the Truth within, shines in the quieted mind and gives birth to intuition. Those who are accustomed to listen to this voice out of the Silence, take it more and more as the instigating motive of their actions; and where others, the average men, wander along the intricate paths of reasoning, they go straight their way, guided through the windings of life by intuition, this superior instinct, as by a strong and unfailing hand.

This faculty which is exceptional, almost abnormal now, will certainly be quite common and natural for the new race, the man of tomorrow. But probably the constant exercise of it will be detrimental to the reasoning faculties. As man possesses no more the extreme physical ability of the monkey, so also will the superman lose the extreme mental ability of man,² this ability to deceive himself and others.

Thus, man's road to supermanhood will be open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, is now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater power within, shall be henceforward his great preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life for themselves, in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and the bringing of its power into our human existence. And this discovery is that of our real, because our highest self and nature.

² *Alternative ending (from earlier draft):* perhaps all of the power of reasoning; and, even, the organ itself may become useless, disappear little by little as the monkey's tail, which was of no use for man, disappeared from his physical body.

However, that self which we are not yet, but have to become, is not the strong vital Will hymned by Nietzsche, but a spiritual self and spiritual nature. For as soon as we speak of supermanhood we must be careful to avoid all confusion with the strong but so superficial and incomplete conception of Nietzsche's superman.

Indeed, since Nietzsche invented the word superman, when someone uses it to speak of the coming race, willingly or not, it evokes at the same time Nietzsche's conception. Certainly, his idea that to develop the superman out of our present very unsatisfactory manhood is our real business, is in itself an absolutely sound idea; certainly, his formula of our aim, "to become ourselves", implying, as it does, that man has not yet found all his true self, his true nature by which he can successfully and spontaneously live, could not be bettered; nevertheless, Nietzsche made the mistake we said we ought to avoid: his superman is but a man aggrandised, magnified, in whom Force has become super-dominant, crushing under its weight all the other attributes of man. Such cannot be our ideal. We see too well at present whither leads the exclusive worshipping of Force — to the crimes of the strong and the ruin of continents.

No, the way to supermanhood lies in the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit. All would change, all would become easy if man could once consent to be spiritualised. The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, found his own real nature; but this spontaneity will not be instinctive and subconscious as in the animal, but intuitive and fully, integrally conscient.

Therefore, the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age, will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being, an evolution or conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, even as the animal man has been largely converted into a highly mentalised humanity.

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They will be comparatively indifferent to particular belief and form of religion, and leave men to resort to the beliefs and forms to which they are naturally drawn. They will only hold as essential the faith in the spiritual conversion. They will especially not make the mistake of thinking that this change can be effected by machinery and outward institutions; they will know and never forget that it has to be lived out by each man inwardly or it can never be made a reality.

And among these individuals, woman must be the first to realise this great change, as it is her special task to give birth in this world to the first specimens of the new race. And to be able to do this she must, more or less, conceive what will be the practical results of this spiritual conversion. For if it cannot be effected simply by exterior transformations, it can neither be realised without bringing forth such transformations.

These will certainly not be less in the moral and social domains than in the intellectual.

As religious beliefs and cults will become secondary, so also the ethical restrictions or prescriptions, rules of conduct or conventions will lose their importance.³

Actually, in human life, the whole moral problem is concentrated in the conflict between the vital will with its impulses

³ *This paragraph and the two which precede it replace the following passage of an earlier draft:*

But among these individuals woman, as we have already said, will have one special task to accomplish, that of giving birth in this world to the first specimens of the new race. And to be able to do this we must, more or less, conceive first in our thought the ideal of what the superman can be.

Of course, nothing is more difficult than to draw a picture of what will be the new race; it is an almost unrealisable attempt, and we shall certainly not try to enter into details; for we cannot ask of our mind to grasp with any certainty or accuracy this creation of the supermind, of the spirit.

But as we have already seen that the replacing of mental reason by intuitive knowledge will be one of the characteristic features of the future being, in the same way, morally and socially what can be the standard of the new race's life?

From the ethical point of view, for the individual of the new race there will certainly be no more restrictions or prescriptions, rules of conduct or conventions.

and the mental power with its decrees. When the vital will is submitted to the mental power, then the life of the individual or of the society becomes moral. But it is only when both, vital will and mental power, are equally submissive to something higher, to the supermind, that human life is exceeded, that true spiritual life begins, the life of the superman; for his law will come from within, it will be the divine law shining in the centre of each being and governing life from therein, the divine law multiple in its manifestation but one in its origin. And because of its unity this law is the law of supreme order and harmony.

Thus the individual, no more guided by egoistical motives, laws or customs, shall abandon all selfish aims. His rule will be perfect disinterestedness. To act in view of a personal profit, either in this world or in another beyond, will become an unthinkable impossibility. For each act will be done in complete, simple, joyful obedience to the divine law which inspires it, without any seeking for reward or results, as the supreme reward will be in the very delight of acting under such inspiration, of being identified in conscience and will with the divine principle within oneself.

And in this identification the superman will find also his social standard. For in discovering the divine law in himself he will recognise the same divine law in every being, and by being identified with it in himself he will be identified with it in all, thus becoming aware of the unity of all, not only in essence and substance but also in the most exterior planes of life and form. He will not be a mind, a life or a body, but the informing and sustaining Soul or Self, silent, peaceful, eternal, that possesses them; and this Soul or Self he will find everywhere sustaining and informing and possessing all lives and minds and bodies. He will be conscious of this Self as the divine creator and doer of all works, one in all existences; for the many souls of the universal manifestation are only faces of the one Divine. He will perceive each being to be the universal Divinity presenting to him many faces; he will merge himself in That and perceive his own mind,

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life and body as only one presentation of the Self, and all whom we, at present, conceive of as others will be to his consciousness his own self in other minds, lives and bodies. He will be able to feel his body one with all bodies, as he will be aware constantly of the unity of all matter; he will unite himself in mind and heart with all existences; in short, he will see and feel his own person in all others and all others in himself, realising thus true solidarity in the perfection of unity.

But we must limit to these indispensable hints our description of the superman, and push no further our attempt to picture him, as we are convinced that any endeavour to be more precise would prove not only vain but useless. For it is not a number of imaginings, more or less exact, which can help us in the formation of the future type. It is by holding firm in our heart and mind the dynamism, the irresistible impetus given by a sincere and ardent aspiration, by maintaining in ourselves a certain state of enlightened receptivity towards the supreme Idea of the new race which wills to be manifested on earth, that we can take a decisive step in the formation of the sons of the future, and make ourselves fit to serve as intermediaries for the creation of those who shall save Humanity.⁴

⁴ *Alternate ending (from an earlier draft):* of the saviours of the world.

The earlier draft closes with the following additional paragraph: For, in truth, saviours they will be, as each being of this new type will not live either for himself or for State or society, for the individual ego or the collective ego, but for something much greater, for God in himself and for God in the world.