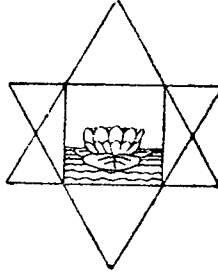


# MOTHER INDIA

**SRI AUROBINDO'S 80th BIRTHDAY SPECIAL NUMBER**

**AUGUST 15, 1952**

**Price: Rs. 1/8.**



The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable . . .

I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth evolution.

SRI AUROBINDO

\* \* \*

*A new Light shall break upon the earth,  
a new world shall be born: the things that  
were promised shall be fulfilled.*

*Sri Aurobindo*

*Translated from the Mother's  
"Prayers and Meditations."*

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

Managing Editor  
**K. R. PODDAR**

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**K. D. SETHNA**

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AUGUST 15

K. D. Sethua

On August 15 it will be eighty years since Sri Aurobindo was born. Out of these eighty years, seventy-eight made up his life in the physical sense. But the physical sense cannot limit Sri Aurobindo. Has he not said that he will remain in the earth-atmosphere, a dynamic personal presence till he consummates the work for which he came?

Memorable, therefore, is the day of his coming: it has brought the hope of a new birth for all human life. That new birth Sri Aurobindo exemplified in his own spiritual realisation when he was in the body. Beyond the visions and forces that play in the ordinary life of man he plunged—not to the denial of them but to their prime forms, their pure types from which they have departed in their usual functionings. This deep where his consciousness dwelt is not some solitude where no birds sing. It is the plenary plane from which, we might symbolically say, all bird-song has derived to keep us aware of some supreme harmony in which life is an ever-new discovery of the Divine's endless potentialities.

That is the special character of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual poise. His the luminous centre from which all things radiate, but with which the manifest world has lost direct connection. Indirect connection there always is: without it there would be no cosmos, no creative urge, no passion for a more abundant, more illumined life. Faint, however, are the golden gleams that show on the surface where we exist. Sri Aurobindo sought the source of these gleams, followed them through a Yogic discipline to the parent Sun of Truth and identified himself with that fiery heart of being. And he not only went towards it with an absolute self-offering and found it to be his own hidden Actuality but, having reached it, turned his face back to the point he had started from, so that in him the Super-conscious grew one with the conscious, and the depth looked out through wide-open eyes to guide us with a full understanding of our needs, a complete grasp over the complexities of normal existence.

In other words, Sri Aurobindo was a mighty synthesis of the spiritual and the secular, the troubles of time were his concern no less than the raptures of eternity—he was bent on evoking in all the fields of human activity the Truth-light and the Truth-force of the Divine and on subjecting the myriad issues of those fields to a selective and transforma-

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tive process. Thus all that is really progressive is to be retained—"human to the red-ripe of the heart"—but saved from wastefully zigzagging and from the slowness with which nature carries on her evolution, even when intelligence is added to instinct. The saving is to be done precisely by calling into operation the supra-intellectual light which Sri Aurobindo has termed Supermind, the Consciousness which does not have to seek for truth but possesses it and has only to bring it forth in the forms of nature according to their possibilities.

The presence of the infinite Supermind that holds in a perfect harmony the divine secrets it has evoked from the ineffable Transcendence which is its own background-being and within which they lie for ever implicit—this presence is the very breath of the Ashram in Pondicherry where Sri Aurobindo is at all moments a Power from behind the visible scene, companioning the visible Love and Wisdom that guides and re-creates his disciples. that radiant co-worker of his, whom they call the Mother.

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### Sri Aurobindo

What words can sing Thy praise, O Lord supreme!	As holds the sea unstirred The waves that pass,
Thy Grace alone shall raise To Truth the dream.	As shadows leave unmarred The tranquil glass—
Thy Love was absolute For humanity,	So pain and sorrow's flame Could touch Thee not,
Thy life a passion-flute Of Eternity.	O Master of cosmic game Beyond all thought.
World-sufferings were Thine And bleeding wounds, And bites Thou bor'st within Of dark Hell-hounds.	A secrecy's veil is drawn Across Thy deeds Till springs the Golden Dawn From Thy Light-seeds
Thou hast set Thy Love's own seal In our being's core. We bow to Thy gracious Will For evermore.	

PRITHWI SINGH

PAGES FROM A JOURNAL  
THE EARLY CONVERSATIONS OF SRI AUROBINDO  
Compiled from the Notes of Anilbaran Roy

INTRODUCTION

Before Sri Aurobindo went into seclusion in order to carry on a yogic-spiritual action by which he could prepare conditions in earth-life suitable for establishing the Supermind, he used to have regularly long conversations with his disciples. During these conversations a number of subjects were discussed—Sri Aurobindo was asked questions on almost everything under the sun. According to his old disciples, his elucidation of the various problems put before him, whether of human life and thought, or of the practice of Yoga and of the play of spiritual and occult forces beyond the ken of the normal human intelligence, always revealed the same high wisdom and spiritual enlightenment that is apparent in his written works. He was to them not only a Master of Yoga but a *risi*, a seer-philosopher in possession of the highest knowledge—"the spectator of all Time and all Existence" who saw all, knew all, and answered all.

Exact verbatim reports of all talks were not taken down, but some of the disciples used to keep notes. Anilbaran Roy, a well-known figure in the political sphere at the time who had settled down at Pondicherry to practise Yoga under Sri Aurobindo, used to write down, after the conversations were over, most of the things that had been discussed. He has kindly given his notes for publication, for which we acknowledge our indebtedness to him. They are very well written and arranged and should be valuable to students of Aurobindonian literature, to spiritual seekers, as well as to the general reader, for they cover a very wide field and throw light on a variety of subjects. It is true that Sri Aurobindo later changed his views on some matters to a certain extent, not so much in their fundamental truth as in their application to life amidst the fast-changing conditions of the world, also, as his mastery over the world-forces increased, he was led to alter some of his views with regard to the working of the Higher Power in the earth-consciousness. Nevertheless, the fundamental truths he had previously expressed he did not reject but incorporated



them in a larger and more complex unity

Most of the time Sri Aurobindo speaks out directly to us from the pages of this journal, but at certain places, whenever Anilbaran Roy is unable to recapitulate the exact words of his Master, he gives us the ideas expounded in his own words. No doubt, at some places what is written may not capture the correct tone of Sri Aurobindo's exposition and bring out the precise shade of meaning, or again it may fail to catch the right turn of phrase and the immaculateness of the expression, making the philosophical formulation suffer stylistically to some extent, but on the whole the journal does justice to the informal discourses Sri Aurobindo used to give to his disciples before he went into seclusion, and definitely succeeds in recreating the atmosphere of that period—an atmosphere of erudition and spiritual enlightenment, of friendship and good humour, of love and goodwill, an atmosphere that can only be possible among men who live together in brotherhood for the pursuit of a high spiritual ideal and look up to their God-realised leader to give them light and realisation.

*"Synergist".*

\* \* \*

15th August seems to have many spiritual associations. In 1926 there was a discussion about the spiritual significance of this date, and Sri Aurobindo made some very interesting remarks. As today also happens to be the 15th of August, the day Sri Aurobindo was born, we are beginning the publication of Anilbaran Roy's Journal with this particular conversation.

Whilst the disciples were sitting around Sri Aurobindo for their usual evening conversation on 30th August in 1926, Anilbaran remarked, "Today is Sri Krishna's birthday—it is Janmasthanī day." On hearing this K turned to Sri Aurobindo and said, "Do you know, one year Janmasthanī fell on 15th August?"

Sri Aurobindo replied, "15th August has a special significance—it is the day of the Assumption of Virgin Mary; it implies that the physical nature is raised to the divine Nature. Virgin Mary refers to Nature, Jesus is the divine soul born in man—he is the son of God as well as the son of man."

About three weeks before this conversation took place, on the 5th to be exact, Sri Aurobindo spoke on mind, philosophy, and spiritual experience. Anilbaran, who was at one time a professor of philosophy, came out with the remark: "If I am not mistaken, I think at one place Hegel says that Being is equivalent to Non-Being."

"How did Hegel know that? Did he have any experience of Being? How is Being equivalent to Non-Being?" asked Sri Aurobindo.

"Being is mere existence."

"Again you say 'mere'; etymologically, 'mere' refers to something

which is not mixed with anything else. Being is very true and existent—only, it is free from the lower forms. One must have experience to understand the reality of Being.

“Philosophy is only a play of phrases and mental ideas—a mental gymnastic without any reference to experience. Spiritual knowledge is as much impossible without experience as scientific knowledge.

“Indian philosophy also is similarly mental and intellectual; but there is this difference that it takes some of the experienced truths stated in the Upanishads and tries to establish them by ratiocination—by the exercise of reason. The Upanishads are not philosophy; they only present truths in various aspects as they have been directly experienced by spiritual seers. If we regard the Upanishads as philosophy, they will appear very crude and confused.

“Shankara might have had some experience of the Brahman himself, but his philosophy is only an attempt to establish that truth by the help of reasoning and argument.”

On 16th July, Sri Aurobindo again spoke in the same vein, but this time the conversation took a more personal turn and he said many things about his own development. *Apropos* of Sankhya and Vedanta holding different metaphysical positions regarding Purusha and Prakriti he remarked: “Sankhya says that Nature somehow begins movement, and Purusha consents to reflect that movement, and the world-play goes on. Then Purusha ceases to give his consent, and Prakriti loses its movement, and the Purusha is liberated. But how does Prakriti begin in the first place, and what happens after the liberation of the Purusha? All these metaphysical determinations are arbitrary.

“Then again, Sankhya says that Purushas are many, while Vedanta says that there is only one Purusha. Now which is true? These metaphysical doctrines only express half-truths. I for myself have had experience of many Purushas as well as of One Purusha. . . . What I can say is—there is the Infinite, and there should be an upward endeavour to reach it. As one rises, one enters into different levels of experience. Philosophy is of little help in getting true knowledge, which must come from experience and actual realisation. It serves as a mental exercise—it makes the mind supple and clear, it gives ideas to the mind that there is something higher than itself to which it should aspire; thus it serves as a sort of springing board.

“At a certain stage of my sadhana I experienced all intellectual truths to be false. Then I came to know that they were incomplete truths. Now I am in a position to put these truths in their proper place. I have written many things before which I must reject or revise now. . . . If at present I have to write out all the truths I have experienced, it will be necessary to

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write a hundred *Aryas* for a hundred years. But I am not going to do that; I only write what will be of immediate use."

On 1st September, at the end the talk turned to ascetics. Sri Aurobindo remarked, "These ascetics got glimpses of the nature of Divine Consciousness, but did not know how to bring that down to life—hence they forsook the life of the world. It is very easy to become a Sannyasi.

"I entered the Brahman Consciousness in three days, but for the Supramental it took a decade. There are many forms of the Brahman consciousness—the Shanti form, the Ananda form, etc. All the movements of the world appear to be mere names and forms—there is no movement of the vital, the mind is abolished and there is perfect peace and ananda; one can remain eternally there without caring for anything else.

"I came out as I got the command from above."

*To be continued*

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## THE INNER TEST

### A Letter To An Aspirant

Don't judge on appearances and do not listen to what people say, because these two things are misleading. . .

There is in the Ashram no exterior discipline and no visible test. But the inner test is severe and constant, one must be very sincere in the aspiration to surmount all egoism and to conquer all vanity in order to be able to stay. A complete surrender is not outwardly exacted but it is indispensable for those who wish to stick on, and many things come to test the sincerity of this surrender. However, the Grace and the help are always there for those who aspire for them and their power is limitless when received with faith and confidence.

November 1948

THE MOTHER

# THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES

(NEW SERIES\*)

Sri Aurobindo

Who knows the beginning of things or what mind has ever embraced their end? When we have said a beginning, do we not behold spreading out beyond it all the eternity of Time when that which has begun was not. So also when we imagine an end our vision becomes wise of endless space stretching out beyond the terminus we have fixed. Do even forms begin and end? Or does eternal Form only disappear from one of its canvases?

\* \* \*

The experiment of human life on an earth is not now for the first time enacted. It has been conducted a million times before and the long drama will again a million times be repeated. In all that we do now, our dreams, our discoveries, our swift or difficult attainments we profit subconsciously by the experience of innumerable precursors and our labour will be fecund in planets unknown to us and in worlds yet uncreated. The plan, the peripeteia, the dénouement differ continually, yet are always governed by the conventions of an eternal Art. God, Man, Nature are the three perpetual symbols.

The idea of eternal recurrence affects with a shudder of alarm the mind entrenched in the minute, the hour, the years, the centuries, all the finite's unreal defences. But the strong soul conscious of its own immortal stuff and the inexhaustible ocean of its ever-flowing energies is seized by it with the thrill of an inconceivable rapture. It hears behind the thought the childlike laughter and ecstasy of the Infinite.

God, Man, Nature, what are these three? Whence flow their divergences? To what ineffable union advances the ever-increasing sum of their contacts? Let us look beyond the hours and moments, let us tear down the hedge of the years and the concept-wall of centuries and millenniums and break out beyond the limits of our prison-house. For all things seek to concentrate our view on the temporal interests, conceptions and realisations of our humanity. We have to look beyond them to know that which they serve and represent. Nothing in the world can be understood by itself, but only by that which is beyond it. If we would know all, we must turn our gaze to that which is beyond all. That being known all else is comprehended.

A beginningless and endless eternity and infinity in which divisible Time and Space manage to subsist is the mould of existence. They suc-

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\* From old writings

## THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES

ceed in subsisting because they are upheld by God's view of Himself in things

God is all existence. Existence is a representation of ineffable Being. Being is neither eternal nor temporary, neither infinite nor limited, neither one nor many, it is nothing that any word of our speech can describe nor any thought of our mentality can conceive. The word existence unduly limits it, eternity and infinity are too petty conceptions, the term Being is an X representing not an unknown but an unknowable value. All values proceed from the Brahman, but it is itself beyond all values.

This existence is an incalculable Fact in which all possible opposites meet, its opposites are in truth identities.

It is neither one nor many and yet both one and many. Numberlessness increases in it and extends till it reaches unity, unity broken cannot stop short of numberlessness.

It is neither personal nor impersonal and yet at once personal and impersonal. Personality is a fiction of the impersonal, impersonality the mask of a Person. That impersonal Brahman was all the time a world-transcendent Personality and universal Person, is the truth of things as it is represented by life and consciousness. "I am" is the eternal assertion. Analytic thought gets rid of the I, but the Am remains and brings it back. Materialism changes "I am" into "It is", and when it has done so, has changed nothing. The Nihilist gets rid of both Am and Is only to find them waiting for him beyond on either side of his negation.

When we examine the Infinite and the Finite, Form and the Formless, the Silence and the Activity, our oppositions are equally baffled. Try however hard we will, God will not allow us to exclude any of them from His fathomless universality. He carries all Himself with Him into every transcendence.

\* \* \*

All this is Infinity grasped by the Finite and the Finite lived by the Infinite.

The finite is a transience or a recurrence in the infinite, therefore Infinity alone is utterly real. But since that Real casts always this shadow of itself and since it is by the finite that its reality becomes conceivable, we must suppose that the phenomenon also is not a fiction.

The Infinite defines itself in the finite, the finite conceives itself in the infinite. Each is necessary to the other's complete joy of being.

The Infinite pauses always in the finite, the finite arrives always in the Infinite. This is the wheel that circles for ever through Time and Eternity.

If there were nothing to be transcended, the Transcendent would be incomplete in its own conception.

What is the value of the Formless unless it has stooped to Form? And

on the other hand what truth or value has any form except to represent as in a mask the Indefinable and Invisible?

From what background have all these numberless forms started out, if not from the termless profundities of the Incommensurable? He who has not lost his knowledge in the Unknowable, knows nothing. Even the world he studies so sapiently, cheats and laughs at him.

When we have entered into the Unknowable, then all this other knowledge becomes valid. When we have sacrificed all forms into the Formless, then all forms become at once negligible and infinitely precious.

For the rest, that is true of all things. What we have not renounced, has no worth. Sacrifice is the great revealer of values.

As all words come out of the Silence, so all forms come out of the Infinite.

When the word goes back into the silence is it extinct for ever or does it dwell in the eternal harmony? When a soul goes back to God is it blotted out from existence or does it know and enjoy that into which it enters?

Does universe ever end? Does it not exist eternally in God's total idea of His own being?

Unless the Eternal is tired out by Time as by a load, unless God suffers loss of memory, how can universe cease from being?

Neither for soul nor universe is extinction the goal, but for one it is infinite self-possessing and for the other the endless pursuit of its own immutably mutable rhythms.

Existence, not annihilation is the whole aim and pursuit of existence.

If Nothing were the beginning Nothing also would be the end, but in that case Nothing also would be the middle.

If indiscriminable unity were the beginning it would also be the end. But then what middle term could there be except indiscriminable unity?

There is a logic in existence from which our Thought tries to escape by twisting and turning against its own ultimate necessity, as if a snake were to try to get away from itself by coiling round its own body. Let it cease coiling and go straight to the root of the whole matter, that there is no first nor last, no beginning nor ending, but only a representation of successions and dependences.

Succession and dependence are laws of perspective, they cannot be made a true measure of that which they represent.

Precisely because God is one, indefinable and beyond form, therefore He is capable of infinite definition and quality, realisation in numberless forms and the joy of endless self-multiplication. These two things go together and they cannot really be divided.

# PROBLEMS OF INTEGRAL YOGA

## The Unpublished Correspondence of Sri Aurobindo

### COMPILER'S NOTE

Many letters of Sri Aurobindo have already been published expressing his views on almost all matters concerning human existence and explaining the process of his Integral Yoga—the Yoga of Supramental Transformation. They have been presented in the form of a philosophical and psychological statement of his leading ideas, experience-concepts and spiritually realised truths, and consequently occupy an important place in the scheme of Aurobindonian literature. The object of this Series, however, is different—it is to present problems of Integral Yoga exactly as they were put before Sri Aurobindo by the disciples from time to time, together with Sri Aurobindo's comments on them. It is felt that a compilation of this type will be a really living document of his teaching and will help the reader to come to close grips with problems of this particular Yoga.

Often, the questions asked by the disciples will not be given when the nature of the problem discussed is easily understandable from Sri Aurobindo's reply, secondly, the letters published will not always be in answer to particular problems—they may either be important injunctions given to the disciples or of a purely informative nature. Sometimes, letters already printed in the various journals and books of the Ashram may also be included if they form an important connecting link in the sequence of questions and answers.

*"Synergist"*

### SECTION A SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS ON HIS OWN LIFE AND SADHANA

It ought to be possible to read with the inner consciousness looking on and as it were, seeing the act of reading. In the condition of absolute inner silence I was making speeches and conducting a newspaper but all that got itself done without any thought entering my mind or the silence being in the least disturbed or diminished. 27-10-34

The worst thing for the sadhana is to get into a morbid condition, always thinking of "lower forces, attacks, etc." If the sadhana has stopped for a time, then let it stop, remain quiet, do ordinary things, rest when rest is needed—wait till the physical consciousness is ready. My own sadhana when I was far more advanced than you used to stop for half a year to-



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gether I did not make a fuss about it, but remained quiet till the empty or dull period was over 8-3-35

. . . In a greater state of emptiness I carried on a daily newspaper and made a dozen speeches in the course of three or four days—but I did not manage that in any way, it happened. The force made the body do the work without any inner activity 13-5-36

I think I know as much about the dualities, weaknesses, ignorance of human nature as you do and a great deal more. The idea that the Mother or I are spiritually great but ignorant of everything practical seems to be common in the Ashram. It is an error to suppose that to be on a high spiritual plane makes one ignorant or unobservant of the world or of human nature. If I know nothing of human nature or do not consider it, I am obviously unfit to be anybody's guide in the work of transformation, for nobody can transform human nature if he does not know what human nature is, does not see its workings or even if he sees, does not take them into consideration at all. If I think that the human plane is like the plane or planes of infinite Light, Power, Ananda, infallible Will Force, then I must be either a stark lunatic or a gibbering imbecile or a fool so abysmally idiotic as to be worth keeping in a museum as an exhibit 30-4-37

No need of logic to see that—a little common sense is sufficient. If anyone, no matter who he be, thinks that this world of ignorance, limitation and suffering is a plane of eternal and infinite Light, Power and Ananda, infallible Will and Power, what can he be but a self-deceiving fool or lunatic? And where then would be the need of bringing down the said Light, Power etc, from the higher planes, if it was already gambolling about all over this blessed earth and its absurd troop of human-animal beings? But perhaps you are of the opinion of R M. The Divine is here, how can he descend from anywhere? The Divine may be here, but he has covered here his Light with darkness of Ignorance and his Ananda with suffering, that, I should think makes a big difference to the plane and, even if one enters into that sealed Light etc, it makes a difference to the consciousness but very little to the Energy at work in this plane 3-5-37

Q As one approaches your photo in the Reception room, there is a feeling that it is an emanation of yours. There seems to be a special light in it.

A. The Sadhaks may themselves bring this light by approaching me through the photo.

## PROBLEMS OF INTEGRAL YOGA

Q Is it not true that the letters we receive from you are full of power?

A Yes, power is put into them

Q Do you encourage our writing to you about the ordinary movements which rise up in us?

A It is better to write if you have them than to be silent about it. In the silent mind one can receive an answer even if I write nothing.

1934

I don't know that I have "called" myself a Superman. But certainly I have risen above the ordinary human mind, otherwise I would not think of trying to bring down the Supermind into the physical. 15-9-35

## SECTION B. MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

### *A Question of Chakras*

*(Those other than the known seven)*

This is a short account given by Tulsibhai, one of the older sadhaks, describing how he had certain ideas and experiences regarding *Chakras* other than the known seven, and how he asked Sri Aurobindo for an explanation and received a reply which revealed something which is not generally known in the practice of Yoga.

### *Tulsibhai's Account*

In the Tantric classification, which is also accepted by Sri Aurobindo, there are seven known *Chakras* or centres of consciousness, the highest being the *sahasradala* (the thousand-petalled lotus) at the top of the head, and the lowest the *Muladhar*, at the end of the spinal cord, all of these are in the subtle body, *sukshma deha*.

In Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, these centres become visible or are experienced when there is the descent of the Higher Power from above, centre by centre one can experience and distinguish as they open and are being worked upon.

But there began to occur experiences of descents going down even below the *Muladhar* to the legs and feet, it was found that in the middle of the foot there was a centre almost as powerful as those mentioned above. I began to think that when the descent takes place, perhaps some connection with the earth is made through this centre, thereby completing the circuit. Not wanting to remain in doubt I sent a letter to Sri Aurobindo asking him whether there were any centres besides the seven known

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to yogic disciplines. I gave Sri Krishna's case as an example. It is related that when Sri Krishna was relaxing in the forest, a light was shining below a foot he had stretched out, a hunter who was passing that way saw it from a distance and mistook it for the eye of an animal shining in the darkness, and shot his arrow at it.

Sri Aurobindo sent me the following reply

"It is the material consciousness that is indicated by the legs and feet

Below the feet is the subconscious. There is no big centre below the Muladhara in the body but there are many centres everywhere." 2-9-34

### *Dreams and Visions*

Disciple: How is it that some dreams have a significance and some do not have it?

Sri Aurobindo: Those which are formed from subconscious impressions arranged at haphazard (subconscious mind, vital or physical) either have no significance or some meaning which is difficult to find and not very much worth knowing even if it is found. Other dreams are either simply happenings of the mental, vital or subtle physical worlds or else belong to the wider mental, vital or subtle physical plane and have a meaning which the figures of the dream are trying to communicate. 9-6-33

Disciple: How is it that sometimes we see dreams very clearly and sometimes not?

Sri Aurobindo: It depends on the state of the consciousness at the time. Or it may depend on the part of the consciousness which is active, the plane to which the dream belongs and many other causes. 15-6-33

Disciple: I was looking at Sri Aurobindo's photograph in the reception hall. As I shut my eyes and stood there, I saw a man marching in the darkness with light around his body. Is there any meaning in this?

Sri Aurobindo: It is a symbol of the progress of the sadhak moving in the Ignorance around him, but with some light from above around his own being. 24-6-33

# SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

## A RESUMÉ

BY "Synergist"

(Continued from the April issue)

### TOWARDS A NEW WORLD-VIEW

In the February issue, a summary of the first Part of this Series, *The World Crisis and India*, was given, it was followed two months later by that of the second, *Sri Aurobindo, the Leader of the Evolution*—its first two Sections. The third Section, *The New World-View*, is now taken up here. The writer began this Section with an argument on the cultural crisis and the problem of thought today, and then proceeded to describe the various aspects of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and the general scheme of his *Weltanschauung*, and his conception of the future of the human race. After this, the major trends in socio-culturology were discussed, as a prelude to the Section on Social Philosophy which is to appear later in the Series. This was done with a view to show that many of the theories of Socio-culturology need a firmer foundation—a basis of adequate metaphysical concepts which can help to classify correctly an immense mass of data that has been collected. In the intellectual field, the tragedy of the West is that it has a large amount of data, especially regarding the externalities of life, but insufficient hypotheses. The tragedy of India is that it has sound hypotheses, verifiable in spiritual experiences, but not enough data regarding the organisation of man's outer life; till the advent of Sri Aurobindo even the spiritual experiences were not properly co-ordinated with intellectual knowledge, which again did not have sufficient data on which to create a thought-structure dealing with the social and cultural life of the nation. This brought the discussion to the spiritual metaphysic itself, and its exposition was taken in hand. The theme of involution-evolution, which may be said to be the leit-motif of the Aurobindonian world-view, inter-relating its spiritual metaphysic, psychology, ethic, and social philosophy, was first put forward.

Then a brief statement was made on the nature of the Divine Reality,

after which the problem of knowledge was taken up for discussion. It was found necessary to deal with this question because in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the problems of Being and those of Knowledge are so closely connected that both have to be treated together, and this is not surprising because his method of expounding is not purely analytical, but both integral and analytical. Therefore, to try and understand his writings by cutting them up into the usual philosophical categories is to mutilate them. His philosophy arises out of an integral spiritual vision, and consequently bears the stamp of that vision. So, simultaneously with the ontological exposition, the epistemological and gnostic side of his philosophy was also dealt with. The resumé of this Section on Knowledge will be published in the next issue. The present one ends with the statement on the involution-evolution theme.

The need of a world-view that can give an ultimate sanction to higher values has been keenly felt by philosophers and social thinkers for a long time. When in the 19th century a materialistic interpretation of life was accepted, the metaphysical and theological structure of European thought gave way, and when this happened, spiritual and ethical values lost their ultimate sanction. The attempt to give a purely subjectivistic and relativistic interpretation of values has not been successful. It maintains that values are matters of personal concern and depend upon one's emotional intuitions, this interpretation, even though it contains a profound truth in it—the power residing in the soul-being to guide the outer personality from behind the veil of the surface nature—is not philosophically complete; it cannot be considered an adequate answer to the axiological difficulty. Its corollary, the relativisation of values is still more unsatisfying, even unconvincing, and can only be looked upon as a solution by minds that are content to examine only the superficialities of life and its external movements. The problem of values is always implicitly connected with the prevalent world-view, the accepted interpretation of existence based upon man's religious and spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, and sensory experience. A radical difference in it is sure to affect the values inculcated by it. In what way and to what extent is a very complex problem, it is not within the scope of this resumé to deal with it.

Other attempts have also been made to effect a transvaluation of values, for those resulting from the traditional world-view could not possibly be grafted upon the new materialistic one. Some of the finest minds have concerned themselves with this problem, and have advocated the creation of a new world-view based upon a metaphysic having as its first postulate the Spiritual Reality—a Divine Being, or a Supreme Intelligence, an Absolute beyond time, space, and causality, or an undifferentiated Divine

Ground, "That" by which all exists—a Reality whose existence alone can give a meaning to man's spiritual aspirations and ideals and in which values can find their highest absolutes; they feel that only such a metaphysic can give a significance to life. It is maintained that it not only satisfies the ethical sense of men, but also their philosophic reason, for it has a verifiable hypothesis—not verifiable in the daily experience of the spiritually untrained and unenlightened, but verifiable in the personal experience of those who have devoted themselves to the pursuit of the Spirit, and who have transcended their narrow ego-selves to attain communion with the Divine. Not only philosophers and mystics, but also social thinkers and historians have made valuable contributions towards this end.

In 1915, Sri Aurobindo saw the need of a complete philosophy that could explain the problem of the world and life and human destiny in relation to the Ultimate Reality, and wrote five major works to meet this need: *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Human Cycle*, and *The Ideal of Human Unity*. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these works are landmarks in the history of man's mental and spiritual development and should be instrumental to a large extent in moulding the thought of the age that is confronting us—an age of spiritual enlightenment, this new age has now to come in the wake of the age of reason, as that in its own turn succeeded the age of belief. It is rather unfortunate that Sri Aurobindo's writings have not yet received the attention they deserve from the thinking world, and their great value not yet widely recognised, but in the near future they are sure to exert a tremendous influence on men everywhere, for the world mind is passing through a transformation in the spiritual direction and is becoming more and more receptive to the type of ideas Sri Aurobindo expresses in his writings. But though his influence in the outer field of thought is not very wide, in the inner field it has spread itself in various directions. The Mind plane, the plane of universal mind-forces from where thought-currents flow outwards into intellects that are open to them, has been receiving the impress of his thoughts and ideas since years. Just as there are material forces and energies, both gross and subtle, so also there are life-forces and mind-forces on the Life plane and the Mind plane. In this world where these planes intersect, the various forces meet and intermingle and work out certain results according to the intention in the cosmic process and the transcendent Will and Intelligence behind it. If a strong impress of an idea or thought-form is made on the Mind plane it has a tendency to seek articulation through minds that are receptive to it and can give expression to it. Sri Aurobindo has been drawing down the seed-truths of the various aspects of thought and life from the higher planes right up to the Supermind, and pressing them down on the Mind plane, for the last forty years. This has certain impli-

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cations—when once the seed-ideas from the supramental planes get fixed on the Mind plane, it becomes possible for thinkers to apprehend them through their deeper mind, the pure mind, for these ideas are now brought within the range of their apprehension; to draw them down from the gnostic planes directly would be for them a task beyond their limited human capacities; at the most they would be able to intuit truths from the plane just above the Mind, but between the Supermind and the Mind there is a hiatus which the mental way of knowledge-apprehension cannot bridge. Together with this gnostic-spiritual action in the inner field, Sri Aurobindo has been himself giving mental forms to these truths in his treatises and poems, especially in *The Life Divine* and *Savitri*, and of late in his *Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*. The effects of these two inner and outer modes of spreading truth-ideas can be clearly seen in the intellectual field today if one is able to concentrate on thought-currents in the world and see the growth of ideas and compare these with the writings of Sri Aurobindo since the beginning of the century. Not only in the shaping of India's political, intellectual and spiritual life, but also in moulding the thought of the West his influence is apparent. It can be seen in the growth of international aims and endeavours, in the movement towards realising the ideal of human unity, in the gradual fall of Materialism and the rise spiritual tendencies in thought and life, in the search for things unseen, realities behind the veil of outer life,—witness the investigations in the fields of Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Psychokinesis, and the placing of Telepathy on a scientific footing,—and finally in the wide-spread practice of yogic and spiritual disciplines.

Whenever humanity is passing through a great intellectual and spiritual upheaval, or a new epoch has to be started, a central figure comes on the scene through whom currents of mental and vital forces pass— and if there is need, spiritual forces also—and attain articulation; he embodies the truth that is trying to express itself in the world, he becomes the voice of the Time Spirit, and the conscious or unconscious executor of the Divine Will. In Sri Aurobindo's case these things get intensified because of the immensity of his task—he has not only to introduce a new epoch on the present human level, but also to bring about a radical change in the level itself by making a new divine principle of existence emerge. His lines in *Savitri* could very well be applied to himself, because they correctly describe him and his work:

Apart he lived in his mind's solitude,  
A demigod shaping the lives of men:  
One soul's ambition lifted up the race;  
A Power worked, but none knew whence it came  
The universal strengths were linked with his,

## SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

Feeling earth's smallness with their boundless breadths,  
He drew the energies that transmute an age.  
Immeasurable by the common look,  
He made great dreams a mould for coming things  
And cast his deeds like bronze to front the years.  
His walk through Time outstripped the human stride.  
Lonely his days and splendid like the sun's.

Therefore, his works, apart from being contributions to the growth of human thought in an external sense, help to disseminate the higher truths brought down from the diviner planes of existence and to usher in a new age of spiritual enlightenment.

This is what he wrote in the *Arya* in 1918: "Our idea was the thinking out of a synthetic philosophy which might be a contribution to the thought of the new age that is coming upon us. We start from the idea that humanity is moving to a great change of its life which will even lead to a new life of the race. . . . and our aim has been to search for the spiritual, religious and other truths which can enlighten and guide the race in this movement and endeavour.

"The main idea which has governed our writing, was imposed on us by the very conditions of the problem. All philosophy is concerned with the relations between two things, the fundamental truth of existence and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience. The deepest experience shows that the fundamental truth is truth of the Spirit, the other is the truth of life, truth of form and shaping force and living idea and action . . . . Our view is that the antinomy created between them is an unreal one. Spirit being the fundamental truth of existence, life can be only its manifestation, Spirit must be not only the origin of life but its basis, its pervading reality and its highest and total result."

Then regarding the meaning of man's evolution he wrote: "To grow into the fullness of the divine is the true law of human life and to shape his earthly existence into its image is the meaning of his evolution. . . . This truth had to be worked out first of all from the metaphysical point of view, for in philosophy metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest, it is the statement of the last and most general truths on which all the others depend or in which they are gathered up. Therefore we gave the first place to *The Life Divine*. . . . The Gita we are treating as a powerful application of truth of spirit to the largest and most difficult part of the truth of life, to action, and a way by which action can lead us to birth into the Spirit and can be harmonised with the spiritual life. Truth of philosophy is of a merely theoretical value unless it can be lived, and we have therefore tried in *The Synthesis of Yoga* to arrive at a synthetical view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual self-discipline and the way in which they



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can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence. But this is an individual self-development, and therefore it was necessary to show too how our ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In *The Psychology of Social Development*\* we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In *The Ideal of Human Unity*, we have taken the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting to them in order that real human unity may be achieved..." This is briefly the scheme of Sri Aurobindo's world-view.

After this, his statement on man's future upon the earth and his ultimate destiny was given. As the question has already been dealt with in the February and April issues, it is not taken up again in this resumé. However, a brief extract from *The Life Divine* is given below for the reader who has not seen them. "A life of gnostic beings carrying the evolution to a higher supramental status might fitly be characterised as a divine life; for it would be a life in the Divine, a life of the beginnings of a spiritual divine light and power and joy manifested in material Nature... If there is an evolution in material Nature and if it is an evolution of being with consciousness and life as its two key-terms and powers, this fullness of being, fullness of consciousness, fullness of life must be the goal of development towards which we are tending and which will manifest at an early or later stage of our destiny. The self, the spirit, the reality that is disclosing itself out of the first inconscience of life and matter, would evolve its complete truth of being and consciousness in that life and matter... Our evolution in the Ignorance with its chequered joy and pain of self-discovery and world-discovery, its half fulfilments, its constant finding and missing, is only our first state. It must lead inevitably towards an evolution in the Knowledge, a self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which is to us still a Supernature."

The different trends of social and cultural philosophy were then discussed, and the position taken up by the Personalists, Humanists, and Realists on the one hand, and the Superorganicists—the Transcendentalists and the Materialists—on the other, was put forward. It was found that the real cause of the difficulty in adequately correlating the individual and the collective consciousness to the cultural reality was the absence of a metaphysic which can give the basic truths of existence, especially man's true status, the individual, the universal, and the transcendent, and his relation to the Ultimate.

This brought the argument to the problem of Being and Becoming

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This work is now published under the title **The Human Cycle**.

Reality and Process, the Divine Self and His cosmic movement.

In Sri Aurobindo's spiritual metaphysic the universe is an emanatory manifestation of the Divine, a particular movement of existence, of consciousness, in the Being of the One Supreme, who though He is in All and is the All, is yet beyond All in His Transcendent status. All is Brahman, *sarvam khalu idam brahma*. The world of Becoming is not something other than Pure Being, but a Self-unfolding of Being, an actualisation of certain possibilities existing within Its depths, a progressive manifestation of the Spirit. He writes: "The Absolute neither creates nor is created,—in the current sense of making or being made; we can speak of creation only in the sense of Being becoming in form and movement what it already is in substance and status."—"What is in the Timeless unmanifested, implied, essential, appears in Time in movement, or at least in design and relation, in result and circumstance. These two then are the same Eternity or the same Eternal in double status; they are a twofold status of being and consciousness, one an eternity of immobile status, the other an eternity of motion in status." He therefore says that out of the seed there evolves that which is already involved in the seed, pre-existent in being, predestined in its will to become. If there is an evolution, then there must have been a previous involution, for there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of Matter, or Mind out of Life, unless we posit that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life, and emerge one after the other. He sees the cosmic process as a descending-ascending involutionary-evolutionary movement between two poles, Spirit and its manifested principle Matter. He writes: "The whole of creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions,—Spirit, in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of Matter; Matter, in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upwards to the other pole of Spirit." As stated before, the movement of descent and ascent, of involution and evolution, is the recurring theme in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. This led to a discussion on evolution itself, and to the two approaches to this problem, the rational-scientific and the spiritual-psychological. The difference between the philosophical ideas regarding evolution and the significance given to it by the ancient seer-philosophers of India, and the scientific ideas based upon observation, experiment, and inference, given by the Western thinkers, was shown. Both the seer-philosopher and the scientific thinker have been seekers of truth in their own way and have made important contributions to the growth of human knowledge; whilst the former got at the spirit and the inner movement of the evolution process, the latter disclosed its form and outer machinery. Whilst the scientist either looked upon mind and life as developments of Matter, and tried to create a frame of reference in which they could suitably be correlated, the ancient seer looked

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upon them as three separate but interpenetrating powers, sustained from behind by a spiritual principle; he was also able to see behind surface phenomena the play of subtle forces, and behind the development of outer forms the growth of consciousness: but not possessing a supramental vision, he too missed the real purpose and aim of evolution—the creation of a race of gnostic beings and the transformation of human life.

The scientist did not come to these conclusions because his approach was different—his method of working dealt with only the outer machinery of the evolution process; also, being a thinker having reason as his only guide, and not a seer-philosopher, he was not sufficiently equipped to perceive behind surface utilities the metaphysical and psychological factors at work. He therefore concluded that the force behind evolution was purposeless and blind. He did not know that his inability to read purpose and meaning in evolution was due to his psycho-epistemic limitations, but that if he overcame them and developed a spiritual consciousness, and his apprehension of Reality became wider and acuter, making him see the forces at work behind the outer movement, he would be able to do so. However, there has recently been a change in the scientific outlook. Now Mind and Life are not considered by all scientists to be developments of Matter. It is admitted by many that Matter, Life and Mind seem to be three separate principles. This implies, though it is not postulated by them, that the evolution of Life in Matter must have been effected not by a Material principle, but by a Life principle working upon Matter and imposing its own laws and necessities upon it, and that, *mutatis mutandis*, a similar action must have taken place when Mind emerged. The idea of a mighty Life working upon the material world has long affected European thought; now it is seriously considering the possibility of a Mind governing both Life and Matter. Some of the best intellects, after examining the findings of the researches carried out in the fields of telepathy and P. K. (Psychokinesis) have come to the conclusion that Mind is a distinct principle in itself, working according to its own laws, and not a by-product or a derivative of Matter. They maintain that experiments in Psychokinesis show that Mind can act upon Matter independently of the physical mechanism of the body, and that those in Telepathy definitely establish the fact that one mind can directly act upon another without any sensory connection. Radiation, as understood in Physics, is found to be a highly inadequate hypothesis for explaining this transmitting process, for neither the distance nor the position of the transmitter and the receiver make any difference to the result. The transmitting takes place in an instantaneous flash, not in parts in serial extension. This shows that one mind acts on another on a plane or in a field which exists in a different space-time extension from the sensorily

apprehended world around us, and indicates that Mind must be a principle distinct from Life and Matter interpenetrating them and imposing its laws upon them, but at the same time, accommodating itself to their laws and practical necessities.

Now the next step is to recognise all these three principles as manifested powers of the one Spiritual principle. But for that a science of the Spirit is required, just as for an understanding of the working of the other principles a science of Matter, Life and Mind is required. And this science Sri Aurobindo proceeds to give in his *Synthesis of Yoga, The Life Divine*, and his letters and essays.

When comparing the Western and Indian approaches to the problem of evolution, Sri Aurobindo wrote in the "Arya" about thirty-five years ago: "The western idea of evolution is the statement of a process of formation, not an explanation of our being. Limited to the physical and biological data of Nature, it does not attempt except in a summary or superficial fashion to discover its own meaning, but is content to announce itself as the general law of a quite mysterious and inexplicable energy. Evolution becomes a problem of motion which is satisfied to work up with an automatic regularity its own puzzle, but not to work it out, because, since it is only a process, it has no understanding of itself, and, since it is a blind perpetual automatism of mechanical energy, it has neither an origin nor an issue. It began perhaps or is always beginning; it will stop perhaps in time or is always somewhere stopping and going back to its beginnings, but there is no why, only a great turmoil and fuss of a how to its beginning and its cessation; for there is in it no fountain of spiritual intention, but only the force of an unresting material necessity. The ancient idea of evolution was the fruit of a philosophical intuition, the modern is an effort of scientific observation. Each as enounced misses something, but the ancient got at the spirit of the movement where the modern is content with a form and the most external machinery."

After a long discussion it was seen that the central problem revolved round this question: "Is man a biological creation of a brute energy which has somehow unexpectedly and quite inexplicably managed to begin to feel and think, or is he in his real self that inner Being and Power which is the whole sense of the evolution and the master of Nature? Is Nature only the force of self-expression, self-formation, self-creation of a secret Spirit, and man however hedged in his present capacity, the first being in Nature in whom that power begins to be consciently self-creative in the front of the action, in this outer chamber of physical being, there set to work and bring out by an increasingly self-conscious evolution what he can of all its human significance or its divine possibility?"

It was concluded that the real sense and significance of evolution is

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the emergence of higher and higher grades of Being, Consciousness, Force, Delight and Truth. As we have seen, the idea of evolution carries within it the reciprocal idea of a previous involution; all that has evolved, all that is overtly manifested, must have been involved and secretly present in essence. Life evolves out of Matter because it is already involved and lies concealed in Matter, and Mind evolves out of Life because it is there dormant in Life. This seems to indicate that in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, and Life a form of veiled Consciousness, and pursuing the argument a little further we may state that Mind itself may hold involved in it a still higher reality, the Supramental Truth-principle, which may be pressing forward to emerge

It was finally summed up that Spirit, with its powers Matter, Life and Mind, and its Truth-power—its creative dynamis and gnostic light, the Supermind—is involved in terrestrial existence, and gradually evolves, creating in its ascent higher and higher grades of organised life and greater and more illumined modes of existence. Evolution is in its inner reality a manifestation in which the Spirit imprisoned in the nescience of Matter gradually emerges in an ascending series as various principles of Being, till as the Supermind it comes out as an all-transforming overtly divine principle into which all the other evolved principles are uplifted and divinised, thereby finding their fulfilment in a spiritually motivated and organised divine life. As the higher principle emerges, the lower is not discarded but integrated into the higher; so when life emerged in a material universe, it animated and vitalised Matter, and a vital-material organised existence was created—a world of physical-vital beings, first the plants, and later the animals, and when Mind emerged, a new level of organisation was created, a world of thinking and living physical beings, for it mentalised the existing vitalised Matter. With the emergence of the Supermind, the reorientation and reorganisation of earth-existence should become possible, as also the creation of a race of divinised beings.

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# THE FUTURE POETRY

Sri Aurobindo

(9)

## THE COURSE OF ENGLISH POETRY

(1)

These are the general characteristics of English poetry, the powers which have been at work in it. For we have to see first what are the spirit and temper that have stood behind and come to the front in a literature in order to understand the course that it has taken and the forms that it has assumed. The field which poetry covers is common ground, but each nation has its own characteristic spirit and creative quality which determines the province in which it will best succeed the turn or angle of its vision and the shape of its work. The English poetical genius was evidently predestined by the complexity of its spirit and its union of opposite powers to an adventurous consecutive seeking over the whole field, but in first potentiality its limitations point to a more facile success in the concrete or imaginative presentation of life, a more difficult success in the intellectual or spiritual interpretation of life, while most difficult of all for it would be a direct presentation of the things beyond, of mystic realities or of the higher truths of the spirit. Yet on the other hand if this difficulty could once be overcome, then because of the profounder intensity of the power of poetical speech which this literature has developed, the very highest expression of these things would be possible, a nearer expression than would be possible without much fashioning to the poetry of the Latin tongues whose speech has been cast in the mould of a clear or high intellectuality rather than into the native utterance of imaginative vision. We see in modern French creation a constant struggle with this limitation and, even, a poet like Mallarmé breaking the mould of the French speech in his desperate effort to force it to utter what is to its natural clear lucidity almost unutterable. No such difficulty presents itself in English poetry, the depths, the vistas of suggestion, the power to open the doors of the infinite are already there for the mind rightly gifted to evoke and use for the highest purposes. Much less

naturally fitted for fine prose utterance, the language has all the close lights and shades, the heights and depths, the recesses of fathomless sense needed by the poet.

We have to see how this has come about, for it has not been accomplished at all easily, but only by much effort and seeking. We observe first that English poetry has covered the field that lies before the genius of poetry by successive steps which follow the natural ascending order of our developing perceptions. It began by a quite external, a clear and superficial substance and utterance. It proceeded to a deeper vital poetry, a poetry of the power and beauty and wonder and spontaneous thought, the joy and passion and pain, the colour and music of Life, in which the external presentation of life and things was taken up, but exceeded and given its full dynamic and imaginative content. From that it turned to an attempt at mastering the secret of the Latins, the secret of a clear, measured and intellectual dealing with life, things and ideas. Then came an attempt, a brilliant and beautiful attempt to get through nature and thought and the mentality in life and Nature and then profounder aesthetic suggestion to certain spiritual truths behind them. This attempt could not come to perfect fruition, partly because there had not been the right intellectual preparation or a sufficient basis of spiritual knowledge and experience and only so much could be given as the solitary individual intuition of the poet could by a sovereign effort attain, partly because after the lapse into an age of reason the spontaneous or the intenser language of spiritual poetry could not always be found or, if found, could not be securely kept. So we get a deviation into another age of intellectual, artistic or reflective poetry with a much wider range, but less profound in its roots, less high in its growth, and partly out of this, partly by a recoil from it has come the turn of recent and contemporary poetry which seems at last to be approaching the secret of the utterance of profounder truth with its right magic of speech and rhythm.

We get the first definite starting-point of this movement in the poetry of Chaucer when the rough poverty of the Anglo-Saxon mind first succeeded in assimilating the French influence and refining and clarifying by that its speech and its aesthetic sense. It is characteristic of the difficulty of the movement that as in its beginning, so at each important turn, or at least on the three first occasions of a new orientation it has had thus to go to school, to make almost a fresh start under the influences of a foreign culture and poetry, needing in spite of so much poetic originality and energy and genius a strong light of suggestion from outside to set it upon its way. All modern literatures have at one time or another needed this kind of external help, but once formed and in possession of themselves they adopt impressions more or less lightly and only as a secondary assistance. But here we have a re-

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modelling of the whole plan under foreign teaching Chaucer gives English poetry a first shape by the help of French romance models and the work of Italian masters; the Elizabethans start anew in dependence on Renaissance influences from France and Italy and a side wind from Spain, Milton goes direct to classical models, the Restoration and the eighteenth century take pliantly the pseudo-classical form from the contemporary French poets and critics. Still this dependence is only in externals; in the essential things of poetry some native character prevails, a new turn is rapidly given, an original power and method emerges; the dynamic vitality of the race was too great not to arrive almost at once at a transmutation.

The first early motive and style of this poetry as it emerges in Chaucer strikes at once an English note. The motive is the poetic observation of ordinary human life and character without any preoccupying idea, without any ulterior design, simply as it reflects itself in the individual mind and temperament of the poet. Chaucer has his eye fixed on the object, and that object is the external action of life as it passes before him throwing its figures on his mind and stirring it to a kindly satisfaction in the movement and its interest, to a blithe sense of humour or a light and easy pathos. He does not seek to add anything to it or to see anything below it or behind its outsides, nor does he look at all into the souls or deeply into the minds of the men and women whose appearance, action and easily apparent traits of character he describes with so apt and observant a fidelity. He does not ask himself what is the meaning of all this movement of life or the power in it or draw any large poetic idea from it, he is not moved to interpret life, a clear and happy presentation is his business. It is there simply in the sunlight with its familiar lines and normal colours, sufficiently interesting in itself, by its external action, and he has to record it, to give it a shape in lucid poetic speech and rhythm, for to turn it into stuff of poetry that and the sunlight of his own happy poetic temperament in which he bathes it is all he needs. And the form he gives it is within its limits and for its work admirably apt, sufficient and satisfying,—provided we ask from it nothing more than it has to offer us. Chaucer had learnt ease, grace and lucidity from the French romance poetry and from the great Italians a sufficient force and compactness of expression which French verse had not yet attained. But neither his poetic speech nor his rhythm has anything of the plastic greatness and high beauty of the Italians. It is an easy, limpid and flowing movement, a stream rather than a well,—for it has no depths in it,—of pure English utterance just fitted for the clear and pleasing poetic presentation of external life as if in an unsullied mirror, at times rising into an apt and pointed expression, but for the most part satisfied with a first primitive power of poetic speech, a subdued and well-tempered even adequacy. Only once or twice does he by accident strike out a really memorable line of



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poetry, yet Dante and Petrarch were among his masters.

No other great poetical literature has had quite such a beginning. Others also started with a poetry of external life, Greek with the poetry of Homer, Latin with the historical epic of Ennius, French with the feudal romances of the Charlemagne cycle and the Arthurian cycle. But in none of these was the artistic aim simply the observant presentation of Greek or Roman or feudal life. Homer gives us the life of man always at a high intensity of impulse and action and without subjecting it to any other change he casts it in lines of beauty and in divine proportions; he deals with it as Phidias dealt with the human form when he wished to create a god in marble. When we read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we are not really upon this earth, but on the earth lifted into some plane of a greater dynamis of life, and so long as we remain there we have a greater vision in a more lustrous air and we feel ourselves raised to a semi-divine stature. Ennius' object was like Virgil's to cast into poetical utterance the spirit of Rome. So the spirit of catholic and feudal Europe transmutes life and gives in its own way an ideal presentation of it which only misses greatness by the inadequacy of its speech and rhythmic movement and the diffuse prolixity of its form. Chaucer's poetic method has no such great idea or uplifting motive or spirit. Whether the colour he gives happens to be realistic or romantic, it falls within the same formula. It is the reflecting of an external life, with sometimes just a tinge of romantic illumination, in an observing mind that makes itself a shining poetic mirror.

The spirit of English poetry having thus struck its first strong note, a characteristic English note, having got as far as the Anglo-Saxon mind refined by French and Italian influences could go in its own proper way and unchanged nature, came suddenly to a pause. Many outward reasons might be given for that, but none sufficient, for the real cause was that to have developed upon this line would have been to wander up and down in a *cul de sac*; it would have been to anticipate in a way in poetry the self-imprisonment of Dutch art in a strong externalism of a fairer kind indeed, but still too physical and outward in its motive. English poetry had greater things to do and it waited for some new light and more powerful impulse to come. Still this external motive and method are native to the English mind and with many modifications have put their strong impress upon the literature. It is the method of English fiction from Richardson to Dickens, it got into the Elizabethan drama and prevented it, except in Shakespeare, from equalling the nobler work of other great periods of dramatic poetry. It throws its limiting shade over English narrative poetry, which after its fresh start in the symbolism of the *Faery Queen* and the vital intensity of Marlowe ought either to have got clear away from it or at least to have transmuted it by the infusion of much higher artistic motives. To give only

one instance in many, it got sadly in the way of Tennyson, who yet had no real turn for the reproduction of life and prevented him from working out the fine subjective and mystic vein which his first natural intuitions had discovered in such work as the *Lady of Shalott* and the *Morte d'Arthur*, we have to be satisfied instead with the *Princess* and *Enoch Arden* and the picturesque triviality of the *Idylls of the King* which give us the impression of gentlemen and ladies of Victorian drawing-rooms masquerading as Celtic-mediaeval knights and dames. with a meaning of some kind in it all that does not come home to us because it is lost in a falsetto mimicking of the external strains of life. Certainly, it is useless to quarrel with national tendencies and characteristics which must show themselves in poetry as elsewhere; but English poetry had opened the gates of other powers and if it could always have lifted up the forms of external life by these powers, the substance of its work might then have meant much more to the world and the strength of its vision of things might constantly have equalled the power and beauty of its utterance. As it is, even poets of great power are being constantly led away by this tendency from the fulfilment of their more characteristic potentialities.

The new light and impulse that set free the silence of the poetic spirit in England for its first abundant and sovereign utterance, came from the Renaissance in France and Italy. The Renaissance meant many things and it meant too different things in different countries, but one thing above all everywhere, the discovery of beauty and joy in every energy of life. The Middle Ages had lived strongly and with a sort of deep and sombre force, but, as it were, always under the shadow of death and under the burden of an obligation to aspire through suffering to a beyond; their life is bordered on one side by the cross and on the other by the sword. The Renaissance brings in the sense of a liberation from the burden and the obligation; it looks at life and loves it in excess; it is carried away by the beauty of the body and the senses and the intellect, the beauty of sensation and action and speech and thought,—of thought hardly at all for its own sake, but thought as a power of life. It is Hellenism returning with its strong sense of humanity and things human, *nihil humani alienum*,\* but at first a barbarised Hellenism, unbridled and extravagant, riotous in its vitalistic energy, too much overjoyed for restraint and measure.

Elizabethan poetry is an expression of this energy, passion and wonder of life, and it is much more powerful, disorderly and unrestrained than the corresponding poetry in other countries, having neither a past traditional culture nor an innate taste to restrain its extravagances. It springs up in a chaos of power and of beauty in which forms emerge and shape them-

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\* Nothing human is alien to me

selves by a stress within it for which there is no clear guiding knowledge except such as the instinctive genius of the age and the individual can give. It is constantly shot through with brilliant threads of intellectual energy, but is not at all intellectual in its innate spirit and dominant character. It is too vital for that, too much moved and excited, for its mood is passionate, sensuous, loose of rein, its speech sometimes liquid with sweetness, sometimes vehement and inordinate in pitch, enamoured of the variety of its notes, revelling in image and phrase, a tissue of sweet or violent colours, of many-hued fire, of threads of golden and silver light

It bestowed on the nation a new English speech, rich in capacity, gifted with an extraordinary poetic intensity and wealth and copiousness, but full also of the disorder and excess of new formation. A drama exultant in action and character, passion and incident and movement, a lyric and romantic poetry of marvellous sweetness, richness and force are its strong fruits. Here the two sides of the national mind throw themselves out for the first time with a full energy, but within the limits of a vital, sensuous and imaginative mould, the one dominant in its pure poetry, the other ordinarily in its drama, but both in Shakespeare welded into a supreme phenomenon of poetic and dramatic genius. It is on the whole the greatest age of utterance,—though not of highest spirit and aim,—of the genius of English poetry.

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### Secret Ether

An unknown sky breaks through my sleep today  
This brilliant blue is an ether of ecstasy  
Wakening to immortal roots the lotus heart—  
Depth beyond depth strikes inward, gripping God  
Without this secret ether none can live.  
Its boundless azure glows not by sun-gold  
But laughs with some eternal radiance  
By whose one quiver Time's truth flashes out!  
A beauty that needs no form to seize the soul,  
Because it bursts a sheer infinity.  
A love that is effortlessly everywhere  
Oneness in which a myriad hells grow heaven.  
Fount of all, fire of all, fate of all,—Bliss!

K D. SETHNA

## THE BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD

Sri Aurobindo

The first canto of Kalidasa's celebrated mythological epic, "Kumarasambhavam" or "The Birth of the War-God", in its English rendering by Sri Aurobindo appeared in the eighth Annual of the Bombay Circle. We are publishing the remaining blank verses, at once sublime and sensitive, of Sri Aurobindo's incomplete translation. These cover the second canto—verses 1 to 40. The manuscript bears at the end the date January 14-15, 1918. It was never revised. Naturally, there are some tentative readings. We have reproduced the Draft as it stands.

The first canto contains a description of the Himalaya and the penance of Shiva on the summits of the King of mountains, with Uma attending upon him. The substance of the second canto up to the point reached by the translation is:

Taraka the Titan has made life impossible for the Gods. They are powerless before him. Frightened, they all await upon Brahma the Creator and hymn his greatness. Brahma welcomes the hosts and enquires about the cause of their dejection. Brihaspati, on behalf of the Gods, answers.  
(EDITOR)

But now in spheres above whose motions fixed  
Confirm our cyclic steps, a cry arose  
Anarchic Strange disorders threatened Space  
There was a tumult in the calm abodes,  
A clash of arms, a thunder of defeat  
Hearing that sound our smaller physical home  
Trembled in its pale circuits, fearing soon  
The ethereal revolt might touch its stars

## MOTHER INDIA

Then were these knots of our toy orbits torn  
And like a falling leaf this world might sink  
From the high tree mysterious where it hangs  
Between that voiceful and this silent flood.  
For long a mute indifference had seized  
The Lord of all, no more the Mother of forms  
By the persuasion of her clinging arms  
Bound him to bear the burden of her works.  
Therefore with a slow dreadful confidence  
Chaos had lifted his gigantic head  
His movement stole, a shadow on the skies,  
Out of the dark inconstancy where he hides.  
Breaking the tread of the eternal dance  
Voices were heard life's music shudders at,  
Thoughts were abroad no living mind can bear,  
Enormous rhythms had disturbed the gods  
Of which they knew not the stupendous law,  
And taking new amorphous giant shapes  
Desires the primal harmonies repel  
Fixed dreadful eyes upon their coveted heavens  
Awhile they found no form could clothe their strength,  
No spirit who could brook their feet of fire  
Gave them his aspirations for their home.  
Only in the invisible heart of things  
A dread unease and expectation lived,  
Which felt immeasurable energies  
In huge revolt against the established world.  
But now awake to the fierce nether gods  
Tarak the Titan rose; and the gods fled  
Before him driven in a luminous rout.  
Rumours of an unalterable defeat  
Astonished heaven. Like a throng of stars  
Drifting through night before the clouds of doom,  
Like golden leaves hunted by dark-winged winds  
They fled back to their old delightful seats,  
Nor there found refuge Bent to a Titan yoke  
They suffered, till their scourged defeated thoughts  
Turned supplants to a greater seat above  
There the Self-born who weaves from his deep heart  
Harmonious spaces, sits concealed and watches  
The inviolable cycles of his soul.  
Thither ascending difficult roads of sleep

## THE BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD

Those colonists of heaven,-the violent strength  
Of thunderous Indra flashing in their front,  
Climbed up with labour to their mighty Source.  
But as they neared, but as their yearning reached,  
Before them from the eternal secrecy  
A Form grew manifest from all their forms.  
A great brow seemed to face them everywhere,  
Eyes which survey the threads of Space looked forth,  
The lips whose words are Nature's ordinances  
Were visible. Then as at dawn the sun  
Smiles upon listless pools and at each smile  
A sleeping lotus wakes, so on them shone  
That glory and awoke to bloom and life  
The drooping beauty of those tarnished gods  
Thus with high voices echoing his word  
They hymned their great Creator where he sits  
In the mystic lotus musing out his worlds  
"Pure Spirit who wast before creation woke,  
Calm violence, destroyer, gulf of Soul,  
One, though divided in thy own conceit,  
Brahma we see thee here, who from thy deeps  
Of memory rescuest forgotten Time,  
We see thee, Yogin, on the solemn snows,  
Shiva, withdrawing into thy hush the Word  
Which sang the fiat of the speeding stars,  
They pass like moths into thy flaming gaze.  
We adore thee, Vishnu, whose eternal steps  
To thee are casual footprints yet thy small base  
For luminous systems measureless to our mind,  
Whose difficult touch\* thy light and happy smile  
Sustains, O wide discoverer of Space!  
To thee our adoration, triune Form!  
Imagining her triple mood thou gavest  
To thy illimitable Nature play.  
When nothing was except thy lonely soul  
In the ocean of thy being, then thou sowedst  
Thy seed infallible, O Spirit unborn,  
And from that seed a million unlike forms  
Thou variously hast made. Thy world that moves  
And breathes, thy world inconscient and inert,  
What are they but a corner of thy life?

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\* Doubtful reading (Editor)

## MOTHER INDIA

Thou hast made them and preservest; if thou slayst  
It is thy greatness, Lord. Mysterious source  
Of all, from thee we draw this light of mind,  
This mighty stirring and these failings dark.  
In thee we live, by thee we contact thy thoughts,  
Thou grewest thyself a Woman and divine.  
Thou grewest twain who wert the formless One,  
In one sole body thou wert Lord and Spouse  
To found the bliss which by division joins,  
Then borest thy being, a spirit who is Man.  
All are thy creatures: in the meeting vast  
Of thy swift Nature with thy brilliant Mind,  
Thou madst thy children, man and beast and god.  
Thy days and nights are numberless aeons; when  
Thou sleepest, all things sleep, O conscient God;  
Thy waking is a birth of countless souls.  
Thou art the womb from which all life arose,  
But who begot thee? thou the ender of things,  
But who has known thy end? Beginningless,  
All our beginnings are thy infant powers,  
Thou governest their middle and their close,  
But over thee where is thy ruler, Lord?  
None knoweth this; alone thou knowest thyself.  
By thy ineffable identity  
Knowledge approaches the unknown. We seek  
Discoveries of ourselves in distant things  
When first desire stirred, the seed of mind,  
And to existence from the plenary void  
Thy seers built the golden bridge of thought,  
Out of thy uncreated Ocean's rest  
By thy own energy thou sprangest forth,  
Thou art thy action's path and thou its law,  
Thou art thy own vast ending and its sleep,  
The subtle and the dense, the flowing and firm,  
The hammered close consistency of things,  
The clingsings of the atoms, lightness, load,  
What are all these things but thy shapes? Things seen  
And sensible and things no thought has scanned,  
Thou grewest, and all such pole and contrary  
Art equally, O self-created God.  
Thou hast become all this at thy desire;  
And nothing is impossible in thee;

## THE BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD

Creation is the grandeur of thy soul.  
The chanting Veda and the threefold voice,  
The sacrifice of works, the heavenly fruit,  
The all-initiating OM, from thee,  
From thee they sprang; out of thy ocean-heart  
The rhythms of our fathomless Words were born,  
They name thee Nature, she the mystic law  
Of all things done and seen who drives us, mother  
And giver of our spirit's seekings, won  
In her enormous strength though won from her.  
They know thee for Spirit, far above thou dwellest,  
Pure of achievement, empty of her noise,  
Silent spectator of thy infinite stage,  
Unmoved in a serene tremendous calm  
Thou viewest indifferently the grandiose scene,  
O Deity from whom all deities are,  
O Father of the sowers of the world,  
O Master of the godheads of the law,  
Who so supreme but shall find thee above?  
Thou are the enjoyer and the sweet enjoyed,  
The hunter and the hunted in the worlds,  
The food, the eater, O sole Knower, sole Known!  
Sole Dreamer, this bright-imagined dream is thou  
Which we pursue in our miraculous minds;  
No other thinker is or other thought.  
O Lord, when we bow, who from thy being came,  
To thee in prayer, is it not thou who prayst,  
Spirit transcendent and eternal All?"  
Shedding a smile in whose benignancy  
Some sweet return like pleasant sunlight glowed,  
Then to the wise in heaven the original Seer,  
Maker and poet of the magic spheres,  
Sent chanting from his fourfold mouth a voice  
In which were justified the powers of sound,  
"Welcome, you excellent mightinesses of heaven,  
Who hold your right by self-supported strengths,  
The centuries for your arms. How have you risen  
Together in one movement of great Time!  
Wherefore bring you now your divine faces, robbed  
Of their old inborn light and beauty, pale  
As stars in winter mists dim-rayed and cold  
Swimming through the dumb melancholy of heaven?"



## MOTHER INDIA

Why do I see your power dejected, frail  
Which bounded free and lionlike through heaven?  
The thunder in the Python-slayer's hand  
Flames not exultant, wan its darings droop,  
Quelled is the iridescence of its dance,  
Its dreadful beauty like a goddess shamed,  
Shrinks back into its violated powers.\*  
Varuna's unescaped and awful noose  
Hangs slack, impuissant and its ruthless coils  
Are a charmed serpent's folds, a child can smite  
The whirling lasso snare for Titan strengths.  
In Kuver's face there is defeat and pain.  
Low as an opulent tree its broken branch  
In an insulted sullen majesty  
His golden arm hangs down the knotted mace  
Death's lord is wan and his tremendous staff  
Writes idly on the soil, the infallible stroke  
Is an extinguished terror, a charred line  
The awful script no tears could ever erase.  
O you pale sungods chill and shorn of fire,  
How like the vanity of painted suns  
You glow, where eyes can set their mortal ray  
Daring eternal spendours with their sight.  
O fallen rapidities, you lords of speed,  
With the resisted torrents' baffled roar  
Back on themselves recoil your stormy strengths,  
Why come you now like sad and stumbling souls,  
Who bounded free and lionlike through heaven?  
And you, O Rudras, how the matted towers  
Upon your heads sink their dishevelled pride!  
Dim hang your moons along the raking twines,  
No longer from your puissant throats your voice  
Challenges leonine the peaks of Night.  
Who has put down the immortal gods? What foe  
Stronger than strength could make eternal puissance vain,  
As if beyond imagination amidst  
The august immutability of law  
Some insolent exception unforeseen  
Had set in doubt the order of the stars?  
Speak, children, wherefore have you come to me?  
What prayer is silent on your lips? Did I

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\*Variant reading for "powers" "pride" (Editor)

## THE BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD

Not make the circling suns and give to you  
The grandiose thoughts 'to keep. Guardians of life,  
Keepers of the inviolable round,  
Why come you to me with defeated eyes?  
Helpers, stand you in need of help?" He ceased,  
And like a rippling lotus lake whose flowers  
Stirred to a gentle wind, the Thunderer turned  
Upon the Seer his thousand eyes of 'thought,  
The Seer who is His greater eye than these,  
He is the teacher of the sons of light,  
His speech inspired outleaps the labouring mind  
And opens truth's mysterious doors to gods.  
"Veiling by question thy all-knowing sense,  
Lord, thou hast spoken," Brihaspati began,  
"The symbol of our sad defeat and fall  
What soul can hide himself from his own source?  
Thy vision looks through every eye and sees  
Beyond our seeings, thinks in every mind,  
Passing our pale peripheries of light.  
Tarak the Titan growing in thy smile  
As Ocean swells beneath the silent moon . . .  
Discouraged from the godhead of his rays  
In Tarak's town the Sun dares not to burn  
More than can serve to unseal the lotus' eyes  
In rippling waters of his garden pools.  
The mystic moon yields him its nectarous heart;  
Only the crescent upon Shiva's head  
Is safe from the desire of his soul.  
The violent winds forget their mightier song,  
Their breezes through his gardens dare not rush,  
Afraid to steal the flowers upon its boughs,  
And only near him sobbingly can pant  
A flattering coolness, dreadful brows to fan.  
The seasons are forbidden their cycling round  
They are his garden-keepers and must fill  
The branches with chaotic wealth of flowers.  
Autumn and Spring and Summer joining hands  
. . . \* him with their multitudinous sweets,  
Their married fragrances surprise the air.  
Ocean his careful servant brings to light

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\* Blank in Ms.

## MOTHER INDIA

The reposing jewels for his toys, his mine  
Of joy is the inexorable abyss.  
The serpent gods with blazing gems at night  
Hold up their hoods to be his living lamps,  
And even great Indra sends his messengers;  
Flowers from the tree of bounty and of bliss  
They bear to the one fierce and sovereign mind:  
All his desires the boughs of heaven must give.  
But how can kindness win that violent heart?  
Only by chastisement it is appeased.  
A tyrant grandeur is the Titan soul . . .

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## Vision

Bright vision of the Infinite, bursting like a flower  
Upon earth's rocky height, what miracles unfold  
In the sun-petals of your thought, what worlds of power  
To secret and mysterious designs you mould!

As when the last diamond spark recedes in the cave of night  
Leaving a nebulous haze on the horizon line,  
The golden hours begin their invulnerable flight  
Across a timeless track, beckoned by a mystic sign,

So your incomparable beauty shines like some dawn-flame  
In a coloured phantasy red, gold and silver blue;  
The earth glows in the magic splendour of your Name,  
A strange reflection of its everlasting hue.

In the still spaces of my memory you weave  
A star-imprinted dream whose sapphire radiance  
Brings a slow change in my heart's dusky mood; they cleave  
No more to hidden roots in soils of shadowy trance.

For you have shown me vasts of a shoreless ecstasy  
And peaks of the immortal plenitudes of desire,  
The primal source, wells of earth's veiled infinity,  
Creation's seed blazing into cosmic fire.

**NIRODBARAN**

## GUIDANCE FOR THE YOUNG ASPIRANT

Compiled from Sri Aurobindo's Unpublished Letters

### COMPILER'S INTRODUCTION

More and more people are daily drawn towards the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo. Attracted by the ideal of the divine life which is being given a concrete shape there by the Mother as regards both individual perfection and collective living, men and women come and settle down at Pondicherry with their families.

The International University Centre that is being created round the parent body has given an added impetus to these people to keep their children under the Mother's care to get educated into a new way of life. This has led to the formation of quite a large group of boys and girls.

As those in the higher grade have already begun to study the smaller books of Sri Aurobindo, and aspire to participate in the new Creation, a special Series of questions and answers has been prepared from the unpublished letters of Sri Aurobindo with a view to give them help in understanding his teachings. As most of the letters published here were originally addressed to a young boy, they were written in a manner which would enable him to understand things easily. Nevertheless, their value for the elders is equally great, for they succeed in elucidating matters on yoga which are sometimes a little difficult to understand from the letters addressed to the more advanced sadhaks.

"Synergist"

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#### *Meditation*

Q. What is true meditation?

A. To turn the mind fully to the Divine. (5-7-33)

#### *Sincerity*

Q. What is sincerity?

A. Following only after the Divine and not after the ego or anything else than the Divine. (5-7-33)

#### *Surrender*

Q. May I know the significance of surrender, and how to surrender?

## GUIDANCE FOR THE YOUNG ASPIRANT

- A. Surrender is giving oneself to the Divine—to give everything one is or has to the Divine and regard nothing as one's own, to obey only the Divine will and no other, to live for the Divine and not for the ego  
(6-6-33)

### *Consecration of the Vital*

- Q. What is vital consecration? How does one make this consecration to the Divine?  
A. It is to offer all the vital nature and its movements to the Divine so that it may be purified and only the true movements in consonance with the Divine Will may be there and all egoistic desires and impulses disappear.  
(10-6-33)

### *Discipline*

(1)

- Q. What is discipline?  
A. To live and act under control or according to a standard of what is right—not to allow the vital or the physical to do whatever they like and not to let the mind run about according to its fancy without truth or order. Also to obey those who ought to be obeyed. (July, 1933)

(2)

- Q. How can one become master of oneself and keep self-discipline?  
A. Observe yourself so that nothing passes without [your] being conscious of it. Do not allow yourself to be moved by the forces of nature without the inner consent. Obey the Mother's will always; let your consent or refusal to the movements of the forces be in consonance with her Truth.  
(12-6-33)

### *The Vital*

- Q. How is it that people say that the vital is not bad? Many bad desires and impulses come from there.  
A. The vital is good when it is properly used—it is a necessary instrument for action. But ordinarily it is in its lower action an instrument of ego and desire—that is why it has not to be indulged, but rather put under strong discipline.  
(15-6-33)

### *Attaining Mastery over the Vital Nature*

- Q. How can one become perfect master of the impulses and desires of the vital nature?  
A. Withdraw from them, do not yield to them, do not act upon them, reject them as soon as they come.  
(8-6-33)

## MOTHER INDIA

### *Keeping the Consciousness Pure*

- Q. How am I to keep the consciousness pure, simple and luminous?  
A. Reject all that is not that (13-6-33)

### *The Ego*

- Q. How can one get rid of the ego?  
A. You have to detect it wherever it comes in and throw it out. (17-6-33)

### *Equality*

- Q. What must I do in order to remain always calm, untouched and unmoved?  
A. Try until you succeed (13-6-33)

### *Silence*

- Q. What is "Silence", and how can one keep it?  
A. Silence is a state of the consciousness which comes of itself from above when you open to the Divine Consciousness—you need not trouble about that now. A quiet mind, receiving things and looking at them without effervescence or haste, not rushing about or turning up random ideas, is what is necessary. (13-6-33)

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## Foot-fall

Night is hushed and the moon climbs high and higher,  
Below the ocean spreads to the Infinite's gyre,  
And earth in deep slumber awaits a call .  
An unheard melody seizes upon its secret lyre.

Distant lights are eager earthward to fall,  
Barriers they break and new cadences install,  
The waves unleashed in silence wander on,  
In the blue of the spotless sky is shaped a dream. Clad all

In gold the moon to her apogean home is gone,  
Towards stark gloom enchanted beams are thrown;  
Down here a music rings—a sweet foot-fall,  
Earth awakes to lights that usher the perfect dawn

ROBI GUPTA

## MAN'S SOCIAL DESTINY

Jugol Kishore

Earth-life appears to us to be a vast arena where individuals and collectivities, communities and nations, all are seeking after self-expression and self-fulfilment. Self-possession, self-affirmation and self-expansion constitute the three-fold urge of all living being.

But where is the guarantee that all these diverse self-affirmations will move in perfect harmony and mutual adaptability? Where is the assurance that the self-affirmation of the individual will not go counter to the self-affirmation of the collective being, and *vice versa*?

Rather, one meets the contrary phenomenon all around. We notice clash, discord and disharmony reigning supreme everywhere. Individual clashing with individual, community colliding with community, nation warring against nation—this is the spectacle hailing our eyes.

But certainly this cannot be the ideal way of living. Harmony, and not disharmony and discord, should be the keynote of all life, whether individual or collective. But, till this day, man's attempts at harmonisation have all miscarried and failed. He has tried his hand at a number of remedies, but the disease seems to have defied all palliatives up till now.

In spite of his great and elaborate material civilisation man has not travelled a whit towards unity with his fellow-beings. Essentially he has remained the same uncultured aboriginal lurking stealthily in darkness to prey upon others in order to grow in his own stature. Self-aggrandisement at the expense of all others, this principle still holds its sway over the nature of man. Even in the limited field of his own personal life he has not succeeded in establishing homogeneity and harmony.

But the question is, why? Why is all this clash and collision and disharmony? What is the root-cause of this ignoble failure on the part of man to organise his individual and collective life on the basis of harmony and union? If we really want to construct our society on an ideal basis, we have to touch and tackle the problem at its very root. Only to manipulate on the surface without caring to go into the fundamentals of the problem—this is precisely the reason why man has till this date failed in his attempts to usher in a rule of the Spirit upon earth.

Man has persistently dreamt of a perfected divine life upon earth, but



## MOTHER INDIA

a divine life must embrace three distinct perfections: a total self-finding and self-fulfilment of the individual in himself, an integral flowering of the collective being, and the perfectly harmonious mutual relation between individual and individual, between society and society, and between individual and society. These three perfections are in no way incompatible with one another, rather they constitute one harmonious whole and are the natural corollaries of one single attainment. We shall try to see what that single attainment is. But before that let us examine whether these perfections are feasible, so long as man remains what he is now.

At present man conceives of himself as a separative ego, separated from others, separated even from his own true and permanent self. As a result, he does not know in what consists his true fulfilment. Groping in the world, he is tossed hither and thither by the impact of world-forces. Vain of his freewill, he is merely a tool in the hands of cosmic energies. His nature is too complex. In his apparent manifestation he seems to be a multiperson. He has got a physical being, a life-being, a mental being, all seeking for their separate fulfilments. He is actuated by numberless forces, each of them straining after its own separate satisfaction. The individual feels himself lost in this medley of impulsions. To strike an accord between all these divergent pulls is a task too difficult for his mind to execute. As a result, he suffers from a constant sense of confusion, frustration and friction, and an inner disharmony and disequilibrium.

Throughout his long history man has tried in diverse ways to solve this problem. The best of all his attempts is to govern the life with the enlightened reason. But life is not entirely rational, and human vital nature and ego are too strong to be subordinated by a mental reason working "by the mind and on the mind".

And this is not all. Our surface existence is not the whole of our existence. It is only the summit of an iceberg the major portion of which remains submerged in a vast and obscure subconscious, and thus hidden from the outward view of man. This subconscious is the field of all sorts of blind powerful impulses which surge up now and then on to the surface and smash to pieces everything bright and golden erected there in the course of long labour and preparation. So long as this subconscious part of man's nature remains untackled and untransformed, the individual cannot be made perfect and created in the image of God.

The second perfection, perfection of the collective being, remains short of attainment, so long as the individuals constituting it remain imperfect themselves. For the collective being has to formulate and express itself through the individuals in order to become conscious, and the community cannot be expected to be perfected except through the perfection of the individuals.

## MAN'S SOCIAL DESTINY

Let us now analyse the possibility of the third perfection: harmonious mutual relation between individual and individual and between individual and society. This too is bound to remain an unrealisable chimera until and unless man transcends his present ego-centric nature. For ego means separation, division and fragmentation. The consciousness, knowledge and will of the egoistic individual remain divorced from the consciousness, knowledge and will of all other individuals, and as a result the minds, hearts, lives of the constituting individuals in a human society cannot be perfectly and harmoniously accommodated. Ego misses the truth of the whole and tries to assert itself for the sake of its separate advantage. Consequently life-discord, conflict and disharmony are bound to arise. No amount of political, social or other mechanical panaceas can solve this problem. The most drastic changes attempted by them will come to naught, for the root-canker of all ills, the ego, is left unscathed. The individual continues still to be governed by vital desires and passions and moved by all sorts of ignorant forces.

Being thus baffled in his efforts to square accounts between his own individual self-affirmation and the self-affirmation of the collective being, man has tried in desperation to cling to one of two extreme views. In one view, he has overemphasised the self-fulfilment of the individual. But if by individual self-fulfilment is meant the satisfaction of one's separative ego, then disunity and discord are sure to crop up. Being ignorant and unaware of the truth of other individuals, the individual is bound to be anarchic and to wound others' interests in order to aggrandise his own blinded ego. Thus he will destroy the foundation of collective living altogether.

In the other extreme view, the society has been made all in all, the communal ego has been elevated to the status of an uncompromising master at whose altar the individual is forced to immolate himself. But in this way, neither the individual nor the society stands to gain. For the collective consciousness is always less evolved than the consciousness of the best individuals forming it, and the collective being has to progress and move onward only through the enlightened consciousness of its individuals. So, if the society tries to crush the individual, it only does so at the risk of the drying up of its own hidden springs of action. It becomes mechanised and all further evolutionary possibility recedes from it.

In fact, we have to seek for the solution elsewhere. For we have seen that the malady of the individual is that he has not found his true soul, his divine individuality. Before any attempt at divine life can be taken in hand, the ego has perforce to be dethroned from its elevated pedestal. But it may be argued that if the ego is abolished, man will lose his individuality *à même coup*

## MOTHER INDIA

But precisely this is an erroneous way of seeing the reality. For, the ego is not the individual. The true individuality of man lies in his psychic being, his divine individuality, which is preparing through his evolution to emerge in him, "its emergence and satisfaction and not the satisfaction of the mere egoistic will-to-live for the sake of one's lower members is the true object"

But since the evolution is progressive, this true person does not at once show himself in the outward nature of the individual. He is now, as it were, the constitutional monarch and his deputy, the ego, is governing the nature of man. But the first preoccupation of man should be to discover this secret person and dwell in his consciousness.

But this is not enough. For spirituality liberates and illumines the inner ranges of the being. But so long as it has to work through the instrumentality of mind, it loses its effectivity and can only influence the outer earth-life but not bring about any radical transformation of life. In order to transform totally a nature created by Ignorance a higher instrumental dynamis than Mind is needed. This superior dynamis we call Supermind. This is a higher Power of the Spirit, which is bound to appear in the course of earth-evolution. For the terrestrial evolution is essentially an evolution of Consciousness-Force and the oestrus of evolution has not stopped with the emergence of man, the mental animal. Life emerged in Matter; Mind has followed Life. But Mind is not the highest power of the Spirit and in the inevitability of things Supermind is sure to emerge in the future.

And wherein lies the essential difference between the nature of mind and the nature of Supermind? Mental nature is based on a consciousness of the finite, whereas supramental nature is a consciousness and power of the Infinite. Mind thinks, sees, wills, feels, senses with division as its starting point, but "supramental nature sees everything from the standpoint of oneness and regards all things, even the greatest multiplicity and diversity in the light of oneness. Its will, ideas, feelings, sense are made of the stuff of oneness, its action proceeds upon that basis"

Supermind being a unitarian, integralising and harmonic consciousness, the supramental being will succeed in founding all his living on an innate sense and effective realisation of harmonic unity in his own inner and outer life, or group life. All beings would be to him his own selves. He will realise himself to be a soul of the All-Soul, "a centre of differentiation of the one personal Consciousness, a centre of determination of the one total movement". The individual will then know that he is not only himself but also all others, that the total universal movement is one and indivisible and He who is presiding over this cosmic Lila is also One and indivisible.

Unity, mutuality and harmony will then be the law of a common collective life. But for that the collective life need not be a white monotone.

## MAN'S SOCIAL DESTINY

There will be infinite variation in the manifestation of each individual being, but since each will be aware of the total truth of things and beings and of their inner self who is at once the self of all, this diversity will not clash with the inherent unity of the movement. All problems of living, individual and collective, will then be definitively solved.

We conclude then that three movements are necessary for remedying the ills of human life. Firstly, each individual has to awake to his secret divine individuality and make it the centre of his living; secondly, he has to open himself to the riches of the Spirit above, thirdly, he has to invoke the Supramental Gnosis so that it can come down and transform his nature in its absolute entirety. For Supermind alone has got the requisite power to change human nature down to the subconscious and the inconscient.

But this may sound like a solution ideal but unrealisable. For neither of these endeavours is easy to undertake and fulfil even for the rare individual, so how can we expect that the collectivity will either consent to or persevere in this attempt?

But the eye of vision holds out the hope that man has reached a crucial point in his evolutionary march, where Supramental Gnosis is in the near future coming to emerge in the earth-nature. The evolutionary *usus* is still working and just as it has brought out successively Life and Mind out of the dim shell of Matter, so also it is going to release the Supermind in the near future. The Supermind from above is ready to descend. But, for that, as a preparatory measure, a few individuals should awake to this divine possibility and convert their body, heart and mind into a perfect receptacle of this Truth-consciousness. And once this descent is effected, once the Supramental Power comes down in its pristine purity and force and takes its stand in the nature of a few individuals, it will become operative in the collective life also. And like some corroding acid, it will then cut its way through all obstacles and dark resistances of the present nature of Ignorance, and establish its divine reign here on this earth. And in that divine event lies man's true fulfilment as an individual and as a race  
*Nānyo panthā vidyateayanāya*

(Based on Sri Aurobindo's Bengali essay, *The Car of Jagannath*)

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# THE BEGGAR PRINCESS

## A DRAMA

Dilip Kumar Roy

### EPILOGUE

PADMINI

*(folding her hands)*

I marvelled, Mother! For your great love-lyric  
Redeemed my pain with joy and made my senses  
Outgrow their limitations so completely  
That, world-oblivious, I moved with you  
Around the magnet focus of Śrī Krishna!  
Your every throb's translated in my heart-throb  
Albeit in mine own human rhythm and measure  
I breathed and laughed and sang and wept with you  
In an inexplicable unison!  
O Maid and Minstrel of the Lord! Your story  
Shall live for ever as a hallowed saga—  
To inspire the native devotees of love  
Who long for Krishna and, withal, still doubt  
The power of their longing to adventure  
In a realm so alien. We, feckless creatures,  
Are born to vacillation we cry for strength  
And courage that can dare to stake our all  
For the noblest summit of His miracle love  
And yet hark back to the familiar call  
Of the plains we are invited to forswear.  
Our minds are lured by what our hearts disclaim  
And our hearts are pledged to what our minds hold suspect!  
Our faith is strangely called to lonely peaks  
Our intellect mocks and, mocking, feel unhappy  
In its dim pen of half-lights! We are torn  
From the dawn of Time between a love that dares  
And doubt that hesitates. We long and long

## THE BEGGAR PRINCESS

For stars that glitter in a far-off vault,  
Too far to be real to our aspirations  
And yet near neighbours to our certitude  
Sung by a mystic oracle called the soul,  
We strive in vain to see with reason's candle'  
A house divided trembles and yet stands  
For aeons the assaults of storms and floods and earthquakes!  
Beauty beckons from far nameless plateaus  
We would indwell, yet dare not call our home!  
The past clings to us like an invisible leech  
Which sucks the life-blood from our aspiration  
For a future which, withal, is born of the past!  
In such dilemmas only dramas like yours,  
Enacted on the darkling stage of life,  
Can goad us to the Unattainable  
With the high indomitable spur of faith,  
We know we can and should claim as our birth-right,  
Yet dare not hope for even as a boon!  
So I would bow to you in gratitude  
That you have thrilled me with your life's romance  
Of love that weaned you from the roots you cherished  
To lead your heart aloft to the peak of bliss  
Whose name is Krishna I would only ask you  
Two questions:

When you won to Him, oh why  
Did you not merge in Him, the Timeless Rapture?  
And wherefore, from His starland of fulfilment,  
Did you elect to come to me, a mortal,  
Who was as far from you as dusk from dawn,  
Who never even dreamed that you could be  
What you do seem: a light ethereal  
And fragile like the star-bloom and, withal,  
A gleam that even the rolling seas of Time  
Failed to extinguish! Why did you, Compassion,  
Come down to me who could not even dare  
To dream of Mira as a kin of humans?

### MIRA

Child, I will tell you all you need to know,  
But clamour not for what but titillates  
Mere idle curiosity. True knowledge  
Is not mere information nor hearsay.

## MOTHER INDIA

So I must leave unanswered your two questions  
Till you are ripe for more than you are now.  
Suffice it that I won from Him, my Lord,  
One boon: to live and move and breathe in Him  
And yet retain my name and form which wooed  
And loved Him while on earth I was embodied  
As Mira, the beggar Princess, who aspired  
To the status of His slave and yet became  
A darling of His heart through His compassion.  
He granted me, in Grace, my heart's petition  
And empowered me to help His devotees  
Like you who would serve Him as His ardent slaves  
And tend the flames He kindled in their souls,  
So by their beneficent lustre the gloom  
Might for a while on earth find some relief  
Till comes a time when pain shall be no more  
A deep necessity in life's ascension  
Toward the heights it craves yet quails to dare,  
(*she smiles*)

Yet undertake we must the great adventure  
That seems to us so dubious and yet  
Unchallengeable as the evidence  
Of cosmic worlds unfolding in space and time.  
But a truce to futile words.

## PADMINI

But, Mother, I ask you:  
Why must all sages, with one voice, condemn  
Words which illumine deep terrestrial darkness?

## MIRA

You have not grasped my emphasis, dear child.  
No true sage frowns on words when they can help  
Even as fireflies glimmering in the gloom  
Around us. How could they when they have all  
Used sound as ladder to the peaks of silence?  
Nought is ever sanctioned by the Diplomat  
But can be made to serve His end divine.  
All agents are His messengers on earth:  
So why not words which do fulfil a purpose  
If rightly viewed and used? But mind, alas,  
Too sure of its proud reason's feeble rushlight,

## THE BEGGAR PRINCESS

Fails constantly to exploit what Krishna gives  
And so these anklets are changed into shackles.  
A deep enrichment of illumination  
Can come, indeed, through words as it has come  
To you already. You have heard the story  
Of how love, even when blind and ignorant,  
Attains through aspiration to true knowledge.  
But what you need to acquire now can no more  
Accrue to you through words. You must aspire  
Henceforth to love and light beyond the ken  
Of even the holiest mantras. Only silent  
One-pointedness can win the delivering strength  
So you may grow into what you were sent  
To become in this your life of mystic hunger  
For Him, who, deathless in the death of things,  
Is manifesting through His endless play  
An immemorial and yet ever-renewed  
Rhythm of love and light through pain and night.  
To stimulate your loftiest aspiration,  
I come today even as I came to you  
In your past births, drawn by an ancient kinship  
With your soul because you, too, are a devotee  
Of the One I sought to adore and serve and love.

## PADMINI

But the Night is starless. Clouds are menacing.  
A storm is brewing. The world is pining, prone,  
The bravest spirits are crying in despair  
The radiant love that shone once through your anguish  
Looks like a legend today Terrestrial life  
Gropes waylost, wan, a prey to strife and hate.  
Time seems now hostile even to His name.  
How can a life like mine dispel the darkness?  
A glow-worm can, alas, but stipple the shadows,  
Nor a rain-drop make the desert laugh with blooms  
I doubt not but that Krishna is and will  
Pilot the loyal boats launched by brave faith:  
But how can a few barks winning to his Harbour  
Save millions who are lost in atheist storms,  
Their rudders of faith in Krishna and His power  
To kindle love's pole-star in an inky sky  
While here, below, Brindaban is no more?



## MOTHER INDIA

### MIRA

The outer hamlet which still bears the name  
Or Brindaban may be no more. But His  
Love that hallowed once the Eternal City  
And kindled the moon of beauty in pain's dusk,  
Still makes of every heart His holy tryst.  
For He still answers with His marvel Presence  
Wherever His Love's deep play at hide and seek  
Goes on and the spell shall work to the end of Time,  
Till every heart becomes a Radha-heart  
Reborn as Mira who will, in new forms,  
Incarnate in each soul that will refuse  
To be quelled by gloom, defeat, despair or death.  
To foster faith in this swift-flowering love  
He sends His heralds and gardeners—now declared,  
Now incognito all serve Him, among whom  
I am but one—a ray of His vast Orb,  
A dynamis of His Will, a blessing of bliss,  
Ancient and ever-young, known as Sri Radha

*MIRA smiles and then continues dreamily:*

The Light of lights—the Everliving Radha  
Who sprang from out the core of Krishna's gleaming  
Grace that fashioned a Being who is one  
With Him and yet an entity unique  
Whom He has moulded with His Love's quintessence:  
His Guest and Hostess, song and singing voice;  
His nest and sky; His anklet, flute and crown;  
His crystal core and, withal, an outer mirror  
Glassing His tenderness, a sleepless minstrel  
Chanting His glory; a praying tongue He made  
To savour timelessly His own love's sap!  
Yea, such is Radha immanent in Shyam  
Everlastingly and yet distinct from Him  
As light from heat and billows from the deep,  
Sponsoring all hearts who aspire to Him  
Born endlessly in every hymn of love  
Yet cannot end because love's theme is endless.

*PADMINI bows to MIRA who sings a song on Rasa eternal:*

## THE BEGGAR PRINCESS

Oh, hark to His haunting Flutelet enchanting  
Our souls like clouds pervading all!  
The strains entrance . our hearts are adance  
And the eyes rain tears as they call and call!

The earth is new with the heave and hue  
And rose-buds bloom and honey-bees hum,  
And hope, still young, now breaks into song  
In chorus with springtide: "Come, Love, come!"

*At this point PADMINI wakes from her samadhi when MIRA vanishes She opens her eyes and sees ASIT who is singing the same song.*

Moonbeams attend and the breezes bend  
The tremulous gleams on the ripples to kiss:  
The bulbuls trill in the bowers, athrill  
Hailing the Lord of beauty and bliss.

The night is ashine with stars hyaline  
And the moon with her mystic laughter of sheen:  
The damsels, in love, lo! run to His grove  
Where dances the Swain—the unique Evergreen!

PADMINI

But you are singing in unison with Her!

ASIT

(smiles)

But can one sing of Him and not sing with Her?

THE END

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### CORRECTION

In the July issue the first three speeches in **The Beggar Princess** should read:

FIRST WOMAN But you mustn't say such things again, Sarama.

SECOND WOMAN You are priceless, Sarala! Now you laugh and the next moment start chiding us for having amused you!

FIRST WOMAN But I can't help laughing even when I am tickled the wrong way One is born human though one has, I suppose, to outgrow one's limitations

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

KENA UPANISHAD

By SRI AUROBINDO

(*Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Rs. 2-8.*)

REVIEW BY T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

The Ishopanishad with Translation and Commentary appeared serially in the *Arya* and was later revised and enlarged for publication years ago. It has now run to several editions, while the Kenopanishad which also with Translation and Commentary followed the Ishopanishad serially (June 1915—July 1916) in the same Philosophical Review is now for the first time published after the passing away of the Master. This Upanishad second in order, not chronological, but in the traditional list of the Major Upanishads, belongs to the Talavakara Brahmana (*talavakara* means musician), otherwise known as Jaiminiya Brahmana of the Sama Vedins and is the ninth chapter of that Book as stated by Shankara in the introduction to his Commentary on this Upanishad. When we find the first word of this Upanishad to be its title, we are reminded of the Vedic tradition (current even today) of referring to a Rig Vedic Sukta by mentioning the opening word of the text, such as 'agnim ile' hymn. This way of mentioning a hymn or a text is Veda-old, avoids an otherwise ponderous and descriptive title, briefly and unmistakably facilitates reference, and thus serves the purpose. And this method Sri Aurobindo adopted in the olden days in naming some of his letters, such as the 'Piercing of the veil'.

It is necessary, at the outset, to state in brief the salient features of the Master's characteristic approach to the study of the Upanishads. It is a general notion in the West that has gained currency in India among the educated moderns, that the Upanishads are the metaphysical speculations of certain bold thinkers who turned away from the Vedic creed of rituals and Nature-worship and arrived at philosophical conclusions about the Whence of Creation and the goal of life through arduous thinkings in their solitary forest-abodes. This modern view is a gratuitous conjecture of an alien temperament and is, indeed, foreign to the spirit and tenor of these sacred texts and

opposed to the ages-old tradition and internal evidence of these Books of Wisdom. It is an erroneous notion to entertain that these Scriptures are the results of revolt, rebel children of the parent religion of a semi-civilised past. They are not the flowers of Reason, or products of speculative labour which, denuded of the euphemistic robe, are in a straight-forward plain language the bold conjectures of the fantastic or the fabrications of the introvert—ideas that have no relation whatever to facts that can be observed, of truths that can be verified.

The sages of the Upanishads have certainly drawn their inspiration and succour from the fountain springs of the Vedas while engaged in developing their self-culture for the realisation of the ultimate Truth, for conforming their lives to the laws of the Spirit, for the attainment of Brahmanhood here while living on Earth. The findings of their explorations in the realm of the Spirit and in the fields of the inner life—the occult and the spiritual gains—are often implicitly, yet in authentic tones expressed in a language that is more intelligible to the mentality of our age and fairly far removed from that of the hymns of the Rig Veda. But they are, in the words of the Master, “the creation of a revelatory and intuitive mind and its illumined experience.” “Nor are they a revolutionary departure from the Vedic mind and its temperament and fundamental ideas, but a continuation and development and to a certain extent an enlarging transformation in the sense of bringing out into open expression all that was held covered in the symbolic Vedic speech as a mystery and a secret ”

This background settled, the Upanishads reveal themselves as vehicles of illumination to the seekers who had, broadly speaking, a processed understanding of the general spirit of the Vedic and Vedantic sages and even some personal experience of the truths which are the bases of their structure. Hence they are appropriately styled ‘Manuals of Sadhana’ in which the ideas are implicit, rarely explicit. The reasoning that supports the conclusive statements is suggested by the expressions employed and not expressly communicated to the reasoning mind. The seeker, the hearer, was expected to proceed from Knowledge to Knowledge, verifying by experience and confirming his intuitions or thought-visions of the truths and not treating his ideas to the light of the logical reason and submitting to intellectual judgment.

This Commentary on the Kena Upanishad, then, takes up the ideas, elucidates them in their completeness, draws attention to the suggestions and thus brings to light the reasoning that is always implicit. The subject matter of the Upanishad, as indeed of the Upanishads in general, is Brahma Vidya, the Knowledge of Brahman. But they vary in their standpoints, start from different positions, proceed along the lines chosen to lead to the object of their seeking: the winning of the Immortal state, the arrival at the

undying Light, the attainment of the supreme purpose of Life, the Eternal. But this text, unlike the Isha Upanishad which concerns itself with the whole problem of world and life and knowledge and works and all the fundamental problems of Existence, confines itself to a restricted question, a limited and narrow but precise enquiry, not straying outside the limits of the problem it has set before itself. The problem of the World-existence is not taken into consideration at all, the material world and the physical life are taken for granted; and it straightly puts the questions: what is the mental life that uses the senses? what are these mental instruments? are they the supreme and final power, the last witnesses or is there anything superior to them and more real and abiding that directs the activities of the eye and ear and speech and life-breath and mind itself? The Upanishad gives the answer in the affirmative. We must note here that this Upanishad like other earlier texts keeps close to the Vedic roots, reflects the ancient psychological system of the Vedic sages and "preserves what may be called their spiritual pragmatism." This is quite apparent in the very opening sentence: '*kena ishita*, by whom missioned?' '*kena yukta*, by whom yoked?' The Upanishad proceeds to expound the relation of the mind-consciousness to the Brahman Consciousness by which, it says, the mind thinks, the eye sees, the ear hears, the voice speaks, the life-breath breathes, but which none of these can reach or touch. Thus it indicates and describes what can not be expressed or actually described by the mind. It affirms and indicates that Brahman is the absolute of all our relatives from which all relatives derive their values and thus in a way it is knowable and yet not utterly knowable, for it is at the same time the Absolute Beyond which is utterly unknowable.

The Upanishad resolves the seeming contradictions in the two statements that it is knowable and unknowable by the affirmation that it is a vaster and profounder existence behind our surface selves, and is the puissant Consciousness of which mind, life, sense and speech are only inferior modes, imperfect figures and external instruments. The Commentary draws attention to the significance of the words employed in the text, brings to the forefront the subtle suggestions, elaborates the reasonings implied in the successive phrases and arrives at the established conclusions of the profound yogic psychology—call it para-psychology—of this Upanishad. And what we normally think as ourselves, mind, life, sense, speech, in short, the psychology of a mind that is involved in the brain is shown to be the outer fringe of man's existence which consists in the eidolon of matter along with the nervous energy and its image reproduced in the mind-stuff. In the manner that is distinctively his, Sri Aurobindo places before the reader here the fact of spiritual experience that we can always enter into relation with Brahman through these faculties—mind, sense, speech etc by tracing them to their source, as these are the outer instruments of the respective

aspects of the profound Reality, Brahman, that is behind and directs the mind, sense, speech etc. as their original truth, source and support. An instance can be given here to exemplify this fact, and the rest left to the reader to find by delving into the pages of the book. In giving a rational explanation of the phrases about Brahman as the 'Word behind the speech' and as 'That which remains unexpressed by the word, that by which the word is expressed,' the Master looks at the question from two poles, discusses it threadbare and concludes: 'Thus we see the theory of Creation by the Word which is the absolute expression of the Truth, and the theory of the material creation by sound-vibration in the ether correspond and are two logical poles of the same idea' (P. 39).

It is to be noted that the Upanishad starts with a negative statement, 'Not this which men follow after here', in order to direct the seeker to aim at the discovery of the vaster Truth of which the ordinary human existence is a trifle, a frail figure, not unreal but incomplete.

Thus in the first two of the four sections of the Upanishad, we find that its instruction rests basically on the affirmation of three states of Existence, the first being the human, our mortal; the second, the Brahman-Consciousness which is the absolute of our relatives, yet knowable in a way as related to all this duality as its Lord and the third the utter Unknowable Beyond. And because of this relation to what we are, it is possible to realise something of Him, of the supreme Truth of our existence and the scripture closes the second section with the emphatic statement "If here one comes to that Knowledge, then one truly is; if here one comes not to the Knowledge, then great is the perdition. The Wise distinguish That in all kinds of becomings and they pass forward from this world and become Immortal" (II 5) The same idea of the necessity of qualifying for Immortality and possessing the Brahmic Knowledge in life here is to be found in some of the other authentic Upanishads e.g. Brihadaranyaka (IV.4 14), Katha (VI.4).

In the third section the Upanishad proceeds to point out the means of piercing the veil to enable the subject-consciousness of man to enter into the Master-consciousness of the Lord. This it does by a striking apologue. It is the famous parable of the Gods—Agni, Vayu and Indra—who approach the Yaksha, the Daemon, but fail to impress their prowess on him and return bewildered. While Indra, the highest of the Gods, the Lord of the luminous mind and Light approaches, the Yaksha disappears and there in the empyrean heights of the void ether, *akasha*, appears Uma, Daughter of the Snowy Summits who reveals to him the truth of the Yaksha that it is Brahman. To appreciate the significance of this story it is necessary to have an adequate idea of the Gods of the Upanishads who are the same as those of the Rig Veda except in one important respect. The Vedic Gods are the Cosmic Powers of the One, and are conscious of their original source and

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true identity and the all-powerful One, the Supreme Lord, Brahman. Also in their lesser and lower movements they manifest themselves in man in the form of human faculties and assume the mould of cosmic operations in Nature. The Gods of the Upanishads are not conscious of their source, their identity with Brahman, but they retain the lesser aspect and are indeed psychological powers including the human faculty of speech, sense, mind and the rest. They are as in the Rig Veda, the Powers that 'affirm the Good, the Light, the Joy and Beauty, the Strength and Mastery.' And when they win the eternal battle with the adverse forces, the Asuras that deny, they think that theirs is the victory won and do not realise that it is the Brahman that stands behind them and conquers for them. Hence the challenge of the Daemon, the Yaksha, hurled at the three main Powers, the Gods of the triple world—Agni is the heat and flame of the conscious force in Matter that builds the universe and makes life and mind possible on the plane of the material world in which he is the greatest Deity, the impeller of speech of which Vayu is the medium and Indra the Lord. He accepts the challenge, but is balked of his attempt to aim his power at the Daemon as the latter is no Birth of the material cosmos. Then Vayu, the Lord of the mid-air, the life-principle who infinitely expands in the mother-element Akasha, returns baffled meeting with the same fate, since the Daemon is no form or force of Cosmic Life of which he is the greatest ruler and God. Then Indra the Power of the mind arises and when he approaches It vanishes because It cannot be seized by mind and the sense. But Indra does not turn back from the quest like Agni and Vayu, but moves onward to the sublime ether of the pure mentality and there Uma, the Para Shakti appears, from her he learns that the Yaksha, the Daemon, is Brahman by whom alone the Gods of mind, life and body—Indra, Vayu and Agni—conquer and affirm themselves and who at once is the source and true centre and focus of their greatness.

Uma, the Daughter of Snowy Summits is the Para Prakriti, the Supreme Nature, the highest Power of the Ultimate Truth, the Supreme Consciousness of Brahman. It is from her the whole cosmic action takes its birth, from her the Gods must learn their own truth, for she has the necessary knowledge and consciousness of the One above the lower nature of mind, life and body, and, creatrix of the Gods, she meditates between the One above and beyond, and Gods and men here in the lower creation. The import, the lesson, then of the story of the Gods is that all the life-activities and senses and mind, the functionings of the Cosmic Powers in man must learn to surrender consciously to their One true master-consciousness leaving behind the wrong and false notion of independence and self-will and self-ordering which is an egoism of life and mind and body.

We may note that the name Uma for the Supreme Nature, Mahashakti,

is used for the first time in this Upanishad; it is a solitary instance of an early Vedantic scripture mentioning Shakti in the ethereal summits above the Gods and we do not find it in any other major Upanishad. The Puranas and Tantras have familiarised us with the truth about Uma, as the Shakti, the inalienable Power of Shiva.

In the closing passages of the Upanishad, the means of attaining the knowledge of Brahman here on earth, and the winning of the immortal status after departure is indicated. But the lines are really obscure, this is partly due to extreme brevity, and also due to the intention in these texts that the seeker has to learn the secret orally from the teacher or learn it from him in silence. The lines in IV 4-5 are supposed to lead the seeker to meditate by reflection on the Nature of Brahman and achieve the end by repeated practice. Sri Aurobindo explains the passage 'As is this flash of lightning upon us, or as is this falling of the eye-lid, so in that which is of the Gods' and the one that follows in the characteristic way that we associate with him, "In the Gods the transfiguration is effected by the Super-conscious itself visiting their substance and opening their vision with its flashes until it has transformed them; but the mind is capable of another action... The mind continually remembers that into which it has entered. On this the Self through the mind seizes and repeatedly dwells and so doing it is finally caught up into it and at last able to dwell securely in that transcendence." Is Transcendence and salvation of the individual, the ultimate goal the Upanishad sets for the seeker? Sri Aurobindo recognises the emphasis in the Upanishads steadily increasing on the individual's rejection of the lower cosmic life. This note increases in them as time goes on. But it does not exist in the earlier Vedic revelation where individual salvation is regarded as a means towards a great Cosmic victory. Fortunately the Kena Upanishad suggests the door of escape from over-emphasis in its own statement. "The name of That is 'That Delight', and as That Delight one should follow after it. *He who knows That, towards him verily all existences yearn*" (IV.6). On this verse, the Master's remarks are noteworthy: "Here is the clue that we need. The connection with the universe is preserved for the one reason which supremely justifies that connection; it must subsist not from the desire of personal earthly joy as with those who are still bound but for help to all creatures. Two then are the objects of the high-reaching soul, to attain the Supreme and to be for ever for the good of all the world even as Brahman Himself; whether here or elsewhere, does not essentially matter, still where the struggle is thickest..."

Before closing, attention may be drawn to an obvious irregularity in the text itself in IV.2. It is curious how it has escaped, or was overlooked and explained away by the ancient commentators for centuries before Sri Aurobindo. On this the discerning mind of the classical savant remarks



in a footnote: "By some mistake of early memorisers or later copyists the rest of the verse has become hopelessly corrupted. It runs, 'They he first came to know that it was the Brahman', which is neither fact nor sense nor grammar. The close of the third verse has crept into and replaced the original close of the second. " (P. 12).

In explaining the recondite psychology of the spiritual consciousness Sri Aurobindo uses four terms, *Vijnana*, *Prajnana*, *Sanjnana* and *Ajnana* and gives their connotations. He takes them from early Brahmana Upanishads whose significances are forgotten in classical Sanskrit. These words are all printed in italics in the text with correct diacritical marks. But on page 66, the diacritical mark on the first *a* in *ajnana* to show that it is long ought not to have been omitted. *Ajnana* with the short *a* as it is printed becomes the privative of *Jnana*, meaning the absence of Knowledge, while the intended long *a* in the word lets it connote the 'operation by which consciousness dwells on an image of things so as to govern and possess it in power.'

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## SHAKESPEARE : THE MAN AND HIS WORK

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

*Continued from previous issue*

Students of Shakespeare owe a great debt to the many critics and scholars of our generation,—and even the least important, the most cranky, and the forbiddingly dry-as-dust among them have freely contributed to the struggle between truth and falsehood, out of which steadily, if also very slowly, the clear light of sanity is emerging at last. Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers; subtlety is often allied to perversity, and traditionalism is sometimes but a synonym for mulish obstinacy. There are occasions when men see, and still refuse to recognise what they see, and hence they canter blindfolded across the clear stream of the obvious to land on the bleak rocks of puzzlement and frustration that are ranged tier on tier on the other side. It is in this context of Shakespearian scholarship and criticism as it now confronts us—a phenomenon rich, variegated, vivacious and tantalizing in the extreme—that the work of scholars like Peter Alexander should be judged. He is as hard-headed a scholar, as pertinacious a researcher, as fearless a fighter as any; but there are no frozen credits in him, his heart and mind are in the right place, he is fanatically on the side of the angels, and above all, he doesn't allow the itch for novelty or originality to derail or sidetrack him. His new edition of the Complete Shakespeare, lately issued in a beautiful format by Collins, is the fruit of over 25 years of almost continuous labouring in the Shakespearian vineyard. The 16-page Introduction is a sunny piece of writing, but at the same time it is a miracle of condensation as well, giving a pointed version of *A Shakespeare Primer*, which in its turn liberally draws upon the earlier *Shakespeare's Life and Art*,—and so we go back to Alexander's first considerable work, *Shakespeare's 'Henry VI' and 'Richard III'*, which appeared in 1929 with an appreciative Introduction by A. W. Pollard. It is interesting to watch Alexander, first getting a grip on a segment of the vast circumference of Shakespearian scholarship, then steadily covering the whole area, and also purposefully pressing towards the centre with an unflinching sense of direction. The Introduction, the *Primer* and its predecessor, *Shakespeare's Life and Art*, are like three concentric circles, each with its own sweep and amplitude, but all revolv-

ing round the same centre.

Every generation, I suppose, needs a Primer peculiarly suited to its own mental climate. Dowden's Primer was followed by Raleigh's volume in the English Men of Letters Series, Dover Wilson's *The Essential Shakespeare* came out 25 years later, in 1932; now, 20 more years after, comes Alexander's *A Shakespeare Primer*, weighted by logic, learning and mature wisdom. As I have striven to show in the foregoing pages, Alexander's book constitutes, when viewed in the background of 20th century Shakespearean scholarship and criticism, a feat of gallant reintegration of the Shakespeare Canon and rehabilitation of the Man Shakespeare. Alexander's *Primer* is, I venture to think, a book addressed, not only to the common reader who will doubtless enjoy it and profit by it, but also to the super-subtle savants, because it is they who often need re-education in sanity and straight thinking. Like Dowden and many others, Alexander too divides Shakespeare's career as a dramatist into four periods, but the headings disarm us at once: "From twenty to thirty: 1584-1594"; "From thirty to thirty-five: 1594-1599", "From thirty-five to forty-five: 1599-1608"; and "From forty-five to fifty: 1609-1613"—the periods "coinciding with the changes in the theatrical conditions in which he worked" In the *Primer*, even more than in the earlier work, the biographical and critical perspectives are adroitly blended, and there is a self sufficiency about the book which cannot be too highly praised. The originality and utter aptness of the citations from Proust, Tchekhov, Henry James and Ralph Hodgson, and the force of the parallelism drawn between Falstaff and Dido on the one hand and the "vision" in *Henry VIII* and Dante's vision in the *Paradiso* on the other, are things not easily forgotten. Often sentences with their burden of suggestion start chains of inference which embrace the entire province of aesthetic criticism, and more than once the sister-arts are summoned to elucidate knotty points in poetry and drama. *Hamlet* receives, as it must, due notice, and Alexander's explanation of the enigma is rooted in his shrewd understanding of the intertwining contradictions in human nature. Why does Hamlet refrain from killing his uncle when he is kneeling at prayer? "This is the central scene of the central act," writes Alexander (in *Shakespeare's Life and Art*), "the very keystone of the action, that holds together the fabric of the play; and here Shakespeare has reduced almost to visual terms the whole of Hamlet's problem" Hamlet's own excuse is merely the perversity of theology. The real explanation must be sought elsewhere.

"He refrains from stabbing the defenceless wretch not from lack of nerve—the story is full of his courage and hardihood—not because he is naturally hesitant—this is the only action that ever gives him pause—not from a determination to damn his victim's soul with his

body—the ghost disposes of this pretence a few lines later—but because he feels a compunction that even his critics approve in the acting, though they may afterwards misrepresent it grievously as does Hamlet himself.”<sup>1</sup>

A “Man in the Black” raised to tragic heights, that is the real Hamlet; and his behaviour towards Ophelia too has to be understood in terms of “supererogatory love” which must needs express itself “with words of unmeant bitterness”<sup>2</sup> The *Primer* is no doubt reared on sure logical foundations, but what makes it glow with life is the critic’s own “vigorous human-heartedness.”

It is no doubt true that the critic’s main task is to interpret literature in a genuinely human spirit. On the other hand, it is foolish to acquiesce in the idea, sometimes fanatically propagated, that literary appreciation and textual criticism are mutually exclusive, and that one is inferior or superior to the other. We needn’t introduce a caste system among the devotees of Shakespeare. The text determines the direction of aesthetic or imaginative criticism, and sometimes one’s imaginative responses to a character or a situation determine, however unconsciously, one’s interpretation of a line, of a word. Critics like Dr. Johnson have carried on their broad shoulders the double burden of textual and literary criticism, and in our own days Dover Wilson and Peter Alexander have demonstrated how these two activities could be properly integrated. The aim of all editors is to give their readers a text as close as possible to the copy as finally revised by Shakespeare himself. The problem is easily stated,—but when one remembers the condition in which the Quartos and Folios have come down to us, the vagaries of printing and publishing in the Elizabethan Age, and the Himalayas of conjectural emendation which editors have thrown up during the past 300 years, one realises how very difficult indeed the problem is. A new editor, unless he readily surrenders to the itch for originality, will be content with making only those changes—necessarily few—which seem to be charged, as it were, with a self-evident authenticity. The “Globe” edition has long been enjoying the authority of a Vulgate; but the “transvaluation of values” that has been witnessed during the last 40 years in Shakespearian scholarship has also needed to be integrated with the texts available to the common reader. This Peter Alexander has attempted to do in Collins’ “Tudor” Shakespeare—and editor and publisher are admirably cast for their respective roles. Like most Scottish editors, Alexander too is cautious and conservative, and his edition accordingly doesn’t imply any violent break with the past. It is in the “Globe” tradition, but it has not hesitated to benefit by the *sure* gains of the last half-century. The type is

1 A Shakespeare Primer, p 97

2 Shakespeare’s Life and Art, pp 154-5.

rather bigger than in single volume editions printed in double columns,—and that is a lot to be thankful for. Besides the preliminary matter to the First Folio, which is here reproduced, there is also an appendix containing in type-facsimile 147 lines from the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More*—which, as mentioned earlier, served as the basis for a study of Shakespeare's handwriting—to throw light on the problems which Shakespeare's first printers had had to face. There is, further, a very helpful glossary of about 25 pages. Notwithstanding the lurid jacket (which, after all, can be thrown away), the book is a sheer delight to handle, a truly meritorious instance of post-war book-production.

To return to the text here there can be but very few things to cavil at, though many things to praise. I have only sampled it here and there, and I have risen almost always with a sense of deep satisfaction. Every edition is verily a grand co-operative achievement; but, as Dover Wilson points out, "the judgment of an editor must be held accountable for every word and every comma of the text he prints"<sup>1</sup>. The reference to commas raises the question of punctuation. Alexander himself took "Shakespeare's Punctuation" as the subject of his Annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy, delivered in 1945. Evidently, Alexander was already at work on—or at least thinking in terms of the new edition of Shakespeare. In his lecture he laid down these guiding principles with regard to the punctuation of Shakespeare's plays:

"... one should focus all the evidence from intrinsic and transcriptional probability, from the internal evidence of the document and from the relevant evidence in documents of similar family descent. This is 'to hear all the evidence continuously'.<sup>2</sup>

"Consider each passage in the light of the document as a whole, and ... remember the habits of the man who punctuated it."<sup>3</sup>

After the late Alfred Theselton, Alexander also elaborated the distinction between 'internal' and 'external' punctuation. It is thus clear that Alexander didn't embark upon this enterprise of editing Shakespeare either light-heartedly or with inadequate preparation.

"Back to the Folio!" might very well have been Alexander's central guiding principle while editing Shakespeare. But Heminge and Condell, for all their integrity and industry, didn't leave behind them a wholly faultless text. Later editors—Rowe, Theobald, Johnson, Capell, Malone, and their successors—have done much to bring the text closer to Shakespeare but also, now and then, to take it further from Shakespeare than even the First Folio. It is just here that Alexander must have found "Back to the Folio!" a salutary exhortation. To take one or two instances, Alexander

1 *The Review of English Studies*, January 1952, p. 72

2 *Shakespeare's Punctuation*, p. 9

3. *Ibid.*, p. 21

prints the first 2 lines of *Macbeth* as follows, as in the Folio.

1. *Witch.* When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Kenneth Muir too has followed the Folio reading in his recent edition in the new Arden series, now coming out under the general editorship of Professor Una Ellis-Fermor. But Dover Wilson, reviewing Muir's edition in the *Review of English Studies*, deplors this harking back to the Folio. The more usual reading is to omit the interrogation-mark after 'again' so that the question would be *when* they should meet again,—the thunder, lightning and rain being always taken for granted. But Alexander might argue that, merely because an emendation or change in the punctuation would give a better meaning, we should not meddle with the Folio, so long as the reading, as it stands, conveys a rational meaning in the context. The editor's job is to make Shakespeare intelligible, not to seek to improve upon him. Likewise, in the following passages, Alexander has reverted to the earlier reading in preference to the more usual ones. This from 2 *Henry IV*:

We see which way the stream of time doth run

And are enforc'd from our most quiet there

By the rough torrent of the occasion. (IV, 1, 70-72)

Here "most quiet there" replaces the words "most quick sphere" found in the other editions. This from *Antony and Cleopatra*:

*Cleo* You lie, up to the hearing of the Gods.

But if there be nor ever were one such,

It's past the size of dreaming. (V, ii, 95-97)

The second line is printed in modern editions as "But if there be, or ever were, one such. . ." Surely, "if there (neither) be nor ever were one such" is not less intelligible than "if there be, or ever were, one such". One more instance, from *The Merry Wives*:

"I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were, not Nature, thy friend."

(III, iii, 54-56)

The usual reading is: "I see what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature thy friend." The former means: "I see what thou wert if Fortune (who is now your foe)—and not Nature—were your friend".<sup>1</sup>

One of the happiest "restorations" in the Tudor Shakespeare is in *Othello*. In the bedchamber scene, Othello tells Desdemona that Cassio "hath confess'd" "What, my lord?" asks Desdemona. According to the First Folio, Othello answers: "That he hath us'd thee." But the Quarto (1622) reading is different: "That he hath—'uds death"—as if "Othello

<sup>1</sup> I have greatly profited by reading in typescript Prof Alexander's article on "Restoring Shakespeare" I understood that it was to appear in the forthcoming volume of *Shakespeare Survey*. But although I read his article while in England, I do not now recall his very words in the various contexts.

were chocked and unable to utter the words". Furness, however, continues: "But Desdemona's next question ("How? unlawfully?") shows clearly, I think, that it is out of place here." On the contrary, Alexander argues that parts of the original speech have been distributed among the Folio and the Quarto, and that the speech should really be:

"That he hath—ud's death!—us'd thee."

This not only completely chimes with the situation and Othello's mood, but also meets Furness's objection.

One or two more cruxes, before I close. Here is Lady Macbeth's soliloquy after reading Macbeth's letter:

Thou'dst have, great Glamis, that which cries  
 'Thus thou must do' if you have it;  
 And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
 Than wishest should be undone.

(I, v, 19-22)

The Folio has no inverted commas; it was Pope who first inserted them, but he closed them at the end of the passage, as is done in the Cambridge Shakespeare as well. Hammer closed the inverted commas at the end of "it" in l. 20, while Joseph Hunter closed at the end of "do". Apart from the lineation, which is slightly different, Alexander's reading of l. 20 is the same as Hunter's. But how is the passage to be explained? I do not know how Alexander would go about it, but I am rather fond myself of H. Hamill's annotation. Lady Macbeth isn't balancing the crown of Scotland against the disappearance of Duncan: one is involved in the other, and to Lady Macbeth's clear vision "the two are one." The earlier part of Lady Macbeth's soliloquy is Euphuistic, and is riddled with antitheses. "It is therefore both artistically and psychologically necessary", says Hamill, "that her culminating remark should be antithetical. . . . There is but one thing which tells a man his duty. It is the voice of conscience. If he has a conscience it will speak. In the opinion of Lady Macbeth, her husband would like to be a man of conscience.

Thou'ldst have, great Glamis,

That which cries, 'Thus thou must do', if thou have it.

But, at the same time, the seeds of corruption have begun to mortify the categoric imperative within him, and so he'd have the death of Duncan—

. . . that which rather thou dost fear to do

Than wishest should be undone."<sup>1</sup>

I remember also another of Hamill's ingenious elucidations. Malvolio appears before Olivia, yellow-stockinged and cross-gartered, and the following conversation takes place (as in Alexander's edition):

*Ol.* God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so, and kiss thy hand so oft?

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1. *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Vol. IV, Part III, pp. 73-74

## SHAKESPEARE: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

*Mar.* How do you, Malvolio?

*Mal.* At your request? Yes, nightingales answer daws!

(III, iii, 31-34)

In the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition, Malvolio's speech is printed thus:

*Malvolio*—(disdainful)—At your request! Yes, nightingales answer daws.

The point at issue is whether Malvolio's words are addressed to Maria or to Olivia. The stage direction "disdainful" and the interrogation mark in Alexander's edition both imply that Malvolio, though piqued by what he must have considered an unreasonable request on Olivia's part, consents to give a reply to a social inferior like Maria. Deighton's paraphrase brings out the meaning clearly: "Yes, I will, for nightingales sometimes answer the notes of jackdaws, and therefore, I may without loss of dignity answer the question of a mere servant like Maria." But, after all, is this the correct explanation? Malvolio is under the impression that Olivia, the "Fortunate-Unhappy", had herself commended his smiles, and as good as commanded him to smile in her presence. When she now asks him, "Why dost thou smile so...?" Malvolio's natural answer is, "At your request!" Olivia is puzzled by the answer, and this Malvolio takes for maidenly blushing or confusion, and intending to help her out of her confusion adds: "Yes, nightingales answer daws." Indeed, even a proverbial mourner like the nightingale answers to the call of spring, indicated though it be only by the appearance of the dark-featured daw; likewise even Olivia, given to mourning the death of her brother, has responded to the call of Love, although it has come only in the garb of a puritanical steward!<sup>1</sup>

But I must close. Alexander has sent me back to Shakespeare, and having opened his edition I find it impossible to shut it. And Alexander is a sure guide to the multiverses of Shakespeare—of the Man and his Work.

*Concluded*

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Bombay University*, Vol. II, Part III, (November 1933), pp 14-15



# THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

## Rishabhchand

### CHAPTER XII

#### THE PURIFICATION OF THE MIND

##### PART I

Many things are meant by the general term mind. It is indiscriminately used for the intellect, intelligence, reason, thought, understanding etc and is even stretched to cover feeling and emotion. It is, therefore, essential that it should be properly defined and classified, its various functions described with precision and their hierarchical order clearly indicated, if we are to embark upon the work of its Yogic as distinguished from ethical purification. A certain amount of detailed knowledge of the psychology of our nature is a great help in the beginning of the spiritual life and saves us many a stumble and bewilderment. When the inner light dawns, we can dispense with the mental knowledge and know the whole working of our nature by spiritual vision and direct experience.

#### **The Chitta or the Basic Consciousness**

What is mind and how does it evolve? The term Antahkarana, employed by most of the schools of Hindu philosophy, is wide enough to comprehend all the principal subjective developments of the instrumental being of man in the Ignorance. It comprises, as we said in the last chapter, chitta or the basic consciousness, manas or the sense-mind, buddhi or the intelligence and ahankara or the ego-sense. Chitta is the primal consciousness, the basic stuff of our instrumental being, as it evolves from the material inconscience. It is mostly subconscious and mechanical in its action, which is of two kinds: (1) passive and receptive, and (2) active and formative. The chitta passively receives all impacts and impressions and "stores them in an immense reserve of passive subconscious memory on which the mind as an active memory can draw."\* Even the

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\* "The Synthesis of Yoga"—Vol. IV—by Sri Aurobindo.

things which escape the attention of our mind, but have been the object of our outer senses, are snapshotted by the chitta. These impressions form a chaotic jumble in the chitta from which they surge up into our surface consciousness, in waking and often in sleep, in various fantastic combinations. This action of the chitta is automatic and unpredictable. The active and formative part of the chitta is responsible for most of the impulses and habits of our aboriginal animal nature and the automatic emotional reactions, Chitta Vrittis, which rise in response to the outer stimuli. In plant life the chitta is the source of the sensations of pleasure and pain, comfort and discomfort, which have more a nervous than a feeling value. In the animal, a life-mind and a sense-mind evolve out of this primal chitta, and the nervous-physical sensation of the plant life assumes a mental hue and acquires a rudimentary mental value. And yet the mind that has developed in the animal is involved in the action of the senses and the hungers and craving of the physical life—it cannot get beyond them. From this welter of the chitta, instincts come and impulses; by it are formed the vital and physical habits of the animal, which are nothing better than crystallisations of the samskaras or impressions of its past evolution with certain characteristic evolutionary modifications. The chitta is an immense sea of amorphous or half-formed elements, out of which develop the various faculties and functions of the evolving being

### Manas or the Sense-Mind

In man the chitta develops the life-mind and sense-mind to a much greater extent than in the animal. The sense-mind throws out a thought-mind, a very elementary state of which we find in some of the advanced species of animals; but in the generalty of men this thought-mind is tied to the sense-mind and can, with a greater precision, be called a sensational thought-mind. This sensational thought-mind works on the basis of the data of the senses and cannot rise superior to them and move in an ether of unfettered thinking. Or, it works on the basis of the subjective reactions generated in the chitta by the outer impacts. But in either case, it is absolutely dependent upon the senses and limited to their reports. It is nothing more than a slight improvement on the mind of the animal—more elaborately and extensively active, but not very different in essence. Modern scientific training on its practical and technological side gives a wide development to this sensational thought-mind and is justified in priding itself on this achievement. Minute and accurate observation by a disciplined use of the senses and a construction of experimental hypotheses on the results of such an observation are certainly an outstanding triumph of the empiri-

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cal method of science, but, instead of being blinded by its glamour, if we try to assess it in the light of Yogic psychology, we shall find that it is the triumph of only the sensational thought-mind, which is tethered to the senses, and attached to life.

The ordinary human mind is not a mind of reason and will—it is a sense-mind. It is a crude organiser of sense experiences and of its own reactions to the external contacts. At every step of its action, it is conditioned by the stored-up memories and associations in the chitta and the defective and misleading data of the senses. When it reasons, it does nothing else than sway from one proposition to another under the varying goad of life's desires and preferences. Very often it does not reason at all, it consents to the demands and decisions of the vital (prāna) without demur, and justifies them by a specious pretence of reasoning. It is a mind which has not yet come into itself, not yet been able to disengage itself from the teguments of its nether origin.

If man stopped at this sense-mind, content with its extensive and practical functioning, which is so very conducive to material well-being, and not attempting to transcend it, he would remain a mere human-animal being and falsify the high hopes cherished of him. The *élite* of his race have, however, risen beyond it to the intellect or the buddhi and acquired the capacity of moving, more or less freely, in the ether of thoughts untrammelled by the senses and their material pursuits. This is a development, found at its high-water-mark, in the thinkers, scientific or philosophical, in which thought, cleansed of the dross of the earth and with its wings unfurled in a larger air, flies high in search of truth. This thought-mind, in proportion as it emancipates itself from the yoke of the senses, begins to seek knowledge for its own sake, and not necessarily or exclusively for an immediate life-effectuation. But it is in very rare cases, even among the scientists and philosophers, that it can range freely and securely in its native atmosphere and control and organise life from above, uninfluenced by vital desires and attachments.

### Buddhi or the Intelligence

Describing the buddhi, Sri Aurobindo says in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, "Buddhi is a construction of conscious being which quite exceeds its beginnings in the basic chitta, it is the intelligence with its power of knowledge and will. It is in its nature thought-power and will-power of the Spirit turned into the lower form of a mental activity." There are three steps of the action of the buddhi: (1) understanding, (2) reason and (3) intelligence proper. The understanding is only a form of the thought-mind which can be distinguished from the sense-mind by a somewhat more

developed thought-process. But it can hardly go beyond the data of the sense-mind, the memories and associations of the subconscious mentality and the reactions of the heart. It tries in its crude way to understand, record and arrange what is transmitted to it—it is a trafficker in raw percepts and concepts. In most men the action of the sense-mind is topped by the mechanical working of this understanding which constitutes their chief distinction from the animals, and their claim to humanity.

The reason is the next higher step of the action of the buddhi. It improves upon the first rough-and-ready arrangement of the percepts by the understanding, by means of a process of selection, by analysis and synthesis and a more elaborate and precise ordering of the various mental-nervous reactions and responses. Most of our cherished views and opinions, our standards of criticism and judgement, our aesthetic and ethical principles are turned out on this second layer of the thought-mind, the mind of reason. It has a will of its own which struggles with a partial or problematical success to impose itself on the lower mentality. Though more or less, like the understanding, reason too has to abide by the limitations of the sense experience, it has one advantage that, by analysis and synthesis and a new ordering of sense data, it can arrive at definite conceptions and judgements of things, instead of remaining satisfied, as does the understanding, with the first impressions and their perfunctory reduction to inchoate thought forms. This mind of reason is responsible for most of the theoretical achievements of the scientific method in different fields of human knowledge. By a masterful manipulation of the reports of the senses, and deduction from them of the general laws which govern the operations of Nature, it has armed man with great material powers and extended the horizons of his mental life. The reason has two aspects: pragmatic and idealistic. The pragmatic reason is bent upon life, the will in it is predominantly a will to creation and formation in terms of life—it drives straight towards concrete results. Whatever knowledge it gains by its logical process based upon the activity of the sense-mind, it hastens to utilise for an improvement of the conditions of life. It is sceptical about the validity, even the reality, of a knowledge that cannot be easily or immediately harnessed to the objective ends of life. This pragmatic reason has received an immense development in the West and is at once its glory and danger. An exclusive reliance on it is a great hindrance to the development of the higher powers and potentialities of the human intelligence. The other aspect of the reason is idealistic, which, depending on its powers of comprehension, co-ordination and synthesis rather than on analysis and differentiation, seeks to command a total or synoptic view of life and Nature. Not satisfied with the surface appearances of things, and the dull bondage of the human mind to the objects

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of the senses, it seeks to discover the rationale and purpose of life and the cardinal ideas that determine and direct the processes of things. But the success it achieves in this new orientation is qualified by its characteristic habit of discursive thinking.

The third step of the buddhi is the intelligence proper. It is an eminence of the human mind which, unless clouded by the lower impurities, can reflect something of the higher truth of existence. It is a seeker of Reality and a lover of Truth. It has the power to lift the human consciousness for a while out of the turmoil of the vital desires and the helpless suffering of the body. It has a wideness, a depth and a limpid tranquillity which, at their best, can be an ideal condition for the attainment of knowledge. A developed intelligence turns naturally towards infinity and immortality and is vibrant with intimations of our soul's freedom. But it is only a seeker of knowledge and not a possessor. It can perceive aspects of Truth or a sum of several aspects, but never the whole Truth; for, the inveterate dividing tendency of the mind vitiates all its attempts at envisaging the indivisible Infinite. Besides, usually, it leans more towards knowledge than towards will and fails to express fully in life what it holds inviolate in its vision. Its exclusive intellectual penchant for knowledge makes it often lose itself in the clouds and indulge in tenuous abstractions. It has also a facile tendency to imprison itself in its own ideas and speculations and refuse to break beyond them. Cured of these drawbacks, the buddhi or the intelligence can become our best means of self-transcendence. It is, in fact, meant to be, as the Upanishads say, the charioteer of the soul's journey to the Divine. It is the finest flower of man's sattwic development and a stepping-stone to nishtraigunya or a secure superiority to the knotted action of the three gunas. It is an intermediary between the Light of the Infinite and the life of the material world.

### The Three Truths

Three things emerge from this study of the hierarchical order of the faculties of the mind. (1) Each successive step of the evolutionary psychology of the being is an ascent to a wider and clearer consciousness and a progressive freedom from subjection to the lower determinism. The evolution of the sense-mind from the clutter of the subconscious chitta is the evolution of a consciousness that begins to be aware of itself and of its contacts with the world, and exercise its will, however rudimentarily and blindly, through its instincts and desires. The emergence of the buddhi or the intelligence, in its three successive stages, is a further evolution of consciousness and will and a considerable release from its primal involvement in the mechanical drive of Nature and its subsequent subjection

to the senses and their reactions and responses to the outer impacts, Vāhyasparsha. On the highest elevations of the buddhi, the consciousness of man can stand almost secure from the compulsion of Nature and realise its separateness. It can take the position of a witness and even of a guide in regard to many of the movements of Nature. 2) Each evolving gradation contains in it the potentiality of the next higher. The drowsy chitta contains in it and releases the sense-mind, which, as an instrument of the being, is more awake and alert and active. The sense-mind releases an elementary thought-mind, more sensational than reflective, and from that in its turn, springs the buddhi with its ascending scale of awareness and will, its increasing sense not only of detachment and freedom, but also of a partial control and mastery. (3) The ascent of consciousness towards freedom does not imply a rejection of the parts of Nature from which it has risen, but a greater and greater development and enlightenment of them, a progressive integration of them all into an organic unity, and their eventual sublimation into something beyond and yet sustaining them, something, for the manifestation of which all their chequered growth is but a long and purposeful preparation. The chitta of the individual being does not remain the same after it has released the sense-mind from it—it tends to become more awake, more refined, more orderly and consistent in its action. It releases out of it the emotive mind and the aesthetic, characterised by a greater rhythm and refinement. The impulses it then throws out are less and less blind and chaotic, and its shapeless hungers change into more defined desires. When the sense-mind releases out of it the buddhi, it begins to be more and more regulated and enlightened by the new emergent principle, which itself, in its turn, continues to gain in rhythm and balance and lumpidity of perception and will to co-ordination. One of the signal achievements of the buddhi is the mirroring of the soul or the Self of man. It points beyond itself. It is big with the supreme Principle of Knowledge and Will of which it is a lower derivation.

### The Double Movement

All this shows that a double movement goes on in each individual—one helping the awakening and release of the central being and its consciousness, and the other the development and purification of the nature. In terms of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, this double process can be described as the awakening and liberation of the Purusha and the purification and liberation of Prakriti. This double liberation is the inner sense and justification of the travail of the terrestrial life, and it would be sheer spiritual narrowness to ignore it. But is liberation the last word? A

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synthetic view of this double process leads one to conclude that not liberation, but a fulfilled perfection is the goal of life. Infinite perfectibility is the watchword of evolution. Liberation is only its first decisive step towards perfection. The Purusha, liberated (not separated) from Prakriti, and Prakriti, liberated from the shackles of her lower modes, unite in Purushottama, the Supreme Being, whose creative Force is Supernature. All purification in the Integral Yoga is, therefore, a preparation of nature for its final transformation into the Supernature. The graded emergence, development and integration of the various parts and faculties of human nature confirm this perfectionist view of life; but it must be understood that it is a divine perfection that is meant and not merely an ethical one.

But the obscurity of human nature is great and the entanglement of its parts, faculties and energies is well-nigh baffling. Evidently no ethical or pietistic tinkering can be of any avail, so far as the aim of divine perfection is concerned. The simplistic method of cavalier repression is fraught with serious dangers and ends more often than not in a dismal devastation of nature. The Integral Yoga, being a revolutionary intensification and acceleration of the Yoga of Nature, and fully aware of the confused complexity it has to deal with, proceeds in the natural way of life itself, laying hold of the motor springs of the organic being, one after another, and cleansing, purifying, galvanising, illumining and integrating them for the utmost perfection in a harmonious working. It represses nothing, maims nothing, cuts away nothing, but disentangles and quickens all and puts them in their right dynamic relations with each other. Surely, no human mind, however, wide and acute it may be, can be the guide and agent of this manifold purification. The Integral Yoga, therefore, provides for the Grace and guidance of the Divine Mother for this superhuman work.

In the next issue we shall consider the process of purification of the human mind, preparatory to the final work of transformation.



## THE SOCIAL BASIS OF INDIAN CIVILISATION\*

Sisirkumar Mitra

In a deeper and truer sense, the culture of India is a way of life, intended to prepare man for a greater life. Both individual and collectivity seek to achieve that aim through this culture. But each depends on the other for its growth, the latter on the former more than the former on the latter. Therefore in the social orders and institutions every facility was given for man to develop and grow in readiness for the ultimate end of life. The collectivity also took effective forms in order that they might conduce to the progress of the individual. And this collectivity too had its ultimate end in the realisation of a perfect Society, a perfect State. But neither of them could be a reality until the individuals comprising them attained their perfection. This is the intrinsic truth of man's social existence which is destined to be 'the Lila of the greater self in humanity, a conscious communal soul and body of Virat, the universal Spirit' That is why the spiritual mind of India regarded people in the mass as a life-body of Brahman in the *samasti*, the collectivity, the collective Narayana, even as it regarded the individual as Brahman in the *vyasti*, the separate Jiva, the individual Narayana.

The story of India's political development begins with the smaller territorial units that originated in her dim past in the physical setting of the country,—so important to its history. These early forms were created by nature—by rivers, hills and forests. Each of these developed into its own political and social existence, its own distinctive ways of life, its own customs and manners, its own way of expressing its creative soul, but all owing allegiance to, and inspired by, the common ideals of the country. Much of the progress of these units was due to the comparative compactness of the regions and to the freedom they always had to follow their own line of development,—a freedom which was largely Nature's gift to them. It is the marvellous achievements of these units in the Heroic Age that formed the bedrock of India's vast and unique civilisation, some aspects of which are being studied here in their essential aim and intention.

The political character of these territories was that they were auto-

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\* Mainly based on Sri Aurobindo's writings.



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nomous bodies, ready when necessary to acknowledge a paramount authority, a *chakravarti-rajā*, who, in strict terms of Indian polity, is the servant of the people, and the preserver of the Dharma. Monarchy was, no doubt, an important political institution, but centralisation was not the aim. In all Indian social and political theories it is the individual who is regarded as the principal factor, because it is he who has the initiative and can take the lead as pioneer and precursor. So in order that he may grow and develop to the best of his potentialities, and contribute to the enrichment of the cultural life of the country, freedom for him naturally becomes a thing of the first importance. This is how in ancient India the individual character of the smaller political units as well as of every single citizen played its part in pushing forward the general progress of the country. Each such group or unit was a free participant in the opulent life of the large whole of India, having spiritual, cultural and political ideals which were fundamentally the same for all the constituent groups. The central State in India emerged out of this larger collective life both as a necessity and as a natural development. The administration of this State was strengthened, among other factors, by representative assemblies for the deliberation of matters of common concern to the whole empire. And its growth was but a spontaneous outcome of the governing principle of the race: unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

The beginnings of the State in India may be traced to the Vedic times when the unit of corporate existence starting with the family (*griha* or *kula*) went on enlarging itself through the village (*grama*), the clan (*vis*), the people (*jana*) till it embraced the whole country (*rashtra*). More definitive forms emerged with the growth and expansion of the State idea, as a result of which there arose the *janapada*, a larger region inhabited by a community, which gradually developed into a *janapadarajya*, a territorial State and then into *mahajanapadarajya*, a larger territorial state, with the central authority vested either in a king or in a popular assembly, the *sabha* and the *samiti* of the Vedic age, or both, the latter always, like the Dharma in later times, limiting the powers and prerogatives of the former. It was this system which formed the framework and the mainspring of the mechanism of the State that evolved later in ancient India. And what is remarkable about it is that notwithstanding the changes made at different epochs in the shape and character of these political structures, the prototype of the smaller units in the form of villages ever remained the constant and vital factor as the foundation for their growth and progress, a proof of the individualistic bent of India's political being. Will Durant, the eminent American thinker and historian, holds that the village community of ancient India is the origin of all forms of self-government and democracy that have ever been evolved in various other parts of the world. Sir Charles Metcalfe,

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in his evidence before a Parliamentary Committee in 1832, stated that these little village republics of India which saved India's culture and soul from the disintegrating forces of political revolution retained their full municipal vigour even up to the eighteenth century until they were swept away by the onrush of British imperialism and over-centralised administration

The essential idea in India's social thinking centres round the importance of the individual or the smaller unit in the development of the larger collective life. The other feature that distinguishes it is its system of gradation and hierarchy in the social and political order of corporate existence. Individuals are not everyone of them the same. They belong by nature to four fundamental types common to any human collectivity. The law-makers of ancient India had this grasp of the psychological make-up of man in accordance with which they subdivided society into interdependent and cooperative groups for the general upkeep and progress of society as a whole. At the base was the shudra, the undeveloped man, not yet fit for the next higher degree of the scale, not having any marked intellect or creative power, capable only of unskilled labour and menial service; next higher in the scale is the vaishya, the economic man, producer and wealth-getter, the merchant, the artisan and the cultivator: the kshatriya is the next higher type, the man of power and action, ruler, warrior, leader, administrator: the highest type is the brahman, the man of learning and thought and knowledge

What made this system so effective and enduring was its ordered gradation of man in conformity with his nature and capacity, the psychological ideas that governed it, the ethical and spiritual contents that the thinkers and builders of society poured into those forms with a view to their natural efflorescence. Indeed, their constant aim was to guide man so that he might grow intellectually, morally and spiritually. And society, as a system of relations, was to them the necessary field for this growth. In his community-life man must be provided with suitable opportunities to fulfil these relations and serve society and in return derive from it the necessary help for his own development which, whatever his caste, was to prepare him for the supreme illumination of his consciousness, the highest ideal of brahmanhood, to which man is destined in his terrestrial evolution.

The place of man in his social life was determined by his capacity, temperament and nature. Birth was the first test, heredity also counted. But birth was not the sole determinants of caste. The powers of mind, heart and soul were other determinants. Thus, there were kshatriya kings who excelled in spiritual knowledge, and even wrote a number of the Upanishads. Visvamitra's attaining Brahmanhood is certainly not a solitary instance. Besides, the system was elastic and adaptable, knowing no rigidity in its working for many centuries after its introduction in the Vedic

age. Satyakama's example shows how broad and liberal it was in the age of the Upanishads. The later ages of the Epics supply abundant evidences of its elasticity. Marriages of princes and men of birth and distinction with women of an inferior status were frequent and their issues held respectable position in society. Some were leaders and heroic souls. Vashishta, Narada, Vyasa, Kripa, Drona, Karna and many others of questionable parentage were raised to the position of a brahman or a kshatriya for their superior learning or valour. All this was in accord with the teaching of the Gita which says that it is not one's birth but one's action and spiritual attainment that determine his *varna* (caste). It is this idea that guided the social development of India in the past, and it proved its worth as a cohesive force in the collective life for many centuries.

Then there are the four aims of life for whose harmonious pursuit and fulfilment the social organisation provided congenial opportunities. The first is *kama*, desire and enjoyment; the second, *artha*, material and economic resources, the third, *dharma*, the ethical conduct and right law of the individual and social life; and lastly, *moksha*, spiritual liberation. Here also the ancient Indian social thinkers showed their deep insight into human nature when they discovered these fundamental motives of life and prescribed legitimate means for their fulfilment, stage by stage, up to the highest which prepares for the ultimate liberation from darkness into light. The highest aim, however, has always been an ascent and liberation into higher and higher states in the world of the Spirit, which have to be approached through a disciplined fruition of the essential inclinations of man. Moksha is here the crown of all endeavours as Brahmanhood is the crown of the caste-order.

The four ashramas—stages of life—were another logical order providing for the harmonious development, elevation and progress of the body, mind, life and soul of man. The four natural periods into which life was divided were each a stage through which the cultural idea of living was meant to be worked out. The first period was of *brahmacharya*, when man was the student; the second was of *grahastha*, when he was the householder; the third, of *vanaprastha*, when he was the recluse or forest-dweller; and the last was that of *parivrajaka*, when he was the supersocial man. In the sylvan retreats of the teachers who were often sages or realised souls, the student used to have his training in various arts and sciences, in the four aims of life, all founded in the Vedic formulae of spiritual knowledge. Here the real objective was an inner preparation of character and knowledge. In later days educational activities shifted to cities where more importance was given to instruction and training of intelligence. In the second stage the householder made a practical use of the knowledge and sought to fulfil the first three motives of life, which done, he would be ready

for the third stage when he would retire to the forest in quest of the truth of the Spirit. Free from any social obligations he would live his days in devoted pursuit of the supreme object of life, giving his knowledge to the young whom he would gather round him for its preservation. It was under these great teachers that the youthful seekers of ancient India had their training in the higher values of life. In the last stage, he would break every remaining tie and wander over the world, all alone, with nothing but the Universal Spirit to commune with, making his soul ready for eternity. This stage was not binding on all, because few could reach it. The majority never went beyond the first two stages, a fair number came up to the forest stage. But the scheme was intended to serve and promote an integral growth and development of human faculties towards their consummation in the Spirit. Here also all the stages converge towards the last and the highest.

This order and gradation at the base of India's social structure has ever been one of the most potent forces in her corporate life which remained for more than four thousand years a source of strength and vitality to the whole race, giving it whatever security it needed for peace and progress. This is indeed an outstanding phenomenon for all time, certainly without a parallel in the whole history of mankind, this social organism so enduring in its vitality, so efficient in its working, so rich in its results. And all this because it was based on principles fundamental to the nature of man, and, in particular, to the peculiar genius of the people; self-acting from within, it hardly needed much of an external authority for control. Indian culture is a natural growth of this excellent social idea in which State and Society existed as components of the common polity, cooperating for the all-round well-being of its constituent individuals and of the composite whole. Their main concern was to see that every individual had the fullest possible scope for developing and utilising his potentialities.

The principle that governed the working out of this idea was the Dharma, alike of the king or the ruler and of the citizen or the individual. The Dharma is the ideal rule of living as expounded by the ancient law-makers, which was enjoined as much upon the king, but with greater strictness because of his greater responsibility, as upon the people, whose highest well-being and progress lay in the faithful discharge of the prescribed obligations of life. All through those glorious centuries of India's history when she rose to splendid heights in every sphere of her social, cultural and political life it was this Dharma that functioned as the shaping and sustaining force in the collective life of the race, and there were in every epoch monarchs and leaders who were keenly conscious of their position as the responsible keepers of the Dharma.

What was this Dharma? It was neither creed nor cult, as popularised

by western scholars. Dharma is a religious law of action demanded by the deepest law of our nature. It is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the right law of functioning of our life in all its parts. It is fixed in its essence, but develops in the consciousness of man and evolves through stages. Indeed, there are gradations of spiritual and ethical ascension in the search for the highest law of our nature. All men cannot follow in all things one common and invariable rule. Each type of nature must therefore have its own rule for its perfection. At the same time there must be some wise and understandable standard of perfection and rule of life by following which, in due relation to his own nature, the individual may rise towards the greater law and the deeper truth of his being, which is universal. 'This was the Dharma, special for the special person, stage of development, pursuit of life or individual field of action, but universal too in the broad lines which all ought to pursue'

When the individual performs his duties to God, to his family, country, and the State in the right spirit and to the best of his ability, he may be said to have lived the true ideal of his life. When the king provides the citizen with the best possible opportunities for his growth and development and looks to the observance of the Dharma by the citizens, he may be said to have followed his own Dharma. The individual, however, had, implicit in his Dharma, an even greater ideal to realise. It was to strive for the expansion of his mind, heart and soul. Of the mind through the pursuit of culture; of heart through the cultivation of kindness, philanthropy and sympathy; of the soul through the practice, in proportion to his inner capacity, of the disciplines whose psychological processes and results are tested and verified ones and are envisaged in the *sadhanas* of the various schools of spiritual thought.

These ideals lost much of their pristine force and greatness and became merely intellectual, cut off from a living faith in them, when Indian civilisation grew in richness and complexity and the old straightness and simplicity and the undefiled intuitions of the old days gave place to the complicated maze of mind-made interpretations and reasoning. Society was anchored to fixed ideas of religion. Birth, and not conduct and capacity began to determine man's position in society. The whole social system turned rigid, ceased to be healthy and vigorous, and when in the trail of foreign incursions, society was threatened, its leaders with a view to preserving its purity, as they then conceived it, closely circumscribed and tightened it to the stiffness of a cast-iron frame. The soundest artery of life-giving blood to the race began to atrophy and sap it. Yet, thanks to the broader spirit at work in the country, it still showed its assimilative power by absorbing large numbers of foreigners, Greeks, Sakas and Hunas. But much more remarkable is the

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fact that, despite all drawbacks, India was able to achieve the great things for which she stands famous in history. How? The only answer is, by the dynamism of her innate spirituality.

It is then the spiritual aim of Indian culture that distinguishes it and invests it with its unique character. And it is in the practice of religion that this aim is more marked and immediate. The mind of India seems to have taken its first religious turn at almost the very dawn of her history. To her ancient seers came the vision of the One Infinite who is beyond all mental and physical appearances and yet who is immanent in them as soul, nature and life; the eternal transcendent Divinity is universally present. The thought of India has always regarded life as a movement of the Eternal in time, of the Universal in the individual, of the Infinite in the finite, of the Divine in man. Her seers declared that man can become not only conscious of the Eternal and the Infinite, but can live in the power of that Consciousness and universalise, spiritualise, divinise himself by that Force. They held that the aim of man's life was to grow by an inner and outer experience till he could live in God, realise his Spirit, become divine in knowledge, in will and in the joy of his being. This is the deeper intention, the dominant motive of all the creative strivings of India, the truth, more markedly, of all her religious endeavours, the one universal credo of Indian religion. This was the Ideal to be sought by all according to the degree of their capacity, to be lived, to be made the governing idea of thought, life and action. Its origin traces back to the Rigveda where the Rishi declares that the One exists, the sages call It by various names.

The Indian religious mind never accepted the illogical idea of one path to God for all. It worships many gods but it regards them not as separate entities but as aspects of the One, any one of which is seized by the devotee as the deity of his heart as that suits his temperament and capacity or answers to his soul's need. This unlimited freedom of worship that Indian religion allows to its adherents is a striking proof of its breadth of outlook, universality and tolerance. It does not impose any fixed set of rules or dogmas on its followers. It not only permits but encourages any individual to follow his own line of spiritual development, respecting at the same time the right of others to follow theirs. It is this cosmopolitan outlook of Indian religion that accounts for the various sects, schools and communities that have grown up within its broad sphere.

But it is not a mere religious system. It embraces the whole life of man, because religion in India has always been a way of life by following which one can grow towards a greater life, a perfection of wholeness composed of the perfection of every part of his being. It therefore embodies along with its cults and rites, mythologies and philosophies, customs, laws and institutions which form the fabric of family, social and collective life.

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But in its present form, encrusted with various excrescences, the core and pith of it, ever so deep, has gone deeper down, beyond the view or reach of the common run, who are today far from its highest ideals. Nevertheless, a day is coming when they will be surprised with the fact that not only their own ultimate destiny but of mankind as a whole lies hidden there—the destiny of man becoming divine.

Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind. The whole range of its creation bears this impress. Its first sign is seen in the high Vedic beginning. Then comes the profound spiritual stir of the Upanishads; then the Heroic Age of the Epics when 'the Song Celestial' was sung. The sweeping flood of Buddhism is the next swell of India's soul. Next come the Puranic and Tantrik religions, reaffirming the ancient ideals. The high waves of Vaishnavism and Shaivism are thrown up by the South in response to the call of the Spirit, amongst whose inspired apostles were the medieval mystics of an undying memory. The modern resurgence is mostly spiritual in its origin and expressions. On every such occasion and in every epoch this upsurge of the Spirit in man, his vision of its light, has given a tremendous impetus to cultural, social and political endeavours whose fruits are among the imperishable achievements of India. Swami Vivekananda says that every movement in India had behind it a new stir of India's soul. That is why all her thought, poetry, art, polity, even material life, were illumined by the light of the Spirit, vibrated with the glow of an ardent aspiration of the soul. And a spirituality that inspired and motivated all these creations of the human mind could not certainly be a world-negating doctrine. It was a dynamic creative force all through the great epochs of Indian history. And there are enough signs of its existence in the Indian mind even today, although, for various untoward conditions, its expression is not as clear as it could have been, had India been less cautious in her imitation of extraneous ideas and ideals. Yet the efforts of India's soul in the past are an indication and a promise of the far greater glory that is waiting to burst upon her and the world around.

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# PROBABILITY IN MICROPHYSICS: ITS IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

K. D. Sethna

## 1

Einstein brought about in 1905 a tremendous revolution in physics when he dethroned Newton's concept of a universal static space and a time flowing uniformly everywhere—an absolute space and an absolute time in terms of which there could be a measurement of absolute motion. The principle on which this revolution was based may be stated as follows: "None but observable factors—that is, factors definable by means of physical processes, factors distinguishable by experimental operations—can be considered to be in causal dependence." Einstein showed that scientific apparatus, even if developed to the utmost perfection and given the most favourable circumstances, could never measure Newton's absolutes and he ruled that these absolutes, therefore, should never be invoked as the cause of anything in physics.

Twenty-two years later, Heisenberg brought about another revolution which struck scientists as still more tremendous. He declared that the very notion of causal dependence and relation, the very concept of causality was about an "unobservable" which no physical processes, no experimental operations by scientific apparatus could demonstrate! Einstein's revolution was in the realm of macrophysics—the large-scale world. Heisenberg's was the outcome of studying the small-scale sub-atomic world—the realm of microphysics. The centre of study was the electron, one of the ultimate constituents of the atom of matter. An early picture of the atom, which solved several problems, was that of Bohr: it took the atom to be a tiny solar system in which the electrons revolved round a nucleus of heavier particles. In this picture, the electrons were said to be travelling in definite orbits at a definite speed, and definite statements were made concerning their position and their periods of rotation. But soon the solar-system conception broke down. A whole army of physicists, including Bohr himself, worked for more than twelve years and proved that such



statements could only be made in macrophysics: sub-atomic events were shown to fall outside them. The relation of the electrons to the orbits of rotation within the atom was so strange that the two magnitudes—position and velocity\*—could never be both stated accurately at the same time of any microphysical body.

Heisenberg summed up this fact in what he called the "Uncertainty Principle," known also as the "Principle of Indeterminacy." He said that the more certain is our measurement of the electron's position the more uncertain our measurement of its velocity, and *vice versa*. When both position and velocity are measured at the same time, there is always an uncertainty or inaccuracy in either and the margin of uncertainty is invariably a function of that small but positive number which is termed Planck's Constant (roughly .00000000000000000000000000006624). To illustrate his principle with finality he suggested a simple crucial experiment which would convince us that the electron's position and velocity could not ever be observed at the same time with accuracy.

He declared that to observe anything we must illuminate it. To observe the electron's position or its velocity we must throw on the electron a beam of light. There is the well-known fact that nothing smaller than the shortest wave-length of visible light can be seen by human eyes. Visible light's shortest wave-length is of violet light, but the size of the electron is even smaller. Beyond violet light there is for us darkness. This, however, cannot stop observation, for we can replace our eyes by a photographic plate which is far more sensitive than they and which can record the action of light too short-waved for us to see. But, as the wave-length gets shorter and shorter, the radiation becomes more and more energetic. When we reach the wave-length which is so short that the electron is not smaller than it—the wave-length of the "gamma rays" given off by radium—and we are able to illuminate the electron and observe it with the help of a photographic plate, we reach also such energy that in illuminating the electron we administer to it a big push. Thus when the radiation can make the electron visible, the electron's velocity is disturbed. On the other hand, if we use light of the longest wave-length—red light—we have very poor energy in the beam and there is no disturbance, but the poor energy leaves the minute electron's position extremely hazy: we are as if trying to measure with a yardstick graduated to inches an object that is millions of times smaller than an inch. So, when the velocity is untouched, the position remains vague, and when the position might be clear the velocity is altered. There is no way to arrive at an accurate measurement of both position and velocity at once.

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\* In physics the term "velocity" connotes direction as well as speed.

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The crucial experiment to find whether the two magnitudes can co-exist with definiteness gives a negative result.

And, mind you, this is not the result of any defect in our measuring instruments. It is the result of the very nature of things—the nature of the electron and of light. No matter what kind of instruments we use, the failure is inevitable. The constitution of the universe is such that scientific observation will never reveal to us an electron having a simultaneous definite position and velocity any more than scientific observation will reveal Newton's absolutes. To suppose such an electron is to suppose something that has no connection with any mathematical formula we actually use in physics. If physics is to be physics and not metaphysics, the supposition is fundamentally unacceptable. All that we have simultaneously are indefinite, indeterminate, uncertain position and velocity.

Now, the principle of causality, as the physicist understands it, may be formulated, in the words of Ernst Zimmer, as follows: "When the state of a 'system'—that is, the position and velocity of all its parts—is known at a given moment, together with the forces which are operative in it and on it, the state at any other moment of time can be calculated." But, if our system consists of electrons or other sub-atomic bodies, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle immediately puts it beyond causality, for the initial position and velocity of not one single electron can be known. Heisenberg says: "If we state the law of causality in the form: 'If we know the present, we can calculate the future,' it is not the conclusion but the premise which is false, for we can never know the present completely in full detail." And he adds that, since all experiments are subject to the laws of microphysics, which is the science dealing with the world's final constituents, the universal invalidity of the causal law is proved as undeniably as the universal invalidity of Newton's absolute space, time and motion.

Lest it be thought that Heisenberg brings in complete irregularity in the physical world, we should point out that such irregularity would make physics quite impossible and that what he has done is only to replace, as Zimmer puts it, the causal law by a law of a more general character which allows us to predict from a state known to us with a specific degree of uncertainty what will happen within specific limits in the future. Instead of a strict calculus of certainty we have a strict calculus of probability.

If we like we may declare that the causal law does not consist merely in our being able to predict correctly from given data but in everything having an antecedent sufficiently accounting for its being such and such and that the substitution of probability for certainty does not do away with causal antecedents. Well, such causality is nothing else than the

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demand of the reason that a conclusion must have a premise. The calculus of probability is itself a system of causal antecedents: given a particular mathematical premise, a particular mathematical conclusion must follow. Similarly, a physical event cannot happen *ex nihilo*: it must have a sufficient reason in the form of a particular antecedent which provides the logical ground for it. Here is logical causality. Logical causality cannot be gainsaid and Heisenberg's Principle does not negate it. But logical causality does not require that the world should be such as to enable us to make certain or accurate predictions. It leaves room not only for the probability calculus but also for the actual existence of factors in the world which would make certain or accurate prediction by us of physical events impossible. To take extreme examples, the factor of human freewill or the factor of God's secret presence. Given these factors, complete accuracy of prediction by us is out of the question: inaccuracy logically follows and it reflects an element of the unpredictable in physical events. Logical causality is complete here. And if we ask what logical causality there is for God's secret presence we can answer that it is the omnipotence of an infinite self-dependent Being. Similarly we can name the logical causality of freewill by saying that it is the human soul, a spark of the Divine Being. Philosophers may argue whether human freewill and God's infinite existence are facts or else whether they are compatible with each other, but we are not now concerned with this problem. What we are concerned with is that Heisenberg's Principle leaves the concept of causal antecedents in the logical sense untouched. That is precisely his meaning when he says that the premise and not the conclusion is at fault in the statement: "If we know the present, we can calculate the future." The conclusion follows by logical causality and, provided the premise is accepted, it cannot be denied. To deny the premise is not to negate logical causality. It is simply to deny the confident determinism of classical physics which held that all the factors of the physical world are knowable, in principle if not in practice, by physicists and that ultimately these factors are particles with simultaneous definite position and velocity and that therefore on the basis of the combined knowledge of these two magnitudes accurate prediction can in principle be made, prediction which would lay down the future with a cast-iron physical fixity.

Science cannot do without logical causality, but the other kind—the deterministic—is a matter of taste, of predisposition. It is not a necessity for scientific thinking. Nor, we may add, has it any clear basis in macro-physics as distinguished from microphysics. There is a common error that macrophysics has nothing in it to throw doubt on determinism and

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that all macrophysical experiments confirm determinism. But Hans Reichenbach has a very pertinent passage on this point "It is not at all true," he says, "that we ever find strict laws in nature. For all that we observe, each time, is that a law has been approximately fulfilled; a hurled stone, a flowing electrical current, a deflected ray of light, when exactly measured, will never show the course prescribed by the mathematical formula, but there will always be little deviations, so-called errors of observation, which may be decreased by better experimental devices but can never be fully eliminated. How far, however, such errors influence the result of advance calculations can never be told *with certainty*. It can only be said that the errors will *very probably* occasion but a slight disturbance—but that is already a statement containing the concept of probability. Thus the idea of probability unavoidably enters the formulation of all laws of nature, if these laws are to be stated with complete conceptual rigour."

Science tried to raise probability to certainty by two means. If we pass to a large number of cases we change the low probability of the single case into the high probability of average occurrence. Thus the physicist, unable to say almost anything about the motion of one molecule in a quantity of gas, could make pretty confident statements about the average motion of millions of molecules. Another way of bettering probability is to look for as many factors of influence as we can and take them into account in our forecast. Thus the astronomer, in order to foretell a planet's position, considers not only the planet's own velocity and the diameter of its own orbit round the sun but also the perturbations from the gravitational force exerted by neighbouring planets. But science never succeeded in changing probability into certainty. All it could achieve was *practical* certainty. An irreducible element of probability always remained and, philosophically, there was no ground for belief that an unbounded improvement of precision could always be possible. To quote Reichenbach again: "At bottom we have here a question of a property of nature, it might well be that there is an absolute limit, short of certainty, to the increase of accuracy. In that case it would be impossible, eventually, to arrive at the making of certain predictions (or even predictions of approximate certainty)."

So we may dismiss the claim, anywhere or at any time in science, for an actually observed or observable operation of anything beyond very high probability. Causality, as scientifically understood, has been nothing more than a fond hope: no consideration on even macrophysical grounds can scientifically be adduced against Heisenberg's conclusion. As a matter of fact, what Heisenberg asserts is just what on the grounds of available scientific evidence philosophical investigation—in contrast to dogmatic

scientific thought—feared might be the case.

## 2

We have now to inquire what sort of entity is the electron or any other sub-atomic unit which lacks simultaneous position and velocity and behaves according to probability instead of causality. The calculus of probability employed by physics today is in terms of a wave-function found by Schrodinger in 1926. At one time it was thought that the electron is both a particle and a wave. Even experimental evidence appeared to confirm this view. Prof. G. P. Thomson prepared a sheet of metal, crystalline in structure and one-millionth of an inch thick, and sent a stream of electrons through it upon a photographic plate on the other side: the pattern traced on the plate was of alternate bright and dark rings—a result which only wave-motion had been credited with producing, for the dark bands would be made by the crest of one wave coinciding with the trough of another, thereby cancelling each other, while the bright bands would be due to the crests of two waves coinciding. Here was evidence as reliable as that obtained by photographing tracks, which could only be of particles, in the device known as Wilson's Cloud Chamber or by bombarding with electrons a sheet of glass lightly powdered with zinc sulphide crystals and proving, by the sparks produced, the electrons to be like small bullets, like tiny particles.

Physics was in a quandary. How could an electron be a particle in some experiments and a wave or a "packet" of waves in others? It was pointed out that a universal property of waves is to scatter through space. Ehrenfest calculated that a packet of waves occupying the dimensions of a proton would double its linear dimensions in a ten-million-millionth part of a second, so that obviously such a system of waves would soon grow too big to show the spatial properties of an elementary particle. Even if a pattern of waves could be formulated which would not rapidly scatter while a single electron or proton was pursuing an undisturbed path, the waves would scatter as soon as the particle interacted with other matter: we have direct experimental evidence of this in the photographed patterns produced as if by wave-motion. Thus, if the waves represented, as Schrodinger had originally conjectured, the electric charge of a proton or electron, how would we account for the observational fact that this charge preserves itself intact and the proton and electron maintain their identity and there is not the least scattering?

Could it be that the wave-equation was merely a mathematical construction to correlate certain empirical observations in which particles somehow seemed to act like waves? The doubt was strengthened when it

was clear that according to Schrödinger's wave-equation the wave of every single electron needed the whole of three-dimensional space! So two electrons need a space of six dimensions, three a space of nine dimensions and a small crowd of electrons a space of thousands of dimensions! Such waves can best be regarded as not existing anywhere except in a mathematician's conceptual space which can be allowed any number of dimensions. All considerations prompted a purely mathematical view of the waves.

Here two physicists, Born and Jordan, stepped forth and worked out the wave-equation on a statistical basis. Today no physicist ascribes to any action of actual physical vibrations the bright and dark rings photographically produced as if by wave-motion. Thus de Broglie, himself the first scientist to speak of matter-waves and start the train of thought which ended in Schrodinger's equation, remarks at the end of his book *Matter and Light* (page 256) that the waves have nothing except a symbolic character and only appear to be physical reality and that after years of discussion scientists have found it impossible to regard them as physical. Millikan has the same thing to say on pages 267-69 of *Electrons (+ and -), Protons, Photons, Neutrons, Positrons and Cosmic Rays*. Einstein and Infeld write on pages 305 and 307 of *The Evolution of Physics*: "The waves provide only the mathematical means of answering questions of a statistical nature. . . . The only physical significance is that they enable us to answer sensible statistical questions in the case of many particles as well as one." C. Mølle and Ebbe Rasmussen in *The World and the Atom* (page 110) sum up succinctly the attitude of physicists towards the waves: "The waves are only a convenient method for expressing how the electrons behave while passing through a crystal, the different interference maxima (bright rings) being merely the places which in such an experiment are struck by the electrons, while the minima (dark rings) are the places where no electrons occur."

In general terms we may state the statistical view thus: "The concentration or diffusion of the waves is proportional to the greater or less probability of a particle being in a certain place. The concentration or diffusion is not of any density of electric charge but of probability. Similarly, the uniform spreading of the waves is not such a spreading of electric energy but a uniform distribution of the probability that the particle may be anywhere. The waves are probability waves, an instrument of calculation, a symbolic representation of our knowledge. The reason why a symbolic wave can appear to behave as if a physical entity is that, in all experiments in which it so appears, large numbers of particles are involved, and what we observe is a statistical distribution. To take an elucidatory comparison given by Dingle: we may assess the probability that a single individual will be found at a particular place in a street. Let us suppose the probability

is greatest at the centre and falls off steadily away as we approach either end. The probability distribution can then be represented graphically by a wave curve but it will have no physical existence when only one individual is in the street. If 10,000 individuals are there, however, the wave will be visibly displayed by their distribution, and, taken as a whole, may be said to have a physical existence. Our knowledge by probability concerning the individual becomes by analogy from the crowd a physical characteristic of the man. But we must remember that the physical characteristic by analogy has only a statistical significance and is ultimately a mathematical invention and there is no actual wave 'out there'."

The explanation offered by Born and Jordan not only resolves the contradiction between wave and particle but shows itself to be just what one would expect on account of Heisenberg's Principle. If definite position leaves velocity utterly indefinite and *vice versa*, then in an experiment like Prof. Thomson's in which there is a crystalline sieve with holes just big enough to let one electron pass through each at a time and thus accurately define its position we can never know anything as to where the electron will strike the photographic plate since the speed and the direction—the two components of velocity—must become quite indefinite. Perforce we have to do with probability derived from studying the pattern formed by aggregates of electrons falling on the plate. The wave-equation describes the pattern, but Heisenberg's Principle is the rationale of the wave-equation and renders intelligible why it is an equation not about actual waves but about probabilities of particles.

So what is "out there" is only the particle. However, let us not take this statement too simply. Since the laws of wave-mechanics relate fundamentally to crowds and not individuals and since the elementary laws about the particle cannot be formulated by specifying positions and velocities at any instant in the simple manner of classical physics, we are left eternally unable to describe as a precise happening in space and time what a particle does. The single particle, therefore, is not like the particle of classical physics. Some scientists hold that there is no real difference so far as position and velocity are concerned and that the particle of modern physics is always in a certain position and is moving at a certain velocity but only our knowledge of that position and velocity is not precise because any attempt we make to measure them necessarily interferes with them. These scientists would say that causality is really operative although we are confined to the probability calculus. But the bulk of opinion is against them: the whole methodology of physics runs counter to their assumption. The basis of modern physics—the rejection of what is "unobservable" in very principle—will give them no standing ground.

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What the basis of modern physics permits is best indicated by an analogy employed by Whittaker on page 145 of *From Euclid to Eddington*. "Suppose," writes Whittaker, "that a child with a penny comes to an automatic machine which supplies chocolate when the penny is put in one slot, and sweets when the penny is put in the other slot. Since he has only one penny, he can get either chocolate or sweets, but not both; from the fact that he can get either at will, is he justified in concluding that they are both present in the machine? Not necessarily; for it is possible to imagine that there is a kind of paste in the machine which is converted into chocolate by his inserting the penny into one slot and into sweets by his inserting the penny into the other. If this latter explanation is correct, then it is possible to imagine the machine fitted with a number of other slots, such that by inserting the penny into any one of them a confection is obtained which is intermediate in some proportion between chocolate and sweets. This is analogous to the situation which exists in atomic physics. If we consider one of the elementary entities we can have an accurate knowledge of its position, combined with complete ignorance as to its velocity, or we can have an accurate knowledge of its velocity, combined with complete ignorance as to its position, or we can have a simultaneous partial knowledge of both, but there is no justification for assuming that the entity is a particle in the old sense, possessing simultaneously an exact position and an exact velocity. We have no right to postulate the existence of entities which lie beyond the knowledge actually obtainable by observation, and which have no part in the prediction of future events. Thus the classical concept of a particle must be discarded: in its stead there has been introduced a new fundamental element in the description of the external world, which is called a *state*."

On page 146 Whittaker has some further illuminating remarks to make: "The method of theoretical physics is essentially to analyse a complicated situation into an aggregate of elementary situations, each of which is governed by some simple law. Thus in the ordinary Newtonian mechanics of a system of bodies the interactions of the bodies are analysed into forces between pairs of particles, and indeed throughout classical theory the ultimate elementary bodies are generally conceived as particles, each occupying a particular point of space at a particular moment, so that the concepts by aid of which the resolution is effected are the concepts of space and time. The great discovery of the present century has been that in atomic physics this method of analysis is wrong: the blurring or imperfect definition, which has been described, simply expresses the fact that the true elementary constituents of nature have not the properties characteristic of Newtonian particles. There are events which extend over more than one point of space and more than one instant of time and which yet are *ultimate*



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events: that is, they cannot be analysed into anything simpler than themselves. These are precisely the 'states' of quantum mechanics."

To distinguish the modern particle from the classical and invest it with the meaning of the term "state", we may coin the portmanteau word "statile." This particle is inherently devoid of factors which would allow us to apply the law of causality to physical phenomena, and there is, within specified limits, an inherent indefiniteness in nature. The probability law must be accepted as primary: it cannot be superseded by a more fundamental law of a deterministic kind. To quote Whittaker again: "Kant said, quite justly, that regularity in occurrence is a necessary presumption of the science of physics. He supposed (erroneously) that these regularities must always be of the kind that we meet with in molar (macroscopic) physics, namely, that they must be deterministic as regards individual events; but this is not so. The regularities on which the science of physics is based are statistical regularities, and do not involve complete determinism."

### 3

Now the question is: How are we to understand statistical regularities, how are we to conceive the probability calculus functioning? According to this calculus, when we are concerned with a large number of "stattles" the indefinitenesses or unpredictable variations of individual "stattles" reduce themselves to an average of uniformity so that what is a marked probability for one "statile" becomes nearly a certainty for millions and the general indefinitenesses or unpredictable variations of individual "stattles" reduce themselves to an average of uniformity so that what is a marked probability for one "statile" becomes nearly a certainty for millions and the general indefiniteness becomes imperceptible to the point nearly of non-existence. The practical certainty that is the result is sought to be explained on the analogy of the mathematics of coin-tossing. Provided the conditions of the toss remain the same throughout, if we toss a coin twice the odds are three to one against it coming heads down both times; seven to one, if we toss it three times; fifteen to one, if four times; until, if we toss it a million times, the odds against it being always heads becomes almost inconceivably great and we shall have as good as equal chances of heads and tails. An average of uniformity will be attained—the uncertain variations will practically disappear by cancelling one another and also accurate prediction will be possible. Similarly, predictions such as of eclipses are said to be correctly made because, although the individual "stattles" composing the physical bodies taking part in an eclipse have an unpredictable nature, a huge crowd of these "stattles" are involved. In other words, large-scale pheno-

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mena seem to be governed practically by causal laws simply on account of an enormous quantity in them of indefinite "staticles".

This description of uncertainty getting metamorphosed into what seems its very opposite is open to serious criticism. But before we criticise, it may be mentioned that we are not talking of "subjective" probability. The abandonment of the causal law and the acceptance of indefiniteness in nature itself signify that the merely probable correctness of prophecies as to nature is here not due just to human ignorance failing to measure with accuracy a causal operation. Probability is "objective," and statistical regularities such as those of aggregates of electrons are a fundamental trend in natural events. But the fact that a statistical regularity, for all its apparent certainty, remains nothing else than a matter of extremely high probability means that at any moment what is assuredly predicted may not come to pass. Actually the million tosses of a coin might all in succession give us heads! This is always on the cards in a probability calculation. And it is so not because any outside forces might work on the situation. No matter if the conditions of the toss are the same throughout, the unexpected can happen. Probability never rules out the unexpected. Nor is there the least force in it to relegate the unexpected to some remote future and prevent it from occurring the very next minute. If probability by itself were the law of the universe, there would be no explanation of the large uniformities we observe in macrophysics. Automatically and without needing extraneous influence the predicted eclipses should on occasion show sudden non-occurrences and even the sun should be seen as not rising one time or another during the long procession of the ages. Why is there such marked regularity in nature? The probability calculus, as illustrated by coin-tossing, has no satisfying answer.

To explain the marked regularity in nature a comparison is also often drawn between it and the data on which life-insurance companies proceed. The actuary is able to predict that so many people of a given age will die each year, though the death of any individual is unpredictable. From a host of accidents a statistical law of probability emerges, by means of which prediction is possible. But would the actuary's generalisations hold good unless the individual deaths from road accidents, diseases and suicides, however unpredictable, were as a matter of fact somehow systematic? Is it logical to expect regularity in the mass without postulating regularity in detail? If we argue that human beings have freewill and that therefore the unpredictableness of individual deaths is, in at least part, undeniable even though the actuary's general prediction is correct, we do not yet show how the partially unpredictable events get systematised on the whole. In forming a mass, individual events with some degree of unpredictableness owing to freewill can only go on aggregating their degrees: there is no rea-

son for practical certainty of forecast to result. The overall regularity must involve a process controlling the individuals. This logic is irrefragable—from human beings down to electrons. Of course, the phrase “process controlling the individuals” or the phrase “regularity in detail” does not mean that every electron behaves altogether in the same manner, but it does mean that the electron has a behaviour not independent of a systematising and integrating factor, for which the concept of probability, as commonly advanced, has no place.

By analogy with neither coin-tossing nor insurance-company procedure can the probability calculus serve to provide a rationale for the marked regularity in nature. Must, then, the old causality come back—operating secretly? Must we endorse the opinion of D. J. Struik: “Statistical regularity is a result of causal relationships. No probability without causality”? Well, the old causal law cannot be accepted—unless we wish to negate the very principle on which modern physics is based. The negation would not only bring back the causal law but at the same time shut out both the confirmed contents of relativity theory and the proved findings of quantum study. A return to classical physics is impossible: a specific indefiniteness at the bottom of things has to be retained and also made to cope with the practical definiteness we meet with in the case of large aggregates of nature’s fundamental constituents. But if the probability-concept in its usual form will not do and the causal law is taboo, what is to be postulated?

The only answer is that the probability-concept has to be infused with a new meaning. Into the initial indefiniteness as well as into the ultimate regularity a common factor is to be read by which they get connected—a strange factor X working both in the details and in the ensemble and somehow controlling the variations of the details so as to produce regularities in the ensemble although in the details there seems nothing to bring into being any limitation. Since probability is the law of the entire universe, X must be in operation everywhere with its dual function—it must be the single activity which by that dual function is responsible for our universe proceeding as it does. In the absence of determinism no less than of other logical alternatives on the purely physical level, X must be a free self-governing factor—an apparent randomness within a self-specified range, which is yet systematic and integrative by its own uncompelled nature. And this freedom implies that the regularities we observe are not themselves something we can always count upon: at any time X may cease to make predictability possible: the probability calculus is only our mathematical reading of its general process—this calculus cannot be a binding law.

These are the terms to which modern physics will have to be reduced

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in the problem of probability. Without them the old deterministic causal law cannot be convincingly abandoned. Curious indeed are the terms and there may be a feeling that it would be better for science if the freely self-governing factor X could be avoided, for X unmistakably suggests some basic World-Will secretly deployed according to its own conscious plan. But, really, to accept this factor is nothing contrary to the temper of modern physics. All that we have to ensure is that the principle of rejecting the unobservable is not broken. That principle is upheld so long as no observable is denied. The law of causality can be brought in only by denying the essential unpredictableness of observable primary phenomena. What we have done is just to supply the ground, the sufficient reason, for the observables concerned being what they are. They are correlated without being denied. Physics illegitimately becomes metaphysics when observables, instead of being explained, are explained away. If, without denying or quibbling over them, we correlate them by a concept whose full significance may not be compassed by scientific apparatus and may even involve a sort of mystical content, we do not act the metaphysician in a manner which the guiding principle of physics rules out—provided, of course, this concept can exclusively hold the field.

There seems to be no sign of any other concept adequately solving the difficulties we have raised. Thus quite legitimately we may say that modern physics suggests a universal Intelligence hidden at the very heart of things, acting elusively through all entities—obscurely in material forms and more overtly in organic nature and with a semi-revelation of itself in humanity.

The tracing of that universal Intelligence's elusive power through the probability calculus illuminates also the hints found of a mysterious presence through the postulate of the "stacicle". At once we realise the significance of the postulate. For, the elementary and primal body or event which bafflingly extends over more than one point of space and over more than one instant of time and thus escapes all final analysis by physical concepts of space-unit and time-unit—what else can this "stacicle" with its inherent indefiniteness and natural indeterminacy be except a free transcendent Being's self-manifestation in the terms of microphysics—

A magic's process in a magical space,  
An unintelligible miracle's depths  
Whose source is lost in the Ineffable?