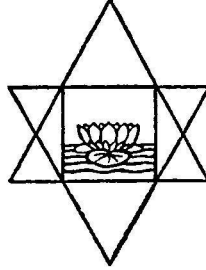


# MOTHER INDIA

JULY 1953

Price: Re. 1.



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

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

### THE SCORPION-BITE INCIDENT

IN September 1935, a very strange incident occurred; it created quite a stir in the Ashram. At that time Dr. Becharlal and I were working in the dispensary. After the day's work we shut the doors and went out—Dr. Becharlal to the pier for his usual walk, and I to a friend's place. J, another friend of mine, who often used to come to the dispensary to help me, also went to the pier at this time. That particular evening he somehow did not enjoy his stroll and instead had what he called "a very repulsive feeling" when he arrived at the pier, and distinctly felt that he should go back to the dispensary. When he went there, he found a number of people collected near the entrance, knocking at the door; they were waiting for me. J inquired what had happened, and was told that a sadhak, Badri Prasad, had been bitten by a scorpion, and required immediate medical help. He at once hastened to fetch me. I asked him to find Dr. Becharlal, and bring him also to the dispensary. He went to the pier looking for the doctor. After going a little distance he met Dr. Becharlal, who was returning without finishing his walk; he said that somehow he did not feel like going to the pier that day. I was a little baffled by the whole incident. So I asked Sri Aurobindo whether there was some Force working behind which had drawn all of us to the required spot at the right time to save an ashramite, or the whole thing was just an accident.

#### *Sri Aurobindo's Reply*

No, of course not. But they seem so to all who live in their outward vision only. "Coincidence the scientists do them call." But anyone with some intelligence and power of observation who lives more in an inward consciousness can see the play of invisible forces at every step which act on men and bring about events without their knowing about the instrumentation. The difference created by Yoga or by an inner consciousness—for there are people like

Socrates who develop or have some inner consciousness without Yoga—is that one becomes conscious of these invisible forces and can also consciously profit by them or use and direct them. That is all.

These things manifest differently, in a different form or transcription in different people. If it had been Socrates and not Becharlal who was there, —which would have been useless as he was no doctor and highly inconvenient to you as he would have certainly turned the tables on you and avenged me by cross-examining you every day and passing you through a mill of philosophical conundrums and unanswerable questions— but still if he had been there he would have felt it as an intimation from his daemon, “Turn back, Socrates; it is at the Ashram that you ought to be now”. Another might have felt an intuition that something was up at the Ashram. Yet another would have heard a voice or suggestion saying “If you went back at once it would be useful”— or simply “Go back, back; quick, quick” without any reason. A fourth would have seen a scorpion wriggling about with its sting ready. A fifth would have seen the agonised face of Badri Prasad and wondered whether he had a tooth-ache or a stomach-ache. In B’s case it was simply an unfeelt force that changed his mind in a way that seemed casual but was purposeful, and this obscure way is the one in which it acts most often with most people. So that’s thus.

8-9-1935

MYSELF: Did you not have a presentiment of what was going to happen? If so, you must have acted through the three of us.

SRI AUROBINDO: I was not speaking of any personal action but of the play of forces which happens everywhere, but is of course more mastered here because of our presence and the work done.

MYSELF: Then it means that there is no such thing as accident, chance, or coincidence; all is predetermined—all is a play of forces.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have not said that everything is rigidly predetermined. Play of forces does not mean that. What I said was that behind visible events in the world there is always a mass of invisible forces at work unknown to the outward minds of men and by Yoga, (by going inward and establishing a conscious connection with the Cosmic Self and Force and forces) one can become conscious of these forces, intervene consciously in the play, to some extent at least determine the result of the play. All that has nothing to do with predeter-

mination. On the contrary one watches how things develop and gives a push here and a push there when possible or when needed. There is nothing in all that to contradict the great Sir C. V. Raman.<sup>1</sup> Only when he says these things are games of chance, he is merely saying that human beings don't know how it works out. It is not rigid predetermination, but it is not a blind inconscient Chance either. It is a play in which there is a working out of possibilities in Time.

MYSELF: From the falling down of the bottle—Simpson's discovery of chloroform—down to the Irish Sweepstake, everything seems to be this blessed play of forces, but not Chance! The bottle had to fall for the great discovery!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why shouldn't it fall? Something had to happen so that human stupidity might be enlightened, so why not the agency of a bottle?

12-9-1935.

MYSELF: Your friend B says that if there were such a thing as "accident", then one can no longer say that there is a perfectly uninterrupted order in this world. Order means a regular sequence. An accident can only happen by disturbing this sequence.

SRI AUROBINDO: That's nineteenth century mechanised determinism. It is not like that. Things can be changed without destroying the universe

MYSELF: I am afraid I am once again knocking my head against a cosmic problem.

SRI AUROBINDO: Very much so, Sir.

### PREDESTINATION, CHANCE, FREE-WILL

SRI AUROBINDO: Predestination and chance are words—words that obscure the truth by their extreme rigidity of definition. All is done through a play of forces which seems to be a play of different possibles, but there is Something that looks and selects and uses without being either blindly arbitrary (predestination) or capriciously decisive (chance).

<sup>1</sup> I had written to Sri Aurobindo that once Sir C. V. Raman had declared that all these scientific discoveries were only games of chance.

## MOTHER INDIA

MYSELF: The ultimate responsibility then lies with this 'Something' on which the play of forces are dependent, and then—no free will, no chance?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no question of responsibility. The "Something" does not act arbitrarily, paying no heed to the play of forces or the man's nature. 'Selects' does not mean 'selects' at random. If a man puts himself on the side of or into the hands of the hostile influences and says "This way I will go and no other. I want my ego, my greatness, my field of power and action"—has not the Something the right to say "I agree. Go and find it—if you can"? On the other, if the balance of forces is otherwise, less on one side, the selection may be the other way, the saving element being present, to determine another orientation. But to understand the working of the Cosmic Something one must not only see the few outward factors seen by the human eye, but the whole working with all its multitudinous details—that one cannot do unless one is oneself in the Cosmic Consciousness and with some opening at least to the Overmind.

There is no such thing as free will, but there is the power of the Purusha to say "yes" or "no" to any particular pressure of Prakriti, and there is the power of the mind, vital etc. to echo feebly or strongly the Purusha's "yes" or "no" or to resist it. A constant (not a momentary) Yes or No has its effect in the play of the forces and the selection by the Something.

I-7-35.

NIRODBARAN

# 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 Aurobindoman 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.*

“Synergist”

## SECTION II: MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

### (1) A VISION

SADHAK: Today, after my return from Pranam, I saw near my forehead an ocean-like expanse of silver waters which contained a tremendously large pink lotus. I have never seen anything like this before—and on the lotus I saw a conch revolving in a large circle at a great speed. Even now I see it sometimes.

When I was in meditation just now I saw exactly in front of me, at some height, something like a large lotus, but I cannot say for certain what flower it



## MOTHER INDIA

was. It had the shape of a flower and it began to blossom, and a pure white light emanated from it in cascades. The light was shed upon my face. For a while the cascades went on; then at a little distance a brownish-looking object began to give off a brownish colour and, with the same speed as the white light, it started inundating me with this hue which was cascading, as it were, from below. This brown shade was opposing the white light. (I cannot say for certain whether the colour was exactly brown, as I do not know the names of the different colours, but there was a brownish tint.) This went on, but I cannot tell from what point exactly the colour was emanating. After this, a vast red light began to emanate and reached a great height, though I do not know how to describe it. After the meditation was over, and when I looked at your face I had various visions of your divine manifestations. The very first was of *Vishwa-swarup* (Cosmic Form) which was extremely brilliant. After that I had the *darshan* of your different Shaktis and whenever I saw a form I immediately knew whether it was the *Vishwa-swarup* or Lakshmi or any other manifestation. But I could not understand the significance of the last *swarup*, which was an extremely luminous, beautiful and sweet *swarup*. The one I saw first had three heads; the one that followed had five heads—what this signified, I could not understand.

SRI AUROBINDO: The silver lake is the spiritual consciousness and the pink lotus means the presence of the Divine in the physical nature.

The white light is the light coming from the Mother's Consciousness and it was driving away from you the brown *prakash*—The brown light must be the obscurity of the ordinary physical consciousness which was giving you trouble and stopping the progress, but now it is being sent out by the Mother's light.

26-1-1935

### (2) A DREAM

SADHAK: On the 15th I had a dream which I am recounting here.

I saw a very huge structure in which a number of people were working. The place where I wanted to go was very far away, but I knew that if I went through the work-shop I would get a short-cut. So I asked its owner to allow me to pass through. He replied that there was not enough space in the work-shop for doing this, for several people were working there; also, that the passage

was filled with many things, like bags etc. I felt that this was only an excuse for not allowing me to go through. However, on my persuading him, he agreed, though a little unwillingly, and sent a man with me to show the way. We began walking; the workshop was very long, but at last we came to the end. For coming out there was a secret passage. In front there seemed to be a wall, as if the road was closed, but to my surprise a passage opened out through two or three walls. In the meantime I saw a woman approaching; I began to wonder how she could have come in when there was no passage visible. The man who was accompanying me saw the woman and immediately hid himself. I thought he wanted to catch her, so without allowing him to see, I informed the woman about this by a sign. On seeing the sign, she climbed a tree and began plucking something. The man did not like this and asked me to return. I requested him to allow me to proceed, to which he finally consented, and asked me to follow him. We passed through one or two walls in an undescrivable manner; then he indicated a place and asked me to sit there. I felt that this was his last secret passage which he did not want me to know, therefore I continued to sit there. I also felt that this was the last wall we had to pass through, for the voices of people came to my ears, and the noise of traffic on the other side could be heard. I continued to sit there; when I happened to look up, I saw that the man was working with some key. The upper ceiling was extremely large—suddenly it broke into two parts and slowly began to move. I felt that the base was also hollow; I surmised that this was due to the working of some sort of mechanism. I wondered what would happen to me if the whole thing came tumbling down?

I was a little frightened at this thought; suddenly the whole ceiling came sliding down, and as if by magic it formed a sort of dome above and around me and I found myself a prisoner. I could not find a single outlet. Now I thought that my end had come. I was in a panic—but it did not last even a moment, for immediately I found within me quite a different attitude.

I addressed the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, "If I am sincere and if I have full faith in You, let these walls which hold me break into pieces." Immediately, with a loud crack my way became open; as soon as I came out I found myself surrounded by many people. Seeing my state they began to say, "A wonderful change,—a wonderful change."

I felt that my body had become like that of a god, that it had been transformed. I then had an experience of limitless peace and joy. Though I was

## MOTHER INDIA

very quiet and calm, yet my whole being was overflowing with joy. What does all this signify?

16-3-1935

SRI AUROBINDO: The workshop is probably a symbol of the activity of the ordinary nature which is so full of formations and activities of the ordinary mind that it is difficult to pass through it to the inner or the inmost being.

The walls with the spaces between indicate the different parts of the being to which the outer mind has no access—possibly, the inner vital (the woman may be the occult vital nature), emotional etc. The ceiling (yellow) may be the intellect or thinking mind which walls one in and prevents from getting into the open spaces of the higher consciousness. But through all a way lies to the open way of the higher consciousness full of peace, light and Ananda.

## THE SADHANA OF SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

### *Compiler's Note.*

*In recent years Sri Aurobindo's teaching and his Ashram at Pondicherry have attracted a great deal of attention. People from India as well as abroad who visit this spiritual centre are greatly impressed by its numerous activities and the perfect organisation of the collective life of its seven hundred and fifty residents. Nevertheless, many of them, though they appreciate the outer side of the Ashram life, find it difficult to understand in what way exactly the actual sadhana of the Integral Yoga is done; in the absence of a set form of discipline which they can see being followed by all alike, they are unable to have a clear grasp of the inner yogic life of the sadhaks and their spiritual development.*

*It is therefore felt that an account of typical day-to-day sadhana of different disciples written by themselves and published in the form of a diary, will greatly help people to have an insight into the working of the inner life of the Ashram.*

*The account published below is entitled: "My Sadhana with the Mother". This account is all the more interesting and valuable because under each statement there is Sri Aurobindo's comment—often brief, but always illuminating. As the reader will go through it, he will understand, apart from other things, the extremely important part played by the Mother in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga of Transformation, and how She and Sri Aurobindo have established a spiritual poise by which they act together on the sadhaks. He will also begin to realise how this Yoga cannot be done and followed to its logical consummation by one's own efforts, but only through the Mother.*

*"Synergist"*

### MY SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

#### THE DIFFICULTIES OF MY NATURE

May, 1935.

AB: Sometimes it happens that certain general functions instead of becoming

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an occasion for joy and happiness make us rather unhappy. This must be due to something wrong in us of which we are not aware as yet.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the old vital with its ego which comes up again and again. It refuses to follow the higher being and be as the true bhaktas who ask nothing and are content with all that the Mother does or does not do, because whatever she does must be good, since she is the Mother.

AB: I am aware that there is a small part somewhere in me which keeps itself aloof from the present working of the transformation. It insists on its egoistic habit—"unless the Divine loves me I cannot love Him," is its attitude.

SRI AUROBINDO: Is it a part of your nature that clings to these things or is it a movement of the general nature which forces itself in and the truer tendency in this part is overpowered for the time by the invasion? If it is an invasion the will and the psychic must attack it and fling it out. If it is a part of your nature that is unchanged, the light of the psychic and of the higher consciousness must press on it to change its attitude.

AB: What should be our proper attitude when confronted with obstructions, attacks and revolts on the way?

SRI AUROBINDO: Keep yourself separate always from all attack and revolt, regarding it steadily as the not-I—for these things do not belong to the true self, the true being.

AB: This afternoon I met X. A short talk with him had a profound effect on me as he is always full of Mother's love and joy which he spontaneously communicates to others. But after some time I was annoyed and depressed with myself because I could not receive the Mother's love and joy in the same way at this stage of my sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no need for sadness. Everyone has his difficulties<sup>1</sup> and it is a mistake to desire the state of another. One must follow the movement of one's own heart and self and psychic without looking elsewhere.

\*  
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<sup>1</sup> I soon found out that X's difficulties were much more serious than those of many of us.

## THE SADHANA OF SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

SRI AUROBINDO: (a few days later) You seemed to write as if X had some wonderful unique realisation superior to all others and therefore specially desirable.

AB: To remain preoccupied with the ideas of our growth and advancement in the sadhana seems to me like carrying an unnecessary burden on the path. Let our progress be always progressing. We lose nothing by remaining at times a little ignorant about it. It is enough if we are on the right road.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the talk about "advanced" sadhaks is a thing I have always discouraged—but people go on because that appeals to the vital ego.

AB: There are some people who talk only about the defects and difficulties of others, and go on praising their own sadhana. These advanced ones try to avoid meeting others.

SRI AUROBINDO: But who are these advanced sadhakas? How is an advanced sadhaka known from an unadvanced one?

AB: What the Mother wants is, that a sadhaka should complete his journey as quickly as possible without worrying about others, so that She can have one more hand at Her command.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite right.

AB: A sadhaka has to learn first of all how to establish an inner relation with the Mother; then only will he understand Her outer dealings with him and with others. Such a sadhaka, when he is offered any extra physical touch or nearness, would make it an occasion of opening himself to a greater love and joy or even to a new height, a fresh realisation.

But in the absence of that extra grace he would receive everything necessary from her usual modes of dealing with him. For her usual modes are not a mechanical routine for him. Rather they reveal to him each day something interesting, or some new meaning and significance.

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is written in this letter is the true knowledge. If only everybody could realise it!

AB: Since yesterday my consciousness is pulled down. Now it finds it too

## MOTHER INDIA

difficult to rise up again. In spite of so much inertia (the force of Negation), there is a complete absence of revolt or active resistance. What is the explanation?

SRI AUROBINDO: It sounds like the sheer inertia of the physical sub-conscious; it is the vital sub-conscious that gives the revolt and resistance.

AB: The spiritual knowledge is not merely a knowledge of the worldly kind. It is one of the aspects of the Divine Mother. It carries in it light, power, Ananda for its effectuation. (Sri Aurobindo wrote here, in-between the lines: "Yes".) For example, yesterday in spite of my aspiration and effort, the inertia in me did not stir a bit. Not knowing what to do, I simply prayed. The knowledge came, cleared the confusion in my mind, and enlightened it; becoming an active principle, it fired out the "heaps of my inertia" like mere wandering waves of the atmosphere! Thus the Mother's knowledge changed my tamasic passivity into a luminous and heroic passion!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is the transformation to be made. All inertia must become *shama*, the divine quietude, silence, peace.

AB: It is due to the Mother's special attention during my sleep that I could conquer even the sex attacks in the most sub-conscious regions.

To see no difference between man and woman except of the "physiological grammar" is, I think, one of the steps towards the purification of the sex centre.

SRI AUROBINDO: A very important step.

"AB"

## THE FUTURE POETRY

18

### THE POETS OF THE DAWN—3

IF Wordsworth and Byron failed by an excess of the alloy of untransmuted intellect in their work, two other poets of the time, Blake and Coleridge, miss the highest greatness they might otherwise have attained by an opposite defect, by want of the gravity and enduring substance which force of thought gives to the poetical inspiration. They are, Coleridge in his scanty best work, Blake almost always, strong in sight, but are unable to command the weight and power in the utterance which arises from the thinking mind when it is illumined and able to lay hold on and express the reality behind the idea. They have the faculty of revelatory sense in a high degree, but little of the revelatory thought which should go with it; or at least though they can suggest this sometimes with the intense force which comes from spiritual feeling, they cannot command it and constantly give it greatness and distinctness of body. And their sight is only of the middle kind; it is not the highest things they see, but only those of a borderland or middle region. Their poetry has a strange and unique quality and charm, but it stops short of something which would have made it supreme. They are poets of the supernatural and of such spiritual truth as may be shadowed by it or penetrate through it, but not of the greatest truths of the spirit. And this supernature remains in them a thing seen indeed and objectively real, but abnormal; but it is only when supernature becomes normal to the inner experience that it can be turned into material of the very greatest poetry.

Coleridge more than any of his great contemporaries missed his poetic crown; he has only found and left to us three or four scattered jewels of a strange and singular beauty. The rest of his work is a failure. There is a dispartateness in his gifts, an inconsequence and incoherence which prevented him from bringing them together, aiding one with the other and producing great work rich in all the elements of his genius. Intellectuality he had in abundance, a wide, rich and subtle intellect, but he squandered rather than used it in discursive metaphysics and criticism and was most at home when pouring it out in the spontaneity of conversation or rather monologue, an outlet in which the



labour of giving it the firmness of an enduring form could be avoided. The poet in him never took into himself the thinker. The consequence is that very much the greater part of his poetry, though his whole production is small enough in bulk, is unconvincing in the extreme. It has at best a certain eloquence or a turn of phrase and image which has some intellectual finish but not either force or magic, or a fluidity of movement which fails to hold the ear. But there are three poems of his which are unique in English poetry, written in moments when the too active intellect was in abeyance, an occult eye of dream and vision opened to supraphysical worlds and by a singular felicity the other senses harmonised, the speech caught strange subtleties and coloured lucidities of speech and the ear the melodies of other realms. It is indeed only just over the mystic border that his sight penetrates and to its most inferior forms, and he does not enter into these worlds as did Blake, but catches only their light and influence upon the earth life; but it is caught with a truth and intensity which makes magical the scenes and movements of the earth life and transforms light of physical nature into light of supernature. This is to say that for the first time, except for rare intimations, the middle worlds and their beings have been seen and described with something of reality and no longer in the crude colours of vulgar tradition or in the forms of myth. The Celtic genius of second sight has begun to make its way into poetry. It is by these poems that he lives, though he has also two or three others of a more human charm and grace; but here Coleridge shows within narrow limits a superlative power and brings in a new element and opens a new field in the realms of poetic vision.'

Blake lives ordinarily far up in this middle world of which Coleridge only catches some glimpses or at most stands occasionally just over its border. His seeing teems with its images, he hears around him the echoes of its sounds and voices. He is not only a seer, but almost an inhabitant of other planes and other worlds; or at least this second subtle sight is his normal sight. But his power of expression is not equal to his power of vision. When he would catch the very words and express the very images of these middle realms, he speaks very often things which are unintelligible symbols to any other intelligence than his own. He is unable to translate his experience to our comprehension. It is only when he casts into some echo of the language of the luminous children of those shores the songs of their childhood and their innocence, that he becomes limpid to us and sheds upon our earth some clear charm, felicity, wonder of a half divine elsewhere. Here again we have something unique, a voice of things which had not been heard before nor has it been heard since; for the Celtic poets who sometimes give us something that is in its source akin, bring a ripe reflective knowledge and a colour of intellectuality into their speech and vision, but

## THE FUTURE POETRY

Blake seeks to put away from him as much as possible the intellectual mind to see only and sing. By this effort and his singularity and absorption he stands apart solitary and remote and produces only a half effect because he has cut away the link which would help us to reach him and share his illumination.

A greater poet by nature than almost any of these, Shelley was alone of them all very nearly fitted to be a sovereign voice of the new spiritual force that was at the moment attempting to break into poetry and possess there its kingdom. He has on the one hand, one feels, been a native of the heights to which he aspires and the memory of them, not indeed quite distinct, but still environing his imagination with its luminous ethereality, is yet with him. If the idea of a being not of our soil fallen into the material life and still remembering his skies can be admitted as an actual fact of human birth, then Shelley was certainly a living example of one of these luminous spirits half obscured by earth; the very stumblings of his life came from the difficulty of such a nature moving in the alien terrestrial environment in which he is not at home nor capable of accepting its muddy vesture and iron chain, attempting impatiently to realise there the law of his own being in spite of the obstruction of the physical clay. This mind and nature cannot live at ease in their dusk day and time, but escape to dwell prophetically in a future heaven and earth in which the lower life shall have accepted the law of his own celestial worlds. As a poet his intellect is suffused and his imagination is bathed with their light; they are steeped in the brilliances of a communion with a higher law, another order of existences, another meaning behind Nature and terrestrial things. But in addition he possesses the intellectual equipment possible in his age and can speak with a subtle beauty and perfect melody the tongue of the poetic intelligence. He is a seer of spiritual realities, much more radiantly near to them than Wordsworth, has, what Coleridge had not, a poetic grasp of metaphysical truths, can see the forms and hear the voices of higher elemental spirits and natural godheads than those seen and heard by Blake, while he has a knowledge too of some fields of the same middle realm, is the singer of a greater and deeper liberty and a purer and nobler revolt than Byron, has the constant feeling of a high spiritual and intellectual beauty, not sensuous in the manner of Keats, but with a hold on the subtler beauty of sensible things which gives us not their glow of vital warmth and close material texture, but their light and life and the rarer atmosphere that environs them on some meeting line between spirit and body. He is at once seer, poet, thinker, prophet, artist. In his own day and after the strangeness of his genius made him unintelligible to the rather gross and mundane intellectual mind of the nineteenth century; those who admired him most, were seized only by the externalities of his work, its music, delicacy, diffusely lavish imaginative opulence, enthusiasm, but

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missed its inner significance. Now that we are growing more into the shape of his ideas and the forms of his seeing, we can get nearer to the hidden heart of his poetry. Still high pinnacled as is his flight, great as is his work and his name, there is in him too a limitation which prevents the perfect self-expression that we find only in the few supreme poets.

This was due to the conditions under which the evolution of his poetry had to take place and to the early death which found him at the time when it was rounding towards the full orb of its maturity. His earlier poetry shows him striving with the difficulty of the too intellectual manner of speech from which these poets of supra-intellectual truth had to take their departure. Shelley uses language throughout as a poet; he was incapable of falling into the too hard and outward manner of Byron or yielding to the turn towards mere intellectuality which always beset Wordsworth. The grain of his mind was too saturated with the hues of poetic vision, he had too splendid and opulent an imagination, too great a gift of flowing and yet uplifted and inspired speech for such descents, and even in his earlier immature poetry, *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, these powers are there and sustain him, but still the first form of his diction is a high, sometimes a magnificent poetic eloquence, which sometimes enforces the effect of what he has to say, but more often loses it in a flood of diffuse and over-abundant expression. It is not yet the native language of his spirit. As his power develops, the eloquence remains, but is subdued to the growing splendour of his vision and its hints and images, but the thought seems almost to disappear from the concrete grasp of the intelligence into a wonder of light and a music of marvellous sound. The *Prometheus* and *Epipsychidion* show this turn of his genius at its height, they are two of the three greatest things he has left to us on the larger scale. Here he does come near to something like the natural speech of his strange, beautiful and ethereal spirit; but the one thing that is wanting is a more ascetic force of *tapasya* economising and compressing its powers to bring in a new full and seizing expression of the thought element in his poetry, not merely opulent and eloquent or bright with the rainbow hues of imagination, but sovereign in poetic perfection and mastery. Towards this need his later style is turning, but except once in *Adonais* he does not seize on the right subject matter for his genius. Only in the lyric of which he has always the secret,—for of all English poets he has perhaps the most natural, spontaneous, sweet and unfailing gift of melody, and his emotion and lyrical cry are at once of the most delicate and the most intense,—is he frequently and constantly equal alike in his thought, feeling, imagery, music. But it is not often that he uses the pure lyrical form for his greatest sight, for what would now be called his “message”. When he turns to that, he attempts

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always a larger and more expansive form. The greatness of *Prometheus Unbound* which remains, when all is said, his supreme effort and one of the masterpieces of poetry, arises from the combination of this larger endeavour and profounder substance with the constant use of the lyrical mould in which he most excelled, because it agreed with the most intimate turn of his temperament and subtly exalted spirit.

The spiritual truth which had possession of Shelley's mind was higher than anything opened to the vision of any of his contemporaries, and its power and reality which was the essence of his inspiration can only be grasped, when it is known and lived, by a changed and future humanity. Light, Love, Liberty are the three godheads in whose presence his pure and radiant spirit lived; but a celestial light, a celestial love, a celestial liberty. To bring them down to earth without their losing their celestial lustre and hue is his passionate endeavour, but his wings constantly buoy him upward and cannot beat strongly in an earthlier atmosphere. The effort and the unconquered difficulty are the cause of the ethereality, the want of firm earthly reality that some complain of in his poetry. There is an air of luminous mist surrounding his intellectual presentation of his meaning which shows the truths he sees as things to which the mortal eye cannot easily pierce or the life and temperament of earth rise to realise and live; yet to bring about the union of the mortal and the immortal, the terrestrial and the celestial is always his passion. He is himself too much at war with his age to ignore its contradictions and pass onward to the reconciliation. He has to deny God in order to affirm the Divine, and his denial brings in a note too high, discordant and shrill. He has not the symbols or the thought-forms through which he can make the spirit of light, love and freedom intimate and near to men; he has, as in the *Prometheus*, to go for them to his imagination or to some remote luminous experience of ideal worlds and to combine these beautiful ideal images, too delicately profound in their significance, too veiled in robe upon robe of light to be distinct in limb and form, with traditional names and symbols which are converted into this other sense and fail to be perfect links because by the conversion they cease to be familiar to the mind. To bring his difficult significance home he lavishes inexhaustibly image on radiant image, line on dazzling beauty of line, the sense floats in a storm of coruscations and dissolving star-showers; the more we look and accustom our eyes to this new kind of light, the more loveliness and light we see, but there is not that immediate seizing and taking captive of the whole intelligence which is the sign of an assured and sufficient utterance.

He is in revolt too against the law of earth, in arms against its dominations

and powers, and would substitute for it by some immediate and magical change the law of heaven; but so he fails to make the needed transition and reconciliation and his image of the thing to be remains too ideal, too fine and abstract in spite of the beauty of the poetical forms he gives it as its raiment or atmosphere. Heaven cannot descend to take possession of the gross, brute and violent earth he sees around him, therefore he carries up the delivered earth into a far and ideal heaven. Something of the same excess of another light than ours surrounds and veils his intercourse with the spirit in Nature. He sees her earthly forms in a peculiar radiance and light and through them the forms and spirits of his ideal world. He has not Wordsworth's distinctness and intimate spiritual communion with Nature as she is on earth; the geni of the worlds of dream and sleep cluster too thickly round all that his waking eye seizes. He tries to let them in through the force of crowding images, brilliant tossings aside of the lucent curtain, *tiraskaranī*, which veils them from us: but they remain half-hidden in their means of revelation. The earth-nature is seen in the light of another nature more than in its own, and that too is only half visible in the mixed luminosity, "burning through the vest that hides it". Tradition governs very largely his choice of rhythms, but wonderfully melodious as is his use or conversion of them to the mould of his spirit, one feels that he would have done better to seek more often for self-formed movements. Shelley is the bright archangel of this dawn and he becomes greater to us as the light he foresaw and lived in returns and grows, but he sings half concealed in the too dense halo of his own ethereal beauty.

As with Wordsworth and Byron, so too we find Shelley and Keats standing side by side, but with a certain antinomy. They are perhaps the two most purely poetic minds that have used the English tongue; but one sings from the skies earthwards, the other looks from earth towards Olympus. Keats is the first entire artist in word and rhythm in English poetry,—not grandiose, classical and derived like Milton, but direct and original in his artistry, he begins a new era. His astonishing early performance leaves us wondering what might have been the masterpieces of his prime, of which even *Hypertion* and the *Odes* are only the unfulfilled promise. His death in the beginning of his powers is the greatest loss ever suffered by human achievement in this field. Alone of all the chief poets of his time he is in possession of a perfect or almost perfected instrument of his native temperament and genius, but he had not yet found the thing he had to say, not yet seen what he was striving to see. All the other high things that interested his great equals, had for him no interest; one godhead only he worshipped, the image of divine Beauty, and through this alone he wished to see Truth and by her to achieve spiritual delight and not so much freedom as completeness. And he saw her in three of her four forms, sensuous beauty,

imaginative beauty, intellectual and ideal beauty. But it is the first only which he had entirely expressed when his thread was cut short in its beginning; the second he had carried far, but it was not yet full-orbed; towards the third and highest he was only striving, "to philosophise he dared not yet", but it was from the first the real sense and goal of his genius.

On life he had like the others—Byron alone excepted—no hold; such work as *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, in which he followed the romantic tendency of the time, was not his own deeper self-expression; they are wonderful richly woven robes of sound and word and image curiously worked and brocaded, but they clothe nothing. The Odes, where fulfilment of imaginative beauty rises out of a higher sensuous seeking and satisfaction to an admirable sweetness, fullness, largeness and opulence and admits intimations of the ideal goddess, are almost all of them among the scanty number of the chief masterpieces in this high and deliberate lyrical form. But the real soul of Keats, his inner genius, the thing he was striving to bring out of himself is not to be altogether found even here; it lay in that attempt which, first failing in *Endymion*, was again resumed in *Hyperion*. It was the discovery of the divine Idea, Power and living norm of Beauty which by its breath of delight has created the universe, supports it and moves towards a greater perfection, inspires the harmonies of inward sight and outward form, yearns and strives towards the fullness of its own self-discovery by love and delight. Not yet in possession of his idea, he tries to find and to figure it in *Endymion* by sensuous images of a rich and dim moonlit dream with a sort of allegory or weft of symbols behind the words and thoughts, but his hand is still inexpert and fails in the execution. In *Hyperion* the idea is clearer and in bolder relief, but it is misconceived under a too intellectual, external and conventionally epic Miltonic influence, and in his second version he turns not quite happily to a renewal of the form of his first attempt. He has found a clue in thought and imagination, but not quite its realisation in the spiritual idea, has already its imaginative, sensuous, something of its intellectual suggestion, but not yet what the spirit in him is trying to reveal, its mystically intellectual, mystically sensuous, mystically imaginative vision, form and word. The intimation of it in his work, his growing endeavour to find it and the unfulfilled promise of its discovery and unique fullness of expression are the innermost Keats and by it he belongs in spirit to these prophetic, but half-foiled singers of the dawn. He lives more than any other poet in the very temple of Beauty, traverses its sculptured and frescoed courts with a mind hued and shaped to her forms and colours and prepares, but is never permitted, to enter the innermost sanctuary. The time had not yet come when these spiritual significances could be more than hinted. Therefore Keats and Shelley

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were taken before their powers could fully expand, Byron led far out of the path, Blake obscured in his own remoteness, Coleridge and Wordsworth drawn away to lose the poet and seer in the mere intellectual mind. All wandered round their centre of inspiration, missed something needed and stopped or were stopped short. Another age had to arrive which worshipped other and lesser godheads.

SRI AUROBINDO

## THE CONQUEST OF MOUNT EVEREST

LEAVING behind the dense outline of gloam  
And far above the moon-change of earthly time  
And above the vales under the spell of the stars,  
We have reached the calm summit of mystic snows  
And the white periphery of the stark Beyond.  
A superhuman mood of upwardness  
Has guided our feet to zones untrodden by time,  
Unlapped by the slow cadence of finite joys,  
Ringed by one lonely burning eternity.  
No wing-beat of swan, no scream of albatross,  
No humming of bees, no quiver and call of the soil,  
No distant spiralling of the hawk of night—  
Instead a wide and all-releasing ascent  
Undisturbed for ever by nature's dim heart-beat,  
Unspanned by darkling thought. A solitude grand  
Of hush stands moveless like a king of Day.  
The soul has forgotten its ache for zeniths unseen,  
The heart feels not the nostalgia for the unknown,  
The sense overwhelmed by the stupendous grip  
Of peace sublime is prone and lost. Height-thrilled  
The life looks up to the welkin's epic roof  
And the chilled and hungry body feels alone  
The unchartered silence of the limitless All.  
But the immobile spirit aspires within  
For a goal mightier than peaks of mortality,  
Yearns unappeased for the domain of the vast.  
A pinnoned thunder leaps from the God-sky  
To reveal the matchless face of a Noon to be.  
Our grey ascent then seemed a primal step  
Towards the Everest of the Apocalypse!

8-6-1953

ROMEN



## SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE GITA

THIS interpretation is contained in the two volumes, *Essays on the Gita* and in various parts of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. It is necessary for us to understand the real nature of this interpretation. It is not what we may call a merely rational interpretation—a commentary in only the light of mental intelligence. Sri Aurobindo has seen with the subtle and integral vision of a seer and understood things with the luminous comprehension of a truth-conscious sage. What he has realised and verified in his inner Self, he has given us in language that is comprehensible to the human mind. This is true of his teaching generally. He has grasped the Ultimate Truth of things and has applied it for the elucidation of man's many-sided life. In his presentation of Indian Culture, as well as in his exposition of man's social and political life, he has dealt with human existence as an evolving whole,—as a steady movement towards the Highest principle of Sat, Chit and Ananda—Pure Existence, Conscious Force and Delight.

Within the short compass of this article it is not possible even to touch on all the varied aspects of the Gita as presented by Sri Aurobindo. We shall have to restrict ourselves to the most salient features thereof. To those of our readers who desire to go to the original, we would suggest, as a preliminary, the perusal of Chapter III of the *Synthesis*, "Self-surrender in Works"—and of Chapters I and IV of the *Essays*—"Our Demand and Need from the Gita" and "The Core of the Teaching", respectively. In the former book, Sri Aurobindo calls the Gita the greatest gospel of spiritual works ever yet given to the race, the most perfect system of Karmayoga known to man in the past. In it, we are told, are laid down for all time to come the basic lines of Karmayoga in a masterly and unerring fashion. So far it is easy enough to understand. But has it any limitations, especially for those who follow the Purna or Integral Yoga? The seeker of this Yoga is not restricted to any path, to any method. He belongs to no path and all paths are his. His field is not a remote, sublime blissful beyond, all life is the field of his yoga. He has to grow from the normal mental consciousness of man to the highest spiritual consciousness. In the ordinary course of natural evolution there is but a "tardy method of slow and confused growth" at work. The process is thus described by Sri Aurobindo—it is "at its best an uncertain growth under cover, partly by the pressure of the environment, partly illumined and half-automatic use

of opportunities with many blunders and lapses and relapses...apparent accidents and circumstances and vicissitudes—though veiling a secret divine...guidance.” Yoga seeks to bring in the place of this confused zig-zag motion a rapid, conscious and self-directed progression, straight towards the goal. A growth into supreme consciousness of all the parts of our nature is the whole meaning of Purna Yoga. To ensure this growth, the integral yogi is forced to seek the aid of knowledge or action or devotion, or of all three as the occasion demands. But it must be remembered that “a Yoga of works, a union with the Divine in our will and acts—and not only in knowledge and feeling—is then an indispensable, an inexpressibly important element of an integral Yoga.” Still there must be no rigidity, no compulsion. Each sadhaka must follow his own nature; he must have the liberty to choose any method he likes to get over passing obstacles. The Gita speaks of action purified by knowledge. Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to be God-minded, to be devoted to God, to be a worshipper of God. Thus are the three paths interrelated in the great scripture. Sri Aurobindo sums up the position of the follower of his Yoga by saying that he should, even from the start, have an integral outlook; for him the movement should throughout be integral in its process and many-sided in its progress, “integral in its aim...but starting from works and proceeding by works, although at each step more and more moved by a vivifying divine love and more and more illumined by a helping divine knowledge.” We get some idea here of the connection between the synthesis of the Gita and the synthesis of the Purna Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

In studying the Gita we have to grasp, at the outset, the lines of the Karma-yoga laid down by it. Its key principle can be summed up as the combination of Equality and Oneness—the acceptance of the Divine in our outer life, as much as in the inner life of the spirit. To arrive at equality, a total renunciation of desire is demanded, and the oneness to be achieved must be as much in dynamic force as in static beatitude. The Gita proposes, Sri Aurobindo says, “a largest possible action irrevocably based on an immobile calm.” There is nothing in this that is unacceptable to Integral Yoga. But its clear meaning has often been twisted right round by the commentator for the purpose of establishing his own sectarian views. For instance, action has been interpreted to mean only action enjoined by the Shastras, and all other acts alleged to be forbidden to the seeker. Sri Aurobindo emphatically repudiates this view. We shall have to come back to this very important point, again and again, as we proceed.

The philosophy of the Gita sets forth the ideal of Karmayoga briefly in three formulas.

- (1) To live in God and not in the ego.

(2) To be perfectly equal always and to all beings; to feel all in oneself and all in God.

(3) To act in God and not in the ego.

The question is, how to attain this ideal, by what practical steps? Desire and ego-sense are the two knots by which we are tied down to ignorance. And these knots we must undo, if we wish to be free from bondage. We have to live in God, to act in God and to be equal to all things and all beings.

Ordinarily, man is guided in the field of action by an attachment to the fruit of action and by the craving for an inner and outer satisfaction by a desire for internal pleasure and for an external reward, such as money, power, honour and fame. The first rule of action that the Gita lays down is work without desire for the fruit—*Nishkāma Karma*. This can never be done by any partial or imperfect self-discipline, and the test is acceptance of whatever comes without being moved, in a condition of absolute equality, when good luck and ill luck, victory and defeat, pleasure and pain, make not the slightest difference to us. The complete liberation, that the Gita holds up before us, can be achieved only thus and not otherwise. The tiniest pebble of imperfection in the masonry may bring down the whole edifice of the yoga

There is a word of warning conveyed by Sri Aurobindo here, that we have to pay heed to. The equality needed is the deep and vast equality of the spirit. The equality that comes from disappointment or pride or hard indifference, egoistic in its nature, will not do, nor will the loftier equality of the Stoic or the devotee or the wise man suffice. What is essential is a true quietude. It is obvious that such perfect calm can come only by stages. Initially we must learn to bear the shocks of the environment with our central being silent and unmoved, even when the surface nature is being violently shaken. A certain amount of stoicism or devotion or philosophic calm may be of great use at this stage. But ultimately, we have to discard or transform all these aids and arrive at a perfect and equal poise of the soul.

But, will there be any action at all, when this poise has been reached? With the passing away of all desire, it would seem that all motive power has been removed and the whole machinery must come to a stop. Not so, says the Gita, "all action must be done in a more and more Godward and finally a God-possessed consciousness; our works must be a sacrifice to the Divine, and in the end a surrender of all our being, mind, will, heart, sense, life and body to the

One must make God-love and God-service our only motive". This divinisation of the very character of Karma is the key-note of the Gita. On it is based its masterly synthesis of Knowledge, Love and Works. In the sadhana indicated by this scripture, the first thing to go is the attachment to the fruit of the act, the second is the attachment to the act itself, and the third is the delusion that man himself is the doer of his act. To understand this, it is necessary to comprehend the Law of Sacrifice put forward by Sri Krishna in the Gita. In his *Essays* and in his *Synthesis* Sri Aurobindo has expounded this Law with remarkable lucidity. We shall set forth a few of its principal features.

The word sacrifice is, however, not to be understood in the narrow sense of a sacred rite—the pouring of clarified butter into the sacrificial flame or the killing of animals before the altar. "The All-Father created these peoples", says the Gita, "with sacrifice as their companion and said, By this shall you bring forth (fruits or offering), let this be the milk of your desire." By accepting this law of Sacrifice, the ego admits that it is not alone in creation and that there is beyond its narrow, limited existence a greater and diviner All, which demands its submission. The sacrifice by the man and the return by the god constitute the bond between man and god,—in Sri Aurobindo's words, a gladly accepted means towards our last perfection. The text of the Gita is:—"Foster by this the gods and let the gods foster you; fostering each other, you shall attain to the supreme good." In exchange for the offering in Sacrifice the gods grant the devotee his desire. But, warns the Gita, he who enjoys the benefits conferred without having offered it to the gods is a thief. Sacrifice is the eternal interchange between the creator and the created. But most often this rite is done unknowingly, without any understanding or acceptance of its import. The profound joy of fruitful divine sacrifice can come only when the mind and the will and the heart consciously cooperate with the Law. It has to be understood and felt that, as the Gita says, "from food creatures come into being, from rain is the birth of food, from sacrifice comes down the rain, sacrifice is born of work; work know to be born of Brahman, Brahman is born of the Immutable (Akshara); therefore is the all-pervading Brahman established in the sacrifice," Thus a wheel has been set in motion, an unbroken bond established, between the Highest and his creatures. He who does not follow the movement of the wheel in this world, "evil is his being, sensual is his delight, in vain does he live." But conscious identification with the World-Sacrifice cannot come at once. There is a gradual ascent of the sacrifice from the lowest rung to the topmost.

The gradation depends on the interpretation we put on the words Yajna, Karma and Brahman—Sacrifice, Works and the Divine. Yajna may mean the

Vedic ceremonial sacrifice as a means of gaining children, wealth and enjoyment—as a means of destroying enemies or bringing down rain. The works may all become Vedic Karma—that is to say, all human action may be turned into a sacrament by ritualistic worship; Brahman the Divine may be taken to be Shabda-Brahman—the letter of the Veda. Obviously, says Sri Aurobindo, this cannot be the true interpretation of the Gita. “Janaka and men like him gained perfection by Karma,” cannot mean that they arrived at realisation and liberation by the due performance of ceremonial rites; such interpretation is inconsistent with phrases like “*Sarvagatam Brahma Nityam Yajna pratishthutan*”—“the all-pervading Divine ever established in Sacrifice.” In order to grasp the Gita’s conception of Yajna, in order to understand the precise meaning of, say, “*Bhoktāram yajan-tapasām sarvabhuta-Maheshwaram*”—“the great Lord of all creation, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and energies”—we have to take Vedism along with Vedantism, we have to comprehend that the true nature of all cosmic action is a sacrifice. Just as the Gita has in a subtle manner unified the Sankhya and Yoga school of philosophy, so has it reconciled the highest spiritual conception of sacrifice with the physical and material, Dravya-yajna with the psychological Jnana-yajna. Likewise the Gita has reconciled the worship of the many cosmic gods with the adoration of the supreme Ishwara, by insisting that the Devas are only forms of the Supreme Deva, the Lord of all Yoga and worship and sacrifice. The following words of Sri Aurobindo’s are pregnant with meaning, “It is with this object of reconciliation in his mind that the Teacher first approaches his statement of the doctrine of sacrifice; but throughout, even from the very beginning, he keeps his eye not on the restricted Vedic sense of sacrifice and works, but on their larger and universal application,—that widening of narrow and formal notions to admit the great general truths they unduly restrict, which is always the method of Gita.” There are various grades of yajna mentioned in the text, such as Dravayajna, Tapoyajna, Yogayajna, Jnanayajna. “Some offer their senses into the fire of control, others offer the objects of sense into the fire of sense, and others offer all the actions of the sense and all the actions of the vital force into the fire of Yoga of self-control kindled by Knowledge.” What is common to all these variations is the subordination of the lower activities to a higher energy, the abandonment of egoistic enjoyment for the divine delight which comes by sacrifice and self-dedication. In the words of the Gita, all these forms of Yajna have been “extended in the mouth of the Brahman. Know them to be all born of work. So knowing thou shalt become free.” Sri Aurobindo explains this verse thus—“all proceed from and are ordained by the one vast energy of the Divine which manifests itself in the universal *Karma* and makes all the cosmic activity a progressive offering to the one Self and Lord and of which the last stage for the human being is Self-knowledge

and the possession of the divine or Brahmic consciousness." It is this knowledge that brings liberation. The very highest form of Yajna is that in which the act and energy and materials thereof, the giver and receiver of the offering, the goal and object of the sacrifice, all merge in the one Brahman. In the words of the text, "Brahman is the giving, Brahman is the food-offering, by Brahman it is offered into the Brahman-fire, Brahman is that which is to be attained by samadhī in Brahman-action." Absolute unity, where the One is the doer and the deed and the object of works. Knowing this and living in this consciousness is freedom. To sum up,—By action done for sacrifice and by abandonment of desire we arrive at Knowledge and are "liberated into the unity, peace and joy of the Brahmic consciousness."

*(To be continued)*

C. C. DUTT

# THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

## CHAPTER XIV

### KARMA YOGA AND ITS INDISPENSABILITY

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

#### PART II

#### THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF KARMAYOGA

KARMAYOGA consists in offering all the movements of our physical being, particularly the works done by our body, to the omnipresent Master of our being. Its primary rule, as the Gita insists, is the renunciation of all desire for the fruit of our action and all preference even in the choice of action. Action has to be done in the beginning as a sacrifice to the Lord of the universal sacrifice, *Yajneshwara*, as an individual contribution to the sum total of the collective evolutionary effort. "The essential of the sacrifice of works is the surrender of all desire for the fruit of our works, of all attachment to the result for which yet we labour, for so long as we work with attachment to the result, the sacrifice is offered to our ego and not to the Divine. We may think otherwise, but we are deceiving ourselves; we are making our idea of the Divine, our sense of duty, our feeling for our fellow-creatures, our idea of what is good for the world or others, even our obedience to the Master a mask for our egoistic desire and a shield against the demand made on us to root desire out of our being."<sup>1</sup> But desires can never be completely eliminated except through action; for, it is only in an active life that they rise to the surface of our consciousness and press for their satisfaction. In an ascetic life of inaction and passivity, they lie either coerced into silence or chafing underground,—they are not worked out. An active life presents every opportunity for all the lower energies of the nature to emerge to the surface; and in the Integral Yoga the very first result of the pressure of the Mother's Force is an upsurge of the dormant or suppressed desires and passions of the being. "Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you.

<sup>1</sup>Sri Aurobindo

And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them. The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free, they rush up and invade the being. So long as this mental control has not been replaced by the divine control, there is a period of transition when your sincerity and surrender will be put to test."<sup>1</sup> This does not happen in the case of an ethical self-culturist or a humanitarian worker, for their minds exert some sort of curb or control over the movements of their lower nature, and there is no higher spiritual force doing in them the work of purification in its inscrutable but impeccable way. Even in the other yogas, until there is a direct spiritual intervention, the mental inhibitions play the most important role and achieve, even at their best, a partial and precarious purification and a superficial ethical polish in the nature. In the Integral Yoga, on the contrary, the first touches of the Mother's Force rouse up the repressed or slumbering appetites of the unregenerate nature and compel them to be converted into their spiritual counterparts. It is to be noted here that when we speak of the elimination or expulsion of desire, we mean, not an extinction or annihilation of the energy that informs and impels it, but the egoistic forms it takes in the ignorance of the nature. It is the egoistic moulds that have to be dissolved and the blind drive that has to be stopped; but the force and energy that feeds them must not be crushed, but offered to the Divine for a supramental life-effectuation. When converted and transformed, the egoistic desires shed their ego-moulds and separative drive and unite and collaborate with the flaming Will of the Divine Mother, which then spontaneously fulfils itself in the individual nature.

What should be the attitude of the sadhaka when, in the course of his yoga, he finds his desires assailing him with a desperate violence? He is not advised to restrict unduly the sphere of his active life or hasten to curtail his activities in order to be able to devote more time to meditation and contemplation. In some exceptional cases it can be done for a time, and for a specific purpose; but the general rule is to give a full and unrestricted play to the energies of the being in the sacrificial spirit of desireless action. Desires may continue to rise and clamour for satisfaction, but they have to be observed with tranquil courage, neither neglected nor indulged, and offered to the transforming light of the Mother. If one renounces action, one renounces the very field of unloosening the knots of the ego and desires and converting the blind energies of the lower nature into spiritual tapas.

<sup>1</sup> Words of the Mother



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The rule of the performance of all action without any desire for fruit, *nishkāma karma*, is a very effective means of purification, particularly of the *prāna*. Every work must be done as an offering, as a sacrifice, in a spirit of consecration, as a service;—not only the important works of life, but every little thing that one does, even every little movement of the body. The Gita inculcates this spirit of detailed surrender in action when it says:

“Offer to me (the Divine) all that thou dost, all that thou eatest, all that thou renoucest, all that thou givest and all that thou practisest to kindle thy soul’s energy.”

When one surrenders and offers in this way all one’s action to the Mother’s Force, one shakes up all desires, latent or patent, and forces them, not by repression, but by an intense, detached and dynamic will, to submit to a spiritual conversion. This individual will, supported and fortified by the Mother’s Will, is the most powerful means of liberation and transformation. What is indispensable at this stage is a quiet, untrembling poise in the central consciousness, and a sincere and sustained rejection of all egoistic insistences. The quieter one is, the stronger one becomes; the more fearless one is, the greater becomes one’s power of resistance. And when one is in this poise of equality and calm surrender, one can observe each desire as it enters into one or rises from below, and deal with it in the most effective yogic way.

But it is not enough to renounce all desire and hankering for the fruit of action, one must give up all attachment to action itself. There must be “the feeling (not merely the idea or the aspiration) that all the life and the work are the Mother’s.”<sup>1</sup> It can be said that the ideal yogic work is done only when there is no overmastering need felt by the karmayogi for any work at all. To him any work appears as good as any other, so far as its inherent yogic value is concerned.<sup>2</sup> The essential thing is the spirit and the attitude with which he works. A work becomes yogic only either when there is an aspiration for union with the Divine inspiring and impelling it, or when it is an expression of the union itself,—the former is Karmayoga for union and the latter Karma-yoga in union. The common denominator between the two is the union; and any work that leads to it or stabilises and intensifies it is a yogic work. If the aspiration for union with the Infinite and Eternal is not there, then whatever

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo

<sup>2</sup> All work done for the Divine is equally Divine, manual labour done for the Divine is more divine than mental culture done for one’s own development, fame or mental satisfaction ”  
—Sri Aurobindo

the nature of the work and however beneficial its results to humanity, it is not yogic work. A karmayogi ought to be able to do any work to which he is appointed, and do it in a spirit of consecration and with as much skill as he commands and as much care as he can bestow upon it, but without any mental bias or stipulation, and feeling himself above the work—free in his soul and free in his nature. This kind of work is, indeed, *yuktasya karma or muktasya karma*,—the work of one who is not a slave of his work, but master.

It is difficult to have this freedom from attachment to one's work so long as the ego has not made its total surrender to the Divine. We may think we are free, but the moment our cherished work is taken away from us, we react in an unyogic way and betray our bondage to the lower modes of Nature. The best condition for attaining this freedom is to rise superior to all action and live in a state in which action and inaction become one. An authentic yogic action proceeds from an inner silence and a perfect detachment from all the movements of Nature.

There are some persons who are very active and pragmatic by nature. It is almost impossible for them not to be doing something or other all the time. When they take up the Integral Yoga, they feel secretly proud of their energy and capacity for work and naturally think that the quantity of their work is an index to their spiritual progress. This is a misconception of the very nature and object of yoga. It is not by the compelling goad of nature that the true karmayogi acts, as a puppet or a bondsman; he acts for yoga, for union with the Divine, and for serving His Will in the world. His first concern, therefore, is with the right poise, the right attitude and the right spirit of his being in regard to action. He acts, not because he cannot help acting, but because through devoted and desireless action he overcomes his ego and advances by self-transcendence towards the Divine. He acts in order to get beyond the bondage of action and render it a means of the self-expression of his soul and the Divine dwelling in it. He works out of a growing inner freedom and peace and joy, and not by the blind impulses of his normal human nature. "All should be done quietly from within—working, speaking, reading, writing, as part of the real consciousness—not with the dispersed and unquiet movement of the ordinary consciousness."<sup>1</sup> He can do, and often does, a great, even an immense amount of work, if it is felt by him as coming from the Divine or conducive to his progress, but it is not the quantity that matters to him, but the spirit and aspiration and attitude behind the work. Karmayoga is a great

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Sri Aurobindo—Vol. IV

liberating force, but it liberates only those who practise it in the developing freedom of their soul, and not under the perpetual lash of Nature's kinetic energies. As there are fanatics of Bhaktiyoga who believe that to be always singing and dancing and weeping with uncontrolled emotions is the best form of *sādhanā*, so there are fanatics of Karmayoga who think that to be always in a flutter and bustle is the best way of progressing in spiritual life. What they have to remember is that Karmayoga is a yoga, and that no yoga is possible without a firm basis of quietude and calm self-mastery. Whatever work is done from the inner silence and serenity of the being and offered as an oblation of love and devotion to the Divine, or whatever is directly inspired and initiated by the Divine Force, is authentic yogic work, and it cannot but lead to Union; all other work is but the effervescence of our egoistic energies or a vain-glorious parade of our personal capacities. If the quantity of the work we do, or even its quality, fills us with pride and a sense of self-importance, then the work, far from being Karmayoga, becomes a fresh bondage and a cause of our fall from the path. To surmount the sense of being the doer of one's action is the first decisive step towards freedom in action.

Again, in the Integral Yoga, it is not enough to renounce all attachment to action and feel it as belonging to the Mother, but "you must learn to feel the Mother's forces behind you and to open to the inspiration and the guidance."<sup>1</sup> This is a point of capital importance. Karmayoga, as I have already said, is not practised in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo as only a means of liberation, but as also a very effective and indispensable means of transformation and manifestation. Karmayoga continues even after liberation, as a channel of the divine Will fulfilling itself in the individual. Therefore, an openness and receptivity to the Mother's inspiration and guidance and a constant aspiration for the working out of Her Will in the details of one's work are a very important part of this Karmayoga. In the beginning of the sadhana one acts according to the best lights one commands and in a spirit of desireless self-dedication, but afterwards, as one progresses, one has to surrender the very choice and initiation of action to the Mother's Force and become only a docile instrument of it. This transference of the initiative takes long to be complete, but on the way to it, one has to remain always concentrated on the divine Force and aspire for its guidance of one's nature. Let us take an example to illustrate what is meant by the inspiration and guidance of the Mother in the details of the yogic work. Let us suppose that a sadhaka who is an artist is trying to offer his work to the Divine. It is not enough for him to be *nishkama*, desireless, and free from all craving for the result of his painting; it is not

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo

enough either to regard the work as belonging to the Mother and do it in a spirit of sacrifice and dedication; what is more dynamically important is that he should remain completely open to the Mother's inspiration and plastic to Her touch, so that She may be the artist in him and he only a vehicle of Her transcendental art. For, the ultimate object of this yoga is to let the Mother initiate and carry out all action in the individual nature, the individual remaining perfectly surrendered and receptive. The human initiation and execution must be replaced by the divine initiation and execution. If the artist can thus remain open and receptive, he will find his art developing in a marvellous way under the direct inspiration and palpable guidance of the Mother in him. There are many instances of this kind of extraordinary development of the capacities and faculties of the sadhakas as a result of openness to the Mother's Light and Force. Instances are not wanting of mystics, both Eastern and Western, performing heroic deeds, infusing superhuman light and energy into their disciples, producing marvellous poems or magnificent pictures under the inspiration of the divine Force. What has usually been more or less an intermittent or sporadic action of the divine inspiration is sought to be properly canalised and regularised in the followers of the Integral Yoga. And the inspiration and guidance received should ultimately be not of any of the lower spiritual planes,—there is a regular hierarchy of them—but of the very supramental Force, the highest Vijnana Shakti.

Let us take another example. Let us suppose that a sadhaka is working in an office. It is not enough for him to dedicate his work to the Divine and do it as best he can in a spirit of disinterested sacrifice; he must seek the divine guidance at every step of his work and be open enough to receive it when it comes. To open thus to the divine guidance is to qualify for being an inspired instrument of God. New ideas will come to him in the course of his office work, new and brilliantly fruitful suggestions, which will heighten the quality of his work in an unforeseen way and to an extent beyond his imagination. But if he follows the lead of his mind and does not look for the lead of the Divine, his work, by virtue of the sincere spirit of sacrifice in it, will of course conduce to his liberation, but it will hardly lend itself to any radical transformation. The human working may be greatly improved in quality and force, but it will nevertheless remain essentially human and will not be replaced by the direct divine working, which is the object of the Integral Yoga. Therefore, a constant concentration on the Divine and an unreserved surrender and opening to His Force and guidance at the time of work are essential elements of this Karmayoga. If this concentration<sup>1</sup> is not there, there will be no steady

Compare the Gita's ideal of Brahma-karma Samadhi

play of the Mother's Force in the human being. If a sadhaka thinks that he can afford to dispense with this constant concentration and openness and indulge in useless chit-chats or other diversions at the time of work, he is sadly mistaken,—it will only distract his attention from the work and shut out the Mother's guidance. Whether one is working or waiting for some work, there should always be a quiet and intent concentration on the Divine Mother and an openness and receptivity to Her inspiration and guidance. Such openness alone can change our physical being, foster the growth of the higher consciousness in it, heighten the powers and faculties of our nature, awaken those that are dormant, and transform the whole instrumentation of our personality. I repeat again that the object of Karmayoga as an indivisible part of the Integral Yoga is not only liberation from the bonds of Nature, but the transfiguration of Nature itself; and for that, the direct and undisguised working of the Mother's Force is an indispensable prerequisite. There must be a free play of Her intuitions in the whole of our being, even in the body, and it must be Her Will, not only choosing and initiating our work, but informing and directing every part and turn of it.

In the beginning of the sadhana it may be found somewhat difficult to maintain this concentration on the Divine in the midst of the work. The attention and absorption that every yogic work demands may render it almost impossible. If we endeavour to remain concentrated on the Divine, we may find, to our embarrassment, that we cannot attend to the minute details of the work; or, if we concentrate on the work and its details, we are apt to forget the Divine. This is a common enough experience at the preliminary stages of the yoga. But as we progress in our attitude of surrender and consecration, we come to perceive that a part of our consciousness, an inner and enlightened part, remains detached from the dynamic parts and concentrated on the Divine. Here love for the Divine plays a very effective part. A spontaneous love for the Divine makes the concentration not only easy but natural,—none can cease thinking of the object of his love. Bhaktiyoga thus reveals itself as the throbbing heart of Karmayoga and supplies the most quickening force to the Godward *élan* of our active being. We can then remain concentrated at once on the Divine and on the work in hand; and by practice this double concentration can be made perfectly normal and habitual. At a later stage, the two concentrations meet and merge into a constant, one-pointed concentration on the Divine, the omnipresent Lord and Beloved of all creatures, and it is the Mother's Force that is seen doing the works in us.<sup>1</sup> We must remember that not

<sup>1</sup> "You can begin to feel always that it is the Mother's Force that is doing the work and you are only a channel or an instrument."—*Lights on Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo.

only the power of double or multiple concentration, but many such supernormal powers lie undeveloped within us. They develop quite naturally by the action of the yogashakti, and what we now regard as impossible may appear to be possible and even become normal with our spiritual progress. We can remain immutably concentrated on the Divine always and in all that we do,—working, reading, talking, eating, walking etc. As the yoga proceeds, this concentration deepens and widens into a union in beatific love and revealing light.

When we have progressed in desireless action and feel our action as belonging to the Divine and perceive it as being done by His Force, we have entered into an equality and serenity of consciousness which nothing can shake or trouble. This serene equality, samattwa,<sup>1</sup> so much extolled in the Gita, is the very foundation of divine work. I shall touch upon it when I deal with the perfection of Karmayoga in the next article. What distinguishes the equality of the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga from that of most of the traditional yogas is this, that, in the latter, it is the equality of the detached soul, knowing and feeling itself separate from Prakriti, and poised in the consciousness of the Brahman. Prakriti works on, purifying and changing her modes and operations under the calm gaze of the Purusha and by the intervention of the divine Force, so far as the high-seated indifference of the Purusha, udasinavadasinah, is capable of inducing such an intervention. But in the Integral Yoga, which starts, not with Sankhyayoga or Buddhiyoga, but with a progressive and active surrender to the Mother's Force, there is, along with detachment and Brahmi-sthiti, an increasing collaboration and participation of the Purusha, who regards himself as not only a sakshi (witness) and anumanta (sanctioner) of the movements of his nature, but also as their bharta (upholder) and bhokta (enjoyer). The soul of the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga calls in the Mother's supramental Force and collaborates with it in the work of the purification and transformation of its nature. This collaboration, this participation, this fusion of the two wills—the Will of the Divine and the dynamic (not passive and quiescent) will of the sadhaka—is the distinguishing feature of the equality as practised in the Integral Yoga. It is a dynamic equality capable of realising a perfect and permanent union with the divine Will in human life. It helps not only the liberation of the individual Purusha, but also of Prakriti, which would not be possible except by the direct working of the Mother's Vijnana-shakti or supramental Force. Sri Aurobindo makes this point very clear in one of his letters:

<sup>1</sup> Referred to in the chapter on "The Triple Foundation" in the first part of "The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo".

## MOTHER INDIA

“In the liberated state it is not the inner Purusha only that remains detached—the inner Purusha is always detached, only one is not conscious of it in the ordinary state. It is the Prakriti also that is not disturbed by the action of the gunas or attached to it—the mind, the vital, the physical (whatever Prakriti) begin to get the same quietude, unperturbed peace and detachment as the Purusha, but it is a quietude, not a cessation of all action. It is quietude in action itself. If it were not so, my statement in the Arya that there can be a desireless or liberated action on which I found the possibility of a free (mukta) action would be false. The whole being, Purusha-Prakriti, becomes detached even in the action of the gunas.

“The outer being is also detached—the whole being is without desire or attachment and still action is possible, action without desire is possible, action without attachment is possible, action without ego is possible.”

With equality as the base, a constant and total self-offering as the motive force and an active surrender to the Mother's instreaming Light and Power as the sole support, the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo advances on the difficult path of liberating and transforming his whole being and rendering it a fit instrument for the manifestation of the Divine upon earth. His Karma-yoga is instinct with love and devotion and more and more illumined with the light of knowledge. It is, indeed, a synthesis of work and love and knowledge that he practises, in which the three elements can never be separated. But in spite of the synthetic nature of his sadhana and the direct increasing guidance of the Divine Mother, he has to pass through a long intricate process of self-discipline and purification. Each part of his nature has to be tackled separately and in the mass, each of its movement to be scrutinised and sifted and exposed to the Mother's Light for transformation. Accepting life, he has accepted a tremendous burden and responsibility upon himself—his own and, in a sense, the world's; and it is only the sustained sincerity of his aspiration and the Grace of the Divine Mother that can carry him to the final perfection and fulfilment.

*(To be continued)*

RISHABHCHAND

## THE AGE OF THE SPIRIT

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

### THE VEDANTIC RESURGENCE\*

THERE is no gainsaying the fact that the Veda is the authentic source of almost all the basic ideas of Indian culture. And where they are not fully developed, their seeds are perceptible in the Veda in some form or other waiting for a favourable moment of sprouting. Of these early beginnings the most significant is the growth of India's spiritual tendency, promoted by what the Vedic Seers had achieved in the early days of her history. And it is this tendency that has always motivated the manifold expressions of her creative genius. In fact, this inward inclination has given its character to the racial mind of India. All her religious aspirations, her Godward endeavours had their birth in the thoughts and rituals of the Vedic Aryans who laid also the foundations of India's social and political life and indicated the broad lines of its development. The art and literature of India are no less Vedic in their origin. The Vedic vision of the gods as powers and personalities of the One has ever been behind the aesthetic and literary achievements of India. The Veda is verily the source of the myths and legends out of which have evolved the Epics and the Puranas. But the most remarkable line of this continuity is found in the Upanishads—a part of the Vedic literature—which are called the Vedanta, the crown and end of Veda.

As pointed out before, it was a latter-day idea that cut Vedic literature in two parts, one of works, and the other of knowledge, the former comprising the Vedas and the Brahmanas as books of rituals and the latter the Upanishads as books of knowledge. European scholarship has on this basis chosen to hold that the Upanishads are an independent creation of India's speculative genius having very little to do with the Veda. There are, however, scholars, Indian and European, who are of the opinion that the source of the Upanishads may be traced in the secret explanations of the rituals and the allegories and speculations thereon that the Brahmanas and Aranyakas contain.

\* Mainly based on the writings of Sri Aurobindo. Unless otherwise mentioned, the translations of the Upanishadic verses are his. Use has also been made of the writings of Nolini Kanta Gupta, an authentic exponent of the Master's thought.



But neither of the views seems to be any longer tenable in the light of Sri Aurobindo's exposition that the Veda is a Book of Knowledge whose symbols conceal the highest truths about God, man and the universe. From this angle of vision, a careful and comparative study of the Upanishads will show that Vedanta—as its name implies—is the very end of the Veda, the flowering and culmination of its mystic doctrines in larger terms of a mind still continuing to be intuitive but at the same time showing the first signs of a conscious tendency to be an instrument of the intellect, influenced and activated by higher vital impulses.

In this tendency of the Indian mind was implicit a purpose of Nature whose aim in evolution was to prepare man for a higher life through the growth and expansion of his inherent potentialities. He had already had his intuitive faculty opened, the results of which were those early dawns of Light on his consciousness that are symbolised in the Hymns of the R̥gveda. The time had now come for the intuitive mind—quite apart from the pure intuitive faculty which has little to do with mind—to open to the Light and become the medium of those illuminations, thereby developing and strengthening the intuitive basis of man's mind and life, which alone can assimilate higher truths so necessary for the expansion of the racial consciousness.

A comprehension of this psychological process is called for here because of the bearing it has on the present study which seeks to survey India's evolution against the background of the forces that have sustained and advanced that evolution. Not merely the isolated peak-points but also the entire area of this progress has to be brought into relief so that a complete picture may be envisaged.

The early phase of the Vedic life was governed not so much by the mind as by the intuition. And it was not a faint dawn of intuition that the inspired Mystics saw and felt. They were rather utterly intuitive in their voyages into the vasts of God by which they won the Solar Glories and those tremendous powers of heaven which automatically formed the line of and paved the way for India's development towards the greater Glories of the Future. It has been shown before how these achievements of the early Fathers influenced in those early days the growth of India's inner being, although the masses were engrossed in their rituals which, however, were not without their subjective contribution to the progressive building up of the racial consciousness.

The next period of the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas saw the emphasis

on the rituals laid with an exclusive attachment to their formalistic performance. Naturally therefore it created an atmosphere of externalism. As a consequence, an unrest started growing within and along with it, an urge to aspire for light and freedom, the light by which to know the Truth, and the freedom by which to strive unhampered for that knowledge. This temporary set-back gave a fillip to a renewed activity of India's soul through a fresh search for the ultimate end of existence, guided by the light of the Vedic truths. What, however, is even more significant is that the visions the Vedantic Seers had, were expressed in terms understandable at least by the higher mind of the race so that they might be reaffirmed to its consciousness and stand there as the perennial source of that spiritual strength by which alone the race could grow towards its highest destiny. But how was this growth to be ensured? The mystic doctrines as revealed through the Vedic symbols had been known only to the initiates whose circle was already too small to serve the expanding need of the hour. Besides, in their inmost significance, they are even more difficult to understand. But the power of the mantra—the inspired Word of the Veda—did never die; and however small their number, the Masters of the Knowledge kept the Ancient Light burning in the soul of the nation. This light aflame in their hearts, the seekers in various parts of the country rose equal to the need of the country at the time, and with all the intensity of their soul sought to have the vision of the Truth, of all that it meant for the regeneration of man, for his ascension to a higher life in the Spirit, not as a liberation from this earth but as its reconciliation with heaven. Vedanta implies the knowledge that India achieved as a result of these endeavours which reflect a resurgence of her soul, the spring-time of her spirituality.

The Upanishads therefore represent a turning-point in the evolution of Indian history. The significant future of that evolution can be read aright and understood only when it is followed and studied with the vision of its integral scope, comprising within it the whole life of the race, all its movements and expressions, each of which has its place no less than its necessity, in the total progress that India has ever made and has still to make in her history through all her success and failure, rise and fall, victory and defeat.

Taking its start with an intuitive seeing of the heavenly Light, the soul of India now entered on a chequered career of its adventure in order to go through the experiences it needed for its enrichment and preparation for the more lummous Dawn of the Future. From the unbounded heavens of the Spirit the soul of this ancient land turned towards the earth and the things of the earth, not to be bound and enmeshed by them but to infuse into them the light of heaven, and to complete and perfect its own development by

whatever contributions the earth had to offer to it. For, indeed, the soul needs the strength of the earth so as to be fit for a higher manifestation, a diviner perfection. And mind being the principle at the top of man's being and easily open to higher influences was the first to be touched by the Spirit and made stronger by the Spirit's power of direct understanding—intuition—so that it might prove its fit instrument in the future. Therefore impelled by her soul, the mind of India broke into a vigorous quest for the Spirit, the inmost self of things. The Upanishads are a graphic record of this quest and its gains.

But how comes it that the Upanishads reflect the Vedic vision? In what relation do the former stand to the latter? Answers to these questions can be found in the abundant evidences of Vedic ideas continuing in the Upanishads. In fact, some of the basic teachings of Vedanta are distinct echoes of the Vedic lore.

The Upanishads are no mere philosophical speculations, though they are spiritual philosophy of the highest kind, because everything said in them is based on actual spiritual experience. That is why they are more than philosophy, at least as it is commonly understood. The masteries in the ways of the Spirit, revealed in these sacred texts, have their roots deep in the mystic realisations of the Vedic Seers, who are often referred to and their utterances (Riks) quoted by the Rishis in almost all the major Upanishads. And this they did not only out of reverence for the ancient Fathers but also as a corroboration of their own perception of the truths, as a reaffirmation of those truths from their own experience. It was therefore only to be expected that, as seekers of the truth, they should acknowledge their indebtedness to the Vedic Seers.

Often would the Vedantic Seers draw inspiration from the doctrines of their Forefathers, and by their standards and precedents measure and verify their own intuitions and experiences. And when the inspiration was direct from the Veda they would straightway acknowledge the source while recording the conclusions of their discourses. The Vedic Riks in the Upanishadic doctrine of the Mystic Honey is an instance in point. Another is furnished by the Katha Upanishad when it speaks of 'the Goal that all the Vedas glorify.' The Rishis of the Upanishads would often begin the exposition of their truth-visions with a recitation of the Vedic mantras. Besides, very many principal Vedantic ideas seem to have derived from the Veda. The whole of a R̥gvedic mantra is quoted in the Mundaka Upanishad when it speaks of the individual soul and the universal soul, the lower and the higher being. The Isha Upanishad concludes

with a Rigvedic mantra. Indeed, there is no limit to the numerous hymns quoted in the Upanishads from the Veda. And where there is no verbatim quotation, there is such a harmony of thought and word as makes one hear the same rhythm of their heart-beat, perceive the same trend of their inner vision. The famous Upanishadic declaration:

‘I have known the Supreme Person, the One whose light shines from beyond the darkness...’

is familiar to us all. But do we know that it is an echo of a Vedic mantra? That mantra is:

‘Beholding the higher Light beyond the darkness we come to the divine Sun in the Godhead, to the highest Light of all.’

When the Upanishad declares that ‘the Supreme manifests himself to the heart and the mind and the higher intelligence’, it only reiterates almost similar Vedic ideas, one of which is that ‘the Seers by the will in the heart and by the thought (discovered)’, and the other:

‘For Indra the Ancient Master, they polished and sharpened their thoughts with the heart, the mind and the intelligence’,

this showing the psychological personality of that godhead of the Divine Mind.

Many of the Vedic gods are found in the Upanishads, though not exactly in the same status. Some of the Vedic symbols too are given Vedantic forms, and these symbols as such lend themselves to an interpretation not far from their esoteric sense. The great symbol of sacrifice is freely used in the Upanishads both in its inner and outer significance. That the Vaishvanara Vidya—the knowledge of the Universal Being—of the Chhandogya Upanishad is directly inspired by the Rigveda is evident from the Rigvedic Hymns addressed to Agni Vaishvanara. This is pointed out by T. V. Kapali Sastry. Sri Aurobindo has shown that the fifteenth and the sixteenth verses of the Isha Upanishad are just reproductions in its own language of the first Rik of the sixty-second Hymn in the fifth Mandala of the Rigveda. The Vedic passage runs:

‘There is a Truth covered by a Truth where they unyoke the horses of the Sun; the ten hundreds stood together, there was That One; I saw the greatest (best, most glorious) of the embodied gods.’

## MOTHER INDIA

The following passage in the Upanishad maintains the central symbol of the Sun (of Truth) but makes no secret of the sense:

‘The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid. O Pushan, that remove for the vision of the law of Truth. O Pushan (fosterer), sole Seer, O Yama, O Sun, O Child of the Father of beings, marshal and gather together thy rays; I see the Light which is that fairest (most auspicious) form of thee; he who is, this Purusha, He am I.’

The ‘golden lid’ is meant to be the same as the inferior covering truth, *ritani*, spoken of in the Vedic verse; ‘the greatest of the embodied Gods’ is equivalent to ‘that fairest form’ of the Sun, it is the supreme Light which is other and greater than all outer lights; the greatest formula of the Upanishad, ‘He am I’, corresponds to ‘That One,’ *tad ekam*, of the Rgvedic verse; the standing together of the ten hundreds (the rays of the Sun) is reproduced in the prayer to the Sun to marshal and mass his rays so that the supreme form may be seen. The Sun in both the passages, constantly mentioned in the Veda and frequently in the Upanishad, is the Godhead of the supreme Truth and Knowledge.

The following passage in the Taittiriya Upanishad furnishes another striking example of this development of Vedic idea and image. In it Indra plainly appears as the power and godhead of the divine mind:

‘He who is the Bull of the Vedas of the universal form, he was born in the sacred rhythms from the Immortal,—may Indra satisfy me through the intelligence. O God, may I become a vessel of the Immortal. May my body be full of vision and my tongue of sweetness, may I bear the much and vast with my ears. For thou art the sheath of Brahman covered over and hidden by the Intelligence.’

The Chhandogya Upanishad opens with the lines:

‘OM is the syllable (the Imperishable One); one should follow after it as the upward song (movement); for with OM one sings (goes) upwards..’

Now OM is the sacred Vedic syllable that sums up the essential and pervading idea of the Upanishad, which, says Sri Aurobindo, records the results of the long travel of seeking by which the first founders and pioneers of Vedantism attempted to recover the secret and true sense of the Veda in an age when it had been largely submerged in ceremonialism and formalism.

Quite a large number of words and phrases are used in the Vedas and the Upanishads in the same particular meanings, connotations and implications. *Paramam padam*, *paramebyomni*, *parame parakat*, *parame parardhe*, *uttar or uttama sadhastha* and so on, are equally interspersed in Veda and Upanishad. European scholarship and its Indian counterparts hold that these phrases as well as words like *satyam* (the True), *ritam* (the Right), *brihat* (the Vast), *amritam* (Immortality), *dhi* (Thought), *jyoti* (Light) are used in the Rigveda in their naturalistic meanings, and that it is the makers of the Upanishads who have first read into them their spiritual meanings. That this view is wrong is evident from what has been said before about the inner truth and significance of the Vedic teaching. Another point to note is that an apt, profuse, consistent and repeated use of these and so many other Vedic terms by the Upanishads in elucidation of their truths, would not certainly have been possible, unless they conveyed the experiences of the Upanishadic Rishis. They can in no sense be said to be mere transplantations from the Veda. The fact remains that these eternal verities were re-visioned by the Vedantic Seers and restated in terms of the intuitive intelligence for a fresh illumination of the racial mind. 'The Upanishads are not a revolutionary departure from the Vedic mind and its temperament and fundamental ideas, but a continuation and a 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.'

The Upanishads then are as much a Revealed Scripture as the Rigveda. Creations of an intuitive mind, they cannot be grasped by the mere intellect. They are a radiation of the Light that dawned on the questing soul; they are not a mere body of instructions given to the mind. Into their world of light he alone has the right to enter who has already had an inner leaning to the ideas of the Vedic and Vedantic Seers, a sincere aspiration for, or better still, some personal experience of, the truths embodied in them. So equipped, the earnest seeker, while studying the Upanishads, will proceed from light to light, confirming his intuitions and verifying his experiences. But he would never even think of submitting the ideas to the judgement of logical reason, the half-lit mind.

The Upanishads represent the finest flowering of the age of the Spirit. In them is found the soul of India reborn in a mighty endeavour to know the Truth, to master its secret significance for man's life. The results of these endeavours are recorded in that supreme work of the Indian mind, the highest self-expression of its genius.

The Upanishads are a poetry of the sublimest kind, the greatest creation of thought and word sprung from the deepest spiritual experiences. 'Documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness', the Upanishads are universally admitted as the profoundest of religious scriptures in the whole world. Here is no religion that starts and ends with a cult or is limited to an religio-ethical aspiration: it is the spiritual fervour of the soul that rises to an infinite discovery of God, of Self, of our highest and whole reality of spirit and being and speaks out of an ecstatic fullness of luminous knowledge, a victorious fulfilment of experience, the bliss of a perfect realisation.

Neither is its philosophy an abstract intellectual speculation about Truth or a structure of logical intelligence, but Truth seen, felt, lived and held by the inmost mind and soul; a ringing paean of discovery and possession. 'Here the intuitive mind and intuitive psychological experience of the Vedic Seers passes into a supreme culmination in which the Spirit, as is said in a phrase of the Katha Upanishad, discloses its very body, reveals the very word of its self-expression and discovers to the mind vibration of rhythms which repeating themselves within in the spiritual hearing seem to build up the soul and set it satisfied and complete on the heights of self-knowledge.'

This fact has been ignored, or rather overlooked, by foreign translators of the Upanishads and not a few Indian scholars, who have sought to bring out the intellectual sense of the Upanishads without feeling the life of thought and vision and the ecstasy of spiritual experience embodied in the verses, and have thus unhappily missed the fullness of their revelation, a revelation not to the intellect alone, but to the soul and the whole being. That is why the Upanishads are no fabric of intellectual thought or phrase, but *Shruti*, or soul listening to the Oversoul, spiritual audience, an inspired Scripture.

Seer-wisdoms, says the Veda, utter their inner meaning to the seer. The inner significance of the principal Vedantic ideas too can be perceived only by those who are fit for it, who possess the power of intuitive seeing. The ideas themselves may to some extent be readily seized by the intellect, as has been done by the modern mind, but their deeper sense eludes it unless the mind chooses to overpass itself into higher lights. Herein lies the sad failure of the interpretations of the Vedanta by modern scholars, Indian and European, whose works on Indian philosophy seek elaborately to satisfy the mere intellect and do not seem to have thought of making an attempt to get at the profound implications of the Upanishadic teachings. Besides, most of them betray a rooted

bias in favour of the old commentaries one or the other of which they follow as the basis and support of their exposition. Many of them doubt if Vedanta is anything more than intellectual thought. While what they understand of it may not be entirely incorrect, the whole meaning even of that aspect of Vedanta as well as of those that are implicit in the symbols, images and the mystic sciences of the Upanishads cannot be fully comprehended by intellect alone, because, essentially and in their origin, they are truths of the spiritual evolution or subjective growth of man, of the inmost meaning of existence, which the modern mind has yet to perceive and recognise as the governing principle of Indian culture, the true fountain-head of which is the Upanishads.

There is again the fact to be noted that the Vedantic Seers, like their Vedic Ancestors, had their knowledge of the Truth by intuitive and spiritual experience, and expressed it in terms of 'subtle reasoning' that can be followed only by those who have the 'subtle vision'. Their way was not the logical process of thinking but of direct contact and identity with the object of knowledge. The Vedantic Seers did not think in order to know, but went beyond thought to direct vision and knowledge by identity. That is why the question put to one seeker by another was, 'What dost thou know?' not 'What dost thou think?' nor 'To what conclusion has thy reasoning arrived?'. Nowhere in the Upanishads do we find any trace of logical reasoning urged in support of the truths of Vedanta. Intuition, the sages seem to have held, must be measured and verified by a more perfect intuition; logical reasoning could never be its judge. When scholars speak of debates or discussions in the Upanishads, they take an erroneous view of them. Wherever there was an appearance of a controversy, it is not by discussion, by dialectics or logical reasoning that it proceeded, but by a comparison of intuitions and experiences in which the less luminous would give way to the more luminous. And it was out of their direct intuitive seeing that the Vedantic Seers formulated the three great declarations of the Upanishads, 'I am He', 'Thou art That', 'All this is Brahman, this Self is Brahman'.

It must also be remembered in this connection that some of the earlier major Upanishads do not explicitly state their leading ideas; they employ suggestive words, leaving the suggestions to be caught by adepts, and guarding them from the profane touch of the mere intellect. There are also gaps and transitions in the movement of their interpretative thought; in some the development of ideas is left incomplete and is completed in others. All these can be grasped, filled up and linked only by those who have understood the inner significance of those movements.

*(To be continued)*

SISIRKUMAR MITRA



## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Dedicated: A Biography of Nivedita:** by *Lizelle Reymond*.  
Published by The John Day Company, New York. (Translated from the French)

THIS book is of a special interest to the people here in India. Although it is a biography, as naturally happens in such cases where the life of a notable personality is depicted, we get glimpses of the contemporary history of the various great movements religious and spiritual as well as political. It is the life-story of a personality undoubtedly—and most intimate, personal, and touching at that,—but still it is of a personality that had attempted to universalise itself, to become intimately one with all who came within the sphere of its influence.

Although more than forty years have elapsed since the passing of that great figure, we feel, as we read the book, as if she were still with us, among us, or rather we were with her, following the quick-changing vicissitudes of her life, her struggles and her peace, her outward circumstances and her inner contemplations. Such is the biographer's power of imagination and graphic presentation, that we identify ourselves, while going through these pages, with the day-to-day life of Nivedita's personal being.

The author has in her not only the art of a biographer but also that of a novelist or a story writer. And that makes her work doubly fascinating. Sometimes the novelist's imagination in her gets the better of the biographer's skill and then we get really poetic passages like the ones we come across in the novels of the romantic age. The very first chapter of the book is a powerful instance of this. We do not know whether we are commencing the reading of a novel or of a biography. The opening chapter describes the first landing of Nivedita on the Indian shores; and then, as in a novel, in the second chapter the author immediately takes us backwards into the early family history of the 'heroine', her birth, her parentage and her childhood. Even the chapter-headings are like those found in a novel, and so too are the development of the 'plot' and the unfolding of the multi-hued drama of human life and the final *dénouement*. Emotional conflicts and moments of suspense, strokes of characterisation and charming conversations, picturesque descriptions of places and graphic depictions of changing moods of men—all these figure in the book

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abundantly and make it extremely pleasant reading. Only, we do not know whether such a way of presentation does justice to the toweringly spiritual figures like Vivekananda and Nivedita. Perhaps it does or perhaps it does not. Spiritual figures are human undoubtedly and have a surface human life. But there is an inner and by far a more important deeper life of theirs which is not apparent on the surface and not describable in the way in which the life of any other person's emotional and intellectual life can be described. It is this spiritual element that is so elusive and often escapes the grasp of the biographer of spiritual personalities.

The outer life of spiritual giants is not unoften that of a very rich and many-sided personality, a dynamic and world-shaking or world-moulding figure. But even then their real life is within and not on the outside. And the measure of success achieved by a biographer of such a life can be assessed by the degree to which he has been able to give expression to this inner and deeper aspect.

However that may be, we cannot but agree whole-heartedly with Jean Herbert when he writes in the preface to this book that the author has recounted the life of Nivedita "in pages that are moving in their simple sincerity", and that "she has tried to restore to us...in all its beauty and all its power, this intensely human personality that was Nivedita".

RAJANIKANT MODY

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**Only the Silent Hear** by *Kenneth Walker*. Published by Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, London: 12 6d.

It is a pleasure to read a modern work that is so transparently clear and simple in its statement, although some people may be inclined to put aside this book as being irrelevant or flimsy, merely on account of its simplicity. The reason is that we have become accustomed to modern writings on current thought and ideas, which just set out to mystify the reader with a fine torrent of words, and we forget that the writer has only made this a means of obscuring his true beliefs (as though he were afraid even to face this elemental issue). But at least the author of this book faces the promptings of his own conscience, which are happily presented here through a series of pertinent dialogues interspersed through the book. These take the form of questionings between the writer and

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his own inner conscience, which is represented by the ever-seeking timeless spirit of his own being, in the form of a young man who is supposedly detached and wandering freely abroad in time and space, and not tied down to the earthly ruminating mind of the writer's outer "now" consciousness.

The author traces the doubts and groupings of modern man in his search for Truth, mainly along the path of science; but with a directness, simplicity and frankness, he goes straight to the centre,—the still centre, as he discovers, that resides in each of us. This, he finds, is the gateway that leads us beyond all our difficulties, and which sooner or later man has to realise as the God-revealing factor of his life and outlook. First of all the author takes us to the setting which forms the natural background of the book,—the cathedral stillness of a pine-wood that stands beyond the confined habitations of man, and where Nature is alone in her dignity. In this dignified and inspiring atmosphere, detached from the hubbub and controversial cross-currents of modern life, he writes his book. Here in this quietude also,—and, as he says, with his back comfortably supported by a pine-tree and his heels dug into a thick carpet of pine-needles,—he finds the inner stillness which opens him to the sense of the rhythm and all-pervading reality of the universal Life-current itself. Thus invigorated by the vibrant touch of Mother Nature herself, we set out on this pleasant excursion into the fields of the Unknown (though by no means unknowable, according to Sri Aurobindo, as the author reminds us). The atmosphere and scent of the pine-wood linger with us on our way, and convey to us a serenity and freshness that is rare in modern works of a popular philosophic type.

We are grateful to the writer for having made certain fundamental ideas regarding the universality of Life (as a cosmic principle), as well as the objective reality of Consciousness, (both concepts being normally unacceptable to current western thought), very simple and palatable to the majority. One legitimate complaint, however, is that the writer has thinned out his thought a little too much; even a conservative reader would expect a more substantial morsel to bite at. But such austerity fare, we suppose, is part of the condition of the times, and we have to be content that even a few unpolluted drops of the essential truths, though highly diluted, have been effectively served up. Little by little these seed-germs of Truth seep into the consciousness and quietly diffuse themselves into the thinking process of the reader's mind. Like a hormone in the bloodstream, they inevitably set up a train of thought which lead him to trace out the origin and sources of the author's premises. Thus by hints and suggestions and direct allusions, the reader will discern, like alpine peaks gleaming

through the snow-sheet of cloud giving the airline traveller his bearings, what are the three main roots of the writer's beliefs. Firstly there is the Philosophy of Organism and Process, that he found widely developed in Whitehead's writings. Secondly there is the direct inspiration he received from the teachings of the Veda and the Vedanta, particularly on the subject of the Creation of Cosmos, whose detailed and inter-related harmony otherwise completely eludes modern thought, narrowed down to a one-track mechanistic view. Thirdly he has discovered an important reconciliation of ideas on God, man and Cosmos in the writings of Sri Aurobindo, where the whole of man's approach to Knowledge is focussed on the fact of his present limited consciousness, and above all on the existence of a real and *attainable* Truth—the Divine Consciousness. Whatever else one might say of the author's approach, we have to admit that his steps are proceeding on cautious, but sound and well-tested lines. The reader thus given these hints and directional signs can confidently proceed himself in his quest for Truth. By taking up these threads at their source, and even if he ventures through the welter and confusion of modern thought, he will, thus set on the right track, come nearer to the searchlight beams of Sri Aurobindo, and be guided safely to the shore of a greater Consciousness.

Almost at the end of the book the author makes some plain statements of his beliefs, in reply to the blunt questioning of his conscience, "What do you believe?" Like a new Credo for this age of unbelief, he replies as follows:—"I believe that the Supreme Mind, the Great Self or what I prefer to call the Divine Consciousness which moves behind the façade of appearances, has created and maintains everything that is. I believe, not so much in man's original sin, as in his original nescience...My view is that Nature has brought man to his present level and that she has now left him to his devices, either to climb higher by his own efforts, or else sink and perish. If he is to evolve any further, it will be by a form of evolution very different from that of the past."

With regard to this latter view, it would seem that the author has not as yet integrated his belief in a Divine Creator Who has made everything that is and *lives in* everything he has made, with the great Mother Nature who has supposedly forsaken her erring offspring, man. It is indeed through the humility of man's realisation of his own helplessness, and his consequent supplication to his Creator, that unfailingly brings the Divine Grace into the world. When all hope is gone—except in God,—then is the day of man's ascent made possible.

N. FEARSON.

# *Students' Section*

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ANANDAMATH

BY BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJI

TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup> BY SJ. AUROBINDO GHOSE

CHAPTER X.

SILENTLY in the moonlit night the two crossed the open country. Mohendra was silent, sorrowful, full of pride, but also a little curious.

Suddenly Bhavananda's whole aspect changed. No longer was he the ascetic, serious of aspect, calm of mood; no longer the skillful fighter, the heroic figure of the man who had beheaded the English captain with the sweep of a sword; no longer had he that aspect with which even now he had proudly rebuked Mohendra. It was as if the sight of that beauty of plain and forest, river and numerous streams, all the moonlit peaceful earth, had stirred his heart with a great gladness; it was as if Ocean was laughing in the moonbeams. Bhavananda became smiling, eloquent, courteous of speech. He grew very eager to talk and made many efforts to open a conversation, but Mohendra would not speak. Then Bhavananda, having no other resource, began to sing to himself.

“Mother, I bow to thee!  
Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
Cool with thy winds of delight,  
Dark fields waving, Mother of might  
Mother free!”

<sup>1</sup> From old writings

## STUDENTS' SECTION

The song astonished Mohendra and he could understand nothing of it. Who might be this richly watered, richly fruited Mother, cool with delightful winds and dark with the harvests? "What Mother"? he asked.

Bhavananda without any answer continued his song.

"Glory of moonlight dreams  
Over thy beaches and lordly streams;  
Clad in thy blossoming trees,  
Mother, giver of ease,  
Laughing low and sweet!  
Mother I kiss thy feet.  
Speaker sweet and low!  
Mother, to thee I bow."

Mohendra said, "That is the country, it is not the Mother".

Bhavananda replied, "We recognize no other Mother. 'Mother and Motherland is more than heaven itself.' We say the Motherland is our Mother. We have neither mother nor father nor brother nor friend, wife nor son nor house nor home. We have her alone, the richly watered, richly fruited, cool with delightful winds, rich with harvests—"

Then Mohendra understood and said, "Sing it again." Bhavananda sang once more.

"Mother, I bow to thee!  
Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
Cool with thy winds of delight,  
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,  
Mother free.

Glory of moonlight dreams  
Over thy beaches and lordly streams;  
Clad in thy blossoming trees,  
Mother, giver of ease,  
Laughing low and sweet!  
Mother, I kiss your feet,  
Speaker sweet and low!  
Mother, to thee I bow.  
Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,

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When the swords flash out in seventy million hands  
And seventy million voices roar  
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?  
With many strengths who art mighty and stored,  
To thee I call, Mother and Lord!  
Thou who savest, arise and save!  
To her I cry who ever her foeman drave  
Back from plain and sea  
And shook herself free.

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,  
Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,  
Thou the love divine, the awe  
In our hearts that conquers death.  
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,  
Thine the beauty, thine the charm.  
Every image made divine  
In our temples is but thine.  
Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,  
With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,  
Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,  
And the Muse a hundred-toned.

Pure and perfect without peer,  
Mother, lend thine ear.  
Rich with thy hurrying streams,  
Bright with thy orchard gleams,  
Dark of hue, O candid-fair  
In thy soul, with jewelled hair  
And thy glorious smile divine,  
Loveliest of all earthly lands,  
Showering wealth from well stored hands!<sup>1</sup>  
Mother, mother mine!  
Mother sweet, I bow to thee  
Mother great and free!<sup>1</sup>

Mohendra saw the robber as he sang shedding tears. In wonder he asked,  
“Who are you?”

Bhavananda replied, “We are the children.”

<sup>1</sup> Translation in prose line by line is given at the end

## STUDENTS' SECTION

“What is meant by the children?” asked Mohendra, “Whose children are you?”

Bhavananda replied, “The children of the Mother.”

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I bow to thee, Mother,  
richly watered, richly fruited,  
cool with the winds of the south,  
dark with the crops of harvests,  
the Mother!  
Her strands rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,  
her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,  
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,  
the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss!  
Terrible with the clamorous shout of seventy million throats,  
and the sharpness of swords raised in twice seventy million hands,  
Who sayeth to thee, Mother, that thou art weak?  
Holder of multitudinous strength,  
I bow to her who saves,  
to her who drives from her the armies of her foemen,  
the Mother!  
Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,  
thou our heart, thou our soul,  
for thou art the life in our body.  
In the arm thou art might,  
O Mother.  
In the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith  
It is thy image we raise in every temple.  
For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war,  
Kamala at play in the lotuses  
and Speech, the goddess, giver of all lore.  
To thee I bow!  
I bow to thee, goddess of wealth, pure and peerless,  
richly-watered, richly fruited,  
the Mother!  
I bow to thee, Mother dark-hued, candid,  
sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,  
the holder of wealth, the lady of plenty,  
the Mother!



MOTHER INDIA

POEMS

THE FLAME-SWORD

IN my body's chamber light Thy lamp of Love,  
Touch my black cells with moon-fire ecstasy,  
When darkness throngs around me and above  
Shield me with Thy golden arms of Purity.  
Flashing the flame-sword of knowledge smite  
The blind dragons of ignorant night.

When like a somnambulist I wander, lost  
In labyrinthine ways of chaotic mind  
And thick and sombre veils of falsehood-frost  
Fall before me, above me and behind,  
Then flash Thy Truth's flame-sword and slay  
The demons of falsehood pallid, gray.

When the clouds of sorrow darken my heart  
With their graphite shades and titanic play,  
And dusty whirlwinds of the human smart  
Into the miry marsh lead me astray,  
Flash, O Lord, Thy flame-sword of Joy  
And the ebon gloom of soul destroy.

RANAJIT

WHAT...

WHAT light do they seek—those skyward peaks,  
What do they sing merrily,  
What message murmurs the breezy dawn,  
What the chant in the sea?

The trees of sheen so blue and green  
What do they pray over there,  
What sheds the Sun on the breast of earth,  
What perfumes in the air?  
Stream of what love flows within my nerves,  
What compassion, smile, and grace,  
What bliss, what peace, what beauty's bloom  
Surround all Nature's face?

PRITHWIN

## THE FLOWER THAT WAITED

IT was in those golden ancient times when earth and Heaven were in a close communion; when joy, peace and happiness flowed everywhere, and when truth and knowledge reigned over the three worlds...

In a picturesque ashram in the rainbow-reflecting heart of the Himalayas all the disciples were sitting in a semi-circle before the great Rishi, eagerly waiting for his trance to end. A soothing silence prevailed all over the place. Not a leaf rustled, not a twig snapped, no wind breathed, as if along with the disciples Nature too was waiting expectantly.

And they had their reason. Since a week a dark cloud like object had been covering the whole of the western sky. No one could tell what it was or from whence it had come. Like a solid mass of night it hung in the air, apparently as motionless as the rocks. But a steadfast scrutiny revealed that a grim movement was incessantly going on in its dark interior. A dull red and black smoke was curling and coiling in its heart as though the cloud was seething with the fury and the poisonous breath of a million writhing vipers. The sight of it evoked, in all, the restlessness of some imminent but unknown disaster.

However, in the beginning they had not given it any importance. But when even after the third day they had seen it in its place like the inevitable scowling threat of Fate, they had run to the Rishi. He saw this terrible embodied apparition and his smiling face grew serious "It is not a good sign", was his laconic remark at the time.

But next morning before sitting for his daily meditation he spoke to his disciples—"My sons, I am sure that some great evil is going to befall the earth. That 'cloud of Death' heralds it. But I must learn the true nature of this evil so that we can be prepared for it and know what we are to do when it comes". Saying this he sat down in the *padmasana* posture—legs crossed, hands resting on the knees, and his eyes as if staring at the face of Infinity. Soon, his whole being became still.

And thus the Rishi had been sitting since the last three days, immobile as the great Himalayas, lost in deep meditation. And all the while the disciples scarcely breathing, had been waiting for him to come out of it...

At last they saw a faint quiver run through his entire body. He sighed, and gradually his earthly consciousness returned. The eyes that seemed to be

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as vacant as the great Void slowly became living and conscious of the surroundings. When he saw the eager, expectant faces of his disciples he smiled, and quietly began to tell them all that he had learnt while in meditation. "Listen, my children, a terrible change is soon going to come over the earth. She will not be as happy as she is now. She will have to undergo much sorrow, much suffering. Greed, lust, jealousy, suspicion, anger, hatred, fear, falsehood will all build their nests in her bosom. Death will be her sovereign.

"And man will become more terrible than the most ferocious beast. All his faculties he will employ for the perpetration of evil. He will think himself guided by reason, but he will be the most unreasonable creature living. He will think himself to be omniscient, but he will really be most ignorant. He will believe that he is creating, but whatever he will create will be to destroy something else. All will then be in a chaos; and earth will be an awful place to live upon. But fear not, my sons; this condition will not last forever. In time, this chaos also will come to an end. Then another, a far greater change will take place, and Heaven itself will descend on earth. And to work out this titanic transformation the Divine Himself will take a human form and be born here.

"During this chaotic era we too will have much to do to help in the advent of the final transformation. Our task will be to influence the evil mind of man and turn it towards Truth, Good and Beauty. For this work we must go and live with man, but without being infected by him. And that is why we must all be changed into flowers—those frail, tiny creations of Nature, which possess the most magical power, who are immune to all evil, but able to influence everything. Each of us will symbolise one particular virtue and each must ingrain it in man so that man again becomes perfect. At the end when the earth is transformed we shall be ourselves again".

Silently all were listening. Now as the Rishi rose from his seat, they too stood up and waited without a word. Slowly he advanced towards one of them and placing his hand on his head, spoke: "My son, you will symbolise Patience. When in the coming chaotic age, the wolf of restlessness will be gnawing man's mind, you will calm him with your sweet fragrance and tell him, 'Patience, my friend, golden times infinitely greater than the past will surely come' ". Then touching another he said, "And you will represent Faith. When disbelief drives man mad, you will go to him and whisper, 'Believe, my friend, and it shall be' ".

Thus the Rishi distributed all the virtues Courage, Purity, Love, Silence, all. Then lastly he turned towards a fair young disciple, his favourite. He

## STUDENTS' SECTION

placed both his hands on the youth's head and intently looked into his brilliant eyes, "Your task, my child", he told him "will be the hardest of all, for you will be the emblem of Sincerity. In that age of falsehood and deceit, you will have to make man sincere, you will have to build up the basis of his nature. And when helpless mortals utterly sink in the mire of deceit, you will have to pull them out of that mire and tell them, 'Be sincere, for that is the only way of reaching the goal'".

Then blessing them all he spoke again, "Men will not know your virtue, nor will they call you by your symbolic names. Silently and patiently you will have to go on with your task. But one day someone will call you by your true names and touch you, and you will be thrilled by that voice, that touch. A shiver of joy will run through you and instinctively you will know that the time for the transformation and for your freedom has come at last".

Time goes by creating, preserving and destroying, leaving an endless trail of memories behind her, and with infinite patience a little flower of white starry petals with a golden centre waits. It is the flower of Sincerity. It has no great beauty and little fragrance, and men scarcely take any notice of it. But it does not mind. It knows its task and silently and patiently goes on with it waiting for the Great Moment. Meanwhile it has seen many things, gathered many experiences. It has seen how the meadows of peace where gold-green waves of light once played about on the green shimmering grass, have hanged into blood-red fields of greed and hatred. It has seen how the silver glimmer of murmuring rivers have become the thick dark waters of suspicion and baseness. It has seen how the volcanoes have vomitted ink-black fires of jealousy and rage and lust. It has seen how with every earthquake truth is changed into falsehood and knowledge into ignorance. And patiently it has waited. Again and again whenever celestial messengers have descended upon earth, it has thought that the long awaited hour has come, and its heart has danced with joy. But its joy has always been short-lived, for each time it has been mistaken.

But one morning, after ages of patient expectancy all of a sudden it instinctively feels that the time is near. Eagerly it looks up and is thrilled as a soft white hand touches it. It knows this touch. A voice speaks, "From now on this flower will be the symbol of Sincerity". It knows this voice. And it also knows, nay now it is sure of it, that the time has come at last.

ANIRUDDHA

## SELECTIONS FROM WORLD LITERATURE

CARLYLE

(FOR THE SENIORS)

THE Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thy self: thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of:—O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, “here or nowhere,” couldst thou only see!

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So true it is, what I then said, that the Fraction of Life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your Numerator as by lessening your Denominator...Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the world under thy feet. Well did the Wisest of our time write: “It is only with Renunciation (Entsagen) that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin.”

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There is in man a HIGHER than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach forth this same HIGHER that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the God-like that is in Man, and how in the God-like only has he Strength and Freedom?...On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him.

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## STUDENTS' SECTION

To us also, through every star, through every blade of grass, is not a God made visible, if we will open our minds and eyes? We do not worship in that way now: but is it not reckoned still a merit, proof of what we call a 'poetic nature', that we recognise how every object has a divine beauty in it; how every object still verily is 'a window through which we may look into infinitude itself'?

But now if all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblems to us of the Highest God, I add that more so than any of them is man such an emblem. You have heard of St. Chrysostom's celebrated saying in reference to the Shekinah, or Ark of Testimony, visible Revelation of God, among the Hebrews; "The true Shekinah is Man!" Yes, it is even so: this is no vain phrase; it is veritably so. The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I",—ah, what words have we for such things?—is a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed? "There is but one temple in the Universe", says the devout Novalis, 'and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than that high form'.... We are the miracle of miracles,—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so.<sup>1</sup>

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Neither say that thou hast now no Symbol of the God-like. Is not God's Universe a Symbol of the God-like; is not Immensity a Temple; is not Man's History, and Men's History, a perpetual Evangel? Listen, and for organ-music thou wilt ever, as of old, hear the Morning Stars sing together.

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(FOR THE JUNIORS)

MIDAS longed for gold, and insulted the Olympians. He got gold, so that whatsoever he touched became gold,—and he, with his long ears, was little the better for it. Midas had misjudged the celestial music-tones; Midas had insulted Apollo and the gods: the gods gave him his wish, and a pair of long ears, which also were a good appendage to it. What a truth in these old fables!...<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is true not of man as he is, but of man as he can be.—Compiler.

<sup>2</sup> THE STORY OF MIDAS.—Midas, the king of Phrygia was offered a boon by Dionysus, for rendering a service to that god's teacher, Silenus. Midas prayed that whatever he touched might turn to gold. His wish was granted. But soon the king found that the boon instead of becoming a blessing had become a curse. Whenever he tried to eat or drink anything it turned to gold as soon as it touched his lips. He really became desperate when on his kissing his child he

## MOTHER INDIA

The secret of gold Midas, which he with his long ears never could discover was, That he had offended the Supreme Powers;—that he had parted company with the eternal inner Facts of this Universe, and followed the transient outer Appearances thereof;...Properly it is the secret of all unhappy men and unhappy nations.

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Two men I honour, and no third. First, the toilworn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living manlike. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent...Yet toil on, toil on: *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

A second man I honour, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the Bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavouring towards inward Harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one: when we can name him Artist; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-made Implement conquers Heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that we have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality?

(*Compilation by "Synergist"*)

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found it changed into a golden statue. He at last implored Dionysus to release him from the consequences of his foolish request. He got the answer: "Go to the River Pactolus, and plunge into the stream." When Midas bathed in this stream, his power left him and passed into the waters whose sand turned into gold dust.

Here, he became friends with Pan, the god of the fields. In a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, Midas insulted Apollo by ignoring his lyre-playing, and continuously applauding Pan, who was playing the flute. Apollo, finding the king's ears so depraved, decreed that they should no more have their human shape. From that day Midas had ass's ears.—Compiler.