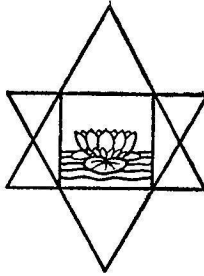


MOTHER INDIA

SEPTEMBER, 1954

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

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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ILION

SRI AUROBINDO

BOOK IV — THE BOOK OF PARTINGS

EAGERLY, spurred by Ares swift in their souls to the war-cry,
All now pressed to their homes for the food of their strength in the battle;
Ilion turned her thoughts in a proud expectancy seaward
Waiting to hear the sounds that she loved and the cry of the mellay.
Now to their citadel Priam's sons returned with their father,
Now from the gates Talthybius issued grey in his chariot;
But in the halls of Anchises Aeneas not doffing his breastpiece
Hastily ate of the corn of his country, cakes of the millet
Doubled with wild-deer's flesh, from the quiet hands of Creusa.
She, as he ate, with her calm eyes watching him smiled on her husband:
"Ever thou hastest to battle, O warrior, ever thou fightest
Far in the front of the ranks and thou seekest out Locrian Ajax,
Turnest thy ear to the roar for the dangerous shout of Tydides;
There, once heard, leaving all thou drivest, O stark in thy courage.
Yet am I blest among women who tremble not, left in thy mansion,
Quiet at old Anchises' feet when I see thee in vision
Sole with the shafts hissing round thee and say to my quivering spirit,
'Now he is striking at Ajax, now he has met Diomedes.'
Such are the mighty twain who are ever near to protect thee,
Phoebus, the Thunderer's son, and thy mother, gold Aphrodite;
Such are the fates that demand thee, O destined head of the future.
But though my thoughts for their own are not troubled, always, Aeneas,
Sore is my heart with pity for other Ilian women
Who in this battle are losing their children and well-loved husbands,
Brothers too dear, for the eyes that are wet, for the hearts that are silent.
Will not this war then end that thunders for ever round Troya?"

But to Creusa the hero answered, the son of Anchises:
"Surely the gods protect, yet is Death too always mighty.
Most in his shadowy envy he strikes at the brave and the lovely,
Grudging works to abridge their days and to widow the sunlight;

MOTHER INDIA

Most, disappointed, he rages against the beloved of Heaven;
Striking their lives through their hearts he mows down their loves and their pleasures.

Truly thou sayst, thou need'st not to fear for my life in the battle;
Ever for thine I fear lest he find thee out in his anger,
Missing my head in the fight, when he comes here crossed in his godhead.
Yet shall Phoebus protect and my mother, gold Aphrodite."

But to Aeneas answered the tranquil lips of Creusa;
"So may it be that I go before thee, seeing, Aeneas,
Over my dying eyes thy lips bend down for the parting.
Blissfullest end is this for a woman here mid earth's sorrows;
Afterwards there we hope that the hands shall join which were parted."

So she spoke, not knowing the gods: but Aeneas departing
Clasped his father's knees, the ancient mighty Anchises:
"Bless me, my father; I go to the battle. Strong with thy blessing
Even today may I hurl down Ajax, slay Diomedes,
And on the morrow gaze on the empty beaches of Troas."
Troubled and joyless, nought replying to warlike Aeneas
Long Anchises sat unmoving, silent, sombre,
Gazing into his soul with eyes that were closed to the sunlight.
"Prosper, Aeneas;" slowly he answered him, "son of a goddess,
Prosper Aeneas; and if for Troy some doom is preparing,
Suffer always the will of the gods with a piety constant.
Only they will what Necessity fashions, impelled by the Silence.
Labour and war she has given to man as the law of his transience.
Work;¹ she shall give thee the crown of thy deeds or their ending appointed,
Whether glorious thou pass or in silent shadows forgotten.
But what thy mother commands perform ever, loading thy vessels.
Who can know what the gods have hid with the mist of our hopings?"

So² from the house of his fathers Aeneas rapidly striding
Came to the city echoing now with the wheels of the chariots,
Clanging with arms and astream with the warlike tramp of her thousands.
Fast through the press he strode and men turning knew Aeneas,
Greatened in heart and went on with loftier thoughts towards battle.
He through the noise and the crowd to Antenor's high-built mansion
Striding came, and he turned to its courts and the bronze of its threshold
Troed which had suffered the feet of so many princes departed.

¹ Alternative: "Fight".

² Alternative: "Then".

ILION

But as he crossed its brazen square from the hall there came running,
Leaping up light to his feet and laughing with sudden pleasure,
Eurus the youngest son of Polydamas. Claspings the fatal
War-hardened hand with a palm that was smooth as a maiden's or infant's,
"Well art thou come, Aeneas," he said, "and good fortune has sent thee!
Now I shall go to the field; thou wilt speak with my grandsire Antenor,
And he shall hear thee though chid by his heart reluctant. Rejoicing
I shall go forth in thy car or warring by Penthesilea,
Famous, give to her grasp the spear that shall smite down Achilles."
Smiling answered Aeneas, "Surely will, Eurus, thy prowess
Carry thee far to the front; thou shalt fight with Epeus and slay him.
Who shall say that this hand was not chosen to pierce Menelaus?
But for a while with the bulls should it rather strive, O hero,
Till in the play and the wrestle its softness grow hard¹ for the smiting."
Eagerly Eurus answered, "But they have told me, Aeneas,
This is the last of our fights for today will Penthesilea
Meet Achilles in battle and slay him ending the Argives.
Then shall I never have mixed in this war that is famous for ever.
What shall I say when my hairs are white like the aged Antenor's?
Men will ask, 'And what were thy deeds in the warfare Titanic?
Whom didst thou slay of the Argives, son of Polydamas, venging
Bravely thy father?' Then must I say, 'I lurked in the city.
I was too young and only ascending the Ilian ramparts
Saw the return or the flight, but never the deed and the triumph?'
Friend, if thou take me not forth, I shall die of grief ere the sunset."
Plucking the hand of Aeneas he drew him into the mansion
Vast; and over the floor of the spacious hall they hastened
Laughing, the gracious child and the mighty hero and statesman,
Flower of a present stock and the burdened star of the future.

Meanwhile girt by his sons and the sons of his sons in his chamber
Cried² to the remnants left of his blood the aged Antenor.
"Hearken you who are sprung from my loins and children, their offspring!
None shall again go forth to the fight who is kin to Antenor.
Weighed with my curse he shall go and the spear-points athirst of the Argives
Meet him wroth; he shall die in his sin and his name be forgotten.
Oft have I sent forth my blood to be spilled in vain in the battle
Fighting for Troy and her greatness earned by my toil and my fathers'.

¹ Alternative to "grow hard" : "is trained".

² Alternative: "Spoke".

MOTHER INDIA

Now all the debt has been paid; she rejects us driven by the immortals.
Much do we owe to the mother who bore us, much to our country;
But at the last our life is ours and the gods' and the future's.
Gather the gold of my house and our kin, O ye sons of Antenor.
Warned by a voice in my soul I will go forth tonight from this city
Fleeing the doom and bearing my treasures; the ships shall receive them
Gathered, new-keeled by my care and the gods', in the narrow Propontis.
Over God's waters guided, treading the rage of Poseidon,
Bellying out with their sails let them cleave to the untravelled distance
Ocean's crests and resign to their Fates the doomed and the evil."

So Antenor spoke and his children heard him in silence;
Awed by his voice and the dread of his curse they obeyed, though in sorrow.
Halamus only replied to his father; "Dire are the white hairs
Reverend, loved, of a father, dreadful his curse to his children.
Yet in my heart there is one who cries, 'tis the voice of my country,
She for whose sake I would be in Tartarus tortured for ever.
Pardon me then if thou wilt; if the gods can, then let them pardon.
For I will sleep in the dust of Troy embracing her ashes,
There where Polydamas sleeps and the many comrades I cherished.
So let me go to the darkness remembered or wholly forgotten,
Yet having fought for my country, true in my fall to my nation."

Then in his aged wrath to Halamus answered Antenor;
"Go then and perish doomed with the doomed and the hated of heaven;
Nor shall the gods forgive thee dying nor shall thy father."
Out from the chamber Halamus strode with grief in his bosom
Wrestling with wrath and he went to his doom nor looked back at his dear ones.
Crossing the hall the son of Antenor and son of Anchises
Met in the paths of their fates where they knotted and crossed for the parting,
One with the curse of the gods and his sire fast wending to Hades,
Fortunate, blessed the other; yet equal their minds were and virtues.
Cypris' son to the Antenorid; "Thee I have sought and thy brothers,
Bough of Antenor; sore is our need today of thy counsels,
Endless our want of their arms that are strong and their hearts that recoil not
Meeting myriads stark with the spear in unequal battle."
Halamus answered him; "I will go forth to the palace of Priam,
There where Troy yet lives and far from the halls of my fathers;
There will I speak, not here. For my kin they repose in the mansion
Sitting unarmed in their halls while their brothers fall in the battle."
Eurus eagerly answered the hero; "Me rather, therefore,
Take to the fight with you; I will make war on the Greeks for my uncles;

ILION

One for all I will fill their place in the shock with the foemen.”

But from his chamber-door Antenor heard and rebuked him;
“Scamp of my heart, thou torment! into thy chamber and rest there,
Bound with cords lest thou cease, thou flutter-brain, scourged into quiet;
So shall thy lust of the fight be healed and our mansion grow tranquil.”
Chid by the old man Eurys slunk from the hall discontented,
Yet with a dubious smile like a moonbeam lighting his beauty.
But to Antenor the Dardanid born from the white Aphrodite;
“Late the Antenorids learn to flinch from the spears of the Argives,
Even this boy of their blood has Polydamas’ heart and his valour.
Nor should a life that was honoured and noble be stained in its ending.
Nay, then, the mood of a child would shame a grey-headed wisdom,
If for the fault of the people virtue and Troy were forgotten.
For, though the people hear us not, yet are we bound to our nation:
Over the people the gods are; over a man is his country;
This is the deity first adored by the hearths of the noble.
For by our nation’s will we are ruled in the home and the battle
And for our nation’s weal we offer our lives and our children’s.
Not by their own wills led nor their passions men rise to their manhood,
Selfishly seeking their good, but the gods’ and the State’s and the fathers’.”

Wroth Antenor replied to the warlike son of Anchises;
“Great is the soul in thee housed and stern is thy will, O Aeneas;
Onward it moves undismayed to its goal though a city be ruined.
They too guide thee who deepest see of the unageing immortals,
One with her heart and one in his spirit, Cypris and Phoebus.
Yet might a man not knowing this think as he watched thee, Aeneas,
‘Spurring Priam’s race to its fall he endangers this city,
Hoping to build a throne out of ruins sole in the Troad.’
I too have gods who warn me and lead, Athene and Hera.
Not as the ways of other mortals are theirs who are guided,
They whose eyes are the gods and they walk by a light that is secret.”

Coldly Aeneas made answer, stirred into wrath by the taunting:
“High wert thou always, nurtured in wisdom, ancient Antenor.
Walk then favoured and led, yet watch lest passion and evil
Feign auguster names and mimic the gait of the deathless.”
And with a smile on his lips but wrath in his bosom answered,
Wisest of men but with wisdom of mortals, aged Antenor:
“Led or misled we are mortals and walk by a light that is given;
Most they err who deem themselves most from error excluded.

MOTHER INDIA

Nor shalt thou hear in this battle the shout of the men of my lineage
Holding the Greeks as once and driving back Fate from their country.
His alone will be heard for a space while the stern gods are patient
Even now who went forth a victim self-offered to Hades,
Last whom their wills have plucked from the fated house of Antenor.”

They now with wrath in their bosoms sundered for ever and parted.
Forth from the hall of Antenor Aeneas rapidly striding
Passed¹ once more through the city hurrying now with its car-wheels,
Filled with a mightier rumour of war and the march of its thousands,
Till at Troy's upward curve he found the Antenorid crestward
Mounting the steep incline that climbed to the palace of Priam
White in her proud and armed citadel. Silent, ascending
Hardly their feet had attempted the hill when behind them they hearkened
Sweet-tongued a call and the patter and hurry of light-running sandals;
Turning they beheld with a flush on his cheeks and a light on his lashes
Challenging mutely and pleading the boyish beauty of Eurus.
“Racer to mischief,” said Halamus, “couldst thou not sit in thy chamber?
Surely cords and the rod await thee, Eurus, returning.”
Answered with laughter the child, “I have broken through ranks of the fighters,
Dived under chariot-wheels to arrive here and I return not.
I too for counsel of battle have come to the palace of Priam.”
Burdened with thought they mounted slowly the road of their fathers
Breasting the Ilian hill where Laomedon's mansion was tented,
They from the crest down gazing saw their country's house-tops
Under their feet and heard the murmur of Troya below them.

But in the palace of Priam coming and going of house-thralls
Filled all the corridors; smoke from the kitchens curled in its plenty
Rich with savour and breathed from the labouring lungs of Hephaestus.
Far in the halls and the chambers voices travelled and clustered,
Anklets jangling ran and sang back from doorway to doorway
Mocking with music of speed and its laughters the haste of the happy,
Sound came of arms, there was tread of the great, there were murmurs of
women,—

Voices glad of the doomed in Laomedon's marvellous mansion.
Six were the halls of its splendour, a hundred and one were its chambers
Lifted high upon columns that soared like the thoughts of its dwellers,
Thoughts that transcended the earth though they sank down at last into ashes.
So had Apollo dreamed to his lyre; and its tops were a grandeur

¹ Alternative: “Pressed”.

ILION

Domed, as if seeking to roof men's lives with a hint of the heavens;
Marble his columns rose and with marble his roofs were appointed,
Conquered wealth of the world in its largeness suffered, supporting
Purities of marble, glories of gold. Nor only of matter
Blazed there the brutal pomps, but images mystic or mighty
Crowded ceiling and wall, a work that the gods even admire
Hardly believing that forms like these were imagined by mortals
Here upon earth where sight is a blur and the soul lives encumbered.
Scrolls that remembered in gems the thoughts austere of the ancients
Bordered the lines of the stone and the forms of serpent and Naiad
Ran in relief on those walls of pride in the palace of Priam
Mingled with Dryads who tempted and fled and Satyrs who followed,
Sports of the nymphs in the sea and the woods and their meetings with mortals,
Sessions and battles of Trojan demi-gods, deaths that were famous,
Wars and loves of men and the deeds of the golden immortals.
Pillars sculptured with gods and with giants soared from bases
Lion-carved or were seated on bulls and bore into grandeur
Amplly those halls where they soared, or in¹ lordliness slenderly fashioned,
Dressed in flowers and reeds like virgins standing on Ida,
Guarded the screens of stone and divided alcove and chamber.
Ivory carved and broidered robes and the riches of Indus
Cherished in sandalwood triumphed and teemed in the palace of Priam;
Doors that were carven and fragrant sheltered the joys of its princes.

Here in a chamber of luminous privacy Paris was arming.
Near him moved Helen, a whiteness divine and intent on her labour
Fastened his cuirass, bound the greaves and settled the hauberk,
Thrilling his limbs with her touch that was heaven to the yearning of mortals.
She with her hands of delight caressing the senseless metal
Pressed her lips to his brilliant armour; she bowed down, she whispered;
"Cuirass, allowed by the gods, protect the beauty of Paris;
Keep for me that for which country was lost and my child and my brothers."
Yearning she bent to his feet, to the sandal-strings of her lover;
Then as she gazed up, changed grew her mood; for the Daemon within her
Rose that had banded Greece and was burning Troy into ashes.
Slowly a smile that was perfect and perilous over her beauty
Dawned like the sunlight on Paradise; strangely she looked on her lover.
So might a goddess have gazed as she played with the love of a mortal
Passing an hour on the earth ere she rose up white to Olympus.

¹ Alternative: "to"

MOTHER INDIA

“So art thou winner, Paris, yet and thy spirit ascendent
Leads this Troy where thou wilt, O thou mighty one veiled in thy beauty
First in the dance and the revel, first in the joy of the mellay;
Who would not leave for thy sake and repent it not country and homestead?
Winning thou reignest still over Troy, over Fate, over Helen.
Always so canst thou win? Has Death no claim on thy beauty,
Fate no scourge for thy sins? How the years have passed by in a glory,
Years of this heaven of the gods, O ravisher, since from my hearthstone
Seizing thou borest me compelled to thy ships and my joy on the waters.
Troy is enringed with the spears, her children fall and her glories,
Mighty souls of heroes have gone down prone to the darkness;
Thou and I abide! the mothers wail for our pleasure.
Wilt thou then keep me for ever, O son of Priam, in Troya?
Fate was my mother, they say, and Zeus for this hour begot me.
Art thou a god too, O hero, disguised in this robe of the mortal,
Brilliant, careless of death and of sin as if sure of thy rapture?
What then if Fate today were to lay her hand on thee, Paris?”
Calmly he looked on the face of which Greece was enamoured, the body
For whose desire great Troy was a sacrifice, tranquil regarded
Lovely and dire on the lips he loved the smile of a goddess,
Saw the daughter of Zeus in the woman, yet was not shaken.
“Temptress of Argos,” he answered, “thou snare for the world to be seized in,
Thou then hop’st to escape! But the gods could not take thee, O Helen,
How then thy will that to mine is a captive, or how, though with battle,
He who has lost thee, unhappy, the Spartan, bright Menelaus?
All things yield to a man and Zeus is himself his accomplice
When like a god he wills without remorse or longing.
Thou on this earth art mine since I claimed thee beheld, not speaking,
But with thy lids that fell thou veiledst thy heart of compliance.
Then in whatever beyond I shall know how to take thee, O Helen,
Even as here upon earth I knew, in heaven as in Sparta;
I on Elysian fields will enjoy thee as now in the Troad.”
Silent a moment she lingered like one who is lured by a music
Rapturous, heard by himself alone and his lover in heaven,
Then in her beauty compelling she rose up divine among women.
“Yes, it is good,” she cried, “what the gods do and actions of mortals:
Good is the play of the world; it is good, the joy and the torture.
Praised be the hour of the gods when I wedded bright Menelaus!
Praised, more praised the keels that severed the seas towards Helen
Churning the senseless waves that knew not the bliss of their burden!

ILION

Praised to the end the hour when I passed through the doors of my husband
Laughing with joy in my heart for the arms that bore and enchained me!
Never can Death undo what life has done for us, Paris.
Nor, whatever betide, can the hour be un-lived of our rapture.
This too is good that nations should meet in the shock of the battle,
Heroes be slain and a theme be made for the songs of the poets,
Songs that shall thrill with the name of Helen, the beauty of Paris.
Well is this also that empires should fall for the eyes of a woman,
Well that for Helen Hector ended, Memnon was slughtered,
Strong Sarpedon fell and Troilus ceased in his boyhood.
Troy for Helen burning, her glory, her empire, her riches,
This is the sign of the gods and the type of things that are mortal.
Thou who art kin to the masters of heaven, unconstrained like thy kindred
High on this ancient stage of the Troad with gods for spectators
Play till the end thy part, O thou wondrous and beautiful actor:
Fight and slay the Greeks, my countrymen; victor returning
Take for reward of the play, thy delight of Argive Helen.
Force from my bosom a hint of the joy denied to the death-claimed,
Rob in the kiss of my lips a pang from the raptures of heaven."
Clasping him wholly her arms of desire were a girdle of madness,
Cestus divine of the dread Aphrodite. He with her kisses
Flushed like the gods with unearthly wine and rejoiced in his ruin.

(To be continued)

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER V

THE PHILOLOGICAL METHOD OF THE VEDA

No interpretation of the Veda can be sound which does not rest on a sound and secure philological basis; and yet this scripture with its obscure and antique tongue of which it is the sole remaining document offers unique philological difficulties. To rely entirely on the traditional and often imaginative renderings of the Indian scholars is impossible for any critical mind. Modern philology strives after a more secure and scientific basis, but has not yet found it.

In the psychological interpretation of the Veda there are, especially, two difficulties which can only be met by a satisfactory philological justification. This interpretation necessitates the acceptance of several new senses for a fair number of fixed technical terms of the Veda,—terms, for example like *uti*, *awas*, *vayas*. These new renderings satisfy one test we may fairly demand; they fit into every context, clarify the sense and free us from the necessity of attributing quite different significances to the same term in a work of so fixed a form as the Veda. But this test is not sufficient. We must have, besides, a philological basis which will not only account for the new sense, but also explain how a single word came to be capable of so many different meanings, the sense attached to it by the psychological interpretation, those given to it by the old grammarians and those, if any, which are attached to it in later Sanscrit. But this is not easily possible unless we find a more scientific basis for our philological deductions than our present knowledge affords.

Secondly, the theory of the psychological interpretation depends very often on the use of a double meaning for important words,—the keywords of the secret teaching. The figure is one that is traditional in Sanscrit literature and sometimes employed with an excess of artifice in the later classical works; it is the *slesha* or rhetorical figure of double entendre. But its very artificiality predisposes us to believe that this poetical device must belong necessarily to a later and more sophisticated culture. How are we to account for its constant presence in a work of the remotest antiquity? Moreover, there is a peculiar extension of it in the Vedic use, a deliberate employment of the “multi-significance” of Sanscrit roots in order to pack as much meaning as possible into

a single word, which at first sight enhances the difficulty of the problem to an extraordinary degree. For instance, the word, *Aswa*, usually signifying a horse, is used as a figure of the Prana, the nervous energy, the vital breath, the half-mental, half-material dynamism which links mind and matter. Its root is capable, among other senses, of the ideas of impulsion, force, possession, enjoyment, and we find all these meanings united in this figure of the Steed of Life to indicate the essential tendencies of the Pranic energy. Such a use of language would not be possible if the tongue of the Aryan forefathers obeyed the same conventions as our modern speech or were in the same stage of development. But if we can suppose that there was some peculiarity in the old Aryan tongue as it was used by the Vedic Rishis by which words were felt to be more alive, less merely conventional symbols of ideas, more free in their transitions of meanings than in our later use of speech, then we shall find that these devices were not at all artificial or far-fetched to their employers, but were rather the first natural means which would suggest themselves to men anxious at once to find new, brief and adequate formulae of speech for psychological conceptions not understood by the vulgar and to conceal the ideas contained in their formulae from a profane intelligence. I believe that this is the true explanation; it can be established, I think, by a study of the development of Aryan speech that language did pass through a stage peculiarly favourable to this cryptic and psychological use of words which in their popular handling have a plain, precise and physical significance.

I have already indicated that my first study of Tamil words had brought me to what seemed a clue to the very origins and structure of the ancient Sanscrit tongue; and so far did this clue lead that I lost sight entirely of my original subject of interest, the connections between Aryan and Dravidian speech, and plunged into the far more interesting research of the origins and laws of development of human language itself. It seemed to me that this great inquiry and not the ordinary preoccupations of linguistic scholars should be the first and central aim of any true science of Philology.

Owing to the failure of the first hopes which attended the birth of modern Philology, its meagre results, its crystallisation into the character of a "petty conjectural science", the idea of a Science of Language is now discredited and its very possibility, on quite insufficient reasoning, entirely denied. It seems to me impossible to acquiesce in such a final negation. If there is one thing that Modern Science has triumphantly established, it is the reign of law and process of evolution in the history of all earthly things. Whatever may be the deeper nature of Speech, in its outward manifestation as human language it is an organism, a growth, a terrestrial evolution. It contains indeed a constant psychological element and is therefore more free, flexible, consciously self-

adaptive than purely physical organisms; its secret is more difficult to seize, its constituents yield themselves only to more subtle and less trenchant methods of analysis. But law and process exist in mental no less than in material phenomena in spite of their more volatile and variable appearances. Law and process must have governed the origins and developments of language. Given the necessary clue and sufficient data, they must be discoverable. It seems to me that in the Sanscrit language the clue can be found, the data lie ready for investigation.

The error of Philology which prevented it from arriving at a more satisfactory result in this direction, was its preoccupation in the physical parts of speech with the exterior morphology of language and in its psychological parts with the equally external connections of formed vocables and of grammatical inflexions in kindred languages. But the true method of Science is to go back to the origins, the embryology, the elements and more obscure processes of things. From the obvious only the obvious and superficial results. The profundities of things, their real truth, can best be discovered by penetration into the hidden things that the surface of phenomena conceal, into that past development of which the finished forms present only secret and dispersed indications or into the possibilities from which the actualities we see are only a narrow selection. A similar method applied to the earlier forms of human speech can alone give us a real Science of Language.

It is not in a short chapter of a treatise itself brief and devoted to another subject that it is at all possible to present the results of the work that I have attempted on these lines.¹ I can only briefly indicate the one or two features which bear directly on the subject of Vedic interpretation. And I mention them here solely to avoid any supposition in the minds of my readers that in departing from the received senses of certain Vedic words I have simply taken advantage of that freedom of ingenious conjecture which is at once one of the great attractions and one of the most serious weaknesses of modern Philology.

My researches first convinced me that words, like plants, like animals, are in no sense artificial products, but growths,—living growths of sound with certain seed-sounds as their basis. Out of these seed-sounds develop a small number of primitive root-words with an immense progeny which have their successive generations and arrange themselves in tribes, clans, families, selective groups each having a common stock and a common psychological history. For the factor which presided over the development of language was the association, by the nervous mind of primitive man, of certain general significances or rather of certain general utilities and sense-values with articulate sounds.

¹ I propose to deal with them in a separate work on "the Origins of Aryan Speech".

The process of this association was also in no sense artificial but natural, governed by simple and definite psychological laws.

In their beginnings language-sounds were not used to express what we should call ideas; they were rather the vocal equivalents of certain general sensations and emotion-values. It was the nerves and not the intellect which created speech. To use Vedic symbols, Agni and Vayu, not Indra, were the original artificers of human language. Mind has emerged out of vital and sensational activities; intellect in man has built itself upon a basis of sense-associations and sense-reactions. By a similar process the intellectual use of language has developed by a natural law out of the sensational and emotional. Words, which were originally vital ejections full of a vague sense-potentiality, have evolved into fixed symbols of precise intellectual significances.

In consequence, the word originally was not fixed to any precise idea. It had a general character or quality (*guna*), which was capable of a great number of applications and therefore of a great number of possible significances. And this *guna* and its results it shared with many kindred sounds. At first, therefore, word-clans, word-families started life on the communal system with a common stock of possible and realised significances and a common right to all of them; their individuality lay rather in shades of expression of the same ideas than in any exclusive right to the expression of a single idea. The early history of language was a development from this communal life of words to a system of individual property in one or more intellectual significances. The principle of partition was at first fluid, then increased in rigidity, until word-families and finally single words were able to start life on their own account. The last stage of the entirely natural growth of language comes when the life of the word is entirely subjected to the life of the idea which it represents. For in the first state of language the word is as living or even a more living force than its idea; sound determines sense. In its last state the positions have been reversed; the idea becomes all-important, the sound secondary.

Another feature of the early history of language is that it expresses at first a remarkably small stock of ideas and these are the most general notions possible and generally the most concrete, such as light, motion, touch, substance, extension, force, speed, etc. Afterwards there is a gradual increase in variety of idea and precision of idea. The progression is from the general to the particular, from the vague to the precise, from the physical to the mental, from the concrete to the abstract, from the expression of an abundant variety of sensations about similar things to the expression of precise difference between similar things, feelings and actions. This progression is worked out by processes of association in ideas which are always the same, always recurrent and, although

no doubt due to the environments and actual experiences of the men who spoke the language, wear the appearance of fixed natural laws of development. And after all what is a law but a process which has been worked out by the nature of things in response to the necessities of their environment and has become the fixed habit of their action?

From this past history of language certain consequences derive which are of considerable importance in Vedic interpretation. In the first place by a knowledge of the laws under which the relations of sound and sense formed themselves in the Sanscrit tongue and by a careful and minute study of its word-families it is possible to a great extent to restore the past history of individual words. It is possible to account for the meanings actually possessed by them, to show how they were worked out through the various stages of language-development, to establish the mutual relations of different significances and to explain how they came to be attached to the same word in spite of the wide difference and sometimes even the direct contrariety of their sense-values. It is possible also to restore lost senses of words on a sure and scientific basis and to justify them by an appeal to the observed laws of association which governed the development of the old Aryan tongues, to the secret evidence of the word itself and to the corroborative evidence of its immediate kindred. Thus instead of having a purely floating and conjectural basis for our dealings with the vocables of the Vedic language, we can work with confidence upon a solid and reliable foundation.

Naturally, it does not follow that because a Vedic word may or must have had at one time a particular significance, that significance can be safely applied to the actual text of the Veda. But we do establish a sound sense and a clear possibility of its being the right sense for the Veda. The rest is a matter of comparative study of the passages in which the word occurs and of constant fitness in the context. I have continually found that a sense thus restored illumines always the context wherever it is applied and on the other hand that a sense demanded always by the context is precisely that to which we are led by the history of the word. This is a sufficient basis for a moral, if not for an absolute certainty.

Secondly, one remarkable feature of language in its inception is the enormous number of different meanings of which a single word was capable and also the enormous number of words which could be used to represent a single idea. Afterwards this tropical luxuriance came to be cut down. The intellect intervened with its growing need of precision, its growing sense of economy. The bearing capacity of words progressively diminished; and it became less and less tolerable to be burdened with a superfluous number of words for the same idea, a redundant variety of ideas for the same word. A considerable, though not too

rigid economy in these respects, modified by a demand for a temperate richness of variation, became the final law of language. But the Sanscrit tongue never quite reached the final stages of this development; it dissolved too early into the Prakriti dialects. Even in its latest and most literary form it is lavish of varieties of meanings for the same word; it overflows with a redundant wealth of synonyms. Hence its extraordinary capacity for rhetorical devices which in any other language would be difficult, forced and hopelessly artificial, and especially for the figure of double sense, of *slesha*.

The Vedic Sanscrit represents a still earlier stratum in the development of language. Even in its outward features it is less fixed than any classical tongue; it abounds in variety of forms and inflexions; it is fluid and vague, yet richly subtle in its use of cases and tenses. And on its psychological side it has not yet crystallised, is not entirely hardened into the rigid forms of intellectual precision. The word for the Vedic Rishi is still a living thing, a thing of power, creative, formative. It is not yet a conventional symbol for an idea, but itself the parent and former of ideas. It carries within it the memory of its roots, is still conscient of its own history.

The Rishis' use of language was governed by this ancient psychology of the Word. When in English we use the word "wolf" or "cow", we mean by it simply the animal designated; we are not conscious of any reason why we should use that particular sound for the idea except the immemorial custom of the language; and we cannot use it for any other sense or purpose except by an artificial device of style. But for the Vedic Rishi "vrika" meant the tearer and therefore, among other applications of the sense, a wolf; "dhenu" meant the fosterer, nourisher, and therefore a cow. But the original and general sense predominates, the derived and particular is secondary. Therefore, it was possible for the fashioner of the hymn to use these common words with a great pliability, sometimes putting forward the image of the wolf or the cow, sometimes using it to colour the more general sense, sometimes keeping it merely as a conventional figure for the psychological conception on which his mind was dwelling, sometimes losing sight of the image altogether. It is in the light of this psychology of the old language that we have to understand the peculiar figures of Vedic symbolism as handled by the Rishis, even to the most apparently common and concrete. It is so that words like "ghritam", the clarified butter, "soma", the sacred wine, and a host of others are used.

Moreover, the partitions made by the thought between different senses of the same word were much less separative than in modern speech. In English "fleet" meaning a number of ships and "fleet" meaning swift are two different words; when we use "fleet" in the first sense we do not think of the swiftness of the ship's motion, nor when we use it in the second, do we recall the image

of ships gliding rapidly over the ocean. But this was precisely what was apt to occur in the Vedic use of Language. "Bhaga", enjoyment, and "bhaga", share, were for the Vedic mind not different words, but one word which had developed two different uses. Therefore it was easy for the Rishis to employ it in one of the two senses with the other at the back of the mind colouring its overt connotation or even to use it equally in both senses at a time by a sort of figure of cumulative significance. "Chanas" meant food but also it meant "enjoyment, pleasure"; therefore it could be used by the Rishi to suggest to the profane mind only the food given at the sacrifice to the gods, but for the initiated it meant the Ananda, the joy of the divine bliss entering into the physical consciousness and at the same time suggested the image of the Soma wine, at once the food of the gods and the Vedic symbol of the Ananda.

We see everywhere this use of language dominating the Word of the Vedic hymns. It was the great device by which the ancient Mystics overcame the difficulty of their task. Agni for the ordinary worshipper may have meant simply the god of the Vedic fire, or it may have meant the principle of Heat and Light in physical Nature, or to the most ignorant it may have meant simply a super-human personage, one of the many "givers of wealth", satisfiers of human desire. How suggest to those capable of a deeper conception the psychological functions of the God? The word itself fulfilled that service. For Agni meant the Strong, it meant the Bright, or even Force, Brilliance. So it could easily recall to the initiated, wherever it occurred, the idea of the illumined Energy which builds up the worlds and which exalts man to the Highest, the doer of the great work, the Purohit of the human sacrifice.

Or how keep it in the mind of the hearer that all these gods are personalities of the one universal Deva? The names of the gods in their very meaning recall that they are only epithets, significant names, descriptions, not personal appellations. Mitra is the Deva as the Lord of love and harmony, Bhaga as the Lord of enjoyment, Surya as the Lord of illumination, Varuna as the all-pervading Vastness and purity of the Divine supporting and perfecting the world "The Existent is One", says the Rishi Dirghatamas, "but the sages express It variously; they say Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Agni; they call It Agni, Yama, Matariswan." The initiate in the earlier days of the Vedic knowledge had no need of this express statement. The names of the gods carried to him their own significance and recalled the great fundamental truth which remained with him always.

But in the later ages the very device used by the Rishis turned against the preservation of the knowledge. For language changed its character, rejected its earlier pliability, shed off old familiar senses; the word contracted and shrank into its outer and concrete significance. The ambrosial wine of the Ananda was forgotten in the physical offering; the image of the clarified butter

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

recalled only the gross libation to mythological deities, lords of the fire and the cloud and the storm-blast, godheads void of any but a material energy and an external lustre. The letter lived on when the spirit was forgotten; the symbol, the body of the doctrine, remained, but the soul of knowledge had fled from its coverings.

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

MEDICAL SECTION

II

MYSELF: Regarding the cure you effected in D by your Force, X says that it might have been due to a combination of unseen factors—not due to your Force.

SRI AUROBINDO: How does he know? Why can't my poor force be there among the invisibles, since invisibles there are? If only visibles were admitted, then of course—

In that case all the trouble I took for D was sheer waste of energy, hallucination and chimera. Hallucination also the fact that D's improvement agreed exactly with the thought I put out in the force? Well, it may be so. Modern science says there is no such thing as cause and effect, only conditions and statistics. But what are these unseen factors? (The Doctor at any rate thought it miraculous. And what about the hundreds of cases of healing by suggestion or other mental forces everywhere?)

MYSELF: We all believe that as soon as you read our letters we receive the necessary help. Yesterday when I went to R to treat his eye, he told me that he felt your Force working inside it, and inferred that you were reading his letter just then.

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on how far the inner being is awake—otherwise one needs a physical *avalambana*. There are some people who get the relief only after we read a letter, others get it immediately they write or before it has reached us or after it has reached but before we have read. Others get it simply by referring the whole matter to us mentally.

MYSELF: You have said that one can know of illnesses before they enter the body; in that case, one can always stop them and have absolute immunity.

SRI AUROBINDO: All illnesses pass through the nervous or vital-physical sheath of the subtle consciousness and subtle body before they enter the physical. If one is conscious of the subtle body or with the subtle consciousness,

one can stop an illness on its way and prevent it from entering the physical body. But it may come without one's noticing, or when one is asleep or through the subconscious, or in a sudden rush when one is off one's guard; then there is nothing to do but to fight it out from a hold already gained on the body. Self-defence by these inner means may become so strong that the body becomes practically immune as many Yogis are. Still this "practically" does not mean "absolutely". The absolute immunity can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental it is the result of an action of a Force among many forces and can be disturbed by a disruption of the equilibrium established—in the supramental it is a law of the nature; in a supramentalised body immunity from illness would be automatic, inherent in its new nature.

There is a difference between Yogic Force on the mental and inferior planes and the Supramental Nature. What is acquired and held by the Yoga-Force in the mind-and-body consciousness is in the supramental inherent and exists not by achievement but by nature—it is self-existent and absolute.

MYSELF: It seems that people are now depending more on doctors and medicines than before!

SRI AUROBINDO: Increase of numbers brought in all sorts of influences that were not there in the smaller circle before. Doctors did not matter so long as faith was the main thing and a little treatment the help. But when faith went, illness increased and the doctors became not merely useful but indispensable. There was also the third cause, the descent of the sadhana into the physical consciousness with all its doubt, obscurity and resistance:

NIRODBARAN

SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

THE PSYCHIC BEING AND THE POWER OF AGNI

SADHAKA: What is meant by having a psychic basis?

SRI AUROBINDO: The psychic in front and supporting the whole experience. (1-6-1934)

SADHAKA: I don't know how to keep the heart and its reactions under the psychic check.

SRI AUROBINDO: The heart is part of the vital—it has to be controlled in the same way as the rest, by rejection of the wrong movements, by acceptance of the true psychic surrender which prevents all demand and clamour, by calling in the higher light and knowledge. (14-7-1934)

SADHAKA: A quiet pressure of sadhana continues almost the whole day with increasing power and intensity. If my vital were participating in it now, the whole nature would undergo a great change.

SRI AUROBINDO: "The whole nature" does not so easily change. What has to be done is to get the inner being established in a higher consciousness. (18-7-1934)

SADHAKA: At present, is it not necessary to have peace? Is its descent retarded by the vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is always better to have peace. As for the vital, there is always something in it that resists and tries to retard, but if the inner being opens sufficiently and you can live in the inner being, peace can descend and establish itself there in such a way that the vital movements of the surface may be there but will not be able to break the inner peace. (18-7-1934)

SADHAKA: At times I feel as if my heart opens out or ascends with joy to the Mother. Has the heart also to rise?

SRI AUROBINDO: The emotional being has to ascend. (18-7-1934)

SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

SADHAKA: Does living the inner life mean necessarily the psychic's leadership in one's being?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not always, at once. There is the inner mind, vital, physical. Many live a long time in that. The psychic is the innermost.
(19-7-1934)

SADHAKA: Why do I not feel love and Ananda every time I see the Mother?

SRI AUROBINDO: As for the love and Ananda, it depends on the psychic coming up.
(29-7-1934)

SADHAKA: Along with the inner quietude I felt today a natural indifference to the outer activities, and as if my inner being were waiting for something.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is some part of the inner being that has entered into quietude and separated itself from the external nature.
(27-7-1934)

SADHAKA: On the Darshan Day (15th August) and the day before it, I felt an intense love for you and for the Mother. It possessed my whole being for some time. And then a high and profound reverence for both of you—and "a happiness that no worldly pleasure can give us."

SRI AUROBINDO: That is obviously psychic.
(25-8-1934)

SADHAKA: Whenever an inner love springs out for the Mother, tears rush out too.

SRI AUROBINDO: These are psychic tears of devotion etc.
(25-8-1934)

SADHAKA: It seems that the psychic has begun to work directly on the outer consciousness using love and devotion as its expressive means.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, certainly that is the working of the psychic.
(25-8-1934)

SADHAKA: A lady visitor was leaving the Ashram today. No sooner did the Mother finish the Pranam ceremony than this lady began to weep. In fact, she tried hard to check herself as we all were still there, but it seems she could not help it. Was it not due to her psychic coming in front for the time?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a question of the psychic coming in front. She has a psychic being which is awake and has long been in connection with the Mother on the inner plane.
(28-8-1934)

MOTHER INDIA

SADHAKA: A thrill comes from above and passes through my body, making the adhar stilled for a while. I don't understand it much. What exactly is it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course it is the thrill of the Mother's touch coming from above and felt by the psychic and vital together. (28-8-1934)

SADHAKA: Day by day it is now becoming obvious that the Mother is bestowing upon her child a psychic and spiritual realisation simultaneously.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is an immense progress. (28-8-1934)

SADHAKA: The pressure felt from the cardiac centre down to the navel centre has deepened and intensified since the morning. It rises and descends unceasingly.

SRI AUROBINDO: It means a strong working to connect the psychic and vital closely together. (31-8-1934)

SADHAKA: Through my forehead something has definitely been coming from above. The descent is powerful as well as rapid.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the higher consciousness sending its force down into the inner mind centre. (8-9-1934)

SADHAKA: The descent felt today has not been confined to me alone: it has been rather general. Will it not change the whole atmosphere?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is an increasing Power descending—but to change the whole atmosphere will take time. (8-9-1934)

SADHAKA: The descent felt before on the forehead is now coming further down as if passing through the nose.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is coming down towards the externalising mind centre.

SADHAKA: What makes its pressure burn like a fire?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the Agni-force in it. (8-9-1934)

SADHAKA: Coming from the Mother, I felt as if a burning transformation had started. I feel around me a burning sensation. To give an example, each of my fingers feels surrounded by a fire.

SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of tapasya, a fire of transformation.
(10-9-1934)

SADHAKA: While leaving the Ashram I was conscious of something very weighty, wide, full of power and intensely strong entering not merely through the Brahmic passage at the top of the head but through the whole head.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is simply the force of the higher consciousness descending in greater mass.
(10-9-1934)

Sadhaka: I feel the experience in flesh and teeth and it is becoming more and more dense. Does it mean that there is also a working of peace?

SRI AUROBINDO: The force can also be dense in that way; but probably it is establishing the solid calm in that way.
(12-9-1934)

SADHAKA: Along with the psychic fire in the heart there was a simultaneous action of a vital fire. How is that?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no incompatibility between them. (18-9-1934)

SADHAKA: What is it that acts in the Agni?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the Mother's Force that works in the Agni.

SADHAKA: Before my consciousness could realise fully the Self the psychic seems to have come so much forward. Is the experience of a burning action almost everywhere in the being a sign of this?

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is simply the burning of the Agni in various parts of the being. It prepares it for transformation. But the coming forward of the psychic is another matter and its signs are psychological. (18-9-1934)

SADHAKA: Since it is mostly the Agni that burns within me, why does the mind take it for the psychic fire?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is some association in the mind probably coupling Agni with the psychic. Of course the individual Agni fire has its starting point in the psychic, but the mere burning of the fire does not show that the psychic is coming forward.

MOTHER INDIA

When it burns in the heart it is the fire *in* the psychic. The psychic fire is individual and takes usually the form of a fire of aspiration or personal tapasya. This Fire is universal and it came from above.

SADHAKA: What is experienced in the vital as fire?

SRI AUROBINDO: The psychic fire may burn in the vital. It all depends on whether it is the fire of the general Force that comes from above or the fire of your soul's aspiration and tapasya. (18-9-1934)

SADHAKA: What does the fire in any part indicate?

SRI AUROBINDO: The fire indicates a dynamic action. (20-9-1934)

SADHAKA: You wrote a few days back that the signs of the psychic's coming forward are psychological. What are these signs?

SRI AUROBINDO: A central love, bhakti, surrender, giving everything, a sight within that sees always clearly what is spiritually right or wrong and automatically rejects the latter—a movement of entire consecration and dedication of all in one to the Mother. (21-9-1934)

NAGIN DOSHI

MATTER AND LIFE

A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

(Continued from the July issue)

II

THE question we have considered crucial in our inquiry is whether the central characteristic of organic nature—or, in common parlance, life—has yielded to physics and chemistry and whether it is such as they can hope to explain.

Let us begin with the opinion of that master physiologist, Sir Charles Sherrington. Sherrington does not forget the many mysteries of even the simplest protoplasmic cell: he admits “the still unexplained residue of the cell’s behaviour.” But he goes by the great deal of accounting that chemistry and physics have done for that behaviour and by the explanation they have given of so much to which years ago they could offer no clue: he feels it is logical to suppose that the remaining mysteries will prove resolvable by them. In his famous Gifford Lectures, published in book-form in 1941, *Man On His Nature*, he declares: “Today the very distinction between the living and the non-living is a convention. That deletes ‘life’ as a scientific category; or, if you will, carries it down to embrace the atom....An energy-system which we call ‘alive’ does not radically depart from energy-systems which we do not call ‘alive’. Both are chemical....Instead of a specific principle which is life, life is an example of the way in which an energy-system in its give and take with the energy-system around it can continue to maintain itself for a period as a self-centred, so to say, self-balanced unity.”

To appreciate Sherrington’s position correctly we should state that he is not an out-and-out materialist. He stands helpless before what he differentiates as “mind” from what he defines as “life”. Mind, according to him, does not yield to explanation in terms of “energy”. But if we understand by “life” broadly whatever carries on and holds together processes like growth, metabolism, adaptation, tissue-regeneration and propagation, then, in Sherrington’s view, science, though still far from the goal of explaining every vital process, is entitled by past successes to be materialistic about the living organism.

We may feel philosophically that by conceding the non-material nature of mind Sherrington has exposed his case to a subtle attack. But we have

strictly limited our discussion to the biological field and we have to meet his materialism on that particular ground: thus, apart from any other advantage, the biological materialism of those that do not concur with him about mind will at the same time be met. Here, adhering to the question we have posed as crucial in our inquiry, we must disengage the central characteristic of life from Sherrington's description and test it by his materialistic canons. Evidently, in his eyes, processes like growth, metabolism, adaptation, tissue-regeneration and propagation are ultimately the give and take of any energy-system with the energy-system around it and are purely physico-chemical for all their complexity. But we must not overlook the phrases in which he calls the organic energy-system one that "can continue to maintain itself for a period as a self-centred, so to say, self-balanced unity." In these words we seem to have life's central characteristic. And we do not have to wait long before Sherrington himself, in developing his materialistic thesis, confirms our perception.

This is how his materialistic thesis is developed by him "Perhaps the most striking feature of life is that it acts as though it 'desired' to maintain itself. But we do not say of the spinning of a heavy top which resists being upset that it 'desires' to go on spinning. The very constitution of the living-system may compel it to increase; thus a self-fermenting protein-system, granted its conditions, *must* increase. Broadly taken, however, there is in 'living' nothing fundamentally other than is going forward in all the various grades of energy-systems which we know, though in some less rapidly and less balancedly than in others. Whether atom, molecule, colloidal complex or what not, whether virus or cell or plant or animal compounded of cells, each is a system of motion in commerce with its surround, and there is dynamic reaction between it and the surround.... There is between them all no essential difference. The difference is one not of ultimate nature but of scheme and degree of complexity, nothing more. The elemental parts and elemental patterns are not novel. The atoms and subatoms are among Earth's commonest."

Is this argument satisfactory? It does not provide any reason for the fact that about life's activity the scientist is led to say that it is as though life "desired" to maintain itself while about the spinning of a heavy top he is led to say nothing of the sort. Surely there is something which makes the difference? Why do we designate one energy-system as life and another as non-life? Sherrington, after saying that the atoms and subatoms in the living system are among Earth's commonest, observes: "'Living' becomes a name for certain complexes of them, arrangements of which it may be said that they are organized integratively—i.e., to form a solidarity, an individual. Hence we do not speak of 'life' in association with absolute simplicity of organization; never with mere homogeneity of structure. It requires a heterogeneity which

permits integration of its complex even if the latter be but a single cell." A little earlier he writes: "The cell is not a polyphasic chemico-physical system merely. Many a mere drop of complex jelly could be that. The cell is a polyphasic chemico-physical system which is integratively organized. Hence there comes about that it can answer to what is described as 'life'." Again: "The processes going forward in it are co-operatively harmonized. The total system is organized....Many considerations force on us the conception of the cell as 'organization'." Elucidating the nature of life at all stages and levels, Sherrington says: "Each of us at the outset of his or her individual life story is microscopic and one sole cell. By that cell's multiplication, and by its descendants' coherence, each of us attains his or her final form and size. Each at every stage of that astonishing 'becoming' is never any less than a self-centred individual....The embryo, even when its cells are but two or three, is a self-centred co-operative society which is familial and a unity—an organized family of cells, with corporate individuality. This character of being an individual seems, as we look upon Nature, a feature peculiarly stressed in what is living."

The key-words about life, therefore, are organization, co-operation, integration, unity, individuality. Of course, the term "individuality" is to be understood in each case within its special context. We must not import into it everywhere all the refinements and subtleties it acquires in a discussion of human psychology. But it is valid inasmuch as there is the mark of a dominant and insistent wholeness suggestive of an overall purpose. The solitary cell has this mark and, when many cells combine, the unit-life retains it and yet the collective life at each moment both of development and of maintenance of developed existence is not a bare aggregate any more than the single cell is a bare aggregate: it has itself the same mark. An identical quality, characteristic of life, is manifested throughout, and this ubiquitous invariable quality is that life is, to quote Sherrington once more, "not simply additive, but additive by co-organization of an integrative kind. There the harmony of the whole is not merely built out of its parts but is impressed on the parts by the whole. An individuality whose whole, as luminously said by Coleridge, is presupposed by all its parts."

Here we have the heart of the matter. And all-serious biologists point towards it. It means in the first place that what distinguishes living things is not some substance or substances of which they are composed. As Edmund W. Sinnott, one of the acutest American biologists, states in *Cell and Psyche*: "It is not the *character* of the constituents of a living thing but the *relations* between them which are most significant. An organism is an organized system." E. B. Wilson, a famous worker in the same field, declares in *The Cell in Development and Inheritance*: "We cannot hope to comprehend the activities of the living cell by analysis merely of its chemical composition....Modern investigation

has brought ever-increasing recognition of the fact that the cell is an organic system and one in which we must recognize some kind of ordered structure or organization." Herbert Muller, again a distinguished name, writes in *Science and Criticism*: "The fundamental fact in biology, the necessary point of departure, is the organism. The cell is a chemical compound but more significantly a type of biological organization; the whole organism is not a mere aggregate but an architecture; the vital functions of growth, adaptation, reproduction—the final function of death—are not merely cellular but organic phenomena." Ludwig von Bertalanffy, perhaps the greatest Austrian biologist of our day, avers: "The fact that the processes in an organism are regulated according to the needs of the whole is the most striking characteristic of the phenomena of life." J.B.S. Haldane no less than his father J.S. Haldane—eminent names both—sees in co-ordinated self-preservation the essential of life. Joseph Needham too has often expressed his opinion that the central problem in biology is "organizing relations." Julian Huxley is aware of this no less. But when we have put aside the notion of character of constituents and concentrated on organization we have not yet emphasised the entire *differentia* of the living.

In a general sense organization is to be found in the non-living. Sherrington makes much of this and lumps life and non-life together as "fundamentally balances of give and take of motion with their surround." He speaks of a grey rock and a darting dragon-fly: "We may consider the dragon-fly the more delicately balanced system with the more intensive give and take. Directly and indirectly through the collateral system of the green plant, it has the more acute commerce with the energy-system of the sun. We may judge it a more organized and integrated system than the rock...but these are details when we view energy-systems generally. Then, as pure energy-systems, rock and dragon-fly come together within one category." Sherrington reduces the fact of life's organization to just a "more" of what already obtains in non-life, to a coming to a head as it were of the organization universally prevalent. Is he right?

At the turn of the century the German philosopher-biologist Hans Driesch conducted a series of experiments in embryology which showed that in many eggs all kinds of interferences could be made without affecting at all the embryo resulting. To explain the eggs' astounding behaviour he posited a non-material agency which he called, reviving a term of Aristotle's, "entelechy"—i.e. a factor which "carries the goal within itself." About these experiments Needham writes: "Large pieces could be removed from the egg, several blastomeres could be taken away, or the blastomeres could be shuffled at will, and yet a normal, though small-sized embryo would result. Any one monad in the original egg-cell, then, was capable of forming any part of the finished embryo. Driesch was quite right in proclaiming that this was beyond the powers of any machine such as man has

ever constructed, but he soon left the straight and narrow path by insinuating his non-material entelechy into the works as the inevitable transcendent mechanic or driver." The straight and narrow path from which Driesch's "vitalism" was deemed a deviation is supposed to be the belief that the surprising organizing relations as demonstrated by him and by many workers after him in many departments of biology do not fall outside physics and chemistry and have to be attacked in the laboratory instead of being left an extra-laboratorial mystery. The resolution thus to attack them is indeed in consonance with the genius of science. But is it scientific to assert that physics and chemistry can be competent to explain organizing relations *in toto*?

Let us first glance at the actual upshot of the attempt to discover the physics and chemistry of organizing relations. The most thrilling chapter of the attempt was the study of certain chemicals which were christened "organizers". They were found markedly to affect development. The most outstanding name here is the German embryologist H. Spemann. Looking at Spemann's work as well as at that of others, Julian Huxley predicted in 1933 that in a short time the organizing powers of a living thing would be reduced to a chemical formula and stored in a bottle. It seems, however, that the short time has not yet elapsed. Spemann himself has admitted that his "organizer" was only a stimulus, an evocator, and that the real problem of organization lies in the responding system itself, and not in the trigger which sets this off. Analogous chemical substances have also been found to be no more than agents and messengers by which development is affected. Sinnott cites the case of "auxin" whose role in plant-growth is important. "The beautifully co-ordinated results", says he, "must come from the presence of just the right amount of auxin, at just the right place, and at just the right time. Something must control the auxin, must act as the headquarters from which the chemical messengers are dispatched....Moreover, the secret of the action of such a substance lies not primarily in itself but in the specific organization of the cells upon which it acts. Auxin no more makes roots than a nickel makes a tune in a juke box. Not the nickel or the auxin holds the secret, but the structure of the system itself."

What exactly makes the structure such and such and controls the evocators? The simple answer from the point of view of current physics and chemistry is: We have not much of an idea. As Michael Abercrombie remarks in *Experimental Embryology Today in Science News 13* (published in 1949), "Though some of the finest experimentalists in embryology, such as Waddington and Needham in this country, were hard on its track, the solution of the problem escaped. The exhilaration of that concerted pursuit is over, and the reaction has been one of some disappointment." About the present state of the science,

Abercrombie says: "Embryologists have at the moment no main objective which can focus the activities of a notable proportion of their effort. They give rather the impression of casting about for new hypotheses to pursue. There is a great deal of apparently sporadic thinking around and trying out." As a result, some interesting ideas are mooted, such as the stickiness of cells: each cell has a stickiness of a most particular kind, so that it will stick firmly only to some types of cells, and will fail to stick to others. But neither this phenomenon of specific adhesion as demonstrated by Holtfreter nor the work of Weiss and Twitty, Medawar and Billingham, plausible though it is with regard to several processes, cuts down to the basic problems—and about one of the most basic, that of regulation, to which Driesch opened our eyes, Abercrombie notes: "We have at the moment only very tentative suggestions, and the problem urgently needs a point of attack." Von Bertalanffy, in his *Problems of Life* (1952), confesses: "In spite of an enormous amount of experimental data, we do not have, at present, a really satisfactory theory of development." George Gaylord Simpson, one of the most able expositors of materialism in his *Meaning of Evolution* (1951), tabulating the much that still remains in biology to be learned, ends with the statement: "How is a genetic system translated into completed organic form? Unless this ignorance is personal, even the path to the answer is not yet really evident, as recent experimental embryology seems rather to skirt than to follow such a path."

Concrete results at bedrock level are nearly nil. Biological organization is still an enigma: the central and most characteristic feature of life has not yielded to current physics and chemistry. Will it ever do so? The answer hangs on the question: Does the integrated unity exhibited by life at all stages and levels resemble whatever unity non-life presents? Sherrington, as we saw, compares a grey rock and a dragon-fly because both are energy-systems in commerce with their surround. But clearly the grey rock as such is not a unity: it is a mere aggregate. The various bits of grey rock-stuff adhere to one another, without in any sense cohering in a sustained pattern. They compose no such organization as is the dragon-fly's. It is when we consider the molecules and atoms of this stuff that we reach a describable unity. The molecule is a unity of different atoms, the atom a unity of protons, neutrons and electrons. Can they be compared to the unity of the cell composed of colloidal particles? If we say that the cell-organization is something unique, it may be pointed out that the molecule-organization is not like the atom-organization and that either is unique. But even among uniquenesses there can be a similarity and a difference. Let us clarify to ourselves why we call a particular organization living and the rest non-living.

First, each part of a growing organism carries in itself up to a certain early

stage of the organism's development the presence or pattern of the whole, so that, if separated from the other parts with which it was co-operating through a particular function, it can produce a complete organism of the same type. Secondly, each part, up to a certain stage, can change its function if its place in the organism is changed and do what the new place which it occupies needs it to do, as if each part had the sense of each point of the pattern and as if the pattern were independent of the material from which it seems to be made and could use any material to serve the function assigned to each point. Thirdly, each part joins with the others to form a separate distinct complete single organism, an organic individual, in which there is to a considerable extent not only a functional dependence of the parts on the whole so that the parts, if isolated, would be disorganized but also an existential dependence such that the parts in isolation would cease even to be recognisable. Each of the three features and *a fortiori* their ensemble appears to prove that the whole has a primacy and that the parts are brought together essentially for its sake, for the purpose of expressing it.

The expression of the whole, over and above the general and fundamental features we have formulated, has some particular features in which the type or species of organism is thrown into relief as being the whole. Often the experiments of Driesch are turned to stress these features most. Sinnott succinctly illustrates them in two statements: "Each part or quality (is) so related to all the rest that in its growth the individual marches on through a series of specific steps to a specific end or culmination, maintaining throughout its course a delicately balanced state of form and function which tends to restore itself if it is altered....A remarkable fact about organic regulation, both developmental and physiological, is that, if the organism is prevented from reaching its norm or 'goal' in the ordinary way, it is resourceful and will attain this by a different method. The end rather than the means seems to be the important thing."

Nothing in the uniquenesses of non-life's organizations really parallels all this. Of course, in an organism the unity we have pictured may not be always manifest in full: it may manifest even in full within limits and it may be seriously hindered in several respects, but inasmuch as the essence of it in some way or other is never absent and all the more since it is often in full play, we can assert that here is a uniqueness incomparable, *sui generis*. The fact is that all non-life's organization, every inorganic whole, for all its pattern and structure and coherence, is still only additive, even when it is not a mere aggregate: it is not what Sherrington terms "additive by co-organization of an integrative kind", its harmony is not "impressed on the parts by the whole", it is not "an individuality whose whole, as luminously

said by Coleridge, is presupposed by all its parts.”

Let us get such a whole into proper focus by further distinguishing “co-organization of an integrative kind” from a system of interrelated parts. Parts interrelated into a system instead of massed together form non-living wholes as distinct from aggregates. These wholes are of two kinds. One kind is exemplified by molecules and atoms, the other by man-made machines. The former, as we can see from our summary of life’s organization, have no recognisable sign of “purposefulness”, of teleology. The latter are teleological, they serve a purpose, but still have nothing in common with organic unity. Although their parts may be interrelated differently from those of atoms and molecules, they are the same type of system inasmuch as organic unity is wanting to them. And it is wanting because a machine is merely put together from the outside and its unity is imposed *ab extra*: it does not have an internal unity and an internal development, whereas an organism bears within itself an active sustaining principle of its own unity as if in some way it had a sense of its own wholeness. And the evident symbol of such a sense is in the very pattern of an organism as contrasted to that of a machine. A machine’s coherent wholeness differs intrinsically from an organism’s. A machine is a number of units that simply fit together and work by action and reaction, while in an organism the parts co-operate to perform different functions and are determined by the functions they perform and are functional differentiations of a unity which pervades them concretely and directly. Hence an organism in its wholeness is pre-eminently non-mechanistic in the literal sense.

This is not tantamount to saying there are no mechanistic elements in it. Bertrand Russell, in a chapter of his *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, seems to think that if a frog’s heart can be kept beating, as it can under special conditions, after being extracted from the frog, the concept of organic unity is disproved. What is disproved is only the fantastic notion that a living creature is entirely an organic unity and has in it no processes comparable to those going on in the inorganic world known to physics and chemistry. Life’s history being what it is, an evolutionary one, mechanism must take a considerable hand in every living creature. And, because there are mechanistic traits and the parts have a certain independence, an organ or other elements may pursue courses different from or actually antagonistic to those of the complete organism: a man’s epithelial cells may start any moment to proliferate independently and cause fatal cancer. But this does not equate a living creature to a machine any more than to an aggregate. While it is not beyond a physico-chemical character in its parts or even to some extent in its totality when that totality is viewed only as a collection of parts, it is much more in its real whole-

ness. Its real wholeness is not simply additive either by being massed together or by being a system of interrelated parts, whether that system be a man-made machine or a natural composite like a molecule, like an atom. It is integratively additive so that its totality is more than the sum of the parts serving it and is in a large measure their very *raison d'être* and seems in a genuine though not easily analysable sense to be prior to them.

And it is because life's organization is not simply additive that life acts as if with "desire" and "purpose": "desire" and "purpose" become possible only when the whole can be said in some sense to pre-exist: "desire" and "purpose" are indeed inevitable assumptions in view of such pre-existence. No wonder that every biologist gets the impression as of ends in view and of a wanting to attain them. Sherrington, illustrating this fact, quotes R.C. Punnett as saying: "We can only understand an organism if we regard it as *though* produced under the guidance of thought for an end." Referring to the suggestion of purposive behaviour received by a "competent observer", E.G. Dru Drury, he admits: "That impression of concerted endeavour comes it is no exaggeration to say with the force of a self-evident truth." And yet he writes *à propos* the growth of organisms: "Because atoms combine on the basis of the arrangement of their sub-atomic parts we do not speak of those constituent parts as there *for* producing molecules. We do not speak of electrons as *for* producing atoms. Yet molecule-producing—and atom-producing—would seem as purposive as limb-producing. Our concept of an atom treats an atom as a deterministic necessity. To describe atomic behaviour science makes no appeal to purpose. In physics science would gain nothing by that appeal. Does it in biology?" Sherrington's broad mind and experimental temper do not allow him to be a crude dogmatist, but he feels that the balance tilts in favour of a negative answer and that physics and chemistry more than hint that they can out of themselves explain how a pin's-head ball of cells in the course of certain weeks becomes a child. He fails to fathom to its depths his own phrase: "co-organization of an integrative kind." He is misled by lack of appreciation of the genuine difference between the organic whole and the inorganic—a difference which, if we look at it from the side of physics and chemistry, is clearly not of degree but of kind.

The central characteristic of life falls outside all materialism *à la* Sherrington.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH AND CORRECT PRONUNCIATION

(Continued from the previous issue)

BOTH as a student and a college-lecturer I found that the greatest barrier in the way of the Indian student is the absence in our educational institutions of proper arrangements for the study of English pronunciation. If it is true that by nothing is England so great as by her poetry then it is most deplorable that our students fail to catch the thrill that sound and rhythm carry with them. They understand only the bare meaning of the words, but their sound suggestions, harmonious setting and the rhythm of the whole line fall flat on them and that accounts for the flagging of interest in English poetry as soon as the yoke of examination is lifted.

Let us see how this problem can be successfully tackled. The problem of correct English pronunciation resolves itself into three parts: (1) Accentuation (2) Vowellation (3) Intonation. Our students either do not put the stress at all or put it on the wrong syllable—a mistake possible because English is a language in which stress in a word of more than one syllable is fixed. I have found that if the student learns how to put the stress ictus on the accented syllable he will find it very easy to pronounce correctly the vowels in the unstressed syllables of a word and after some time he will get the hang of pronouncing a word correctly without being misled by its spelling. For instance take the word 'message'. Now the student has learnt the rule that 'a' becomes lengthened if preceding a consonant followed by 'e' as in age, mate, hale, face etc., so he will pronounce it as mes-age; but, if he accentuates the first syllable with the proper stress ictus then he will automatically contract the 'a' in the second syllable to the short 'i' sound and pronounce it almost as mes-ij. This opens the door to many similar words—passage, courage, lineage, advantage etc. From this it is easy to develop the sense of the neutral vowel denoted by the phonetic sign 'ə' and called schwa. The shortening of the unaccented syllables reduces their vowels to the shortness of the neutral vowel. I give below some key-words with their phonetic spelling to facilitate the picking up of right pronunciation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH AND CORRECT PRONUNCIATION

Ordinary Spelling

/element
/comfortable
/Asia
/ancient
/conscience
att/endent
/Russian
/dryness
/illness
arr/angement

Phonetic Spelling

/eləmənt
/comfətəbl
/eishə
/einshənt
/conshns
et/əndənt
/Rushən
/drainis
/ilnis
er/eingment

In all the above cases the proper throw of the hammer-stroke will diminish the length of the unstressed vowels with little conscious effort on the part of the student.

The next problem is to determine the place of accent in a word.

For that also there are simple rules which cover the majority of the words. Sir George Young has formulated them as follows: "Accent in English is properly the special enunciation given to one syllable of a word of more than one; and the rules of accentuation are the same for prose as for poetry.... besides a few exceptions there is in the course of years a continual tendency to throw back the accent. This throwback affects a noun earlier than the cognate verb, an epithet earlier in its adjectival than in its participial use, the uninflected verb earlier than the inflected (Examples: /premise, n; prem/ ise, v. and an /unknown man, adj.; The Great Un/ known, part.). The most common accent in English is on the last syllable but one; but it may occur on the last but two, and exceptionally on the last but three, or four. In the majority of dissyllables, whether originally or by throwback, the accent is now on the first syllable; and in trissyllables, where it formerly was common on the last, it has now been thrown with hardly an exception back either to the second or first."

A sense of poetic rhythm also, at times, proves of great corrective value. In the word 'inexorable' I used to put the accent on the third syllable—even sometimes Englishmen commit this mistake—but the rhythm of a line demanded that it should be thrown on the second syllable; I have corrected myself many times in this way.

The next problem is that of correctly pronouncing the vowels. This requires only a few days' practice with an Englishman and then one can go on swimmingly with the help of some standard books on phonetics as by Daniel

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Jones, Lloyd James, Palmer etc. The student mostly mispronounces the long 'a' which should be pronounced as 'ei' and long 'o' which should be pronounced as 'ou'. The most difficult vowel for the Indian student is the 'aw' sound which occurs in such words as 'Dawn, talk, wall, water, horse and fall' etc. The Indian identifies it mostly with the open vowel 'o' as in 'not,' hot' etc.

Now, if the Indian student gives these three vowels their full value and does not lengthen the short vowel sounds, his sense of rhythm will immensely increase. Let us take, for instance, this line of Shakespeare:

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain

The words 'harsh,' 'draw', and 'pain' with their length reinforce the sense of the agony of a sensitive soul face to face with the brute facts of life. The word 'pain' is not only intrinsically long but being the last important word has to be intoned so that the hammer-stroke coupled with its length stamps its effect on the reader's mind. Similarly the lines:

Alone, alone, all, all, alone,

Alone on a wide wide sea!

owe their effect to the crowding of nine long vowels. The length of the second vowel in the word 'alone' combined with accentual weight on that vowel carries the listening imagination into the heart of the inhuman-solitude of the watery wastes.

The problem of right intonation presents the most serious difficulties and it seems it can be imbibed with the mother's milk only. We Indians have a tendency to stress the adjective in a sentence like, 'It is a good book' but the English people drop the voice forcibly on the substantive. Gramophone records and one or two books on Intonation can go a long way in remedying this defect. All this involves a few months' labour of an hour a day but will make English studies most delectable.

In the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre students learn both French and English thoroughly and find themselves at home in either language and gather the riches of the East and the West.

India should set an example to the world by brushing aside narrow nationalism and freely radiating her spiritual light through the most potent language that exists now.

(Concluded)

R. N. KHANNA

THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INTEGRAL TRANSFORMATION

PART II

THE RATIONALE OF TRANSFORMATION

WE have already learnt that an integral and dynamic union with the Divine is the goal of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. What does this integral union mean? It means that we have to be united with the Divine in all the states, poises and modes of His being and our being. The Divine is not only the Transcendent Absolute; He is not only the infinite, impassive Impersonal; He is all that exists, here as well as there above. He is both Spirit and Nature, Time and the Timeless, Space and the Spaceless, all these names and forms that we see and those that we do not see, as well as the eternal Formless and Nameless. To be united with Him in an undeviating intimacy and identity in all the aspects and attributes of His infinitely one and multiple being, is integral union. We have to be one with Him in His divine Self and also in His divine Nature, Paraprakriti; in His omnipresent being and also in His universal becoming. How can this be done except by an integral transformation of our being? By the liberation of our soul we can unite with Him in His Self or Spirit; we can withdraw our consciousness from our nature and its working and absorb it either in the silent Immutable or the ecstatic Lover in the depth of our heart; but unless our nature is also liberated and transformed and universalised, we cannot unite with the Divine in His Supernature. We have either to slough off this nature altogether—and that is not possible before death, and problematical even after it—or consent to put up with its impurities and imperfections as an irremediable evil. It is this imperative necessity of an integral union with the Divine, of making Him the Master not only of our being, but also of our becoming; not only of our soul but also of our nature, that imposes the long labour of transformation. Transformation will enable us to live in the Divine not only in the absorbed ecstasy of trance, but at all times, in all that we think and feel and do, and in all the parts and elements of our being. It will enable us to live the Life Divine on earth—physically, vitally, mentally and spiritually.

If the supramental transformation be not achieved, the goal of spiritual life would remain what it has always been—liberation of a few exceptional individuals into some kind of transcendent peace or bliss; and the world would continue in its present darkness, ignorance and suffering. No ethical pottering or patch-work, no dim-eyed moral rearmament or any such superficial tinkering with the nature of man, can ever effect a radical transmutation of the entrenched, ancestral animality of human life. For, ethics does not reach the roots that thrive in the gloomy subsoil of our being; it chisels and polishes only the surface. But man being potentially divine, not only in his inmost self, but also in his nature—for his nature is derived from the Supernature—a complete transformation, that is to say, a complete divinisation, of his integral being is the ultimate destiny of his earthly existence. A perfect radiation of the supreme divine Light, *ritamjyotih*, is the inalienable birth-right of his life.¹

If we study the course of evolution, we find that it has two striking features invariably marking its progress from stage to stage—transcendence and metamorphosis. The consciousness of the being that is released more and more from the darkness of Matter goes on transcending itself, and its nature follows in the wake of its progressive transcendence. Transcendence seems, indeed, to be the cardinal principle of evolution,—transcendence not only in the consciousness of the being, but also in its nature. The difference between the consciousness of the worm—for, it, too, has a consciousness, though it is not mental—and that of the dog or the horse is an indisputable evidence of the law of transcendence, and we perceive an equal difference in their respective natures. The difference between the consciousness of man and that of the animal is a still more striking difference, and equally striking is the difference between their respective natures. This proves that evolution is nothing but a continuous series of self-transcendence of the being. We may, therefore, legitimately ask: “Will this self-transcendence stop at the mind of man and proceed no farther? Or will it henceforth be only a transcendence of consciousness and not of nature? Are the twilight of the human mind and its inherent weaknesses and incapacities the insuperable limit beyond which evolution cannot advance?”

Evolution presupposes involution. From this truth we can reasonably deduce that what is involved must fully evolve. What is it, then, that is involved here in Matter? According to ancient Indian philosophy, it is the Supreme Being, *Sachchidananda*, that is involved in Matter, and evolution is nothing but a progressive emergence of the involved *Sachchidananda*. The highest that has evolved up to now is the mind of man, a mind, be it noted, which is

¹ “An integral transformation is the integral aim of the Being in Nature; this is the inherent sense of her universal urge of self-transcendence.”—*The Life Divine* by SRI AUROBINDO.

enfolded in ignorance and struggles for, but is not in possession of, knowledge. Evidently, therefore, this cannot be the term of evolution. There is scope for a further series of transcendence, a further widening and heightening of the consciousness till it reaches the infinite Supermind, the supreme Truth-Consciousness. This consummating transcendence will inevitably be followed by a corresponding supramental metamorphosis or transformation of nature. Even the most confirmed sceptic will admit that the present evolution of human nature does not exhaust all its possibilities—it has a divine Face to unveil, the shining contours of the Supernature.

There is yet another point to consider in this connection. According to Sri Aurobindo—and it is the view implicit in the Vedas and the Upanishads—there are seven basic principles sustaining the seven principal worlds: *bhuh*, *bhuvah*, *swah*, *māhas*, *janah*, *tapas* and *satya*. In the material world, the Sat of the satya world has become annam or Matter, chit of the world of tapas has become Life and Mahas has become Mind. Matter which is derived from Sat or the luminous stuff of the transcendent existence is not something intrinsically inert and obscure but has become so on account of its phenomenal evolution from the utter darkness of the Inconscience. Similarly, Life is not something intrinsically turbid and impure but has so become on account of the same phenomenal cause. Mind, too, whatever its present deficiencies, its ignorance and limitations has derived from the Mahas or the infinite Truth-Conscious Supermind. These instruments of the Spirit are not, therefore, condemned to function for ever on an irretrievable basis of division, darkness and discord but are meant to recover their essential unity and identity with their divine counterparts and be converted into their substance, force and light. Matter or annam can be converted into the luminous, immortal substance of Sat; Life or Prana into the effulgent force of Chit-Tapas and Mind into the boundless glory of the Supermind or Vijnana. Their eventual transformation is foreshadowed in the very trend of their evolution and seems to be the secret sense of their creation.

THE CONDITIONS OF TRANSFORMATION

The first condition of transformation is an intense, constant and definite aspiration for it. Unless one has as strong, as intense an aspiration for it as one has for personal salvation or divine realisation in the traditional yogas, it cannot be achieved. There must be a clear perception in the aspiration that transformation is an indispensable means of the integral divine union, and that without it the union can never be constant and integral. Those who long only for the peace and silence of the Akshara (the Immutable), or self-extinction in

the Ineffable, or the transporting raptures of the embrace of the eternal Lover in the adytum of their heart, do not need to transform their nature; they are content if their nature is purified and quieted enough to let them pass beyond it in moments of absorbed concentration. It is only the seekers of the integral union, those who are resolved to turn their whole human consciousness into the divine consciousness and their whole human life into the divine life, that aspire for transformation.

The second condition is an integral surrender to the Divine Shakti, the Mother. I have dwelt at length on this subject in some of the previous chapters, particularly in chapter VII, and shall, therefore, pass it by here with just an emphatic assertion of its indispensability. It is sheer folly to think of effecting the supramental transformation of one's nature by one's own mental strength and power.

The third condition is the descent of the supramental consciousness into the nature of the aspirant. "The ascent is the first step, but it is a means for the descent of the new consciousness attained by the ascent that is the stamp and seal of the sadhana."¹ As I have already said, the work of transformation, which is a radical and integral operation, is beyond the capacity of any spiritual consciousness, short of the supramental. A mere ascent to the Supermind will not transform our nature; the all-powerful Light-Force of the Supermind must come down and penetrate as far down as the subconscious and inconscient² levels of our manifold being, illumine their darkness and make them plastic and responsive to its transmuting action. This descent of the supramental consciousness is the most distinctive feature of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and bears in itself all the incalculable possibilities of the Life Divine in humanity.

The fourth condition, which is also a characteristic feature of the Integral Yoga, is that it is essential for every part of our being to consent and offer itself with a good grace to the work of transformation. It is not enough that the heart or the most enlightened part of the mind aspires for the transformation, or that the awakened soul imposes its imperial will upon the other parts of the being and constrains them to accept the discipline. That can be done in the beginning of the sadhana when the psychic pressure and influence is a decisive purifying factor and the toddling mental being has not learnt to walk erect and look up to the high heavens. A certain psychic push and pressure are indispensable at the earlier stages of the sadhana in order to awaken the less evolved parts to their own potentiality and destiny. But for the descent of the supramental Truth-

¹ *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*—Vol. I

² "Even the inconscient and subconscious have to become conscient in us, susceptible to the higher light, no longer obstructive to the fulfilling action of the Conscious-Force, but more and more a mould and lower basis of the Spirit."—*The Life Divine* by SRI AUROBINDO.

THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

Light and the work of the integral transformation, the consent and cooperation of every part are absolutely necessary. Each part of the composite being must desire the Divine and a constant union and communion with Him; each part must choose the supreme Light and give itself without reserve to its transforming Force. This necessity of consent and collaboration rests upon the profound truth that each part of our being is an autonomous whole having a centralised consciousness in it which is called in Indian philosophy the Purusha, and that all parts together constitute the organic totality of our complex being. For example, we have the physical Purusha, annamaya Purusha, in our physical organism; the vital or pranamaya Purusha; the mental or manomaya Purusha, and the psychic or chaitya Purusha. All these Purushas, which are projections of the central Purusha or Jivatman, are free to accept or reject transformation. If they all aspire for the Divine and surrender to His supramental Shakti, then only will that Shakti descend and act in the integral being. The supramental change is impossible of achievement with any part of our being remaining rebellious or unresponsive, or coerced into some kind of resigned or resentful submission. Even the body with its own consciousness must seek the Divine—His Light and Peace and Harmony and Bliss—in all its cells and nerves and currents of energy, and the Divine's effective, immortalising Presence in its transformed substance. A sincere call,¹ a free choice, a joyous consent² and an unstinted self-offering on the part of each member of our being are essential for the great change aimed at by the Integral Yoga. The world is built on the principle of freedom for each individual, each element, each atom; and if there is bondage and subjection, it is self-imposed, an inevitable consequence of a free choice. Liberation and transformation are also matters of free choice and cannot be imposed upon unwilling members.

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

¹ The vital may understand, but that is not enough; it must whole-heartedly call for the peace and transformation"—*Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Vol. IV.

² " . The participation and consent of the Purusha to the transition is not sufficient, there must be also the consent and participation of the Prakriti. It is not only the central thought and will that have to acquiesce, but all the parts of our being must assent and surrender to the law of the spiritual Truth, all have to learn to obey the government of the conscious Divine Power in the members."—*The Life Divine* by SRI AUROBINDO

" ..At each step of the transition the assent of the Purusha is needed and there must be too the consent of each part of the nature to the action of the higher power for its change."
—*The Life Divine*. by SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE UPANISHADS

(Continued from the issue of July)

IV

He should be searched out, Him one should desire to understand.
*Chhandogya Upamshad*¹
This is the Soul of mine within the heart, this is Brahman.
*Chhandogya Upamshad*²
Faith at dawn, Faith at noon do we invoke;
Faith at the setting of the sun. O Faith, endow us with Faith.
*Rig Veda*³
Arise, awake, find out the great ones and learn of them.
*Katha Upamshad*⁴
By askesis do thou seek to know the Eternal.
*Taittiriya Upamshad*⁵
Accepted by Him the soul attains its goal of immortality.
*Svetasvatara Upamshad*⁶
With soul serene, stayed in the Soul,
Delight eternal one enjoys.
*Maitri Upamshad*⁷
He moves through these worlds at will.
*Taittiriya Upanishad*⁸

KING Janaka and Yajnavalkya the preceptor, it would appear, once had a discussion on Agnihotra and the sage was so much captivated by the erudition of the monarch that he offered him a boon; the boon was eagerly accepted, but in an unexpected form. Janaka asked for no earthly advancement; he assured for himself greater depths of Knowledge than he could fathom on his own. Great riches

- 1 सोऽन्वेष्टव्यः स विजिज्ञासितव्यः (VIII.7.1)
- 2 एष म आत्मान्तर्हृदय एतद्ब्रह्म (III.14.4)
- 3 श्रद्धां प्रातर्हवामहे श्रद्धां मध्यन्दिन परि । श्रद्धा सूर्यस्य निम्नुचि श्रद्धे श्रद्धापयेह नः ॥ (X.151.5)
- 4 उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत । (I.3.14)
- 5 तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । (III.2)
- 6 जुष्टस्ततस्तेनामृतत्वमेति । (I.6)
- 7 प्रसन्नात्मात्मनि स्थित्वा सुखमव्ययमश्नुता (VI.20)
- 8 इमांल्लोकान् . . . अनुसञ्चरन् (III.10)

of Knowledge though he had, he was avid for still more; he chose a promise from the wise one to answer whatever question he might ask at any time. And, the legend records, he drew upon this boon on an occasion when the sage,—apparently in the fullness of his soul—was not disposed to talk. And what is the question he asked?

‘Yajnavalkya’, he said, ‘what is the light of man?’

Yajnavalkya replied: ‘The sun, O King; for, having the sun alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘So indeed it is, O Yajnavalkya.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘When the sun has set, O Yajnavalkya, what is then the light of man?’

Yajnavalkya replied: ‘The moon indeed is his light; for, having the moon alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘So indeed it is, O Yajnavalkya.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘When the sun has set, O Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, what is then the light of man?’

Yajnavalkya replied: ‘Fire indeed is his light; for, having fire alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘So indeed it is, O Yajnavalkya.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘When the sun has set, O Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is gone out, what is then the light of man?’

Yajnavalkya replied: ‘Speech indeed is his light; for, having speech alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns. Therefore, O King, when one cannot see clear even one’s own hand, yet when a voice is raised, one goes towards it.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘So indeed it is, O Yajnavalkya.’

Janaka Vaideha said: ‘When the sun has set, O Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is gone out, and the speech hushed, what is then the light of man?’

Yajnavalkya replied: ‘*The Self indeed is his light...*’¹

It is this Self, the Self that is one with the Sole Reality, the Brahman, that is the central objective to which all the roads of the Upanishads lead. To acquire knowledge of the Truth of the Self, to realise one’s identity with the utter Self is the one constant preoccupation. The bases from which the seekers commence their voyage are many; the means and ways by which they proceed are several; the forms in which the realisations are received are more than one, but the Truth that is attained is the same—the One Reality of All.

¹ *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad* (IV.3). Adapted from Max Muller’s translation.

This is the Ideal placed before man by the Rishis of the Upanishads. There is a Reality from which all derive their existence and significance; all are self-expressions or becomings of Something which is their Source and End. They call It Brahman, they call It the Self; and they declare that it is possible for man to arrive at a realisation of his oneness with this Reality. All life is a preparation, conscious or unconscious, for this endeavour which is indeed the highest and noblest purpose to which one's life could be yoked. The world of the Upanishads hums with the stir of this mighty movement of awakening and aspiration, this eager advance towards the Goal of this higher life, not only in the forests and hermitages of sages and disciples but in the courts and assemblies of kings and scholars as well. Questions are raised, discussed and pursued to the farthest limit possible for the human mind; and once grasped, these truths of Knowledge are faithfully sought to be verified and made living in one's own experience. The zeal with which these men and women betake themselves to the task is matched only by the enviable perseverance with which they hold to their objective regardless of any consideration of time and effort.

Every achievement has its price and the demands of the higher Path, the sages declare, are severe. No one shall embark on this lofty enterprise whose course is as perilous as the edge of the razor,¹ unless he is sure of himself, sure of the Call. In the first place he must have been convinced of the futility of the life man normally leads and the necessity of a higher life with a purpose and direction worthy of his status as the most prized in God's creation.² He must have the *faith* that there is something other, that is greater and truer than himself—the surface personality of which alone he is usually conscious—and that it is possible for him to acquire the nature and character of this Reality in the measure in which he draws close and attains to identity with it. Thus faith is indispensable to every seeker. "We must believe in God before we know him." (Sri Aurobindo) Knowledge comes only after a long period of travail and till then it is well nigh impossible for man to make headway without this fulcrum of faith. The Katha Upanishad pointedly asks: "Unless one says *He is* how can one become sensible of Him?"³ One must believe in the existence of God before one can hope to gain knowledge of the truth of His Existence, what he is in his essentiality. One must have faith in His existence in oneself and around in the

1 क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत् . . (Katha Upanishad. I.3.14)

2 सुकृतं बत . . . पुरुषी वाव सुकृतम् । "O well fashioned truly! Man indeed is well and beautifully made." (Aitareya Upanishad. I.2.3)

3 अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र कथं तदुपलभ्यते । (II. 3. 12)

world before one can think of Him Beyond.¹ And this faith is the sense of certitude of something to which his normal faculties do not yet testify. Usually it is the reflection of a perception of the soul deep within or of an Intelligence above and it is a power that helps to effectuate the truth of Idea which is so perceived. "This faith is a support from above; it is a brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances." (Sri Aurobindo)

It is to be noted that on the eve of his immortal adventure, Nachiketas was *seized by Faith*.² And it was this strength of faith, faith in the truth of his seeking that gave him the voice to tell Yama that he had the competence to receive the wisdom from Him: "Teach me, I have faith".³ Not merely in the beginning, but in the course and the term also of the Self-Discipline, faith is essential. Those that are engaged in the Rite of the Soul are men who are *śraddhayantah*, who are active with faith. It is significant that in its description of the Vijnana-maya Purusha, the Taittiriya describes Faith as the very head of the Knowledge-Self.⁴ We may note in passing that this emphasis, in the Upanishads, on Faith has been consistently maintained all along in the Indian tradition, the seal of confirmation being given by the Gita in unforgettable words: "This Purusha (soul in man) is made of Faith and whatever is that Faith he is that and that is he."⁵

To have faith is not enough. It should be acted upon. Conditions must be rendered favourable for the faith to grow and express itself. Otherwise it will remain a dormant, ineffective belief. One must subject himself to a thorough discipline of purification and rectification. "The doors of the body", says the the Upanishad,⁶ are set "face outwards, therefore the soul of man gazes outward and not at the Self within." A resolute attempt must be made to change the

¹ अस्तीत्येवोपलब्धस्य तत्त्वभावः प्रसीदति । when he has grasped Him as the *Is*, then the essential of God dawns upon a man. (Katha Up. II. 3. 13)

² त . . . श्रद्धाऽऽविवेश । (Katha Up. I. I. 2)

³ प्रब्रूहि त्वं श्रद्धानाय मह्यम् । (Ibid. I. 13)

⁴ आत्मा विज्ञानमयः . . . तस्य श्रद्धैव शिरः । the Knowledge-Self...Faith is the head of him. (II. 4)

⁵ श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः । (XVII. 3)

"The Lord says: It is the faith of man that is behind all that he does. It adjusts itself according to one's nature. The very Purusha is filled with faith; of whatever faith one is, that he becomes. For faith is a power of the spirit, a will in the reason that transcends it and yet possesses and guides it." (Sri Kapali Sastry: *Gospel of the Gita*)

⁶ पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् . . . तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् । (Katha Up. II. I. I)

direction of the senses and the energies behind them; the body must be trained to become more and more conscious inward than outward, the life-energy discouraged from its unchecked flow to outgoing activities and the mind and emotions freed from their mechanical preoccupations and turned and centred round the soul. The Eye must be turned inward¹ and only those movements which help this orientation of consciousness must be cultivated, the others being gradually eliminated. Weakness, negligence, sloth, error, falsehood, indulgence of the senses are to be purged in the course of the purifying discipline to equip the being to enter the Gates of the Higher Knowledge.² In the place of the fascination and pull with which the objects of the senses hold one captive, there should grow a distaste, a spontaneous shrinking from the ordinary life of ignorance³ and a consequent, natural turn towards the Higher. This cleansing and upgrading of oneself involves a difficult effort—difficult particularly because old, settled and inherited tendencies, *samskāras*, and habitual movements have to be held in control and gradually replaced by new and frequently their opposites—but who ever won the Knowledge of the Soul without austerity?⁴

With this preliminary preparation by way of rejection and purification there comes the need for a right understanding, an authentic knowledge of the Truth or Truths to be realised, the ways and methods to be adopted therefor. The ancients always looked up to the Word of the forefathers, the Word that was handed down by them in the progression of their tapasya, *Sruti*. The *Sruti* contains the essence of the experience and the Realisation of those who have trodden the Path before; it sums up the course and crown of their seekings and embodies in the imperishable form of the word the truths they found and thus contains in itself the drive of the Power that liberates, the light of the Knowledge that guides. The seeker in the Upanishads takes to a reverent study of these Scriptures that have come of old, pores over their luminous utterances epitomising the wisdom gained and vouchsafed to those who had come and

1 आवृत्तचक्षुः

(Ibid)

2 सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आर्त्तमा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।

The Self can always be won by truth, by self-discipline, by integral knowledge, by a life of purity. (*Mundaka Up.* III. 1. 5)

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात् . .

This Self cannot be won by any who is without strength, nor with error in the seeking. (Ibid. III. 2. 4)

3 निर्वेदमायात् (*Mundaka Up.* I. 2. 12)

4 नातपस्कस्याऽऽत्मज्ञानेऽधिगमः कर्मसिद्धिर्वा . . (*Maitri Up.* IV. 3)

For him without austerity there is no attainment of the knowledge of the Soul nor perfection of works.

striven as Pioneers in the field. And in so doing, he not only acquires a mental clarity in facing and meeting the various issues that challenge his understanding but also opens himself, in the depths of his being, to the inflow of the dynamic spiritual Power with which the Word of the Tapasvin is instinct. The Upanishads themselves being such records of revelation received by the Rishis in their high-strung askesis are invaluable to the earnest aspirant. For, in the words of Sri Aurobindo: "The business of the Sruti and especially of the Upanishads is to seize the mind and draw it into a magic circle, to accustom it to the thoughts and aspirations of God (after the Supreme), to bathe it in certain ideas, surround it with a certain spiritual atmosphere; for this purpose it plunges and rolls the mind over and over in an ocean of marvellous sound through which a certain train of associations goes ever rolling. In other words it appeals through the intellect, the ear and the imagination to the soul."¹

The reading and study of the Sruti enlighten the seeker on the highway of Knowledge. But one cannot be sure of grasping the import correctly; there may be—and usually there is—much more behind the overt expression than what strikes the eye. No one can tap the hidden treasure unaided. Besides, whatever one may have learnt by assiduous study rests as a mental acquisition; it requires the touch of a live wire to set it aglow and operating in a dynamic manner. This need is fulfilled by the *Teacher*. "When all is said, the fact remains that definite entry into the *sādhana*, the awakening into the Spirit within, the actual building of the inner Life, usually begins only when one has a Satyakama, the teacher, to transmit the tangible secret and light the life within of the seeker or one happens to be a Satyakarma, the disciple, whom the Gods looked upon with favour opening his eye of vision to the Supreme Truth." (Sri Kapali Sastry)² The Upanishads stress repeatedly that there can be no spiritual life without the Teacher. He is verily the Father³ who gives the inner birth. The Teacher is one who has already realised the Ideal which the seeker is striving for, or holds in himself the dynamis of that Truth and is capable of communicating the power and fruit of his realisations to those who seek it from him.⁴ He implants the seed of realisation in the disciple and tends its growth in him by his constant influence and inner direction. The power he instils, the knowledge he imparts

¹ *Eight Upanishads* P. XVI

² *Lights on the Upanishads* P. 39

³ त्वं हि नः पिता (*Prashna Up.* VI. 8)

⁴ *Vide* Ashwapati's declaration to his pupils, Aruni and others:
अभिसम्पादयिष्यामि "I shall make you realise." (*Shatapatha Brahmana* X. 6. 10) *Vide*
also *Lights on the Upanishads*, P. 69.

are charged with the vibrations of the living Truth housed in him. That is why it is said that only he who has a teacher really *knows*, *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*. For, the Knowledge of Brahman is the most difficult to acquire and beyond the reach of the ordinary human intelligence. Only one who is not inferior, *avara*, but superior in the ways of the Truth and Knowledge can reach it to the seeking mind. "Unless told of Him by another thou canst not find the way to Him: for He is subtler than subtlety and that which logic cannot reach. This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning...only when told thee by another it brings real Knowledge."¹

"For the knowledge of That, let him approach, fuel in hand, a Guru".²

Knowledge, says the Chhandogya, is most fruitful only if it is learned from the Teacher.³ He not only gives the knowledge, but shows the way in which it is to be translated in practice. The same Upanishad records how student Upakosala tended the Fires for twelve years and was blessed by them with high knowledge but even they—the divine personages—told him that for the *way*, for the Path, he must go to a Teacher.⁴ The Acharya, the Guru, not only shows the way, but, says the Maitri, is himself the way. For, those who take refuge in him are lifted up in his protective hands from the depths of ignorance and darkness in which they are submerged and, in his compassion, redeemed. Thus does the aspirant pray to the Teacher: "Be pleased to deliver me. In this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a waterless well: sir, you are our way of escape, yea, you are our way of escape."⁵

The seeker receives the knowledge from the Master; he receives the initial push which sets him on the Path. It is now for him to apply and work out in life what he has learnt; no doubt the help, guidance and lead of the Guru are

1 अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्त्यणीयान् ह्यतर्क्यमणुप्रमाणात् । (Katha Up. I. 2. 8-9)

2 नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया प्रोक्तान्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ ।

3 तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः . . . (Mundaka Up. I. 2. 12)

4 आचार्याद्येव विद्या विदिता सधिष्ठं प्रापयति . . . (IV. 9. 3)

5 आचार्यस्तु ते गतिं वक्ता . . . (IV. 14)

Vide Rig Veda X. 32. 7:

अक्षेत्रवित् क्षेत्रविदं ह्यप्राद् स प्रैति क्षेत्रविदानुशिष्टः ।

एतद्वै भद्रमनुशासनस्योत स्रुतिं विन्दत्यञ्जसीनाम् ॥

The stranger asks the way of him who knows it: taught by him who knows he travels onward. This is, in truth, the blessing of Instruction: he finds the path that leads directly forward.

5 उद्धर्तुमर्हसि । अन्धोदपानस्थो भेक इवाहमस्मिन्ससारे

भगवंस्त्वं नो गतिस्त्वं नो गतिः । (Maitri Up. I. 4)

always at hand for the sincere disciple; yet it is he who is to strive and battle to grow in the altitudes of the spirit. He enters into this inner life with the determination *now or never*. The seers of the Upanishads warn him that if he does not reach the Goal *here* itself, in this very life, then vain will have been his birth. "If here one comes not to the knowledge, then great is the perdition."¹ He will have lived truly and greatly, made a success of himself, only if he gets to the Truth during his life-time.² The status one attains after the termination of this bodily life depends upon the stage of progress arrived at here, while in body. It is only if one has succeeded in reaching God in this life that he can hope to realise the Truths of the God Beyond. "If in this world of men and before thy body fall from thee, thou wert able to apprehend it, then thou availest for embodiment in the worlds that he creates."³

Note that this emphasis on the need of realisation during one's life-time and on earth⁴ is a continuation of the Vedic stress on the attainment here, *iha*, and now, today, *adya*, *idānīm*.⁵

And what is the practical discipline, the *sādhana*, that is commended in the Upanishads for reaching the Goal of Brahman, getting to the core of the Truth of Existence? We find that there is not any one set course of discipline, but many lines of development, Sadhanas or Vidyas, corresponding to the many possible points of approach to the Reality and also to the varying temperament and fitness of the aspirants. We do not find any detailed procedure laid down in the manner of the later systematising treatises. "The Upanishads always give general instructions, but they do not give the actual methods of the *sādhana* even when it is possible to find out the method from oral or recorded teachings, the actual and definite working out of the *sādhana* takes place only when the would-be-sadhaka receives the help, the influence, the power from some source human or Divine or more truly from the Divine in the human."⁶

¹ न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनिष्टिः । (Kena Up. II, 5)

² इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति । (Ibid)
If here one comes to that knowledge then one truly is.

³ इह चेदशकद्बोद्धुं प्राक् शरीरस्य विस्रसः ।
ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु शरीरत्वाय कल्पते ॥ (Katha Up. II. 3. 4.)

⁴ इहैव सन्तोऽथ विद्मस्तद् वयम्, May we know It while we are here itself,
(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. IV. 4. 14)

⁵ कृधी नो अद्य वरिवः स्वस्तिमत् . . . (RV. IX. 184. 1)
उतेदानीं भगवन्तः स्याम (RV. VII. 41. 4)

⁶ Sri Kapali Sastry: *Lights on the Upanishads* P. 69-70.

“The teacher who was always a seer admitted the disciple for initiation on being convinced of his fitness for receiving the Vidya. He trained him for the life, put into him the necessary seed of realisation, allowed it to grow and bear fruit in the right season. Thus these Brahma-Vidyas were communicated in silence through the influence and example of the Guru, rather than through precept which occupied a brief and formal place in the scheme of the spiritual culture of these ancients.”¹ “These *Sādhanas*, these methods of approach were transmitted by the Master to the disciple and verbal instruction when necessary at all to accompany the initiation given was either not recorded or only briefly hinted at in these Scriptures. And this is so because the real *Sādhana* begins with initiation and not with oral instruction though the latter may be in some cases helpful giving just a sort of mental satisfaction.”²

These Vidyas were so many ways of attaining to the Brahman and were naturally different depending upon what aspect of that Supreme Reality they sought to realise and dwelt upon—Brahman with Qualities, *saguna*, or without them, *nirguna*, Brahman as the Self, Purusha, Atman or as Consciousness in its diverse manifestations or as Bliss. The Vidyas were known either by terms expressive of their central features³ or after the Teacher who expounded them⁴ or even after the disciple who first pursued the Vidya with notable results.⁵ Sri Kapali Sastry has given a luminous exposition of some of the more important of these Vidyas⁶ and we reproduce here a few of the relevant passages from his summing up:

“Let us then put in a nutshell the salient features of each of these spiritual disciplines, the Sadhanas of these Scriptures. The Narada-Sanat Kumara episode concerns itself with what is called Bhuma Vidya. The discipline aims at the realisation of the Infinite Self beyond the ignorance. Satyakama’s forte is Prana Vidya, the discipline that leads to the conscious union with the creative Energy, Prana, the Tapas of Ishwara, and is, as we have noticed, the most dynamic of all the Vidyas of the Upanishads. The *Agni-rahasya* gives us the Vidya of Shandilya and here the soul is envisaged as Spirit in its relation to its embodiment in life, to its encasement in mind as well as to its Source, Support, Power and Light in the all-pervading Purusha. It is the most comprehensive of all the Sadhanas and begins with the centre of the Spirit as soul,

¹ *Lights on the Upanishads* pp 3-4.

² . Ibid. p. 156.

³ E.g. Prana Vidya, Udgitha, Dahara, Vaishvanara etc.

⁴ Shandilya Vidya, Satyakama Vidya etc

⁵ Bhargavi Varuni Vidya, Upakosala Vidya, Balaki Vidya etc.

⁶ Vide *Lights on the Upanishads* (Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, Madras)

the seat of God—the heart; it takes a survey of and aims at the realisation of the All Spirit becoming the soul in each. The Rishis seek from Ashvapati Kaikeya for a knowledge of the Universal Fire which is the Self in each and the all. This discipline called Vaishvanara Vidya aims at the realisation of the Cosmic Self active in each being and starts as usual with most of the Upanishadic Sadhanas, with the heart....From the Brihadaranyaka we took up for clarification the Doctrine of the Mystic Honey and showed that it reconciles the relative Reality of World-Existence with the Absolute Monism to which the Brihadaranyaka tends in some of its sections—notably the Maitreyi Brahmana which precedes the section on the Mystic Honey, called the Madhu Brahmana. Even this Upanishad which in some important parts is the stronghold for the ‘Lofty Illusionism’ of the later Vedantins is not wholly in favour of the negation of world-existence but looks upon it as a Creation of Delight, an Existence which subsists by interdependence of the whole and the part, a Manifestation which subsists because of the Honey, the Madhu in it...

“The Bhuma Vidya starts with a strong and constant remembrance, *dhruvā smṛiti*, an intuition—not the same as realisation—earned by purification of the stuff of the instrumental being, *sattva śuddhi*, which is the same as *dhātuprasāda*, crystalline purity of the temperament. It aims at the realisation of Bhuma, the Plenum, the Infinite Self. The Prana Vidya starts with the Life-principle arriving at its source in the Creative Spirit, the Tapas or the active Consciousness of the Lord. The Shandilya discipline starts with the soul as related to the instruments of life and mind in the bodily existence on the one hand and on the other, to the Light, Power and Will of the Universal Self—a most comprehensive vision that takes in a sweep all the complexities of the soul in its various aspects. The Universal Spirit, the Fire in each being and the all, the feeling and realisation in each of its oneness with the Cosmic Self and the Cosmic Life is the theme of Ashvapati in the Vaishvanara Sadhana. The doubt about the survival of something of man that afflicts Nachiketas is just a surface appearance of the hunger of the soul with which Nachiketas starts and receives the initiation from Yama into the secrets of the Immortal existence, Manifest and Unmanifest, to be realised in this life before the body falls.”

This is not all. The seeker, in the Upanishad, starts with an initial faith, undergoes a preliminary self-training to purify and equip himself, resorts to the study of the collective Wisdom of those who have already trod the Godly Path, finds the Master who launches and leads him on the career of the Spirit which he pursues with unflinching courage and perseverance along the lines chosen for him by the Guide. All these means carry him far, but not far enough. There are in this mystic path certain barriers to be crossed, crucial

steps to be taken, disentanglements¹ to be effected which it is not possible for human effort alone to do. The Upanishads declare unequivocally that it is only the Divine *Grace*, the Sanction of the Supreme that can effect these decisive realisations in the initiate and give him the final release. When Narada has mastered all the known Sciences of Men, of Gods and of Demons, he still finds it beyond him to cross to the other shore of Ignorance and it is Skanda Sanatkumara, the Divine Deliverer, who has to help him over.² Indeed,

Heaven is too high for outstretched hands to seize.

This Light comes not by struggle or by thought;

(Sri Aurobindo: *Savitri*)

There are bounds over which it is vain for mortal strength to exert; when such limits are reached it is only an intervening Factor that can meet the situation and by its intrinsic action consummate the life-labour of the striving individual. And, as Sri Kapali Sastry points out: "that something is the final means, the supreme help which is either plainly stated or hinted at or implicit in the instructions recorded in the Upanishads. Each Upanishad has its own way, the Isha may call for the help of the Gods Agni,³ Vayu,⁴ Surya⁵, the Kena

¹ Disentanglement from the various knots of involvement in the psycho-nervous-physical mechanism, the most difficult of which is the knot of Ignorance, *avidyāgranthi* (*Mundaka Up.* II. 1. 10). "When the Upanishad speaks of the *knots*, the knots are not a product of poetic fancy or a philosophic concept in the sphere of Metaphysics. They are entanglements of subtle nerve-force lodged in a frame of psycho-physical structure which acts on and reacts to the functionings of the nervous system that links the subtler levels and conditions of being to the grosser material body." (Sri Kapali Sastry)

The Katha and the Mundaka expressly speak of the knots to be loosened or strings of the heart which are to be cut asunder before the consummation can take place:

यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते हृदयस्येह ग्रन्थयः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवति . . .

Yea, when all the strings of the heart are rent asunder, even here, in this human birth, then the mortal becomes immortal...(*Katha Up.* II. 3.15)

गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ।

He is delivered from the knotted cord of the secret heart and becomes immortal. (*Mundaka Up.* III. 2.9)

भिद्यन्ते हृदयग्रन्थिः

The knot of the heart strings is rent...(Ibid. II. 2. 9)

² *Chhāndogya Up.* VII

³ It is Agni who is called upon by the Rishi to 'remove the devious attraction of sin'.
अग्ने . . . युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो; (18)

⁴ Vayu who is to manifest immortal Life to the seeker of whose body ashes are the end
वायुरनिलममृतम् अथेद भस्मान्त शरीरम् ;(17)

⁵ it is the favour of Surya that is sought to remove the lid that stands between the Rishi and the Truth Supreme: हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यपिहितं मुखम् । तत् त्व पूषन्नपावृणु.. (15)

may point to the supreme guidance of Uma¹, the Katha and the Mundaka may refer to the Self's gracious revealing of the body of Itself."²

Thus delivered out of the hold of *samsāra*, the web of Ignorance and Desire, the seeker attains a new state of being—a Release into a condition of knowledge, freedom and bliss. He has attained to a complete identity with his true self; he has realised that the self which is himself is none other than the Greater Self which upholds the universe. No more for him is grief or sorrow. He is no more lost in the blinding ignorance of his true nature and denied the joy of self-possession and enjoyment.³ He has no fear. For what fear can he have who has known the Delight of the Eternal? "When the Spirit that is within us finds the Invisible Bodiless Undefinable and Unhoused Eternal his refuge and firm foundation, then he has passed beyond the reach of Fear."⁴ From such a man, liberated while yet living, *Jivan-mukta*, all desire falls away. For, as the Sages of the Brihadaranyaka ask, "What shall we do with offspring, we whose is this Soul, this Home?"⁵ "When in the embrace of the Wisdom-Self, he knows nothing without or within...he is without desire, without sorrow."⁶ He has nothing to bind him; he lives and moves in the autonomy of his soul.⁷ He is free, not only in this world but in all other worlds as well.⁸

In his consciousness the Jivanmukta realises his unity not only with the All, the Self that is manifest in this universe but comes also to find his identity

¹ II.4

² यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनू स्वाम् ।

Only by him whom It chooses can it be won; to him this Self unveils its own body. (*Katha Up.* I. 2. 23); (*Mundaka Up.* III. 2. 3)

³ समान वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः । जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥

The soul is the bird that sits immersed on the one common tree; but because he is not the lord he is bewildered and has sorrow. But when he sees that other who is the Lord and beloved, he knows that all is his greatness and his sorrow passes away from him. (*Mundaka Up.* III. 1.2)

⁴ *Taittiriya Upanishad* II. 7

यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नदृश्येऽनात्म्येऽनिलयनेऽभय प्रतिष्ठा विन्दते । अथ सोऽभय गतो भवति ॥
आनन्द ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न बिभेति कदाचन (Taitt. Up. II. 7t)

Who knows the delight of the Eternal He shall fear nought now or hereafter. (Ibid. II. 4)

⁵ किं प्रजया करिष्यामो येषां नोऽयमात्मास्यं लोकः (Br. Up. IV. 4. 22)

⁶ प्राज्ञेनात्मना सम्परिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं किञ्चन वेद नान्तर . . . अकामं . . . शोकान्तरम्
(Ibid. IV. 3. 21)

⁷ *Chhândogya Up.* VII. 26. 1

⁸ तेषा सर्वेषु लोकेषु कामचारो भवति । (Ibid. VIII. 1. 6)

with That which transcends, what is beyond Space and Time. His is the Hymn of Self-Knowledge voiced by sage Trishanku:

“I am He that moves the Tree of the Universe and my glory is like the shoulders of a high-mountain. I am lofty and pure like sweet nectar in the strong, I am the shining riches of the world, I am the deep thinker, the deathless One who decays not from the beginning.”¹

This state of full knowledge and uninterrupted bliss, the Upanishads hint, is still conditioned by the circumstance, the tether of the body in whose dissolution alone the *liberation*, Mukti, is complete,² when, “he goes from this world having passed to the Self which is of food; having passed to the Self which is of Prana; having passed to the Self which is of Mind; having passed to the Self which is of Knowledge; having passed to the Self which is of Bliss, lo, he ranges about the worlds, he eats what he will, and takes what shape he will and ever he sings the mighty Sama. ‘Ho! ho! ho! I am food! I am food! I am food! I am the eater of food! I am the eater! I am the eater! I am he who makes Scripture! I am he who makes! I am he who makes! I am the first born of the Law; before the gods were, I am, yea, at the very heart of immortality. ...I have conquered the whole world and possessed it, my light is as the sun in its glory.’³

V

This, then, is the Call of the Upanishads whose notes are heard in the Scriptures of every Religion in the East, and so unexpectedly caught even in some of the soul-strains of the West. Much of their content is couched and preserved in symbols, images, figures and terms which do not have today the same meaning and significance they originally had when the Rishis chose them

¹ अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा । कीर्तिः पृष्ठं गिरेरिव । ऊर्ध्वपवित्रो
वाजिनीव स्वमृतमस्मि । द्रविण सर्चसम् । सुमेधा अमृतोक्षितः । (Taittiriya Up. I. 10)

² विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते (Katha V. 1)

³ एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसङ्क्रम्य । एतं प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसङ्क्रम्य । एत मनोमयमात्मानमुपसङ्क्रम्य । एत विज्ञानमयमात्मानमुपसङ्क्रम्य । एतमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसङ्क्रम्य । इमाल्लोकान् कामाक्षी कामरूप्यनुसञ्चरन् । एतत् साम गायन्नास्ते । हा३वु हा३वु हा३वु । अहमन्नमहमन्नमहमन्नम् । अहमन्नादोऽहमन्नाद । अह श्लोककृदह श्लोककृदहं श्लोककृत् । अहमस्मि प्रथमजा ऋता३स्य । पूर्वं देवेभ्यो अमृतस्य ना३भायि । ... अह विश्व भुवनमभ्य-भवा३म् । सुवर्णं ज्योतीः । (Taittiriya Upanishad III. 10)

as living bodies within which to cast their highest thoughts and deepest realisations. It is not every one who is able to enter into the spirit of these writings, get behind their veil of archaic language and ancient imagery, and stand face to face with the living Truth of Knowledge in the penetralia. Sri Aurobindo calls attention, repeatedly, to this aspect of the subject and asks for a scrupulous sincerity of scholarship in one's study of these hallowed texts. Of his own approach, what he records is memorable: "To enter passively into the thoughts of the old Rishis, allow their words to sink into our souls, mould them and create their own reverberations in a sympathetic and responsive material—submissiveness, in short, to the Sruti—was the theory the ancients themselves had of the method of Vedic knowledge—*girām upāśrutim cara, stomam abhi svāra, abhi gṛñihī ā ruvā*. To listen in soul to the old voices and allow the Sruti in the soul to respond, to vibrate, first obscurely, in answer to the Vedantic hymn of knowledge, to give the response, the echo and last to let that response gain in clarity, intensity and fullness—this is the principle of interpretation that I have followed."

M. P. PANDIT

BEHOLD...

BEHOLD, the dire cloud is rent apart,
Again appears the gold disk bright between;
Earth sings a quiet hymn, almost unheard,
And the far splendours unveiled here-below lean.

A tune unknown plays on the chord of Nature,
And the glowing hopes of a god here incarnate,
And explore a vast deep-hidden wonder-treasure
To work a miracle, a new earth to create.

The full-moon sails across the infinite space,
And the whole sky charged with a luminous lore
Meets earth, setting the very dust ablaze,
A new note far-flying rings from shore to shore.

The moon golden with the cadence of a mystic lay
Wraps the earth in the light of a secret day.

ROBI GUPTA

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

(To The Children of The Ashram)

WHY DO WE FORGET THINGS?

THERE are many reasons, of course. First and the most important is that we use the faculty of "memory" in order to remember. Memory is a mental instrument depending upon the formation and growth of the brain. Your brain is developing constantly unless, of course, it is already degenerating; the development can continue for a long time, longer than that of the body. In the process there are necessarily things replaced by others; and as the instrument grows, elements that were useful at one stage are no longer so at a subsequent stage and have to give place to others more suitable. The net result of our acquisitions remains there in essence, but all that led to it, the intermediary steps are suppressed. Indeed, a good memory means nothing more than that—that is to say, to remember the results only, so that the fundamentals are sifted and stored, namely, those alone that are useful for further construction. This is more important than just trying to retain some particular items in a rigid manner.

There is another thing. Apart from the fact that memory by itself in its very nature is a defective organ, there is the other fact that there are different states of consciousness one following another. Each state faithfully records the phenomena of that moment, whatever they may be. Now, if your mind is calm and clear, wide and strong, you can by concentrating your consciousness on that moment bring out of it and recall in your present active state what is recorded there of your movements then; you can, that is to say, go back to the particular state of consciousness at a given moment and live it again. What is registered in your consciousness is never obliterated and hence not really forgotten. You can live a thousand years and you will not have forgotten that. Therefore, if you do not want to forget a thing, you must retain it through

your consciousness, and not through your mental memory. As I have said, the mental memory fades away, new things, things of today replace old things, things of yesterday. But that of which you are *conscious* in your consciousness, you can never forget. It lies somewhere in the background, returns to you at your bidding. You have only to withdraw to that state of the consciousness where it lies embedded. In this way you can recall things that you knew perhaps centuries ago. It is how you remember your past lives. For, a movement of consciousness never dies out, it is only the impressions on the surface brain-mind that are fugitive. What you have learnt with this superficial instrument laboriously—only read, heard, noted, underlined—leaves no lasting mark, but what is imbibed, breathed in into the stuff of consciousness remains. The brain is being constantly renewed and reformed. Old cells, cells that have become weak and atrophied are replaced by younger and stronger ones or the old cells combine differently or enter into other organisations. Thus the old impressions or memories they carried are obliterated.

It is, as I say, by entering into a previous state of consciousness where you experienced a thing that you can always call back the thing. Only you must know how to get at the point, submerged somewhere in the depths. The body, after death, dissolves, the greater part of the vital and the mind dissolves also—only a small portion that has been well organised, given a compact cohesive form endures. Such an achievement is a rare phenomenon. But it is otherwise with the consciousness. Consciousness is eternal. If you contact the consciousness you discover the whole mystery of the earth and creation. It is consciousness that can create.

HOW TO GET RID OF TROUBLESOME THOUGHTS?

There are several ways and also it depends upon the case. The first and the easiest way is to think of something else. Concentrate your attention upon a subject which has nothing to do with what troubles you. You can read something interesting or take up a work that demands care and consideration. Something creative would be more effective; writers and artists, for example, when they are engaged in their particular occupation forget every thing else, their whole mind is engrossed in that one matter. But, of course, once the work is done, the trouble begins again, if one has not learnt to control the thoughts in the meanwhile. So there is the second method which is a little more difficult. You have to learn a movement of rejection. As you reject or throw away a physical object, even so you must throw away and reject the thought. It is more difficult, but if you succeed, it is more effective. You have

to practise and continue the endeavour, repeat and persevere and there is no reason why you should not succeed, if you are thoroughly sincere and serious.

There is a third method. It is to bring down from above a greater light which is in its nature the very opposite of the thoughts you are dealing with, opposite in a very radical and deep sense; that is to say, if the thoughts that trouble you are obscure and ignorant, especially if they happen to rise from the subconscious or the unconscious, supported by the mere instincts, then, by calling down the light from above and turning it upon the dark thoughts you can simply dissolve them or transform them, wherever possible. It is the supreme means, but perhaps not within the easy reach of all. But if you succeed in it, not only the thoughts do not come, their very cause is removed. The first method is to turn aside, the second to face and fight, the third to rise above and transform. In the third you are not only cured, but you make a progress—a true progress.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

THE MARVEL

THY lotus-feet, O Lord of life,
Treading the worlds of God-delight,
Gave to the earth of lust and pain
A glimpse of the Infinite's golden height!

Each mortal's breast then glowed in joy
And called the sacred flame-love down
To dwell in man and quell the rage
Of night's black force and fate's blind frown.

The marvel's done, the rapture's come,
A sun-like luminous face is seen
In the depth of sea and the blush of sky,
In the blooms of rose and meadows green.

Thy lotus-feet, O Lord Divine,
Have touched the caves of the darkest night,
A radiant smile has kissed each soul,
One gaze of Thine has brought the Light!

PRITHWINDRA

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE

(ELIZABETHAN AND 17TH. CENTURY)

(Continued from the previous issue)

DONNE's prose Sermons, which appeared shortly after the translation of the Bible, still bear the strong marks of Elizabethan rhetoric, although sterner in tone. It is an argumentative language, and his aim was to convince his audience by exposing and analysing his own convictions. We can compare Donne's prose very well with that of two other writers—Milton and Jeremy Taylor—who writing some two or three decades after Donne's time had a similar purpose in view, that of stirring feeling in their audience. Theirs is the moving type of argument rather than the logical. They were writers who were instigated—at least in their prose—by the pure oratorical motive, and their work, especially Milton's, was strongly linked to the Latin oratorical style where rhetoric predominates over logic. The Renaissance, which had introduced the study of classical Latin in the English Universities from the middle of the 16th. century, had led to this change, when rhetoric began to replace logic as the subject of study.

In Milton and Jeremy Taylor we have an obvious retardation in the development of the native English prose, since they both by-passed the principal problem of linking the classical form with the native idiom. Instead they elaborated wholly on the Latin model; Milton in the construction of the massive sentence, and Taylor in giving to prose the whole colouring of poetry. The result in both cases was a specialised expression, a language dressed up for special occasions; and this was obviously very limited in its usage. They were characteristic of the personal prose style typical of this period.

Other writers of this early half of the 17th. century, apart from those who practiced the classical oration, also showed the clear beginnings of the personal prose style. During this time we have such diverse writers as Robert Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Izaak Walton and Thomas Hobbes. Of Robert Burton we need say little. His was the quaint antiquarian style, a rare collection of antique sayings. He set the pattern for the personal and eccentric, prose style. (A well-known follower some 140 years later was the novelist Laurence Sterne.)

Sir Thomas Browne was more classical and orthodox. He broke away from

the Elizabethan extravagances, and followed the Latin syntax closely as his model. But he also broke away from the native Teutonic speech; and many writers after him, especially in the 18th. century, followed his example. Both Bacon and Ben Jonson had to some degree attempted to work out a compromise between the highly developed classical language and the rough, living, native speech; and both of them exhibit the uneven, jerky and far-from-clear expression typical of these early efforts. Browne sought to improve on the Elizabethan writers, but he took the extreme course of disregarding the living roots of the language. He produced a smooth prose, but it was unrelated to the living tongue. It was a prose developed by himself, and served his own private need; but used for general purposes (as happened with the neo-classical 18th. century writers) and especially when used for periodical writing it resulted in a falsely elevated style. For Thomas Browne it was more of a private and personal expression. The following two extracts, the first from Francis Bacon and the second from Thomas Browne, show the abrupt and jerky Elizabethan style on the one hand and the smoother, more polished (mid-17th. century) classical style on the other:—

“Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgement and disposition of business.”

“Let thy studies be free as thy thoughts and contemplations: but fly not only upon the wings of imagination; join sense unto reason, and experiment unto speculation, and so give life unto embryon truths, and verities yet in their chaos. There is nothing more acceptable unto the ingenious world, than this noble elucidation of truth; wherein against the tenacity of prejudice and prescription, this century now prevaleth.”

Izaak Walton, a contemporary of Browne, shows the more down-to-earth style and homely expression. He was one who had experienced the extravagances of the later Elizabethans, but who had lived on into a sterner Puritan age. His prose has the direct touch of the Elizabethans, but is trimmed severely of all fancies suitable for the temper of later times. Unlike Browne's, Walton's writing is nearer the speech rhythm and very readable; and also being shorn and clipped it is tidier than the Elizabethan prose. But here again, as in the other writings of this period, it is more of a personal idiosyncrasy and very limited in its use. It is admirable, as he used it, for country talks and scenes, or the quiet lives of Church dignitaries, but it is a personal and restricted style. Nevertheless, we can still read Walton with pleasure, as the following short extract shows, which is more than can be said of his great contemporaries in prose:—

“But take this for a rule, that in hot weather he (the chub-fish) is to be fished for towards the mid-water, or near the top; and in colder weather nearer the bottom; and if you fish for him on the top, with beetle or any fly, then be sure to let your line be very long, and to keep out of sight.”

It was Thomas Hobbes who opened the door, or rather supplied the key, for a more widely representative English prose to come into being. Hobbes was one of those rare persons who, living in the most turbulent times, can maintain a serene detachment, but at the same time is acutely aware of the fundamental problems of his day. We are not concerned here with Hobbes' sociological views, but with what he has written on prose and poetry in general, as well as with his manner of writing. His prose, though somewhat clearer than Bacon's, is still marked by the struggle of putting complex thought and sequence of ideas into plain English. He did, however, take up the task which Bacon, with his more poetical style, was clearly not able to accomplish; that is, to develop a precise and exact mode of expression. The following extract will show Hobbes' effort to make himself clear:—

“By manners, I mean not here, Decency of behaviour; as how one should salute another, or how a man should wash his mouth, or pick his teeth before company, and such other points of the Small Morals; but those qualities of mankind, that concern their living together in Peace, and Unity”.

Apart from his manner of writing, Hobbes had a number of important things to say on the question of the distinction between prose and poetry. With his mathematical love of precision—and as a student of Aristotle—he classified poetry into three main branches: the heroic, the scommatic, and the pastoral. These were again divided into sub-classes, into which all types of poetry (except the lyric with which Hobbes was not concerned) could be fitted. By this categorisation the sphere of poetry was henceforth restricted, and this opened the way for prose to come into its own.

Hobbes also gave the idea of a psychological approach to literary criticism. His distinction between Judgement and Fancy had an important bearing in this respect. The expression of Fancy or Wit shows the resemblances between objects, and belongs more to the poetic mind; while the aim of Judgement or Reason is to find the differences in objects, and this attribute belongs to the analytical or philosophical mind. Literary work was henceforth to be judged on its proper blending of fancy and judgement. This had a restraining influence on the fanciful element in poetry, and at the same time gave prose the lead in expressing judgement.

The writer who had the greatest influence in moulding modern English prose was Dryden, who took up the precepts of Hobbes and put them into practice. Dryden spent a good part of his life and energy in pursuing the problem of a standard English prose. His aim was not to evolve a personal prose style, but one that could have the widest application. To achieve its purpose such a style would have to come nearer towards a conversational style; and this is what was more or less accomplished by the time Dryden had completed his last work in 1700. From the beginning he disregarded the personal prose styles of his immediate predecessors (except Hobbes), and went back to Ben Jonson's dictum (which incidentally Jonson could not himself accomplish) of writing in the manner as men do speak, and yet giving it a classical bearing. Dryden, in other words, took up the fundamental problem of elevating the uncouth speech and refining it into a prose that could stand side-by-side with the classical, and yet have its own individuality,—and above all be alive with the sound of English.

Two factors of Dryden's time also helped to bring about a more standardised prose. First, the beginning of the cultivation of discourse and the art of conversation; which was at first limited to court circles, but later extended to the educated classes of the people. Second, the beginning of the periodical literature and the wider spread of reading. Although both these factors did not come to fruition until about the end of Dryden's life (the beginning of the 18th. century), yet the formative stage of these developments were the currents underlying Dryden's own work. A third, and more immediate, factor was the influence of the newly-formed Royal Society (the scientific body that came into being at the opening of Dryden's career). This body, which included Dryden and other literary figures as well as those with purely scientific interests, laid down certain rules regarding the clarity of expression in English. The test of good prose was that which could be readily understood by all educated people; and above all it had to be direct and plain.

In spite of Dryden's shortcomings—we forgive his attempt to revise his essays and give them a more "classical" structure—we must be grateful to him for his meticulous work in this field of prose development. His last prose work—the Preface to his "Fables"—which appeared in the first year of the 18th. century, marks the establishment of the intimate conversational style in English literature. This style henceforth became the fashion, and was directed along the two lines of prose development of the 18th-century,—the periodical essay and the novel.

A writer who happened to be almost contemporary with Dryden, but who stands apart from the rest of English writers—like a wild plant among the cultivated—was the Puritan John Bunyan. His prose was based on the prose

of the Bible, and is the first achievement to bring this simplified native idiom into literary form. Its obvious limitation is that it ignored the classical heritage; and that it was practically only suitable for his own chosen form of moralistic allegory, which ran close to the biblical teaching. Its simplicity, however, gained it wide currency, and even today it can hold its own with the best of Dryden's work. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" is a children's classic even in these times.

Our survey of English prose during this formative period has shown that the elevation of prose could only properly come about with, and through, the elevation of the speech. From the time of Dryden onwards we see the more conscious cultivation of "polite conversation", and this brought in a more living and enduring prose that is read and enjoyed today where the older prose cannot (for reasons already stated). Once this basis was secured—the linking of prose writing with the cultivation of good conversation—the basis of modern prose, as we know it, was laid.

One fundamental problem, however, was not solved by Dryden, nor by the classical-minded 18th. century in general. This was the problem of establishing a compatibility between the loose Teutonic phraseology, in the native English idiom, with the expansive sentence and word structures of the classical Latin. This had to wait until the speech itself—the real measure of English—was sufficiently developed. (The beginning of parliamentary speech at the end of the 18th-century played an important part here.) The failure of the older writers—as we have seen of the 17th. century—lay in the fact that they had preferred to use only the compact Latinised words, which could only fit in comfortably with a Latinised structure. The simpler Teutonic idiom was ignored; and thus there was the wide gap between the written and the spoken language, to the detriment of both. The final reconciliation of the Latin and Teutonic elements in English prose is bound up with the later, and modern, development of English, and hence lies outside the scope of this survey.

N. PEARSON

WITH THE STUDENTS

IV

“WHY DO PEOPLE QUARREL?”

TODAY one of you asked in class: “Why do people quarrel?” This apparently simple question has possibilities of infinite digression which could not be resolved in the class, but which might with some profit be dealt with here at our leisure. I suppose the cause lies in the Ignorance which is Division. There is a Consciousness that knows itself as all the universe in itself and itself in all the universe, such as Krishna showed to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. It is known as the Universal Consciousness; in that state of consciousness it is not possible to quarrel (unless one wills to do so) for one sees all as the Divine and the Divine in all. We might have some idea of what this means when we try to imagine quarrelling with someone whom we dearly love—with whom we feel a oneness. It would be too painful, don’t you think? But man, ordinarily, is not in that consciousness, he is still covered by the dark cloak of Ignorance—his is that Great Consciousness divided up into separate individualities of Itself. Now these separate individualities which we call human beings have a constant hunger to express themselves in terms of their own separative consciousness, their own particular individualism; this is the very reason of their existence and the force which at first is behind their urge to grow out of their ignorance into a higher state of consciousness where they will then have no need of this hunger which is Desire. Fundamentally, we might say that desire is perhaps the root of quarrelling among human beings who are still in the Ignorance, who feel that they have to feed on the individualities of others, impose their ideas, their will, their preferences and opinions on others; who feel that they must impose their individuality on others for their own security. For if they do not impose their wishes (and such imposing is a kind of conscious feeding or devouring,) others will devour them. So, in the Ignorance this Desire, this hunger becomes the very fulcrum of one’s existence, the apparent essential for survival, a principle of self-preservation. And it remains so until man arrives at the stage where he can climb out of the Ignorance; until he has grown to be dissatisfied with the lower and starts to hunger for the higher. But at this very point his difficulty begins, for he would change from the hunger of the lower to the Desire (still hunger) for the higher. The difficulty is that the very force he must use to “aspire” (hunger) for the higher is the hunger or desire of the lower which as yet is the only force he knows, and which is a chain that binds him to the lower as long as he allows

it to have play in him. The only way to get out this apparent dilemma is by the purification of the desire will, or hunger will, if you like a purification which will reduce the ego (the little or superficial self) to a minimum or into a force of aspiration for the higher only, where it becomes a constant longing for the Divine. Of course in our Yoga it is not such an arduous process as all that, for with us it is really the Mother who does the Yoga for us; if we keep open to Her, look always towards Her, concentrate more and more on Her Will—then that itself becomes a constant aspiration for the Divine through the Power of the Mother's Love—for Love when it is pure is the greatest force of aspiration.

We have allowed ourselves to digress in our digression, we must come back to the point of our question "Why do people quarrel?" Well, now perhaps if you have thought over what we have discussed you can see that the True Consciousness divided up into individuals produces separate natures, and divisions or different aspects of Truth and it is when these differences insist or try to impose or dogmatise that the friction begins, and if the other individual counters this by a similar action then quarrels, riots, strikes, mutinies, revolts and wars are the natural outcome: it is cause and effect.

One other important factor has to be added to this to complete our answer regarding the cause of friction between individuals and that is the division within the human being himself. It is not generally remembered that the human consciousness is made up of many complex parts which are seldom, if ever, in harmony with each other. Let us take the three main divisions, i.e. the mental, the vital, and the physical. When contact is made between two people how often do they see, or are they aware *which part of the being speaks?* or from where speech comes? If one's vital reacts to a mental stimulus, that may be the root cause of misunderstanding between two people; they continue in their misunderstanding quite unaware that they are speaking at cross purposes because one is speaking from the vital and the other is trying to understand, to apprehend, the problem solely with the mind; thus apart from the fact that the ego of one or both may be all the time trying to impose itself. Then, of course, there is no sincerity to understand; it is only a question of who can dominate the argument, which unfortunately is only too often the case. But to end on a more simple note we can always try to remember that when we dearly love someone it is hardly possible to quarrel with him or her. And if you ask: Why is that? then the answer is: it is because we are open only to the best, the true, and the beautiful in the one we love, for that is the substance of love, and it reflects those qualities in ourselves which are ever before our heart and soul as the Ideal; which again can be our conception of the Divine—and who is foolish enough to quarrel with That?

NORMAN DOWSETT