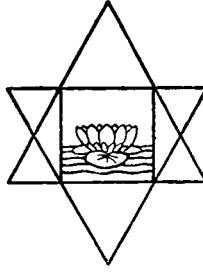


MOTHER INDIA

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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

MOTHER INDIA

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No. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE BIRTH OF A NEW WORLD

THE period through which we are passing will be recognised in the future as the most important in all history—as one in which the gates of heaven were thrown open to the earth.

The goal of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has been to set working as a natural ruling power in earth-life what they call the Supermind, the sovereign Truth-Consciousness which holds the secret of that life's total transformation. Far above the Mind the Truth-Consciousness has its status of unconfined creative splendour. But on every plane, in the core of everything, it is occultly present. And within Matter it is not only immanent: it lies hidden also as a latent divinity: there has been an "involution" of it, an entire seeming submergence, prior to its release as a force of evolution, its emergence into the open, by the impact of a descent from above.

The Supermind began its descent into Matter in 1938. What could not be done at that time was to fix it here. At last in the December of 1950 it fixed itself for progressive action in an individual form.

What has happened now in consequence of that victory is not a descent but a manifestation—and it is more than an individual event. The Supermind has burst forth into universal play. It has become a principle at constant work upon all earth. And this work will have as its result the release of the concealed Supermind "involved" in Matter.

Everywhere the master Light is active now—no longer as if it were a visiting though intimate splendour but as a glory intrinsic and established. Its power in the very midst of physical existence is pressing towards more and more manifestation of its perfect touch on the movements of our common day. It is amongst us for embodied expression just as in ages remote the Mind became a manifest world-principle and in the course of time developed the full human being.

The appearance of the Supermind for universal action means the birth of a new world.

K. D. S.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DATES

A TALK BY THE MOTHER

Does a particular date or a series of dates carry any special significance?

THE way of framing a calendar is a convention. If the convention is made general, as there is an attempt now to do, it can become a very powerful formation. But in order to become significant for many, many must first accept it. I mean by a formation an image infused with a force that makes it something living, an image which can be used as a symbol. There are people who may form images and use them as symbols, but all is done only for themselves, as in the case of dream-symbols. These are purely subjective and valid in so far as those people are personally concerned.

But if your calendar is adopted by almost the whole of mankind, then the symbol is capable of acting upon a very wide field. You can act upon the major population through this formation. As it is purely conventional, I repeat, it is fruitful only in the measure in which it has been accepted. If instead of millions of people who are now following the European calendar there were only three or four persons, then it would be symbolic only for these few. The thing itself has no value, its value depends upon the use you make of it.

The conventions are useful as symbols, I said,—that is, they are a means to put you in contact with what is more subtle, to put what is material in contact with the more subtle. That is their use.

Here comes also the error which people make in respect of stars and horoscopes. For all that is simply a language and a convention. If you accept the convention you can use it for a particular work. But it has value and importance only in proportion to the number of people who believe in it. But if you simplify, the more you do so the more the thing becomes a superstition. For, what is superstition? It is the abuse of generalisation from a particular.

I always give the example of a person passing under a ladder. A man was working on its top-rung and accidentally he dropped his instrument on the person below who got his head broken. The witness of this whole incident then made a general rule that to pass under a ladder was a bad sign. Well, it is superstition pure and simple.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DATES

In fact, much of our knowledge originates in the same way. Thus, a certain medicine is found, because of favourable circumstances, to cure a number of people of a particular disease. Then it is announced that the medicine is an absolute remedy for that disease. But it is not true. If the same medicine is given to a hundred persons, it will affect them in a hundred different ways: sometimes the reactions are quite opposite. In no two cases will the result be similar. Therefore it is not the virtue of the medicine itself that effects the cure. It is a superstition to believe in the absolute efficacy of medicines.

But going further we can say that there is very little difference between science and superstition! The only difference is in the manner of expressing oneself. If you take care to say like the scientists, "it seems it is like that, one might conclude that things appear like that" etc. etc., then it is no longer superstition. But if you assert point-blank, "it is like that", then you land in superstition.

THE TWO NECESSITIES OF THE SADHANA

THE two feelings are both of them right—they indicate the two necessities of the sadhana. One is to go inward and open fully the connection between the psychic being and the outer nature. The other is to open upward to the Divine Peace, Force, Light, Ananda above, to rise up into it and bring it down into the nature and the body. Neither of these two movements, the psychic and the spiritual, are complete without the other. If the spiritual ascent and descent are not made, the spiritual transformation of the nature cannot happen; if the full psychic opening and connection is not made, the transformation cannot be complete.

There is no incompatibility between the two movements; some begin the psychic first, others the spiritual first, some carry on both together. The best way is to aspire for both and let the Mother's Force work it out according to the need and turn of the nature.

SRI AUROBINDO

28-9-1936

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

ON YOGIC FORCE

THE fact that you don't feel a force does not prove that it is not there. The steam engine does not feel a force moving it, but the force is there. A man is not a steam engine? He is very little better, for he is conscious only of some bubbling on the surface which he calls himself and is absolutely unconscious of all the subconscious, subliminal, superconscious forces moving him. (This is a fact which is being more and more established by modern psychology though it has got hold only of the lower forces and not the higher, so you need not turn up your rational nose at it.) He twitters intellectually (=foolishly,) about the surface results and attributes them all to his 'noble self', ignoring the fact that his noble self is hidden far away from his own vision behind the veil of his dimly sparkling intellect and the reeking fog of his vital feelings, emotions, impulses, sensations and impressions. So your argument is utterly absurd and futile. Our aim is to bring the secret forces out and unwallled into the open so that instead of getting some shadows or lightnings of themselves out through the veil or being wholly obstructed, they may "pour down" and "flow in a river." But to expect that all at once is a presumptuous demand which shows an impatient ignorance and inexperience. If they begin to trickle at first, that is sufficient to justify the faith in a future downpour....Also it is the trickle that gives assurance of the possibility of the downpour. One has only to go on and by one's patience deserve the downpour or else, without deserving, slide on until one gets it. In Yoga itself the experience that is a promise and foretaste but gets shut off till the nature is ready for the fulfilment is a phenomenon familiar to every yogi when he looks back on his past experience. Such were the brief visitations of Ananda you had some time before.

*

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Yes, the mind is used as a medium. It might be an understanding transcribing agent or it may be only a passive channel. If an agent, it transcribes what comes from above, understands but does not pass its opinion—only transmits. If it is only a channel then it sees the words and passes them but knows no more.

Not to improve, for that would mean the mind interfering, refusing to be a medium and trying to do better on its own active account. But to understand is desirable. If the mind is watchful and awake to the Symbols being used or the images it can acquire the habit or knack of understanding.

*

*

*

If it [the latent medico] were there, I would develop that and run the Dispensary myself. What would be the need of a Nirod or Becherlal or Ramchandra?...What logic? Because Mother and myself are not engineers, therefore Chandulal can't develop the right intuition in engineering? or because neither I nor Mother are experts in Gujerati prosody, therefore Punjalal can't develop the inspiration for his poems?

Oh Lord, what a question! To guide internally is a million times easier than to guide externally. Let us suppose I want General X to beat Y's fellows back at Guadalagasu (please pronounce properly). I put the right force on him and he wakes up and, with his military knowledge and capacity, does the right thing and it is done. But if I, having no latent or patent military genius or knowledge in me, write to him saying "do this, do that", he won't do it and I would not be able to do it either. It is operations of two quite different spheres of consciousness. You absolutely refuse to make the necessary distinction between the two fields and their processes and then you jumble the two together and call it logic.

...Intuition and revelation are inner things—they don't belong to the outer mind....Do you imagine that I tell you inwardly or outwardly what expressions to use in your Bengali poems when you are writing? Still you write from an inspiration which I have set going.

(NIRODBARAN)

DEATH AND THE TRAVELLER FIRE*

SRI AUROBINDO

DEATH

Flame that¹ invadest my empire of sorrow wordless and sombre,
Arrow of azure light, golden-winged barbed with delight,
Who was it aimed thee into my² crucified Soul that forever
Passions and beats in the womb of a universe built for its tomb?

I who am Death and live in the boundless cavern of Nature,³
I am Death who cannot die. A Shadow of Eternity,—
Vainly I throb in the stars that err through the void without feature,
Scintillant forms in a Nought vast without life, without thought.

O these stars⁴ that glitter and wander, God has devised them
Burning nails in my heart, stones of my prisonhouse. God
Architect griefless relentless and mighty built and raised them,
Clamped with them Time, His road to⁵ Nothingness, Death's grim abode.

Fire of God, I passioned for life and have gathered but ashes—
Life so that Death might die. Yea, was it life but He gave me?
Glow of my darkness, reflex and nerve-beat! devoured the⁶ devourer,
Tortured by the flame an obscure will in me kindled to save me.

Life was⁷ a sorrowful throb of this Matter teaching it anguish,
Teaching it hope and desire trod out too soon in the mire,
Life the frail joy that regrets its briefness, life the long sorrow,
Love the close kinsman to hate and its freedom but bedfellow⁸ of Fate?⁹

* Unrevised and incomplete version

¹ Fire who ² the ³ Matter ⁴ All these worlds ⁵ towards ⁶ its ⁷ is

⁸ comrade

⁹ Boons for a shortlived sweetness were given me—hours that were tortures,

Hope more blind than my night, desire for deadly delight,

Joy that outlasts not its moment, vivid and barren,

Love a close kinsman to hate, freedom a minister of Fate.

DEATH AND THE TRAVELLER FIRE

Then in my anguish I reached out for knowledge, light on my midnight,
Light on its symbols of dream, strength of the thought to redeem,
Yea, was it light He permitted, this thought that is tangled in darkness?
Ignorance sees by its own record of sense and of stone.

Ignorance building its schemes and its dreams on a basis of error,
This was the mind I had sought fashioned out of His nought.
Alphabet hieroglyphs of the reflexes life had engendered,
Spasms of matter caught in a luminous figment of thought.

Lo, is not God but myself, Death's euphemism fictioned immortal,
Nothing eternalised bare, yet as if one who is None,
Death yet for ever alive, an Inconscient troubled with seemings,
Matter tormented with life, a Void with its forces at strife.

O by my thought to escape from myself out of thought into Nothing,
Thus I had hoped to dissolve, rapt in some featureless Bliss,
Rending the illusion I made to be immutable and formless and timeless,
This dream too now I leave, long not even to cease.

Into numb discontent I have lapsed of a universe barren,
Goalless, condemned to survive, a spiral of matter in pain,
Now have I known myself as thy boundless finite, thy darkness without end
Shadowily self-lit, grown content to strive and in vain.

Fire that travellest from immortality, spark of the Timeless,
Why hast thou come to my night, unbearable Idol of Light,
Ah, from what happier universe strayedst thou kindling my torpor?
Pass, O spirit of Light, now perturb not my vastness of Night.

ODYSSEY*

(A Translation from Homer)

SRI AUROBINDO

BOOK I

SING to me, Muse, of the man many-counselled who far through the
world's ways
Wandering, was tossed after Troya he sacked, the divine stronghold,
Many cities of men he beheld, learned the minds of their dwellers,
Many the woes in his soul he suffered driven on the waters,
Fending from fate his life and the homeward course of his comrades.
Them even so he saved not for all his desire and his striving;
Who by their own infatuate madness piteously perished,
Fools in their hearts! for they slew the herds the deity pastured,
Helios high-climbing; but he from them reft their return and the daylight.
Sing to us also of these things, goddess, daughter of heaven.

Now all the rest who had fled from death and sudden destruction
Safe dwell at home, from the war escaped and the swallowing ocean:
He alone far was kept from his fatherland, far from his consort,
Long by the nymph divine, the sea-born goddess Calypso,
Stayed in her hollow caves, for she yearned to keep him her husband.
Yet when the year came at last in the rolling gyre of the seasons
When in the web of their wills the gods spun out his returning
Homeward to Ithaca,—there too he found not release from his labour,
In his own land with his loved ones—all the immortals had pity
Save Poseidon alone; but he with implacable anger
Moved against godlike Odysseus before his return to his country.
Now was he gone to the land of the Aethiopes, nations far-distant,—
They who to either hand divided, remotest of mortals,
Dwell where the high-climbing Helios sets and where he arises;
There of bulls and of rams the slaughtered hecatomb tasting

* Unrevised

ODYSSEY.

He by the banquet seated rejoiced; but the other immortals
Sat in the halls of Zeus Olympian, the throng of them gathered,
First led the word the father divine of men and immortals;
For in his heart had the memory risen of noble Aegisthus
Whom in his halls Orestes, the famed Agamamnonid, slaughtered;
Him in his heart recalling he spoke mid the assembled immortals;
“Out on it! how are the gods ever vainly accused by earth’s creatures!
Still they say that from us they have miseries; they rather always
By their own folly and madness draw on them woes we have willed not.
Even as now Aegisthus, violating Fate, from Atrides
Took his wedded wife and slew her husband returning,
Knowing their¹ violent end; for we warned him before, we sent him
Hermes charged with our message, the far-scanning slayer of Argus,
Neither the hero to smite nor wed the wife of Atrides,
Since from Orestes a vengeance shall be, the Atreid offspring,
When to his youth he shall come and desire the soil² of his country.
Yet not for all his voice, would the infatuate heart of Aegisthus
Heed that friendly counsellor; now all in a mass has been paid for.”
Answered then to Zeus the goddess grey-eyed Athene.
“Father of ours, thou son of Cronus, highest of the regnant,
He indeed and utterly fell by a fitting destruction:
So too perish all who dare like deeds among mortals.
But for a far better man my heart burns, clear-eyed Odysseus
Who, ill-fated, far from his loved ones suffers and sorrows
Hemmed in the island girt by the waves, in the navel of ocean,
Where mid the woods her home a goddess has made and inhabits,
Daughter of Atlas whose baleful heart knows all the abysses
Fathomless, vast of the sea and the pillars high on his shoulders
In his huge strength he upbears, that divide the earth and the heavens;
Atlas’ daughter keeps in that island the unhappy Odysseus...

(*Incomplete*)

¹ the ² soul

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST SUN AND THE LOST COWS

THE conquest or recovery of the Sun and the Dawn is a frequent subject of allusion in the hymns of the Rîg-veda. Sometimes it is the finding of Surya, sometimes the finding or conquest of Swar, the world of Surya. Sayana, indeed, takes the word Swar as a synonym of Surya; but it is perfectly clear from several passages that Swar is the name of a world or supreme Heaven above the ordinary heaven and earth. Sometimes indeed it is used for the solar light proper both to Surya and to the world which is formed by his illumination. We have seen that the waters which descend from Heaven or which are conquered and enjoyed by Indra and the mortals who are befriended by him, are described as *svarvatîr āpah*. Sayana, taking these *āpah* for physical waters, was bound to find another meaning for *svarvatîh* and he declares that it means *saraṇavatch*, moving; but this is obviously a forced sense which the word itself does not suggest and can hardly bear. The thunderbolt of Indra is called the heavenly stone, *svaryam asmānam*; its light, that is to say, is the light from this world of the solar splendours. Indra himself is *svarpati*, the master of Swar, of the luminous world.

Moreover, as we see that the finding and recovery of the Cows is usually described as the work of Indra, often with the aid of the Angirasa Rishis and by the instrumentality of the *mantra* and the sacrifice, of Agni and Soma, so also the finding and recovery of the sun is attributed to the same agencies. Moreover the two actions are continually associated together. We have, it seems to me, overwhelming evidence in the Veda itself that all these things constitute really one great action of which they are parts. The Cows are the hidden rays of the Dawn or of Surya; their rescue out of the darkness leads to or is the sign of the uprising of the sun that was hidden in the darkness; this again is the condition, always with the instrumentality of the sacrifice, its circumstances and its helping gods, of the conquest of Swar, the supreme world of Light. So much results beyond doubt, it seems to me, from the language of the Veda

itself; but also that language points to this Sun being a symbol of the divine illumining Power, Swar the world of the divine Truth and the conquest of divine Truth the real aim of the Vedic Rishis and the subject of their hymns. I will now examine as rapidly as possible the evidence which points towards this conclusion.

First of all, we see that Swar and Surya are different conceptions in the minds of the Vedic Rishis, but always closely connected. We have for instance the verse in Bharadwaja's hymn to Soma and Indra (VI. 72-1), "Ye found the Sun, ye found Swar, ye slew all darkness and limitations," and in a hymn of Vamadeva to Indra (IV. 16-4), which celebrates this achievement of Indra and the Angirasas, "When by the hymns of illumination (*arkaih*) Swar was found, entirely visible, when they (the Angirasas) made to shine the great light out of the night, he (Indra) made the darkneses ill-assured (i.e. loosened their firm hold) so that men might have vision." In the first passage we see that Swar and Surya are different from each other and that Swar is not merely another name for Surya; but at the same time the finding of Swar and the finding of Surya are represented as closely connected and indeed one movement and the result is the slaying of all darkness and limitations. So in the second passage the finding and making visible of Swar is associated with the shining of a great light out of the darkness, which we find from parallel passages to be the recovery, by the Angirasas of the Sun that was lying concealed in the darkness. Surya is found by the Angirasas through the power of their hymns or true *mantras*; Swar also is found and made visible by the hymns of the Angirasas, *arkaih*. It is clear therefore that the substance of Swar is a great light and that that light is the light of Surya the Sun.

We might even suppose that Swar is a word for the sun, light or the sky if it were not clear from other passages that it is the name of a world. It is frequently alluded to as a world beyond the *Rodasī*, beyond heaven and earth, and is otherwise called the wide world, *uru loka*, or the wide other world, *uru u loka*, or simply that (other) world, *u loka*. This world is described as one of vast light and of a wide freedom from fear where the cows, the rays of Surya, disport themselves freely. So in VI. 47-8, we have "Thou in thy knowledge leadest us on to the wide world, even Swar, the Light which is freedom from fear, with happy being," *svar jyotir abhayam svasti*. In III. 2-6, Agni Vaiswanara is described as filling the earth and heaven and the vast Swar, *ā rodasī aprīṇad ā svar mahat*; and so also Vasishtha says in his hymn to Vishnu, VII. 99, "Thou didst support firmly, O Vishnu, this earth and heaven and uphold the earth all around by the rays (of Surya). Ye two created for the sacrifice (i.e. as its result) the wide other world (*urum u lokam*), bringing into being the Sun, the Dawn and Agni", where we again see the close connection of Swar,

the wide world, with the birth or appearance of the Sun and the Dawn. It is described as the result of the sacrifice, the end of our pilgrimage, the vast home to which we arrive, the other world to which those who do well the works of sacrifice attain, *sukṛtām u lokam*. Agni goes as an envoy between earth and heaven and then encompasses with his being this vast home, *kṣayam bṛhantam pari bhūṣati*, (III. 3-2). It is a world of bliss and fullness of all the riches to which the Vedic Rishi aspires: "He for whom, because he does well his works, O Agni Jatavedas, thou willest to make that other world of bliss, attains to a felicity full of the Horses, the Suns, the Heroes, the Cows, all happy being" (V. 4-11). And it is by the Light that this Bliss is attained; it is by bringing to Birth the Sun and the Dawn and the Days that the Angirasas attain to it for the desiring human race; "Indra who winneth Swar, bringing to birth the days, has conquered by those who desire (*uśigbhm̐*, a word applied like *nṛ* to express men and gods, but, like *nṛ* also, sometimes especially indicating the Angirasas) the armies he attacks, and he has made to shine out for man the vision of the days (*ketum ahnām*) and formed the Light for the great bliss," *avindaj jyotir bṛhate raṇāya* (III. 34-4).

All this may very well be interpreted, so far as these and other isolated passages go, as a sort of Red Indian conception of a physical world beyond the sky and the earth, a world made out of the rays of the sun, in which the human being, freed from fear and limitation,—it is a wide world,—has his desires satisfied and possesses quite an unlimited number of horses, cows, sons and retainers. But what we have set out to prove is that it is not so, that on the contrary, this wide world, *bṛhad dyau* or Swar, which we have to attain by passing beyond heaven and earth,—for so it is more than once stated, e.g. I. 36-8, "Human beings (*manuṣaḥ*) slaying the Coverer have crossed beyond both earth and heaven and made the wide world for their dwelling place," *ghnanto vṛtram ataran rodasī apa uru kṣayāya cakriṇe*,—that this supra-celestial wideness, this illimitable light is a supramental heaven, the heaven of the supramental Truth, of the immortal Beatitude, and that the light which is its substance and constituent reality, is the light of Truth. But at present it is enough to emphasise this point that it is a heaven concealed from our vision by a certain darkness, that it is to be found and made visible, and that this seeing and finding depends on the birth of the Dawn, the rising of the Sun, the uprising of the Solar Herds out of their secret cave. The souls successful in sacrifice become *svardṛis* and *svarvid*, seers of Swar and finders of Swar or its knowers; for *vid* is a root which means both to find or get and to know and in one or two passages the less ambiguous root *jñā* is substituted for it and the Veda even speaks of making the light known out of the darkness. For the rest, this question of the nature of Swar or the wide world is of supreme importance for

the interpretation of the Veda, since on it turns the whole difference between the theory of a hymnal of barbarians and the theory of a book of ancient knowledge, a real Veda. It can only be entirely dealt with in a discussion of the hundred and more passages speaking of this wide world which would be quite beyond the scope of these chapters. We shall, however, have to return to this question while dealing with the Angirasa hymns and afterwards.

The birth of the Sun and the Dawn must therefore be regarded as the condition of seeing or attaining to Swar, and it is this which explains the immense importance attached to this legend or image in the Veda and to the conception of the illumining, finding, bringing to birth of the light out of the darkness by the true hymn, the *satya mantra*. This is done by Indra and the Angirasas, and numerous are the passages that allude to it. Indra and the Angirasas are described as finding Swar or the Sun, *avidat*, illumining or making it to shine, *arocayat*, bringing it to birth, *ajanayat*, (we must remember that in the Veda the manifestation of the gods in the sacrifice is constantly described as their birth), and winning and possessing it, *sanat*. Often indeed Indra alone is mentioned. It is he who makes light from the nights and brings into birth the Sun, *kṣapām vastā janitā sūryasya* (III.49-4), he who has brought to their birth the Sun and the Dawn (II.12-7), or, in a more ample phrase, brings to birth together the Sun and Heaven and Dawn (VI.30-5). By his shining he illumines the Dawn, by his shining he makes to blaze out the sun, *haryan uṣasam arocayaḥ sūryam haryan arocayaḥ* (III.44-2). These are his great achievements *ajāna sūryam uṣasam sudansāḥ* (III.32-8), that with his shining comrades he wins for possession the field (is this not the field in which the Atri saw the shining cows?), wins the sun, wins the waters, *sanat kṣetram sakhibhiḥ śvitrnyebhiḥ sanat sūryam sanad apaḥ suvajraḥ* (I.100-18). He is also he who winneth Swar, *svarṣa*, as we have seen, by bringing to birth the days. In isolated passages we might take this birth of the Sun as referring to the original creation of the sun by the gods, but not when we take these and other passages together. This birth is his birth in conjunction with the Dawn, his birth out of the Night. It is by the sacrifice that this birth takes place, *indraḥ suyajña uṣasaḥ svar janat* (II.21-4), "Indra sacrificing well brought to birth the Dawns and Swar"; it is by human aid that it is done,—*asmākebhir nṛbhir sūryam sanat*, by our "men" he wins the sun (I.100-6); and in many hymns it is described as the result of the work of the Angirasas and is associated with the delivering of the cows or the breaking of the hill.

It is this circumstance among others that prevents us from taking, as we might otherwise have taken, the birth or finding of the Sun as simply a description of the sky (Indra) daily recovering the sun at dawn. When it is said of him that he finds the light even in the blind darkness, *so andhe cit tamasi jyotir*

vidat (I.100-8), it is evident that the reference is to the same light which Agni and Soma found, one light for all these many creatures, *avindatam jyotir ekam bahubhyaḥ*, when they stole the cows from the Panis (I.93.4), "the wakeful light which they who increase truth brought into birth, a god for the god" (VIII.89-1), the secret light (*gūḍham jyotiḥ*) which the fathers, the Angirasas, found when by their true mantras they brought to birth the Dawn. It is that which is referred to in the mystic hymn to all the gods (VIII.29-10) attributed to Manu Vaivaswata or to Kashyapa, in which it is said "certain of them singing the Rik thought out the mighty Saman and by that they made the Sun to shine." This is not represented as being done previous to the creation of man; for it is said in VII.91-1, "The gods who increase by our obeisance and were of old, without blame, they for man beset (by the powers of darkness) made the Dawn to shine by the Sun." This is the finding of the Sun that was dwelling in the darkness by the Angirasas through their ten months' sacrifice. Whatever may have been the origin of the image or legend, it is an old one and widespread and it supposes a long obscuration of the Sun during which man was beset by darkness. We find it not only among the Aryans of India, but among the Mayas of America whose civilisation was a ruder and perhaps earlier type of the Egyptian culture; there too it is the same legend of the Sun concealed for many months in the darkness and recovered by the hymns and prayers of the wise men (the Angirasa Rishis?). In the Veda the recovery of the Light is first effected by the Angirasas, the seven sages, the ancient human fathers and is then constantly repeated in human experience by their agency.

It will appear from this analysis that the legend of the lost Sun and its recovery by sacrifice and by the *mantra* and the legend of the lost Cows and their recovery, also by the *mantra*, both carried out by Indra and the Angirasas, are not two different myths, they are one. We have already asserted this identity while discussing the relations of the Cows and the Dawn. The Cows are the rays of the Dawn, the herds of the Sun and not physical cattle. The lost Cows are the lost rays of the Sun; their recovery is the forerunner of the recovery of the lost sun. But it is now necessary to put this identity beyond all possible doubt by the clear statement of the Veda itself.

For the Veda does explicitly tell us that the cows are the Light and the pen in which they are hidden is the darkness. Not only have we the passage already quoted, I.92-4, in which the purely metaphorical character of the cows and the pen is indicated, "Dawn uncovered the darkness like the pen of the cow"; not only have we the constant connection of the image of the recovery of the cows with the finding of the light as in I.93-4, "Ye two stole the cows from the Panis...Ye found the one light for many", or in II.24-3. "That is the work to be done for the most divine of the gods; the firm places were

cast down, the fortified places were made weak; up Brihaspati drove the cows (rays), by the hymn (*brahmaṇā*) he broke Vala, he concealed the darkness, he made Swar visible"; not only are we told in V.31-3, "He impelled forward the good milkers within the concealing pen, he opened up by the Light the all-concealing darkness"; but, in case any one should tell us that there is no connection in the Veda between one clause of a sentence and another and that the Rishis are hopping about with minds happily liberated from the bonds of sense and reason from the Cows to the Sun and from the darkness to the cave of the Dravidians, we have in answer the absolute identification in I.33-10, "Indra the Bull made the thunderbolt his ally" or perhaps "made it applied (*yujam*), he by the Light milked the rays (cows) out of the darkness,"—we must remember that the thunderbolt is the *svarya āsmā* and has the light of Swar in it,—and again in IV.51-2, where there is question of the Panis, "They (the Dawns) breaking into dawn pure, purifying, opened the doors of the pen, even of the darkness," *vrajasya tamaso dvārā*. If in face of all these passages we insist on making a historical myth of the Cows and the Panis, it will be because we are determined to make the Veda mean that in spite of the evidence of the Veda itself. Otherwise we must admit that this supreme hidden wealth of the Panis, *nidhim pañinām paramam guhāhitam* (II. 24-6), is not wealth of earthly herds, but, as is clearly stated by Puruchchhepa Daivodasi (I.130-3), "the treasure of heaven hidden in the secret cavern like the young of the Bird, within the infinite rock, like a pen of the cows", *avindad drvo nihitam guhā nidhim ver na garbham parivṛtam āsmani anante antar āsmani, vrajam vajrī gavām iva siṣasān*.

The passages in which the connection of the two legends or their identity appear, are numerous; I will only cite a few that are typical. We have in one of the hymns that speak at length of this legend, I.62, "O Indra, O Puissant, thou with the Dashagwas (the Angirasas) didst tear Vala with the cry; hymned by the Angirasas, thou didst open the Dawns with the Sun and with the Cows the Soma." We have VI. 17-3, "Hear the hymn and increase by the words; make manifest the Sun, slay the foe, cleave out the Cows, O Indra." We read in VII. 98-6, "All this wealth of cows that thou seest around thee by the eye of the Sun is thine, thou art the sole lord of the cows, O Indra," *gavām asi gopatir eka indra*, and to show of what kind of cows Indra is the lord, we have in III.31, a hymn of Sarama and the Cows, "The victorious (Dawns) clove to him and they knew a great light out of the darkness; knowing the Dawns went upward to him, Indra became the sole lord of the Cows," *patir gavām abhavad eka indrah*, and the hymn goes on to tell how it was by the mind and by the discovery of the whole path of the Truth that the seven sages, the Angirasas drove up the Cows out of their strong prison and how Sarama, knowing, came to the cavern in the

hill and to the voice of the imperishable herds. We have the same connection with the Dawns and the finding of the wide solar light of Swar in VII. 90-4, "The Dawns broke forth perfect in light and unhurt, they (the Angirasas) meditating found the wide Light (*uru jyotiḥ*); they who desire opened the wideness of the Cows, the waters flowed on them from heaven."

So too in II. 1 19-3 we have the Days and the Sun and the Cows,—“He brought to its birth the Sun, found the Cows, effecting out of the Night the manifestations of the days.” In IV. 1-13 the Dawns and the Cows are identified, “The good milkers whose pen was the rock, the shining ones in their concealing prison they drove upward, the Dawns answering their call,” unless this means, as is possible that the Dawns called by the Angirasas, “our human fathers,” who are mentioned in the preceding verse, drove up for them the Cows. Then in VI. 17.5 we have the breaking of the pen as the means of the outshining of the Sun; “Thou didst make the Sun and the Dawn to shine, breaking the firm places; thou didst move from its foundation the great hill that enveloped the Cows;” and finally in III. 39-4, 5, the absolute identification of the two images in their legendary form, “None is there among mortals who can blame (or, as I should rather interpret, no mortal power that can confine or obstruct) these our fathers we fought for the Cows (of the Panis); Indra of the mightiness, Indra of the works released for them the strongly closed cow-pens; when a friend with his friends the Navagwas, following on his knees the cows, when with the ten, the Dashagwas, Indra found the true Sun (or, as I render it, the Truth, the Sun,) dwelling in the darkness.” The passage is conclusive; the cows are the Cows of the Panis which the Angirasas pursue entering the cave on their hands and knees, the finders are Indra and the Angirasas who are spoken of in other hymns as Navagwas and Dashagwas, and that which is found by entering the cow-pens of the Panis in the cave of the hill is not the stolen wealth of the Aryans, but “the sun dwelling in the darkness.”

Therefore it is established beyond question that the cows of the Veda, the cows of the Panis, the cows which are stolen, fought for, pursued, recovered, the cows which are desired by the Rishis, the cows which are won by the hymn and the sacrifice, by the blazing fire and the god-increasing verse and the god-intoxicating Soma, are symbolic cows, are the cows of Light, are, in the other and inner Vedic sense of the words *go*, *usrā*, *usrīyā*, the shining ones, the radiances, the herds of the Sun, the luminous forms of the Dawn. By this inevitable conclusion the corner-stone of the Vedic interpretation is securely founded far above the gross materialism of a barbarous worship and the Veda reveals itself as a symbolic scripture, a sacred allegory whether of Sun-worship and Dawn-worship or of the cult of a higher and inner light, of the true Sun, *satyam sūryam*, that dwells concealed in the darkness of our ignorance, hidden

as the child of the Bird, the divine Hansa, in the infinite rock of this material existence, *anante antar aśmani* (I. 130-3.)

Although in this chapter I have confined myself with some rigidity to the evidence that the cows are the light of the sun hid in the darkness, yet their connection with the light of Truth and the sun of Knowledge has already shown itself in one or two of the verses cited. We shall see that when we examine, not separate verses, but whole passages of these Angirasa hymns the hint thus given develops into a clear certainty. But first we must cast a glance at these Angirasa Rishis and at the creatures of the cave, the friends of darkness from whom they recover the luminous herds and the lost Sun,—the enigmatic Panis.

THE TRIUNE DIVINE

(A Vision during World War II)

FIRST I saw before me our Mother, the individualised embodied form of the Divine Mother, kneeling on the ground. She was sad because of the suffering in the world. It seemed as if the misery of the whole world was in her, and she was praying that it be worked out in herself and the world be relieved of it. Beside her sat in an absolute trance-like concentration the Universal Mother. She was clothed in pure white.

A few seconds later, I saw also the third form of our Mother, the transcendental Mother appearing on something that looked like a balcony. She had taken human form and features; only she was much bigger in size. She looked vast and all-pervading. The Supreme Consciousness was flowing even from her body. First she looked at me,—I was standing in a corner unseen by the individual and the universal Mothers,—and then just below at the two forms of her own self. The most important thing in the vision was the mysterious or the divinely significant smile she gave me while looking at the individual and the universal forms. It seemed to say: I am here behind them both and, though the world is afflicted with all sorts of adverse things, it will be saved.

A SADHAKA

THE VIGILANT LOTUS-FACE

WHEN you turn your eyes to the left upon your entrance into the Meditation Hall, what strikes you with an immediate attracting force is a strong beautiful staring Face encased within the lotus-space of the glass-lined symbol of Sri Aurobindo. You feel, as it were, transfixed on the spot. You begin to gaze and adore; you also begin to understand, as though you were let into the secret of some mystery, and slowly to yourself—to a corresponding eternally waking, watching, leading Power within you—you begin to speak: This is the compassionate Face of sovereign might and beauty, this is the great Master, the invisible Bodyguard that keeps eternal vigil here and wherever I am.

O Face divine, do we follow Thee well? do we understand thy message clearly? and do we interpret, work it out properly? have we kept the flame of Thy Light burning steadily in our heart? is our aspiration for the unprecedented Advent intense? is our hold on the unshakable Peace and Delight firm and fast? are we, in brief, worthy of Thee in all respects, for all of Thy purposes?

Whether we are yet worthy or not, Thy vigil, we know for certain, will keep us on the Sunlit Path, undeflected. Even if some of us fall away, losing patience and faith and hope, and a lot of us are fully spent in getting across and on the Way, the victory Thou hast sought, the Mother-Force, the Divine Presence Thou hast given us will ultimately dazzle all by the new, unheard-of wealth and beauty and joy Thou art bringing upon our earth.

There is full certitude in every inch of Thy simple, sweet Face. There is triumph written on Thy smooth brow and a flaming glory in Thy shining eyes. There is inescapable watchfulness flowing, outgoing from Thee all round. Eternal Watchman, sure Marksman, no weakness of ours, not a jot of our darkness, not an inch of our imperfection will be left unobserved, unmended and unfortified by Thy iron massive Will. Unless we reach the very peak of perfection, Thy self-imposed, unwearied, unsleeping vigilance will drive us on and on, without any slackness, without any shrinking.

Thy living Face is an unfailing help, a sure guide, a rock of strength to us. Whenever we feel faint, we have but to look up to Thee and imbibe the firm outline of Thy immortal image and all becomes a fresh adventure, an invigorating game, a delightful occupation once again.

O beloved Leader, we know we have yet to go a long way, we have yet to keep a close relentless watch upon ourselves, we have to fight out the battle

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to the last, change the tiniest bit of our nature to perfection, offer the whole of ourselves from top to bottom for Thy moulding—but the fact that Thou, the very supreme Divine Being, art our leader is itself the guarantee that complete success is ours; we are destined to be immortal. There is no failure in our fight, no loss in our journey; we shall carry the whole earth with us. It is a task, a fight, a journey none had seen, none had heard of in the past ages, and alas! very few understand it even now; yet it is but a continuation of the vision and effort of our ancient sages and seers, dreamers and men of action. But the future that will bloom forth shall bring in a glory and a richness, exceeding even the highest dreamings of the past and the present. Therein lies the chief purpose as also the rare glory of Thy ceaseless vigilance, O sweet, ever-by-our-side-standing Master.

Often have I felt, sitting under the silent graces of this symbol Supramental, as if I were in some sort of a transforming trance and saw a sweet vision arise before me and knew:

Nothing will fail this silent Emperor, none will refuse or long oppose his unfolding, irresistible Light that unerringly expands every second of the hour; and He will see ere long the vast ocean of humanity along with the wavy masses of earthly powers, big and small, gathered round Him in one single tremendous outflow of conscious, illumined waters of a richly-patterned unity and oneness. How sweet will be that great conglomeration, that vast concord! What an unfailling flood of a rare diamond flame will shine upon this dark, obscure planet! What glorious hymns of love and adoration will fill the upper and lower hemispheres! What a marvellous new world of confident faces and purposeful, delight-enriched living, what a huge edifice of peace and understanding, what a mighty commonwealth of new gods and consciousnesses, united for ever in a great magnificent purpose will be here actually before us! “Victory to the Divine Mother” will no longer be on the lips alone but lived, attained in every moment and movement of our life.

SREEKRISHNA PRASAD

A CALL

THROUGH a high-poised tranquillity came a call
And like a startled bird I woke from sleep;
The earth lay still within her rocky wall
Unmoved by the murmur of the luminous Deep.

I followed a silver path that wandered on
Along a narrow tract of tortuous mind
And reached a mansion on the edge of Dawn
Leaving the lonely tread of Time behind.

Long did I wait before the hidden door
Opened drawn back by some invisible hand;
My beating heart felt in its secret core
A certitude I could not understand.

I passed through a large hall empty and old,
But it was thronged with lustrous memories
That stirred within my listening spirit gold
Remembrances of lost eternities.

The frozen stillness heaved a weary sigh
Called by my entrance back to life again,
Its silence troubled with a sudden cry
Which my heart echoed with its voice of pain.

I saw through a closed door a gleam of light,
My breath was swayed with rhythms of hope and fear,
As if I stood on the brink of the Infinite
And its creative cadence I could hear.

NIRODBARAN

NEW ROADS

(Book V)

THE GRAND EMERGENCE

NIGHT held a quiver of expectancy
As if a hidden fragrance filled the air
And quickened every living thing to Life.
Awaiting some impending goddess step,
Earth cradled the stars in the bosom of the Night
And offered to the unknown her ocean breast
Which heaved a sigh of waking to the moon.
Earth and the sleeping trees felt imminent, near,
The first faint breath of the approaching Dawn.
Night and the waiting stars trembled the pools
Into remembrance of the coming Day.
And Time turned back upon the sleeping hours
As if to take a mightier breath to live
For some bright effort new to earth and man,
Some new emergence now to be disclosed
Between the quivering edge of Night and Day.
There was a hush in every beating heart;
A silence grew among the aspiring few
Who felt the future dawns of Light draw near.
Each common act became a point of light
Which led to regions of a vaster love.
Each glance of inward recognition led
To worlds of beauty felt as well as seen
Within the cosmos of the living man.
The very air grew silent, mute and still
The birds and creatures of the listening trees.
All was a wonder-moment drawing close
The heavens to the waiting earth below.
All was a warning kiss on Nature's brow,
Each moment a thrill of glad expectancy.

NEW ROADS

To some these moments were a mystic sign
Previsioning the Greater Day to come;
But others felt the Dawn itself was near
And ran towards the heights to greet the Sun
Only to find the brilliant Night below
Reflected in the sleeping valley floor.
There in the waters of the slumbering earth
Shone forth the stars to mock the sky above:
All was the Night—below, above, around.
All was in slumber still behind a veil.
Yet from the light of every planet-gleam,
From every star-glint on its cosmic way,
There shone a warning ray to earth and men:
“The Hour has come! the Soul is now awake
To a New Emergence from the Fields of Light!”

NORMAN DOWSETT

ARJAVA (J. A. CHADWICK)

HIS POETIC INSPIRATION AND ART

THE most famous work of that prominent philosophical writer, C. D. Broad, *Mind and Its Place in Nature*, is inscribed to J. A. Chadwick. Although this inscription is enough to hint to us the esteem in which, even as a young man, that student of Philosophy and Mathematical Logic was held, we can never guess from it that he deserves an essay which might well be entitled *Chadwick and His Place in the World*. For it is not as a philosopher or mathematical logician that he has become significant, nor was it at Cambridge that he did so. Only after leaving Trinity College to sail to India and after throwing up a professorship at an educational institution at Lucknow he suddenly flowered into a poet of the first quality. What brought about the flowering was his stay in Sri Aurobindo's Ashram of Yoga at Pondicherry. There, after a short spell, he made one of a group of poets writing in English whom, during the 1930's, Sri Aurobindo carried with a most acute and intimate care, both analytic and constructive, towards the Ideal of a perfect mystical and spiritual expression.

As we might expect of a mind trained to careful intellectuality, Chadwick—or Arjava, as he came to be known from the name Arjavananda given him by Sri Aurobindo—did not achieve closeness to the Ideal through a lavish spontaneity whose very breath is song. A deliberate self-critical compact perfection belonged to him. Instead of taking the Kingdom of Heaven by a stormy frontal assault, he laid slow siege to it and won its treasures by patient compulsion—a victory no less complete though differing in plan and technique.

Here too is a superb energy of imagination expended not so much in a royal diffusion as in concentrated exquisiteness or magnificence. We feel, to quote the poet's own words, "a chaos-ending chisel-smite" in each work—a faultless statue emerges in which every line and curve has been traced by an inspired precision. Naturally the result is less prolific, but a greater stress is brought to bear upon the understanding, a stress which produces a peculiar intensity of rapture packed with haloed mysteries, so to speak,—unfamiliar twilights, symbolic enchantments, hieratic seclusions—and yet no narrowness in the ultimate revelation made: the sole difficulty lies in turning the key which

throws the esoteric doors wide open into vista on shining vista of heights and depths.

It is an art which may be a little baffling at first, but for those who can absorb its strange atmosphere there awaits a reward often of a beauty which takes one's breath away by its magic spells or by its grave amplitudes of spirituality. The style is highly original with unexpected turns that are vividly forceful and a power of pregnant construction armed with a genius for rhythmical innovation is everywhere manifest—as in that finely as well as incisively imaged poem called *Communication*:

Ebbing and waning of joy, the day estranged:
Here, petalled evening droops;
Below sky-rim the petals have drifted—all is changed

To a dim listless stalk where Twilight stoops
Horizonward; and then
The black scorpion, Night, lifts claws of loneliness and loops

The zenith and all the sky
(Its venomèd blackness is in the life-blood of men).
...O then, love-armèd cry,

Bring with compulsive dream the moon's foreglow
Over the difficult edge
Of being, that eastward-straining hopes may know

Lit pearl of untarrying pledge,—
Counsel, and laughter, and undissembling eyes.
Time-tameless thought shall dredge

Wide welcome for the glimpsed sail of moonrise,
The ship of understanding and conjoinèd wills,
The keel of trust from far-off friendly skies.

Remarkable as this poem is, with its subtle variations of tempo and appositely manipulated expressive drive which promise a capacity for effective blank verse if ever the poet were to be inspired in that direction, Arjava's most majestic work seems to be those flights where bursts upon the gaze an imaginative colour widening every moment into an "inscape" of high philosophy charged with the profoundest spiritual illumination. A striking instance is *Moksha*:

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As one who saunters on the seabanks in a wilderness of day
Is dazzled by the sunshot marge and rippling counterchange
Of wavebeams and an eagerhood of quivering wings that range—
Grey on the sky's rim,—white on the foam-pathway,—

Each man is wildered myriadly by oversight and surface tone
Engirdling soul with clamour, by this fragmentary mood,
This patter of Time's marring steps across the solitude
Of Truth's abidingness, Self-Blissful and Alone.

But when eastward-streaming shadows bring the hush of eventide
The wave-lapped sun can wield again his glory of hence-going
And furnish by his lowlihead vast dreams of heaven-knowing—
A golden wave-way to the One where Beauty's archetypes abide.

One can see how deftly the fourteener can be modulated by one who is conscious of the possibility it offers of many internal tones—swirl and stream and surge playing significant roles within the cumulative dignity of the whole movement. The two alexandrines in the above quotation are very suggestive also—the fourth line with its truncated first foot and its inverted accent in the fourth produces by the resultant emphasis on “grey” and “white” just the changeful bewildering effect which is sought to be conveyed by the sense of the stanza; while the eighth line, marking a contrast to the three longer ones preceding it, is eloquent of the self-compactness and isolation attributed therein to Truth. In a similar way the comparative lengthening out of the finale seems to indicate the triumphant roll of the meaning like a lustrous billow towards some immutable mystery beyond the mind's horizon. All the three stanzas are consummately inspired art, and no greater praise is possible than that the middle—particularly in its second half—might well be one of the supreme moments of the Upanishads, a *Mantra*.

The large and lofty utterance met with in the major Upanishads carrying with it an echo as of some rhythm infinitely vibrating out of a stupendous Unknowable is indeed a *rara avis* in the atmosphere of the English language. Hardly any recent poet of the British Isles writing with a marked mystical *penchant* shows even a glimmer of it: AE has filled his verse with a wonderful simplicity of soul-vision, Yeats of the earlier phase brings a poignancy dipped in secret wells of faery colour, Cousins often gives his song an exquisite touch of inward meditation, but their best work, whatever its aesthetic perfection, falls short of the eagle-height of spiritual quality. Not the substance by itself confers that pure poetic zenith: what is necessary is a profound intonation vitally one

ARJAVA (J. A. CHADWICK)

with substance and language, and Arjava at his finest reflects something of this triune intensity because his English mind has more consistently steeped itself in Yoga and caught a breath from the luminous levels of Sri Aurobindo.

If we wish to find among English-speaking poets a peer to that pair of lines ending with the full yet far-away gong of the epithet "alone" we shall have to pick out from Wordsworth his noblest music. Curiously enough the verses that equal them are just the two that also end with the same epithet's long rounded "o" and bell-like consonance—the lines on Newton's face in the bust at Cambridge:

The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

And here it may be significant to mention that the word "alone" is not confined to Wordsworth's and Arjava's Upanishadic pictures. It seems to have some innate affinity with peak utterance of the Spirit, for it crowns too one of Sri Aurobindo's own poetic apocalypses, a passage visioning the very state hinted by Arjava:

Across a void retreating sky he glimpsed
Through a last glimmer and drift of vanishing stars
The superconscient realms of motionless peace
Where judgment ceases and the word is mute
And the Unconceived lies pathless and alone.

To continue with Arjava: he is not only a spiritual poet but an occult one. And in his occult sensibility too he strikes a new note. His Unicorn—

Unicorn uncreated,
Time may grow tired, not you!
For changes of rhythm are dated
By the clang of your topaz shoe—

and his Phoenix—

Tranquil the phoenix poise of golden-crested
Fleece-white and sorrowless
Head of the undefeated vision who had nested
Where on Time's moments looms the Everlivingness—

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are neither of them merely traditional figures; they are a fresh contribution to symbolic sight. The white Unicorn with its single pointed projection on the head seems to be a symbol of purity and of faithfulness to a spiritual purpose, while the golden yellow of the topaz is emblematic of some spiritual principle behind manifested life in the recurrences as well as variations of Time's movement. The Phoenix appears to stand for a power of some solar altitude of divine Truth, a power missioned to renew in the heart of Time the flame of aspiration towards the unquenchable and imperturbable luminosity above that has to be caught and intimately felt in Time's flux. But the achievement of Arjuna's symbolic poetry is the living body the spiritual-occult significances acquire in a verse where vision, word and rhythm are organically knit together. It is this that constitutes the revelatory originality of his Symbolism.

Symbolic sight again, blending now the outer scene with an inner occult-spiritual lucidity of shape and significance, casts its spell on us in that short piece called *Unveering Light*:

Across unmoving lake
A mirror-theme
Of swans with white wings take
Their endless dream.

Poise-perfect is the set
Of lunar-bright
Pinions of trance where silence met
Unveering light.

The swan is an old symbol of the human soul as a representative of the immaculate Eternal. But here it is given a specially revelatory attitude. The compound adjective "lunar-bright" immediately refers our imagination from the embodied soul to some Beyond of sheer Bliss. And the relationship indicated between the bird and the lake suggests a unison between the soul and its environing nature. Here is a double reception of the transcendent beauty and purity—the soul realising its divine origin not only by an in-look towards the heavenly height but also by an out-look upon the natural elements amongst which it lives with the ideal of progressively manifesting the supreme light in the changeful character of earth's limited existence. That existence is here glimpsed in a transformed moment of tranquillity and made one substance as it were with the soul's self-vision of its own enraptured being—and the whole double identity is caught by the poet's eye in a tranced inner dimension where the perfection that is to be accomplished in Time waits full-formed in an immutable *Nunc Stans*, an ever-standing Now of Eternity.

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In the pure occult also, as distinguished from the spiritual or the spiritual-occult,—the pure occult of the midworlds behind us where a whole vast life of subjective-objective motifs, beautiful or bewildering, fantastic or formidable proceeds on its way, pulling various strings of our own psychology—there too Arjava captures a new note. Sri Aurobindo has contrasted Walter de la Mare's *Listeners* with Arjava's *Totalitarian*, not as a disclosure of the spiritual with that of the occult but rather as the occult's superficial glimpse with its profound sight. De la Mare's is a poem of fanciful hauntedness enveloping earthly objects with a faint ghostly atmosphere—Arjava's carries a direct focussing of realities clean beyond earth, a vivid vision powerfully evocative of the sheer occult. Not only the actions described have entirely different gestures: the very sceneries differ though apparently similar. Take de la Mare's

...the faint moonbeams on the dark stair
That goes down to the empty hall

and his

...the dark turf 'neath the starred and leafy sky.

Delicately imitative, this, of an occult landscape, but how stark and realistic a projection of some "terrible elsewhere" are Arjava's

...the empty eerie courtyard
With no name

or

...a crescent moon swung wanly
White as curd.

And as the poems proceed, de la Mare goes on increasing his exquisite ghostliness with strange movements whose meaning is elusive, while Arjava presses home to a weirdly dynamic symbol of a soul-attitude struck by the human in accord with some drama of hell's tyranny and murderous monotony. Here is de la Mare's ending:

Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward
When the plunging hoofs were gone—

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and this is how Arjava recounts how his “traveller”, feeling frantic after having flashed his single swordblade in a night where none resisted,

Hurled his weapon through the gloaming,
Took no aim;
Saw his likenesses around him
Do the same:
Viewed a thousand swordless figures
Like his own—
Then first knew in that cold starlight
Hell, alone.

De la Mare’s poetry is undeniably fine in a daintily phantasmal vein, but it is ever so far from Arjava’s dreadful revelation of an occult depth reaching its climax with the gripping resonance once more of that adjective about whose poetic suggestiveness we have already remarked.

Perhaps something of this kind of dreadful revelation dealing with the soul’s own recesses is to be found in a few verses of that eccentric little genius Emily Dickinson, where she emphasises the individual’s solitary confrontation of himself in some spectral profundity of consciousness. She lacks Arjava’s direct occult sight and consummate symbolic art, but she has an occult feel by means of an inward-straining thought and a terse elliptic style adding to the psychological eeriness:

One need not be a chamber to be haunted,
One need not be a house;
The brain has corridors surpassing
Material place.

Far safer, of a midnight meeting
External ghost,
Than an interior confronting
That whiter host.

Far safer through an Abbey gallop,
The stones achase,
Than, moonless, one’s own self encounter
In lonesome place...

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Even when a scene of external earth-nature is clearly recognisable, Arjava always throws a visionary hue upon it, calling up immediately a soul-reality: as in that atmospheric snatch, half Yeatsian half de la Maresque—

Drowsy pinions whitely winging
Smoulder dimly past the strand—

or in those lines that end with a most sensitive vibration from the depths of the Godward-turned psyche—

...the eve
Has limned a trance upon the air,
A swirl of sunset on the stream,
An ecstasy of quivering bells that seem
Born from the heart of prayer.

But Arjava is not only depth-suggestive; he has many moments that burst upon us with amplitude and power. Instead of a sensitive psychic vibration, indirect in its description of the physical stars twinkling as though tinkling, he can look straight at the constellated firmament and give us an in-feeling of it in a line where the entirely monosyllabic pentameter with its various dispositions of similar or dissimilar vowels and consonants and with its meaningful massings of stress makes a most effective conjuration:

You stars that span with strength long leagues of space.

Or else, with less direct power but equally direct communication of a vast experience-value, we have the same starry phenomenon:

To gaze and gaze upon the fire-strewn sky
Until the hush of heaven loom within.

Here there is a breath of what Sri Aurobindo has called overhead rhythm. This rhythm, winging down as if from some boundlessness above the brain-clamped mind, tends in Arjava to touch at times the very summit. And the Upanishadic magnificence of a poetic gesture like the following apostrophe to the transcendent divine Force which he visions as drawing the quintessence of a triple Absolute of Being, Consciousness, Delight, and reigning from on high over the mental plane like a Sun-kingdom of Knowledge, is, like those verses about Truth's solitude that is utterly withdrawn from the mind's "fragmentary mood", the most memorable of Arjava's victories:

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Unsullied wisdom of gold which was thrice refined,
Shine in the clear space of holy noon
On all the upland hollows of the mind:
May every shadow-harboured thought be strewn
With solar vastness and compelled
To feel all fear and all self-limits quelled.

Of course, the fact that a poet seizes or at least neighbours the *Mantra* does not mean that he is so filled with a supreme spirituality that he can never drop to a lower level of utterance. Neither must we expect all his speech on that level to be one tissue of originality. In Arjava we may trace, except when he is at his best, certain general influences from poets preceding or contemporary. The Nature-poems, startlingly fresh though are as a whole, share in some details the vocabulary of Edmund Blunden's inspired pastoralism enamoured of the English countryside. The magic vision within many verses casts our mind back to Yeats's Celticism and here and there is a drift of dreamy fancifulness not very far removed from Walter de la Mare's. Even on some occasions the colouring shows a touch of the minutely marking as well as luxurious painter eye of the young Tennyson, and not infrequently the phrasing bears an aspect of traditional poeticism from Spenser down to William Watson, which especially the rebellious modernist ear may dub wearying. In a semi-modernist manner we get at a few moments an affinity to Gerard Manley Hopkins. But if we look deeper and hear more intently we realise that in the echo-semblances themselves a novel genius runs to create a general pattern of mind which is sheer Arjava and that an artistic flair lends by vigorous compactness or airy suggestiveness originality even of language to the *ensemble* and makes almost every stanza if not every line sparkle in at least one place with pure dew on whatever petals may have grown from the past or have reflected contemporary burgeonings. This should restrain the critic from pronouncing anything to be stale or even merely traditional.

Further, we must remember that Arjava is not confined to old forms of verse. He is perfectly aware of recent tendencies and can exploit the possibilities of new forms without losing the true poetic quality. Thus he has several experiments in free verse, each an artistic success, and at times he not only works out the substance revelatorily in perfect language and rhythm but also brings superb depth and energy:

A green-grey twilight hush in the ageless forest,
After the immense canopy of boughs

Has strained all glare and vivid colours from the sunlight.
Plinths of tree and stems of giant creeper rise up from the floor of
dimness

To the full height of these grey spaces
In a cathedral calm.
A plashy thud of some hard-rinded fruit
Ripples momentarily the tapestries of hush.

The greyness and the quiet are over all, a many-fathomed covering of
ocean mystery.

The turbulence of harsh atomic being,
Those hard and garish colours of the upper day
Are no more;
And only a faint dissolving line, a bubble's membrane holds
Frontiers of existence and not-being.

We may apply to this the remarks made by Sri Aurobindo about another splendid performance in free verse: "Its rhythmic achievement solves entirely the problem of free verse. The object of free verse is to find a rhythm in which one can dispense with rhyme and the limitations of a fixed metre and yet have a poetic rhythm, not either a flat or an elevated prose rhythm cut up into lengths. I think this poem shows how it can be done. There is a true poetic rhythm, even a metrical beat, but without any fixity, pliant and varying with the curve or sweep of the thought and carrying admirably its perfect poetic expression." We may also note here, in passing, the phrases: "a plashy thud" and "a bubble's membrane". They do not sound quite poetic in the old style of verse-writing. But they are entirely in place not merely in free verse but also in the type of work turned out by Arjava in all forms, and they constantly mix a sort of modernism with his usual avoidance of the modernist degradation of poetry. They are intrinsic to his aim, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out at the very commencement of Arjava's poetic career when an objection was raised by a reader to the use of the phrase: "bobbing globelets". Sri Aurobindo wrote: "I entirely dispute the legitimacy of the comment. It is based on a conventional objection to undignified and therefore presumably unpoetic words and images—an objection which has value only when the effect is uncouth or trivial, but cannot be accepted otherwise as a valid rule. Obviously, it might be difficult to bring in 'bobbing' in an epic or other high style, although I suppose Milton would have managed it and one remembers the famous controversy about Hugo's '*mouchoir*'. But in poetry of a mystic (occult or spiritual) kind this does not count. The aim is to bring up a vivid suggestion of the thing seen and some

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significance of the form, movement etc. through which one can get at the life behind and its meaning; the adjective here serves its purpose very well as a touch in the picture and no other could have been as true and living or given as well the precise movement needed."

Modern-sounding or traditional-seeming, Arjava's artistic technique is nearly always faultless, and it is original by more than a living sense of word-value and rhythm-value reinforcing thought and vision: there is the originality of the thought and the vision themselves. And this originality is of a rare order by being a mysticism which is not merely intellectual or emotional but comes of a genuine intuitive hold on hidden domains. Even when the symbols chosen are old ones, verging on the well-worn, he can transmute everything into a masterpiece. Who has not heard of the shell that brings from its whorl the long boom of breakers? And has not Swinburne familiarised us to easy enthusiasms like "the sea, my mother," and "my mother the sea"? But take now Arjava's:

Out of an infinite ocean
Time arose;
By his shore with a thunderous motion
That Splendour flows.

Here is one shell of Its bringing,
Cast on the beach;
Hold it and hark to the singing,—
Eternity speech.

Flotsam and jetsam of Oneness
Unbaffled and free,
Spurring Time to remember his sonhood,
His mother—the Sea.

With a godlike ease the whole depth of the poetic significance of sea-born land and stray sea-cast shell is plumbed and a power of mystical sight creates a little marvel of profound word and rhythm out of what seem almost nursery-rhyme properties. In view of this power, whether exercised with striking novelty or within a known symbology, Arjava's art in even its most traditional appearance must be distinguished as a new element at play in poetic literature, a pioneering triumph of one kind in what Sri Aurobindo has designated as "Future Poetry". And this triumph which springs from a heart of spiritual feeling attuned to an inmost Presence never so permanent and piercing in any English poet and approached in intensity by perhaps none else than Shelley and AE, is not a matter

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of a few isolated poems. In piece after piece that Presence makes Arjava a masterful discloser of mystical songscapes. We should hardly exaggerate in saying that it leads his poetry to overtop in sustained quality the production of all his English contemporaries and to hold a promise of greatness rendering his premature death a tragedy whose true significance can be adequately uttered only by a fineness of word comparable to his own, whether the fineness quicken the imagination by a sober felicity as in

Boles of strength with that whisper of blessing,

or by a rhapsodical beauty as in

Lustrously pale like the starlight when the air has been washed by the rain,

or with a happy audacity as in

Gleam and bend cloud-centaurs from afar
Moon-bow that is aiming, silver-taut,
Arrows made of silence at a star,

or with a vividly strange suggestiveness as in

Only a moon-pale ledge of rock,
Lapped by that sullen waste
Of Limbo-drift where a shadowy flock
Of dream birds spaced

In the unquiet wideness of their loneliness
Are as that sky-line aimlessly empty of good—

or with an exceedingly exquisite “moon-prompted” aspiration—

Power and immaculate Glory
Whom outward eyes may greet—
In this hour might the inward quicken,
Cloudlessly meet
Mother and Beauty Divine—

or with an august intuitiveness coupled with an inmost poignancy, setting Shiva before us—

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Aimless yet knowing each goal,—
As unfrontiered Space
Moves not at all,
But centres in each place
One instant effortless control;
Or as the pity finds Thy face
When on Thy shrine the tears and bel-leaves fall,

or with a profound ingenuity of “counterchanged” sense-perceptions spiritualised, as in

Timid clamour-pomps we see
Whose mingled sound
Leave naked yet the limbs of earthly faring:
While all around
The undraped silences go Selfward, wearing
Form’s ecstasy—

or with a powerful insight symboling the seer-trance by a “rock-hewn cavern” open to unrealised spiritual possibilities, as in

So sleep the strong and keep their guarded peace,
Whilst gracious dreams from aisles of future Time
Lean past the bars of Being, whisper their secret word,
Yearn to be made rock...Inlapidate Sublime—

or with a fusion of almost all the varieties exemplified above of poetic imaged speech in a grand attitude of keenly felt self-dedication to the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo—

Precarious boat that brought me to this strand
Shall feed flame-pinnacles from stem to stern,
Till not one rib my backward glance can find—
Down to the very keelson they shall burn.

Now to the unreal sea-line I would no more yearn;
Fain to touch with feet an unimagined land...
The gates of false glamour have closed behind;
There is no return.

K. D. SETHNA

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

(To the Children of the Ashram)

LITERATURE AND READING

Q. In The Great Secret the "writer" is made to say: "The word is sufficiently immaterial to be in contact with subtle things, forces and vibrations, principles and ideas." What is the meaning here?

My children, let me tell you, to begin with, that this is literature. So one should not ask for explanations. It is a literary way of speaking, it should be understood in a literary way. It is a literary description of the word; it is very exact, but it is literary. And I cannot make literature about literature. You must have a taste for forms, for the graceful manner of saying things, a little unusual, not too banal; but it is just one way, the way of speaking which has charm. Literature is all in the way of speaking. You catch what you can from behind. If you are rightly open to the literary sense, then naturally it evokes for you the thing; but it cannot be explained. It is a means of evocation which corresponds also to music. Surely one can analyse literature and see how the sentence is built, but this is as if one changed a human being into a skeleton. A skeleton is not pretty and the same holds here. If in music you make counterpoint and if this note ought to lead necessarily to that and one group of notes necessarily to another, you spoil music also, you make a skeleton out of music. That is hardly interesting.

These things have to be felt with a sense corresponding to them, the charm of a phrase with the literary sense: you must catch the harmony of the words and what it evokes. Is it not that in each of the figures set up in *The Great Secret* we have a description of people who have arrived at the maximum of human possibility? It is evident that the "writer" in question is a very great one, the best that can be. Well, he has come so far and then he is struck aware that it

was all hollow and that he has missed the essence. And for all there will be the same experience.

The exceptional writer has now reached the psychological moment where he can waken to another kind of consciousness, a higher consciousness. And as regards all the description he gives, it is truly the description of a maximum of human possibilities: he does not dully see things just as they are, he sees the spirit that is behind them, he communes with it, tries to express it and does give it expression—he has gone as far as a human consciousness can go. Then he finds himself in front of a precipice. How is one to pass to the other side? Everything is like that, isn't it? We shall have to repeat the same thing each time. That's all.

Q. Can literature help us to progress?

It can help you to become more intelligent, to understand things better, to acquire the sense of literary forms, to cultivate taste, to know how to choose between the good and the bad way of saying a thing; it can enrich your mind.

There are many different kinds of progress. And if you wish to progress integrally, you must progress in all the different directions. Here in literature we have at the same time an intellectual progression and an artistic, the two join hands: one plays with ideas, is capable of understanding them, sorting them, organising them and simultaneously one plays with the form of these ideas, the manner of uttering them, the way of presenting them and making them intelligible.

Q. The literature we read—history, fiction etc.—has very often a substance that lowers our consciousness. It is not altogether possible to leave aside the matter and read only from the view-point of literary value.

Is it not true that there is little excuse to read certain novels except that they are remarkably written and that you wish to learn a language—either your own language or another which you want to study? Well, you can read no matter what, provided it is well-written. It is not what is said that is interesting, but the manner of saying it. And the right manner of reading is precisely to busy oneself only with the manner of saying and not with what is said: the latter is without interest. For example, in a book there are always descriptions: one sees how the describing has been done and how the author has sought to choose words to express his theme. As for the ideas, it is the same: how he has sought to make his characters talk: no interest in the things they say but in how they do

so. If one takes certain books, like books of study, just to understand how sentences are to be well constructed and things are to be said as they should, then because these books are expertly written, the story in them has not much importance. But if one sets out to read books for the sake of the story they tell, one has to be strict and not catch hold of what would obscure the consciousness, because it would be a waste of time, worse than a waste. There are also vulgar stories told in a vulgar way—here the question does not even arise. Such things one should never touch. They, however, are current coin circulating everywhere, especially in our age because processes have been invented to print cheaply, to make pictures cheaply and all the countries are deluged with literature that is worthless, ill-written, ill-conceived and expresses vulgarities and stupefies you with vulgar notions and spoils completely your taste by vulgar images. All this has happened because from the point of view of production we have succeeded in making extremely cheap things, what are called editions “accessible to all”. But since the makers of such editions aim not at all either at educating or at promoting progress—far indeed from that, for they hope on the contrary that one will never progress, never advance enough to refuse to buy their wares—the intention of these people is to make money out of those who read their literature, and the more their stuff sells the better it is for them. Their stuff can be horrible but it is very good if it sells well. It is the same state of affairs with art, the same with music, the same with the drama.

The latest scientific discoveries applied to life have thrown open the gate to all sorts of things which were reserved formerly for the intellectual or artistic *élite*; and in order to legitimise their effort and to profit by their work these people have brought out matter which is the most saleable—that is to say, matter most low, most commonplace, most vulgar, the easiest to understand and demanding no exertion, no education. And the whole world is swamped by it to such an extent that when somebody writes a good book or makes a fine play, there is nowhere any place for him: every place has been taken up by the worthless literature. Naturally there are sensitive people who try to react against all this, but their job is difficult. The foremost need is to drive away from this world the mercantile spirit. Driving it away will take time. Some signs are there that perhaps it is less respected now than before. There was a time when one was a criminal if one did not bustle about, and whoever had the audacity to spend his capital, even for very good causes, was considered fit for a madhouse. It is a little better at present, but we are still pretty far from the right situation; there is still the golden calf lording it over the world: before it is thrown out by the earth some time has yet to pass, I fear. It has so corrupted the mind of people that it is for them the standard for everything. In America, when one speaks of anybody, one says: “He—oh he’s worth one

million dollars!" That is the greatest compliment he can be paid. One asks: "Do you know this man? What is he?"—"Oh, he is worth a hundred thousand dollars", "he is worth five hundred thousand dollars"—and this means that he has a position which brings him that sum. Is he intelligent, is he stupid? What he is has no kind of importance. Is he a good man or a bad one? This too matters no jot. Is he rich or poor? If he is rich, ah then I should like to know him! He is poor—then I will have nothing to do with him. Naturally, America is a young country, so its ways are those of a child, but of a child brought up badly enough. And the old countries have become too old and they cannot any longer react, they get giddy in the head and they ask if, after all, this youthfulness is not right. It is all like that. The world is very sick.

Q. How should we select our books?

It would be preferable to ask somebody who knows. If you ask somebody who, at least, has the taste and the literary knowledge, you will not fall into reading ill-written books. Now if you wish to have reading-matter which would help you from the spiritual point of view, that is another question and you must ask somebody who has a spiritual realisation to help you. There are—don't you see?—two lines that are very different. They can converge because you can make them converge; but they are indeed different. One is of a perpetual choice, choice not only of what you read but of what you do, what you think, all your activities: it is a question of doing only that which can help you on the spiritual path; this need not be too narrow or limited, but it ought to be on a plane that is a little higher than the ordinary life, and with a concentration of will and aspiration which do not permit one to stray from the path, to swing to right or left uselessly. It is austere, it is difficult to adopt when you are very young, because there is the impression that the instrument which one is has not sufficiently developed, is not rich enough to let itself remain what it is, instead of enlarging or progressing. Hence, in general, except for the very few, it comes later, after a certain development of life. The other path is that of a development as complete, as integral as possible of all human faculties, of all that one carries in oneself, of all one's possibilities—than a fanning out as widely as possible in all directions, in order to fill the consciousness with all human capacities, to know the world and life and men and their work as it is at present, to make a base vast and rich for the future ascension.

Generally, this is what we expect of children, except for the altogether rare child who brings a psychic being which has already gone through all the experiences before getting embodied this time and which has no longer any need of experiences and which wishes only to realise the Divine and live out

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the Divine. Such a case, of course, is one in a million. Otherwise, up to a certain age, as long as you are young, it is good to develop, to unfold as much as you can in every sense, to draw out of your self all that it contains of potentialities, in order to make of them things expressed, conscious, active, which would provide a foundation solid enough for the ascension.

That is why one should learn, love to learn, always learn—but not waste time in getting filled with or bringing forth useless stuff. All should be for that sole end—to enrich your possibilities, develop those that you have, acquire new ones and become a human being as complete, as perfect as you can. This implies that even along this line it is necessary to be serious, not just to pass time merely because one is here and to fritter it away to the utmost because some how it must be gone through. What is the attitude of men in general? They come into this life for they know not what; they know they have a certain number of years to live but not why it should be so; they are aware they will have to go from here since the whole world does the same, yet they have no idea of the reason for doing it. And, further, for most of the time they are bored, because they have nothing in them, their beings are empty, and there is nothing more boring than to be empty; and then they seek to fill up the void by distracting themselves, they make themselves quite useless, and when they reach the end they have squandered away their whole existence, all their possibilities—and all is lost. Go and catch hold of a thousand persons: there will be at least nine hundred and ninety who are in this situation. They find that they are born in one set of circumstances or another and they try to pass their time as best they can, to get bored also as little as they can, to suffer the least they can, to amuse themselves to the utmost; and all is dull, tame, fruitless, stupid and absolutely ineffective. They do not even think, they do not even ask: “But after all why am I here? why is there an earth? Why are there men? Why is it that I am alive?” No, all this is entirely uninteresting to them. The sole thing they are interested in is to try to eat well, get amused enough, find good distraction, marry successfully, have nice children, make a lot of money and secure all the advantages they can have from the point of view of desires, and especially, most especially, not think, not reflect, not pose problems, not get bored, and then pull through like that without too much of a catastrophe. Well, that's the general condition. That's what men call being reasonable. And thus the world can go on turning round and round indefinitely for an eternity, it will never progress. And it is all for them as it is for the ants, they come, they swarm, they die, they disappear, they return, they swarm again, they die once more and so on and on. It can last like this for endless time. Luckily there are some who do the work of all the rest but they alone are those who will make everything change one day.

Now the first problem is to know on which side one wants to be: on the side

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of people who do something or on that of people who do nothing: on the side of those who can perhaps truly make out what life is for and who do the needful to lead their life to some issue, or on the side of those who care very little to understand what it all amounts to and who set themselves to pass their time with as little boredom as can be helped.

After this first choice, there are plenty of others. But the first one has to be made before everything.

21-9-1955

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

MIND

SELF: *Should I not persist in making my mind surrender all its workings to the Mother?*

SRI AUROBINDO: A persistent but quiet aspiration for the surrender of the physical mind and vital is the best way. (1-1-1934)

SELF: *Is it possible to remain conscious of the Mother in the midst of intellectual pursuits and activities?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It can be done when you become the witness detached from the mental action and not involved in them, not absorbed in them as the mental doer or thinker. (20-3-1934)

SELF: *Is the asking of questions a help to yoga?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Questions are meant for getting light on the things that are going on in one. It is the statement of what is going on that helps to surrender. (3-4-1934)

SELF: *The mind does not now remain in my control or think properly. It feels pressed down under the force from above.*

SRI AUROBINDO: The best way to meet that is for the mind to be silent and only aspire for the true open and plastic condition. (9-4-1934)

SELF: *Is it good for the mind and vital to attempt to perceive the movements of others?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Not unless there is a quiet and dispassionate perception correct in its seeings. (28-4-1934)

SELF: *Before one gets this perception, one may let the attempt go on and afterwards try to correct the result and finally ask you to give the right value.*

SRI AUROBINDO: No. That is no use, it merely encourages the passing of mental judgments usually of a personal kind. (2-5-2934)

SELF: *When there is a cold in the head, the thinking mind becomes passive,*

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and impressions and impulses come up from the subconscious, and the mechanical mind goes on.

SRI AUROBINDO: What you describe happens very usually during a cold in the head, as ordinarily one depends upon the brain cells for the transmission of the mental thought. When the mind is not so dependent on the brain cells, then the obscuration by the cold does not interfere with clear seeing and thinking and one is not thrown back in the mechanical mind. (19-5-1934)

SELF: *My mind does not remain vigilant all the time. Perhaps it is because there is not the vital's assistance.*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the mind's business to be on guard, not the vital's. If you mean that the vital is interested in other things and the mind follows, that may be so. But the business of the mind is to recall the vital, not to follow it. (28-6-1934)

SELF: *The mind observes and directs the vital, doesn't it?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It ought to, but in most men the mind is the instrument of the vital. (6-1-1934)

SELF: *At times the mind is not in a clear condition and is unaware of the reason and effect of the force's working.*

SRI AUROBINDO: It has only to watch and observe and wait for the knowledge. (6-7-1934)

SELF: *For the last few days the mind seems not to have any say and the being gets driven by all sorts of undesirable impulses and doing things inspired by the lower forces.*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is probably due to the mental control being removed—what is acting in the things you mention is not the mind but the vital and physical consciousness. (9-7-1934)

SELF: *What should take the place of the removed mental control?*

SRI AUROBINDO: The psychic or spiritual control. (10-7-1934)

SELF: *What is meant by the spiritual control?*

SRI AUROBINDO: The control from the higher Consciousness above the ordinary mental. (10-7-1934)

SELF: *During study I have to set aside the response to the spiritual pressure and externalise myself in order to grasp what I read.*

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to do that until you can develop the power of doing mental work without externalising yourself. (11-7-1934)

SELF: *How is thought to become quiescent?*

SRI AUROBINDO: By the descent of silence in the whole mind down to the physical. (12-7-1934)

SELF: *After I wrote to you about study, I find I cannot keep reading properly because I am unable to put aside the pressure. The pressure goes on during the mental activity.*

SRI AUROBINDO: So much the better. The reading must learn to accommodate itself to the pressure—that is, be done by the outer mind while the inner being remains in concentration. (13-7-1934)

SELF: *I have not much knowledge of experience or descents; so I am unable to get the full value out of them. Could you say something in general about such things?*

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to learn by experience. Mental information (badly understood, as it always is without experience) might rather hamper than help. In fact there is no fixed mental knowledge for these things, which vary infinitely. You must learn to go beyond the hankering for mental information and open to the true way of knowledge.

SELF: *When an impulse comes, the mind feels perplexed and the heart is anguished. They cannot exercise control over it.*

SRI AUROBINDO: The mind and the heart would do better to remain quiet and wait on a higher Force than theirs to do what is necessary. (13-7-1934)

SELF: *Is it not better to keep giving mental knowledge until the experiences come in plenty. As you were giving it in the past, even when there were small experiences, the habit persists, though I don't want to stick to it.*

SRI AUROBINDO: There is something in you that does want to stick to the habit of mentalising about everything. So long as you were not having real experiences it did not matter. But once real experiences begin you have to learn to approach them in the right way. (16-7-1934)

SELF: *How is it that physical work can go on as if by the Mother's force but an attitude of inner silence cannot be kept during mental work?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is only because it is more difficult to separate from the active mind than from the body consciousness. (26-7-1934)

SELF: *Is it the mechanical mind in me that keeps going the influence of a wrong movement?*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is probably the thing. Any disturbance is taken up by the mechanical mind and even when the direct¹ cause is no longer there it goes on grinding out just like a machine the thoughts and vibrations created. (5-10-1934)

SELF: *When some inner truth gets formulated for expression, the mechanical mind takes it up and goes on repeating the same thought for a long time.*

SRI AUROBINDO: The mechanical mind is a sort of engine—whatever comes to it it puts into the machine and goes on turning it round and round no matter what it is. (22-12-1934)

SELF: *Can one be quite silent within and still go on reading?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It ought to be possible to read with the inner consciousness looking on and, as it were, seeing the act of reading. In the condition of absolute inner silence I was making speeches and conducting a newspaper, but all that got itself done without any thought entering my mind or the silence being in the least disturbed or diminished. (27-10-1934)

SELF: *You once used the phrase: "the essential power of the higher consciousness". What is the meaning of "essential"?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you not know what "essential" means? There is a difference between the essence of a thing which is always the same and its formations and developments which vary. There is, for instance, the essence of gold and there are the many forms which gold can take. (29-10-1934)

SELF: *I can understand the silence, peace etc. which the higher consciousness commands. But I cannot understand what makes a power "essential".*

SRI AUROBINDO: Essence can never be defined—it simply is. (29-10-1934)

NAGIN DOSHI

¹ Uncertain reading (Editor).

THE INFINITE AND THE MOTHER DIVINE

March 29, 1914

EACH other they find in a silent gaze.
From their limbs awakes the rapture-blaze.

THE INFINITE: "Thy Advent makes me whole today—
I am now certain to flood the clay
With my Spirit-Vision's golden Light.
Thou art my only help in the Night."

THE MOTHER: "Thou art the proof, O Lord supreme!
That all shall be free from ignorance-dream.
I know the darknesses shall be
Changed into Light. Forever in Thee
The ceaseless fount of Life Divine:
The earth with heaven's height shall dine."

CHINMOY

LOTUS-DAWN

March 29, 1956

O POWER Supreme! long-awaited Birth!
Thou comest burdened with lotus dawns
To the wearied limbs of patient earth.

Calmly thou comest, O lovely Light,
To plant the Sun's immortality
And the Moon's solid tranquillity.

Behind thee I glimpse the eternal pace
Of thy royal Master's radiant feet.
The Finite shall kiss the Gnostic Grace!

Soon wilt thou burst the inconscient Cavern
And release the iron crusts of our world.
Denied to the Gods, to Man thou art given!

NAGIN DOSHI

MOTHER INDIA

DHRUVA

I

DOWN to the dust I was flung at once from throne,
From princely right and father's royal lap.
I knew not then with what fire-seeds was sown
My little life, with what immortal sap

Were filled my dauntless veins. I looked not back
Nor in king's sceptre did I justice seek;
I troubled not the world with my heart's ache
But left the palace in obedience meek

To the Will of God. I spurned the golden crown,
The shining hours of purple pleasure; I flew
From a father's heart tarnished by a woman's frown—
And in my heart my God I nearer knew.

Alone and young I left the safe abode
And bearing but the tearful memory
Of a mother's eyes I walked the dusty road
Guided by an unknown flame that burned in me

Like the deep dazzling blue of a tropic noon—
And then I saw my soul immortal, immune.

(2)

I called Him whose lap is the refuge of beggars and kings,
Who fathers the orphaned children of the earth.
Far, far from royalty's enchanted rings
I breasted danger for a diviner birth.

Far from my empire's crimson glories, far
From cities' turmoil, pomp's wild vanity,
Released from a bewildered life of care
I plunged into God's fathomless ecstasy.

I walked through the deep forest-solitude
Within the muffled music of ancient trees,
I felt the throb of spirit-lonelihood
Swaying my heart through wide eternities.

I sought my God in creepers' soft caress,
In tiger's strength, in lion's gold-maned might,
I called Him within mountain-silences
In soul-revealing words. O guiding Light,

Lift me towards thy immortal majesty,
O may I find a ruinless throne in Thee!

RANAJIT

I

THE FOUR AGES OF INDIA'S CULTURAL CYCLE

III. HISTORICITY OF THE RIG VEDA AND ITS BEARING UPON HUMANITY

“FROM the historical point of view, the Rig Veda may be regarded as a record of a great advance made by humanity by special means at a critical period of its collective progress.”

Sri Aurobindo has made this statement from his spiritual perception of the Rig Veda and its period of collective progress, with the Rishis at the helm; we shall try to see now what the “great advance made by humanity” was at that time, the nature of “the critical period of its collective progress”, and “the special means” adopted by the originators of that great culture. Without a proper knowledge of the underlying truth of these things, no true basis of India's cultural history can be given or a true appraisal made of the events that followed that glorious age. For all the succeeding history of man is only a development and action of the power of Intuition they set in motion through the revelatory word; a new force came into play in man's evolution and began to work on the different planes of his being through the following ages of that cycle.

What we have to determine first is the prevalent condition of humanity at the beginning of India's cycle of the four ages, that is, the beginning of the Rig Vedic period, its Satya Yuga. History, based on the purely rationalistic approach to the events of the past, states that about 2000 B. C., when the ancient civilisations of the Mediterranean, the West Asian ones and the Chinese and also those of Mohenjodaro and Harappa in India were at their peak, the Aryans from the north-west of Asia invaded North India which was then occupied by the Dravidians, a people equally civilised if not more, and drove them to the South. At that time the Aryans were following a primitive religion of worshipping the powers of Nature as gods. One section of this rationalistic school holds that two hundred years later the great historic episode celebrated in the Ramayana took place and three hundred years after this, the great Mahabharata war took place; nine hundred years later, the scientific history of India begins with the birth of the great religious founders Mahavira and Buddha

who introduced new religions on account of which the old Vedic religion changed its form; and later, through other saints and religious founders, developed into the present form of Hinduism.

In tracing the development of pre-historic India, the rationalistic approach, drawing its ideas from what happened in India and Britain during the early historic period of these countries,—how the Greeks, the Scythians, the Muhammedans invaded India, and how the Romans and the Saxons invaded Britain with swords and lances one after the other—applies them to pre-historic India. The underlying speculation is that perhaps the Celts entered Britain earlier in this manner and therefore the Aryans also entered India likewise. Then there are philological “proofs” claiming to show that Sanskrit, the Aryan language and the Indo-European languages have arisen from one source, and since the Indo-Europeans seem to have entered Europe at about 2000 B.C., so the Aryans too must have invaded India at the same period with a holy book in one hand and a sword in the other, like the later Muhammedans or even like the still later Europeans; further, after invading India, the Aryans began to spread a new irrational religion of Nature-worship.

Now here it will be advisable to know the ideas of Sri Aurobindo regarding scientific history based on a purely objective view; also what a more comprehensive science of future history may be.

“The objective view of society has reigned throughout the historical period of humanity in the West; it has been sufficiently strong though not absolutely engrossing in the East.” (*The Human Cycle*, p. 41)

“Scientific history has been conceived as if it must be a record and appreciation of the environmental motives of political action, of the play of economic forces and developments and the course of institutional evolution. The few who still value the psychological element have kept their eye fixed on individuals and are not far from conceiving of history as a mass of biographies. The truer and more comprehensive science of the future will see that these conditions only apply to the imperfectly self-conscious period of national development. Even then there was always a greater subjective force working behind individuals, policies, economic movements and the change of institutions; but it worked for the most part subconsciously, more as a subliminal self than as a conscious mind. It is when this subconscious power of the group-soul comes to the surface that nations begin to enter into possession of their subjective selves; they set about getting however vaguely or imperfectly at their souls.” (pp. 41-42)

“Subjectivism proceeds from within and regards everything from the point of view of a containing and developing self-consciousness. The law here is within ourselves; life is a self-creating process, a growth and development

at first subconscious, then half-conscious and at last more and more fully conscious of that which we are potentially and hold within ourselves; the principle of its progress is an increasing self-recognition, self-realisation and a resultant self-shaping." (p. 68)

"...Objectivism proceeding by the analytical reason takes an external and mechanical view of the whole problem. It looks at the world as a thing, an object, a process to be studied by an observing reason which places itself abstractly outside the elements and the sum of what it has to consider and observes it thus from outside as one would an intricate mechanism." (p. 67)

In view of the above ideas, we can see why our modern scientific objectivistic histories have failed to show us the essential nature of the civilisation and culture of each of the ancient nations, as well as of the modern nations, and how this essential nature guided the destinies of the old nations through the cycles of their civilisations; also, how the nature of the peoples that formed the new nations has helped them in this formation, and how each of the new nations is developing its nation-soul. Of course, it cannot be said that all subjectivistic ideas of life are always correct. Subjectivism is physical or vital or mental or spiritual. Only the last can completely identify itself with the object; and so it is truer than the others. If one takes guidance from what Sri Aurobindo has written about these nations and their growth and adopts the subjectivistic view of life to interpret the Mysteries, mythologies and religions of the different nations, the resultant histories will be of great value; with their fundamental psychological and spiritual ideas, the data of the objective sciences can be correlated.

That the objectivistic has not been the only approach to the Vedic culture can be seen from the books some of the Indian scholars have written. Abinash Chandra Das, author of "Rig Vedic Culture" writes that this culture passed through all the different stages of its evolution in Sapta-Sindhu from the early neolithic to the recent, and that there was a continuity in this culture without a break for over 20,000 years.

There is also a theory of Balgangadhar Tilak, that the Aryan races descended originally from the Arctic regions in the glacial period. At the time that Tilak wrote his book the geologists of America had declared that the last glacial period was about 10,000 years ago, but now the modern geologists declare that it took place about 50,000 years ago. Sri Aurobindo has remarked somewhere that Tilak has at least established a strong possibility for his theory.

There are also various traditional beliefs amongst Indians about the Rig Vedic period and the four ages of India's cultural cycle. The most current of them is that Kali Yuga began about 5,000 years ago; the previous Yuga Dwapara lasted for 10,000 years; its previous age Treta lasted for 15,000 years and its

previous age the Satya lasted for 20,000 years; thus the total period of the cycle comes to 50,000 years.

The following remarks of Sri Aurobindo about the philological and ethnological theories which form the basis for the rationalistic approach will help us in our enquiry.

“...There was the elaborate division of civilised humanity into the Aryan, Semitic, Dravidian and Turanian races based upon the philological classification of the ancient and modern languages. More sensible and careful reflection has shown us that community of language is no proof of community of blood or ethnological identity. The French are not a Latin race because they speak a corrupt and nasalised Latin, nor the Bulgars Slavs in blood because the Uro-Finnish races have been wholly slavonicised in civilisation and language. Scientific researches of another kind have confirmed this useful and timely negation. The philologists have, for instance, split up, on the strength of linguistic differences, the Indian nationality into the northern Aryan race and the southern Dravidian, but sound observation shows a single physical type with minor variations pervading the whole of India from Cape Comorin to Afghanistan. The races of India may be all pure Dravidians, if indeed such an entity as a Dravidian race exists or existed, or they may be pure Aryans, if indeed such an entity as an Aryan race exists or existed, or they may be a mixed race with one predominant strain, but in any case the linguistic division of the tongues of India into the Sanscritic and the Tamilic counts for nothing in the problem.”

“...On examining the vocables of the Tamil language, in appearance so foreign to the Sanscritic form and character, I yet found myself continually guided by words or by families of words supposed to be pure Tamil in establishing new relations between Sanscrit and its distant sister, Latin, and occasionally, between the Greek and the Sanscrit. Sometimes the Tamil vocable not only suggested the connection, but proved the missing link in a family of connected words. And it was through this Dravidian language that I came first to perceive what seems to me now the true law, origins and, as it were, the embryology of the Aryan tongues. I was unable to pursue my examination far enough to establish any definite conclusion, but it certainly seems to me that the original connection between the Dravidian and Aryan tongues was far closer and more extensive than is usually supposed and the possibility suggests itself that they may even have been two divergent families derived from one lost primitive tongue.”

“In India we are chiefly familiar with the old philological divisions of the Indian races and with the speculations of Mr. Risley which are founded upon these earlier generalisations. But a more advanced ethnology rejects all linguistic

tests and leans to the idea of a single homogeneous race inhabiting the Indian peninsula.”

From the above quotations it is evident that Sri Aurobindo finds the philological and ethnological conclusions, as they are offered to the world at present, altogether unsatisfactory. A study of his writings where he discusses philology reveals the fact that he has given a number of ideas which can form a sound basis for a proper science of philology. Like research scholars, he may not have worked on this subject in detail, but his insight is always deep and goes to the essential truths of things.

So in view of the remarks made by him about the conclusions of the philologists and the ethnologists, we shall approach the problem with a fresh mind, unhampered by the conjectures of the Objectivists. If there is any data made available by this school of thought, it will certainly be used and given its right place. First, we shall try to have a deeper understanding of the sciences of comparative Mysteries, comparative mythologies and comparative religions and the cultures and civilisations born out of these sciences. We may use also the data regarding the evolutionary unfoldment of the life of man from his sub-human origins, as is made available to us by Psychology, Biology, Palaeontology, and other sciences.

From what has been written in the previous article about the various Mysteries of the world which gave rise to different religions and civilisations, we may draw the following conclusions. First, the degenerate or vitalistic Mysteries followed by the savage or barbarous tribes must have given rise to religions like animism, fetishism, taboo, totemism and such other kinds of vitalistic religions which are followed to this day by tribal people. These tribes form a very small percentage of the human race now but they must have formed an immensely large percentage at the time when the first mentalistic or spiritualistic cultures began on earth at the commencement of its cycle of civilisation. These cultures and their religions were not based on reason and intellectualism, and that is why they were called barbarism. The tribal barbarisms must have had their place, utility and importance in the scheme of man's evolution from his earliest condition of ape-man,—(who, as the biological theory of evolution says, appeared first on earth some lacs of years ago,)—to the later development of the intellectual and spiritual man. Exactly when the intellectual man and spiritual man appeared on earth we do not know at present. However, we see that the non-spiritual mentalistic Mysteries that gave rise to civilisations like that of the asuric Atlantis began, according to tradition, with a high life-idea of its mystic originators but later degenerated and got destroyed. We learn from Indian traditions and its ancient texts of the Asuric civilisation of Ravana, which resembles that of Atlantis. The texts say that it happened at the end of the

second age of the Indian cycle of civilisation. Then again we have seen that the later mental Mysteries gave rise to the ancient humanistic civilisations of the Mediterranean and the West Asian nations. These Mysteries also had a high life-idea of mental manhood at the beginning, and their civilisations lasted for several millenniums, but were finally all absorbed by the civilisations of Greece and Rome; in the course of absorption they were destroyed by military invasions. Thirdly, spiritual Mysteries like those of India, China and the Indo-Europeans of which the last changed soon after by discarding the spiritual motive of its culture and taking to a psychological culture; this culture developed dynamic intellectual philosophies. As a result, the types of spiritual manhood stamped on the temperament of the race in the previous age continue to this day; the external forms of religion are altogether lost, but a rapid intellectual development took place in the people, India and China continued without change in their motive of spiritual culture and their religious attitude till the last century, when a new period of renaissance set in in India. Regarding China, it is too early to predict, as it is in a transitional stage, and has to find its true soul.

In writing the history of a prehistoric period either of India or of any other country, we must note that, apart from the philological, ethnological and geological theories which have their own bearing here, the most important role is of the science of Comparative Mysteries. Only after this comes the importance of the sciences of Comparative Mythology and Comparative Religion which have developed out of the Mysteries. The difference in the various view-points of histories written on the basis of these sciences is due therefore to the difference in interpretations of these sciences which in turn is due to the difference in the view-points based on either the subjective or the objective or the spiritual idea of life. But these ideas of life have been influenced in the 19th and 20th centuries by the theory of evolution much more than by any particular science or philosophy or even a group of them. It is the theory of evolution that has influenced even the sciences and philosophies. Sri Aurobindo wrote about this theory of evolution some forty years ago, that it "...has been the key-note of the thought of the 19th century. It has not only affected all its science and its thought-attitude, but powerfully influenced its moral temperament, its politics and its society....In society and politics it had led to the substitution of the evolutionary for the moral idea of progress...." (*Evolution*, p. 1) About its influence on the modern theory about the Rig Veda, he writes that it "is in accord with the received idea of a rapid human evolution from the quite recent savage; it is supported by an imposing apparatus of critical research and upheld by a number of Sciences, unhappily still young and still largely conjectural in their methods and shifting in their results—

Comparative Philology, Comparative Mythology and the Science of Comparative Religion." (*Mother India*, December, 1953, p. 61)

Several great thinkers are of the opinion that the greatest achievement of the 19th and 20th centuries is the growth of European Thought and Science, and of these the fine flower is the theory of evolution. Along with the rapid progress of Science and Thought, the shape of the theory of evolution also has changed and is changing. But if the theory of evolution as built up and accepted by modern Thought and Science is the greatest achievement of these two centuries, modern Thought and Science have yet to learn that the spiritual theory of evolution by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is a greater achievement; on the basis of their theory, they have interpreted the Mysteries, Mythologies and Religions. There are many ideas which are common to both the theories; but on some important points the spiritual theory of evolution goes forward while the other theory stops short. A large number of schools of the scientific theory of evolution hold that human progress is in a straight line; but there are some schools even of that theory which say that humanity has progressed through cycles of civilisation. In this respect Sri Aurobindo also, while enunciating a spiritual theory of cycles of human civilisation, further says: "...we may yet arrive at the theory of cycles of human evolution, the *kalpas* and *manvantaras* of the Hindu theory. If its affirmation of cycles of world-existence is farther off from affirmation, it is because they must be so vast in their periods as to escape not only all our means of observation, but all our means of deduction or definite inference." (*Evolution*, p. 8)

Now we take up the question whether the spiritual culture of the Rig Veda began at 2000 B.C. as claimed by the scientific materialistic theory of evolution and its interpretation of the Veda or whether it began much earlier as asserted by the Hindu tradition. We rely for our answer on the theory of spiritual evolution and its interpretation of the ancient Indian texts.

(To be continued)

C. NARAYANA REDDI

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

*(An expansion of Notes given to the First Year Poetry Class at
the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre)*

VI

IN appearance, the second Romantic Movement started in England at the end of the eighteenth century by a revolt against the artificial “poetic diction” of the pseudo-Augustan age. Wordsworth asked for a natural language and, though he went in some respects to an extreme by insisting on almost conversational naiveté, what ultimately he and his contemporaries wanted was a living speech not ruled by a too externalised mind. Naturalness connoted the mind of thought expressing itself vividly from a depth of the being.

Here it is interesting to observe that the pseudo-Augustans had themselves claimed naturalness as their guiding principle. “If you had asked them,” remarks G.H.Mair, “to state as simply and broadly as possible their purpose they would have said it was to follow nature, and if you had inquired what they meant by nature it would turn out that they thought of it mainly as the opposite of art and the negation of what was fantastic, tortured or far sought in thinking or feeling.” Theirs was a revolt against the Elizabethans and the Metaphysicals, and naturalness to them connoted urbanity, good sense, moderation, distrust of emotion, good breeding. These qualities are not intrinsically objectionable: in their true form they are some aspects of an authentic Classicism and make fine poetry indeed in the works of Horace who, next to Virgil, was the most famous figure in the circle of poets around the Roman Emperor Augustus. The bane of the pseudo-Augustans was an over-externalisation of the cultured mind. Against this so-called naturalness the new Romantics with their Rousseauistic cry of “Back to Nature” urged the charging of the intellect with not only elemental spontaneity but also intuitive subtlety and profundity.

The philosopher Whitehead has suggested that the new Romantic Movement was really a reaction from the mechanistic view held by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the sway of the Newtonian development of physics. The whole universe was to physics a machine and, though the mind

of man was granted its own non-material essence, the body of man came under the mechanistic category and even the mind was regarded with a mechanistic eye. As Edmund Wilson puts it, human nature came to be reduced to a set of principles according to which it invariably acted. Everything was strictly rationalised. In poetry also the role of the imagination was diminished—it was made out to be a sort of decorative aid to the play of the logical intellect and systematised sentiment. The form of poetry lay as well under the shadow of the mechanistic philosophy. Corresponding to the theorems of physics, there were the geometrical plays of Racine and the balanced clicking couplets of Pope.

Whitehead points out that Romanticism refused to look on the world as mechanism and saw it as organism: the Romantic poet perceives, in Edmund Wilson's words, "that nature includes planets, mountains, vegetation and people alike, that what we are and what we see, what we hear, what we feel and what we smell are inextricably related, that all are involved in the same great entity": things and sense-impressions, matter and mind are interfused and they constitute a reality in which every element implies and "prehends" another by a sort of feeling so that all the parts are what they are because of one another and because of a whole which by being present in some manner in each part makes them mutually "prehensive" and serve as members of an organic totality and not a mechanical aggregate.

About the first book of Wordsworth's *Prelude* Whitehead says: "Of course, Wordsworth is a poet writing a poem, and is not concerned with dry philosophical statements. But it would hardly be possible to express more clearly a feeling for nature, as exhibiting entwined prehensive unities, each suffused with modal presences of others"—and he quotes as a typical passage:

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
 And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
 And Souls of lonely places! can I think
 A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
 Such ministry, when ye through many a year
 Haunting me thus among my boyish sports
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
 Impressed upon all forms the characters
 Of danger or desire: and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
 Work like a sea?...

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

Whitehead continues: “Shelley is entirely at one with Wordsworth as to the interfusing of the Presence in nature. Here is the opening stanza of his poem entitled *Mont Blanc*”:

The everlasting universe of Things
Flows through the Mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters—with a sound but half their own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the Mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

Whitehead’s comment is: “Shelley has written these lines with explicit reference to some form of idealism, Kantian or Berkelyan or Platonic. But however you construe him, he is here an emphatic witness to a prehensive unification as constituting the very being of nature.”

The thesis put forward by Whitehead is not fictitious, but if the Romantics foreshadowed a philosophy of organism it was with an approach entirely different from his and they were not confined to the organic formula. Whitehead does not take vitality or mentality as powers underlying materiality and exceeding the physical universe which may be considered ultimately a certain expression of them though an expression often appearing to obscure, obstruct and even deny them. To him they are manifestations of a universal reality which, though not the materialist’s lifeless and mindless matter in motion with the phenomena of life and mind as certain complexities of physico-chemical action, is still a process of mere “events” with what we call the body as the centre of each vital and mental experience that is ours and the entire physical universe as the enlarging circumference of a pattern with which this experience is somehow continuous, for no experience can be bound down to just one place but is the actualisation of everything everywhere, a member of a world-wide organism and itself an organism on a small scale. No primacy is given by Whitehead to life and mind, and his system of “events” he finally distinguishes from materialistic mechanism by terming it “organic mechanism”. The great Romantics would have been horrified on being accused, as Whitehead can be, of taking away with the left hand what is conceded with the right. Their rebellion

against mechanism went far beyond giving, however "soulfully", to the mechanism an organic complexion. They could never have agreed to thinking that their intuitive subtlety and profundity lay in a poetic approximation to Whitehead's philosophy.

However, it is true that the soul of man felt ill at ease in the world, pictured by eighteenth-century physics, of iron law and rigid structure. When the individual looked into himself deeply, he found not a well-ordered world but fantasy, conflict, mystery, aspiration, a sense of "things not easily expressible". It was with this in-look that Rousseau gave birth to modern Romanticism. And it was the same in-look that, piercing farther than Rousseau, unsealed on a sudden the springs of a Splendour that nourished for the first time the poetic mind in Europe—"except", as Sri Aurobindo adds, "in so far as the ancient poets had received it through myth and symbol or a religious mystic here and there attempted to give his experience rhythmic and imaginative form. But here there is the first poetic attempt of the intellectual faculty at the height of its own development to look beyond its own level directly into the unseen and the unknown and to unveil the ideal truth of its own highest universal conceptions." The attempt can be seen in various forms: Blake's touch on the inner psychic realms and on vivid occult "emanations" as well as his huge mythological imaginings that spoke at times as from a thick shining cloud into which the rational intellect seemed caught up—Coleridge's supernaturalism, his seizure of a terrible haunting indefiniteness, his projection of weird influences from hidden worlds into the midst of primitive and symbolic or else idealistic and rhapsodical thinking—Wordsworth's pantheistic entry into Nature's inner being of infinite peace and also his elevated ethical thought in tune with that empathy and his occasional snatches of regions beyond the intellect which are the soul's home before physical birth and which sweep into the mind's word the breath and brightness of a direct intuitive seerhood—Shelley's imaginative etherealised Platonism capturing the essence of the ideals of light, love and liberty by a semi-pantheistic semi-personalised vision of a single Spirit and of secret entities from "a world far from ours", whose intense rapturous contact he conveys by his enchanted and iridescent lyricism—Keats's worship of perfect Beauty, a soulful sensuousness rising on wings of partly myth-making partly idealistic thought-yearning towards some dream-shrine where Beauty fuses with Truth.

Byron who belonged to the same group and was the most vigorous voice among them is weakest in the characteristic element which shone forth in the new Romanticism—the Celtic element which is one ingredient of the English genius, mingling as a refining and developing force of visionary insight with the more prominent Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic ingredient of concrete earthi-

ness either fresh and simple or robust and practical. Byron carries still a living shadow of the eighteenth century, though with an individual note in his frequent picturesque rhetoric: it is somewhat symptomatic that his favourite poet should be Pope. Also, the tendency to pose and make a pageant of his heart introduces a certain falsity and exaggeration into his work. But here he has the defect of the new Romanticism and not of pseudo-Classicism and the defect was not unaccompanied by qualities that render him an outstanding figure of the Rousseauistic age by his sensitiveness to mountain and sea with an elemental vehemence drawn from his rebellious endeavour to exceed life's ordinary limits by a titanism bursting with power of personality, an endeavour hardly mystical yet not unrelated to the *élan* of mysticism in his greatest contemporaries towards the superhuman.

In Byron the passion for liberty and the insistence on individuality that were wide-spread by Rousseauistic Romanticism reached their acme—finding, as Sri Aurobindo says, their voice of Tyrrhenian bronze—just as Wordsworth marked the climax of this Romanticism's communion with Nature and Shelley the extreme of its unrestrained sympathy. But that passion and that insistence burned bright too in Wordsworth and Shelley, not to mention Blake. They are mixed with other motives, philosophical and emotional, yet it is noteworthy that temperaments so different had the same basic desire to enjoy personal freedom and to make every individual free. Sometimes the new Romanticism is even defined as typically a revolt of the individual. And indeed the deeper aspect of this Romanticism, the revolt against mechanism, may itself be interpreted in terms of individualism. For what was in revolt was the personal vision the Romantic poet had of the world within him. Face to face with that world he—to quote Edmund Wilson again—“either set himself like Wordsworth and Blake to affirm the superior truth of this vision as compared to the mechanical universe of the physicists or, accepting this mechanical universe, like Byron or Alfred de Vigny, as external to and indifferent to man, he pitted against it, in defiance, his own turbulent insubordinate soul.”

In all cases individualism was aflame—and we are reminded of the Hellenistic and humanistic stress on the individual in the Romanticism of the Renaissance. But here is no outcome of the mere Life Force's upsurge. In the Renaissance there was no stress on individualism in principle—a formulated recognition of it. Modernism with its more intellectual character is individualistic with a certain self-justifying gesture. And there is also a profounder context for its assertion of personality and for its view of society as not a rigid whole subordinating the members but a group of free individuals spontaneously associating with one another. There is a difference here from the Renaissance explosion of individual gusto—the riotous giantism of Rabelais, the curious and

happy self-regard of Montaigne, the artistic egotism of Benvenuto Cellini, the perplexed individualistic passion and powerful expanding enthusiasm of the half animal half god heroes of Shakespeare. The individualism of the second Romantic Movement was geared to an idealism fraught with religious and philosophical aspirations.

In their effect on art-form, however, the two Romantic Movements are almost at one: the sense of the artistic whole is no longer as emphatic as in Classical creations, and the units making up the *ensemble*—words, phrases, paragraphs, sections—draw more attention to themselves, stand out more in their own rights, their own richnesses, and the contour of the totality is proportionally more diffuse. As already remarked in relation to the old Romanticism, this diffuseness has two sides—either a subtlety in the sense of general form or else a looseness in the view of the whole.

The change in form-feeling is acutely illustrated by one of the most Romantic poems, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. It was published as the transcript of a fluctuant dream and as a mere fragment, but to the typical Romantic mind it is as good as a coherent totality and a complete composition. The individual pictures and imaged significances appear nearly independent and self-contained in their fascinating blend of vividness and vagueness, and there is a quick shift from one to another, occasionally almost a leap, as from the stately pleasure-dome to the sunless sea and from the deep chasm to the wailing woman and from the mingled measure heard on the waves to the Abyssinian maid and from that damsel with a dulcimer to the poet himself. Yet behind this suggestive variety the Romantic mind perceives a connection—an underlying general mood of sensuous-symbolic fantasy. The poem is a whole not by a recognisable idea developed in a regular or manifold imaginative manner but by a delicate or bold multi-aspectedness of imaginative-emotional and intuitive-sensuous mood strongly enveloping the idea. Nor is there a real end in the Classical fashion: instead, we have at the close of the last two magnificent lines—

For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of paradise—

a word—"paradise"—which at once takes us back to the beginning of the poem where Xanadu is pictured as an ideal place of beauty, fantasy and grandeur. Paradise seems to be the supernal archetype of which *Kubla Khan's* Xanadu is an earthly reflection. Again, in the two lines just preceding the above—

Weave a circle round him thrice
And close your eyes with holy dread—

the mention of going three times round the inspired poet recalls the verses at nearly the beginning after the unforgettable description of the pleasure-dome beside the river Alph—

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round.

Thus the poem's commencement and termination are suggestively tied together. The image of the circle is itself vaguely suggestive of the whole piece being subtly rounded off.

Apart from constituting a characteristic Romantic *ensemble*, *Kubla Khan* is notable for providing a partial definition of Romanticism itself in the words:

But oh that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green slope athwart a cedarn cover—
A savage place!—as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

We may recall that a strong trait of the Rousseauistic mind is its love of solitude. But by solitude Rousseau did not mean a cottage in the country. He made this pretty clear again and again. “Never has a land of plains, however beautiful it may be, seemed beautiful to my eyes,” he once wrote, bringing, as Havelock Ellis notes, a new sensation into literature, if not into life; “I need torrents, rocks, pines, dark forests, mountains, rough paths to climb by precipices that fill me with fear.” The landscape beauty that, as Ellis remarks, “appealed to the classic mind was easy and luxurious, pleasant to all the senses and good to rest in.” Rousseau not only moved away from human crowds, saying that he would rather be among the arrows of the Parthians than among the glances of men; he also sought out wild places, places untouched and untrimmed by men, tameless solitudes. Before Rousseau and the Romantics, such solitudes were shunned. The region which was to become a century later the home of the Lake School was for most people in Addison's time, as to Roger North, a land of “hideous mountains”. Madame de Staël, even after Rousseau, called Switzerland “une magnifique horreur”. But there was something in the individualistic and rebellious spirit of Romanticism that responded to and craved for perilous and savage sceneries defiant of man. Mixed with this response and craving was the feeling of strange unearthly presences haunting remote and comfortless expanses: solitude and the supernatural went together. It is this mixture that those lines of Coleridge's illustrate as well as label.

By this mixture Romanticism has been considered by us to be partially

defined—and, if we stick to the immediate connotation of the phrase “solitude and the supernatural” apropos the lines quoted, the whole of the Romantic adventure is not compassed. But if we try to look into the ultimate suggestion of it we may reach all the mystical in Romanticism through it. For “solitude” implies Nature free from humanisation, Nature as it is in itself, Nature’s own being, the strange Presence that lived in various moods for Wordsworth and his successors. “The supernatural”, associated with the natural thus understood, implies that these various moods are not only of an elemental life in individual things but also of entities that belong to other dimensions than our universe and use this life as if it were a projection of their own, entities by which lonely and savage places become “holy and enchanted”. And just as separate places have their “souls”, as it were, both natural and supernatural, so too the totality of solitary Nature is one great elemental life that is a projection of a divine infinity, a Pantheos whose body is the world but whose spirit, while manifesting in the world and even constituting it, transcends Nature—

The light that never was, on sea or land.

Of this transcendence *Kubla Khan* itself supplies a hint in the word with which its spell of music attains its climax: “paradise”.

Coleridge’s “romantic” connects up with words in two other poets of the same period, echoing in significant ways the term Romanticism. In the idea of solitude and enchantment, it is linked to Wordsworth’s phrase about his Lady of the Mere

Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.

Here an additional shade is imported by the epithet “old”—a nostalgia half sad half blissful as for a lost Eden of marvellous beauty and tenderness and heroism. In the idea of the supernatural, Coleridge’s “romantic” joins with the sense of unearthly realities in Keats’s lines:

When I behold, upon the night’s starr’d face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows,

where a straining of thought and emotion towards a mysterious ecstasy neighbouring the Spirit’s infinitude glimmering afar is faintly felt—lines that breathe some hidden intimacy to be realised between this infinitude and the human imagination and heart of the poet.

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

Apropos both the supernatural and this intimacy we may revert to *Kubla-Khan* and conclude by mentioning that in its closing part it provides a vivid picturisation of the Romantic view of poetic inspiration. Not only is the poet portrayed as one who has known paradisaical raptures: he is also declared to have seen the vision of a strange form that creates music and whose remembrance by the poet would make him a musical creator:

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

The Abyssinian maid represents an occult denizen of the poet's soul-depths, dusky with its dream-distances—a wondrous creature of his being's mystical abyss. And within the abyss she catches the rhythm of the Divine Spirit's height which is connected with that recess: the height is called Abora by Coleridge through a vague recollection of Milton's phrase—

Nor where Abassin Kings their issue guard,
Mount Amora, though this by some supposed
True Paradise under the Ethiop Line
By Nilus' head—

a recollection in which the initial “Am” gets altered to “Ab” as if to render subtly evident the link with the suggestion of depth in the adjective “Abyssinian”. No doubt, the alteration is related to dream-state echoes from Coleridge's probable knowledge that a mountain in Abyssinia was called Aba Yared and from his reading in Bruce's *Travels to the Source of the Nile* that between a pair of ridges in Abyssinia ran two tributaries of the Nile—Abola and Atbora. But the “b”-sound wafted with the echoes need not have been accepted: the

creative process in poetry has always an imaginative *rationale*, a symbolising significance. As this process does not go by strict logic, the *rationale* is embodied in factors like alliteration, assonance, recurring metrical rhythm, refrain, multiple association of a word, even a submerged pun, variations of the prose-order by means of inversions, transferred epithets, ellipses—factors that force separate phrases and stanzas to hold together and the poem to become a unified instantaneous totality. Especially are these factors functional in a Romantic poem where individualism of detail and mysticism of mood repel all the more the logically progressive tendencies of prose. So the fundamental reason why the damsel with a dulcimer (a phrase which itself also exemplifies poetic logic by alliterative effect) sings of Mount Abora rather than of Mount Amora is that the dream-state echoes provided the poet with a verbal instrument to achieve a connection of occult sense, a unifying spiritual glimpse. The connection is closer with the help of such an instrument than if it were left to a collocation by geography, both the singer and the sung height Amora being understood to belong to Abyssinia.

The Abyssinian maid whom Coleridge sets forth as thus joined in music to an unknown altitude is what the ancients named the Muse; she is a Romantic version of the Goddess of Song, a version in which the strange is merged with the beautiful. But more than strangeness is conjured up: a direct concreteness of experience is implied, a contact with the occult and mystical by immediate vision (.. “in a vision once I saw”) instead of by a faint far sense of it in the mind of the poet when the afflatus passes through him. Modern Romanticism knew a powerful palpable impact of the supernatural in the process of poetic creation. It created from an intense inwardness as if from a dimension of supra-terrestrial dream, though it never disdained the terrestrial and ever aligned it with the dream-mysterious, the trance-radiant. And *Kubla Khan* quintessentialises in a certain aspect the Romantic creativeness not only by picturing the poet as striving to create through a revival within him of mystical reverie, but also by itself being the product of a strangely beautiful dream-experience sought to be revived by Coleridge.

(To be continued)

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