

MOTHER INDIA

MAY 1956

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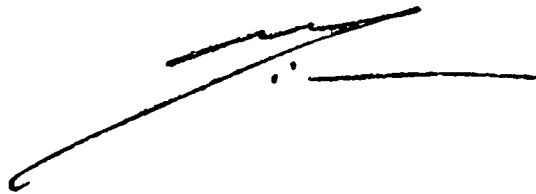
1956

29 février - 29 mars

Seigneur, Tu as voulu et je réalise.
Une lumière nouvelle point sur la terre.
Un monde nouveau est né,
Et les choses promises sont accomplies.

29 February - 29 March

Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER'S TALKS

(To the Children of the Ashram)

THE SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION

Q. You have said: "The things that were promised are fulfilled." What are these things?

They have been promised since a very long time ago, they have been spoken of since far past times,—not here, but since the beginning of the earth,—there have been all sorts of predictions made by different prophets, saying: "There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, a new race shall be born, the world shall be transformed," etc., etc.; and prophets have spoken of these things in all the traditions.

Q. You have said: they are fulfilled. But where is the new race?

The new race? Wait for something like a few thousand years and you will see it! When the mind descended on the earth, then between the moment of its manifestation in the earth's atmosphere and the moment of the first man's appearance, nearly a million years elapsed. The new race will come sooner, because man has a vague idea, he somehow waits for the arrival of the superman. The apes certainly never waited for the birth of man; they never thought of it, for the simple reason that probably they did not think much about anything. Man, however, has thought of the superman and that will bring him sooner. But "sooner" means still some thousands of years. Now, we shall talk again about this in some thousands of years!

People who are inwardly ready, who are open and in rapport with the higher forces, people who are in personal contact more or less direct with the Supramental Light and Consciousness are capable of feeling the difference in the terrestrial atmosphere.

Like knows like, it is only the Supramental Consciousness in an individual that can perceive this Supermind which is acting in the terrestrial atmosphere. Those who for some reason have developed this perception in themselves can see it. But those who are not conscious even in the slightest degree of their inner being and who would be embarrassed to talk of what their soul is like, such

people are surely not ready to perceive the difference in the earth's atmosphere. They have yet a long way to go for that, because for those whose consciousness is more or less exclusively centred in the outer being—mental, vital and physical—things have to appear preposterous and unexpected in order to be recognised, and then they call them miracles.

But the constant miracle of the intervention of forces, changing circumstances and characters and having a very general effect—this is not called a miracle because one sees only the appearance and it seems altogether natural. But, truly speaking, if you reflect on the least of the things that are happening you will be obliged to tell yourself that it is miraculous. It is simply because you do not reflect on it that you take things as they are, for what they are, without asking whether every day you do not have a considerable number of occasions to say: "Hello! this is quite astonishing. How did it ever happen?" The reason why you are not astonished is just the habit of a vision purely superficial.

Q. What should be our attitude towards this new Consciousness that has manifested?

That depends on what you want to make of it. If you want to regard it as a curiosity, then you will only look at it and try to understand. If you want it to change your very self, you have to open to it and make an effort at progress.

Q. When the Mind descended, the ape had not made any effort to convert itself into a man. Was it not Nature that provided the effort? But here...

But it is not man who is going to convert himself into superman!

Q. No?

Try a little! Is it not the truth that something else has come to work?

However, I do not wish to be unkind. Man is able to collaborate, that is to say, he can lend himself to a process, out of good-will, with aspiration and can help to the best of his ability. And it is for that that have I said the new race will come more soon. I hope it will come very much sooner. But still, even at the soonest, it will take some time!

Individually, the goal of each one here has been to prepare himself, to enter into a personal relation more or less close with this Force in order to help—or indeed if he cannot help, then at least to be ready, when the force manifests itself, and to recognise it and open himself to it; and instead of its being a foreign element in the world where what you carry within you is not manifest-

ed, you should all at once grow one with this atmosphere itself, you should forthwith and fully enter into it: for it is this Force that is there, that surrounds you and penetrates you. If you had a tiny inner contact, you would immediately recognise it, wouldn't you?

Anyway, it has come to those who had a little inner contact; they have recognised it, they have felt it and said: "Ah, there it is, it's come."

It is indeed understood that similars recognise similars. That is an evident fact. There was a possibility of entering into contact with the Supermind individually: this was the thing Sri Aurobindo had written about as the necessary process: a certain number of people who by their inner effort and by their aspiration got into rapport with this Force. That is what we have called the ascent to the Supramental. And even if it is by an inner ascent—that is to say, by getting clear of the material consciousness—they have touched the Supramental and they would naturally be bound to recognise it as soon as it arrived. But the touching was indispensable: without it how can they recognise?

We may say the universal movement is like that. Certain individuals who are the pioneers, the *avant-garde*, by their inner effort and by an inner progress enter into communication with the new force which ought to manifest and they receive it in themselves. And then, because there are calls like that, the manifestation becomes possible and the age and the moment for it come. It is thus that the manifestation occurs.

All those who are ready are bound to recognise it.

Q. In the "Mother India" of April, after a mention of the Supermind descending and getting fixed on earth in an individual form at the end of 1950, there is the statement: "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."

Yes, yes, I have myself said all that in effect, I remember it.

What I call a descent takes place when one rises in an ascent and catches hold of the thing high up there and descends with it. That is an individual event.

When such an event takes place in a manner sufficient to create a possibility of a general order, what happens is not a descent, it is a manifestation.

What I call a descent is an individual movement, in an individual consciousness. And when it is a new world that manifests itself in an old one—as when the Mind was first diffused over the earth—I call it a manifestation,

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You may call it what you will, it is all the same to me, but we must understand each other.

Ascending and descending are a way of speaking, they have no ultimate sense: there is really neither up nor down. We speak of ascending when we have the impression of raising ourselves towards something; and we say “descending” when, after seizing that thing, we make it descend within ourselves.

But when the gates are thrown open and the flood takes place, you cannot call it a descent. It is a force that spreads itself.

*

*

Now, to people who put you roundabout questions, you may reply that the best way to receive whatever there may be is not to pull but to give. If they wish to give themselves to the new life, well, the new life will enter into them. But if they want to pull the new life into themselves. they will shut the doors with their egoism.

2-5-1956

TO THE MOTHER OF THE NEW-BORN WORLD

(A GARLAND WOVEN FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S "SAVITRI")*

O WISDOM-SPLENDOUR, Mother of the universe,
Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride,...

O Sun-Word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to Light
And bring down God into the lives of men...

The spirit's mightiness shall cast off its mask;
Its greatness shall be felt shaping the world's course.
It shall be seen in its own veilless beams,
A star rising from the Inconscient's night,
A sun climbing to Supernature's peak.
Abandoning the dubious Middle Way
A few shall glimpse the miraculous Origin
And some shall feel in you a secret Force
And they shall turn to meet a nameless tread,
Adventurers into a mightier Day.
Ascending out of the limiting breadths of mind,
They shall discover the world's huge design
And step into the Truth, the Right, the Vast...

The supermind shall claim the world for Light
And thrill with love of God the enamoured heart
And place Light's crown on Nature's lifted head
And found Light's reign on her unshaking base...

All then shall change, a magic order come
Overtopping this mechanical universe.
A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
On Nature's luminous tops, on the Spirit's ground,
The superman shall reign as king of life...

* A recitation by two Ashram girls before the Mother on April 24.

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Then in the process of evolving Time
All shall be drawn into a single plan,
A divine harmony shall be earth's law,
Beauty and Joy remould her way to live:
Even the body shall remember God...

A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
And take the charge of breath and speech and act
And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
And every feeling a celestial thrill...

O beautiful body of the incarnate Word,...

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

THE SATTWIC MAN AND THE RAJASIC MAN

NIRODBARAN: If what is most needed is an upward aspiration (as mentioned in X's letter) what about the two other requisites, rejection and surrender? And aspiration being equal, don't you think a rajasic man will meet with greater resistance in rejecting his lower impulses than a sattwic man in transcending his virtues ?

SRI AUROBINDO: It was not necessary to mention all that. I was only answering a limited question, not giving a whole theory of Yoga to X.

That is implied in what I said about the sattwic man having the advantage. X's question seemed to be about the approach to spirituality, Yoga, not as to what would happen to the two kinds of people in the course of the sadhana. But obviously the rajasic movements are likely to create more trouble than the sattwic ones. The greatest difficulty of the sattwic man is the snare of virtue and self-righteousness, the ties of philanthropy, mental idealisms, family affections etc., but except the first, these are, though difficult, still not so difficult to overpass or else transform. Sometimes, however, these things are as sticky as the rajasic difficulties.

NIRODBARAN: And since desires are strong, they will thwart the fire of aspiration; and because of this, combined with the resistance and unwillingness in rejection and the gravitational pull of the nature, rajasic men run the greater risk of a relapse or even a fall from the path. If by some miracle I could have been a sattwic man, wouldn't you have been saved a lot of trouble from my murmurings, repinings, and depressions?

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is logical, but it does not happen in every case. It may be true in your case, but what of St. Augustine, Jagai, Madhai, Bilwamangal and the rest? St. Augustine had difficulties, but they do not seem to have been of a very violent character,—the others are described as having made a total volte-face, I believe.

No doubt. But you are not, after all, a thief, debauchee, drunkard or gangster. You may say perhaps that if you had been, you could have been a great saint also, violently sinning, violently repenting, violently sanctifying yourself? Perhaps that was the secret of St. Augustine and the others!

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NIRODBARAN: I should say that the sattwic type of people are the most in numbers to follow the spiritual path, the rajasic few, and the sinners very scarce.

If so, one could then say that in the spiritual evolution of consciousness sattwic people are more evolved than others.

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be so, but that is not my experience. The highly sattwic are few; the abnormally rajasic are few; of the middle sort there are many. According to my observation, this is true not only of this Ashram, but of others.

Um! somewhat! There are all sorts among the more evolved, among the less evolved there are many sattwic people also, nice good people who don't amount to much. One pats them on the back and goes farther. But don't twist this into meaning that I prefer the nasty bad ones. I don't; they give too much trouble. Only life, evolution, human character and things generally in this perplexing world are disconcertingly complex and can't be dismissed with a few simple affirmations.

16-10-1935

NIRODBARAN

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XVI

THE ANGIRASA RISHIS

THE name Angirasa occurs in the Veda in two different forms, Angira and Angirasa, although the latter is the more common; we have also the patronymic Āngirasa applied more than once to the god Brihaspati. In later times Angirasa, like Bhrigu and other seers, was regarded as one of the original sages, progenitors of clans of Rishis who went by their names, the Angirasas, Atris, Bhargavas. In the Veda also there are these families of Rishis, the Atris, Bhrigus, Kanwas etc. In one of the hymns of the Atris the discovery of Agni, the sacred fire, is attributed to the Angirasa Rishis (V. 11-6), but in another to the Bhrigus (X. 46-9).¹ Frequently the seven original Angirasa Rishis are described as the human fathers, *pitāro manuṣyāḥ*, who discovered the Light, made the sun to shine and ascended to the heaven of the Truth. In some of the hymns of the tenth Mandala they are associated as the Pitris or Manes with Yama, a deity who only comes into prominence in the later Suktas; they take their seats with the gods on the *barhis*, the sacred grass, and have their share in the sacrifice.

If this were all, the explanation of the part taken by the Angirasa Rishis in the finding of the Cows would be simple and superficial enough; they would be the Ancestors, the founders of the Vedic religion, partially deified by their descendants and continually associated with the gods whether in the winning back of the Dawn and the Sun out of the long Arctic night or in the conquest of the Light and the Truth. But this is not all, the Vedic myth has profounder aspects. In the first place, the Angirasas are not merely the deified human fathers, they are also brought before us as heavenly seers, sons of the gods, sons of heaven and heroes or powers of the Asura, the mighty Lord, *divas putrāso asurasya virāḥ*, (III. 53-7) an expression which, their number being seven, reminds us strongly, though perhaps only fortuitously, of the seven Angels of Ahura Mazda in the kindred Iranian mythology. Moreover there

¹ Very possibly the Angirasa Rishis are the flame-powers of Agni and the Bhrigus the solar powers of Surya.

are passages in which they seem to become purely symbolical, powers and sons of Agni the original Angirasa, forces of the symbolic Light and Flame, and even to coalesce into a single seven-mouthed Angirasa with his nine and his ten rays of the Light, *navagve angire daśagve saptāsye*, on and by whom the Dawn breaks out with all her joy and opulence. And yet all these three presentations seem to be of the same Angirasas, their characteristics and their action being otherwise identical.

Two entirely opposite explanations can be given of the double character of these seers, divine and human. They may have been originally human sages deified by their descendants and in the apotheosis given a divine parentage and a divine function; or they may have been originally demi-gods, powers of the Light and Flame, who became humanised as the fathers of the race and the discoverers of its wisdom. Both of these processes are recognisable in early mythology. In the Greek legend, for instance, Castor and Polydeuces and their sister Helen are human beings, though children of Zeus, and only deified after their death, but the probability is that originally all three were gods,—Castor and Polydeuces, the twins, riders of the horse, saviours of sailors on the ocean being almost certainly identical with the Vedic Ashwins, the Horsemen, as their name signifies, riders in the wonderful chariot, twins also, saviours of Bhujyu from the ocean, ferriers over the great waters, brothers of the Dawn, and Helen very possibly the Dawn their sister or even identical with Sarama, the hound of heaven, who is, like Dakshina, a power, almost a figure of the Dawn. But in either case there has been a farther development by which these gods or demi-gods have become invested with psychological functions, perhaps by the same process which in the Greek religion converted Athene, the Dawn, into the goddess of knowledge and Apollo, the sun, into the divine singer and seer, lord of the prophetic and poetic inspiration.

In the Veda it is possible that another tendency has been at work,—the persistent and all-pervading habit of symbolism dominant in the minds of these ancient Mystics. Everything, their own names, the names of Kings and sacrificers, the ordinary circumstances of their lives were turned into symbols and covers for their secret meaning. Just as they used the ambiguity of the word *go*, which means both ray and cow, so as to make the concrete figure of the cow, the chief form of their pastoral wealth, a cover for its hidden sense of the inner light which was the chief element in the spiritual wealth they coveted from the gods, so also they would use their own names, *Gotama* “most full of light”, *Gaviṣṭhira* “the steadfast in light” to hide a broad and general sense for their thought beneath what seemed a personal claim or desire. Thus too they used the experiences external and internal whether of themselves or of other Rishis. If there is any truth in the old legend of Shunahshepa bound as

a victim on the altar of sacrifice, it is yet quite certain, as we shall see, that in the Rig-veda the occurrence or the legend is used as a symbol of the human soul bound by the triple cord of sin and released from it by the divine power of Agni, Surya, Varuna. So also Rishis like Kutsa, Kanwa, Ushanas Kavya have become types and symbols of certain spiritual experiences and victories and placed in that capacity side by side with the gods. It is not surprising, then, that in this mystic symbolism the seven Angirasa Rishis should have become divine powers and living forces of the spiritual life without losing altogether their traditional or historic human character. We will leave, however, these conjectures and speculations aside and examine instead the part played by these three elements or aspects of their personality in the figure of the cows and the recovery of the Sun and the Dawn out of the darkness.

We note first that the word Angiras is used in the Veda as an epithet, often in connection with the image of the Dawn and the Cows. Secondly, it occurs as a name of Agni, while Indra is said to become Angirasa and Brihaspati is called *Angiras* and *Angirasa*, obviously not as a mere decorative or mythological appellation but with a special significance and an allusion to the psychological or other sense attached to the word. Even the Ashwins are addressed collectively as Angirasa. It is therefore clear that the word Angirasa is used in the Veda not merely as a name of a certain family of Rishis, but with a distinct meaning inherent in the word. It is probable also that even when used as a name it is still with a clear recognition of the inherent meaning of the name; it is probable even that names in the Veda are generally, if not always, used with a certain stress on their significance, especially the names of gods, sages and kings. The word Indra is generally used as a name, yet we have such significant glimpses of the Vedic method as the description of Usha *indrataṃ angirastamā*, "most-Indra," "most-Angirasa", and of the Panis as *amndrāḥ*, "not-Indra", expressions which evidently are meant to convey the possession or absence of the qualities, powers or functionings represented by Indra and the Angirasa. We have then to see what may be this meaning and what light it sheds on the nature or functions of the Angirasa Rishis.

The word is akin to the name Agni; for it is derived from a root *ang* which is only a nasalised form of *ag*, the root of Agni. These roots seem to convey intrinsically the sense of preeminent or forceful state, feeling, movement, action, light¹, and it is this last sense of a brilliant or burning light that gives us *Agni*, fire, *angāti*, fire, *angāra*, a burning coal and *angiras*, which must have meant flaming, glowing. Both in the Veda and the tradition of the Brahmanas the

¹ For state we have *agra*, first, top and Greek *agan*, excessively; for feeling, Greek *agape*, love, and possibly Sanskrit *anganā*, a woman, for movement and action several words in Sanskrit and in Greek and Latin.

Angirasas are in their origin closely connected with Agni. In the Brahmanas it is said that Agni is the fire and the Angirasas the burning coals, *angārā*; but in the Veda itself the indication seems rather to be that they are the flames or lustres of Agni. In X. 62, a hymn to the Angirasa Rishis, it is said of them that they are sons of Agni and have been born about him in different forms all about heaven, and in the next clause it is added, speaking of them collectively in the singular; *navagvo nu daśagvo angirastamaḥ sacā deveṣu manhate*, nine-rayed, ten-rayed, most *angiras*, this Angirasa clan becomes together full of plenty with or in the gods; aided by Indra they set free the pen of cows and horses, they give to the sacrificer the mystic eight-eared kine and thereby create in the gods *śravas*, the divine hearing or inspiration of the Truth. It is fairly evident that the Angirasa Rishis are here the radiant lustres of the divine Agni which are born in heaven, therefore of the divine Flame and not of any physical fire; they become equipped with the nine rays of the Light and the ten, become most *angiras*, that is to say most full of the blazing radiance of Agni, the divine flame, and are therefore able to release the imprisoned Light and Force and create the supramental knowledge.

Even if this interpretation of the symbolism is not accepted, yet that there is a symbolism must be admitted. These Angirasas are not human sacrificers, but sons of Agni born in heaven, although their action is precisely that of the human Angirasas, the fathers, *pitaro manuṣyāḥ*; they are born with different forms, *virūpāsaḥ*, and all this can only mean that they are various forms of the power of Agni. The question is of what Agni, the sacrificial flame, the element of fire generally or that other sacred flame which is described as “the priest with the seer-will” or “who does the work of the seer, the true, the rich in varied light of inspiration,” *agnir hotā kavikratuḥ satyaś citraśravastamaḥ* (I. 1-5)? If it is the element of fire, then the blazing lustre they represent must be that of the Sun, the fire of Agni radiating out as the solar rays and in association with Indra the sky creating the Dawn. There can be no other physical interpretation consistent with the details and circumstances of the Angirasa myth. But this explanation does not at all account for the farther description of the Angirasa Rishis as seers, as singers of the hymn, powers of Brihaspati as well as of the Sun and Dawn.

There is another passage of the Veda (VI. 6-3, 4, 5) in which the identity of these divine Angirasas with the flaming lustres of Agni is clearly and unmistakably revealed. “Wide everywhere, O pure-shining Agni, range driven by the wind thy pure shining lustres (*bhāmāsaḥ*); forcefully overpowering the heavenly Nine-rayed ones (*divyā navagvāḥ*) enjoy the woods¹ (*vanā vananti*,

¹ The logs of the sacrificial fire, according to Sayana.

significantly conveying the covert sense, 'enjoying the objects of enjoyment') breaking them up violently. O thou of the pure light, they bright and pure assail¹ (or overcome) all the earth, they are thy horses galloping in all directions. Then thy roaming shines widely vast directing their journey to the higher level of the Various-coloured (the cow, Prishni, mother of the Maruts). Then doubly (in earth and heaven?) thy tongue leaps forward like the lightning loosed of the Bull that wars for the cows." Sayana tries to avoid the obvious identification of the Rishis with the flames by giving *navagva* the sense of "new-born rays", but obviously *divyā navagvāḥ* here and the sons of Agni (in X. 62) born in heaven who are *navagva* are the same and cannot possibly be different; and the identification is confirmed, if any confirmation were needed, by the statement that in this ranging of Agni constituted by the action of the Navagwas his tongue takes the appearance of the thunderbolt of Indra, the Bull who wars for the cows, loosed from his hand and leaping forward, undoubtedly to assail the powers of darkness in the hill of heaven; for the march of Agni and the Navagwas is here described as ascending the hill (*sānu prśneḥ*) after ranging over the earth.

We have evidently here a symbolism of the Flame and the Light, the divine flames devouring the earth and then becoming the lightning of heaven and the lustre of the solar Powers; for Agni in the Veda is the light of the sun and the lightning as well as the flame found in the waters and shining on the earth. The Angirasa Rishis being powers of Agni share this manifold function. The divine flame kindled by the sacrifice supplies also to Indra the material of the lightning, the weapon, the heavenly stone, *svarya aśmā*, by which he destroys the powers of darkness and wins the cows, the solar illuminations.

Agni, the father of the Angirasa, is not only the fount and origin of these divine flames, he is also described in the Veda as himself the first, that is to say the supreme and original Angirasa, *prathamo angirāḥ*. What do the Vedic poets wish us to understand by this description? We can best understand by a glance at some of the passages in which this epithet is applied to the bright and flaming deity. In the first place it is twice associated with another fixed epithet of Agni, the Son of Force or of Energy, *sahasāḥ sūnuḥ ūrjo napāt*. Thus in VIII. 60-2, he is addressed "O Angirasa, Son of Force," *sahasāḥ sūno angirāḥ*, and in VIII. 84-4, "O Agni Angirasa, Son of Energy," *agne angira ūrjo napāt*. And in V. 11-6, it is said "Thee, O Agni, the Angirasa found established in the secret place (*guhā hitam*) lying in wood and wood (*vane vane*)" or, if we accept the indication of a covert sense we have already noted in the phrase *vana vanānti*, "in each object of enjoyment. So art thou born by being pressed

¹ Shave the hair of the earth, according to Sayana.

(*mathyamānaḥ*) a mighty force; thee they call the Son of Force, O Angirasa, *sa jāyase mathyamānaḥ saho mahat tvām āhuḥ sahasas putram angiraḥ.*" It is hardly doubtful, then, that this idea of force is an essential element in the Vedic conception of the Angirasa and it is, as we have seen, part of the meaning of the word. Force in status, action, movement, light, feeling is the inherent quality of the roots *ag* and *ang* from which we have *agni* and *angiraḥ*. Force but also, in these words, Light. Agni, the sacred flame, is the burning force of Light; the Angirasas also are burning powers of the Light.

But of what light? physical or figurative? We must not imagine that the Vedic poets were crude and savage intellects incapable of the obvious figure, common to all languages, which makes the physical light a figure of the mental and spiritual, of knowledge, of an inner illumination. The Veda speaks expressly of "luminous sages," *dyumato viprāḥ* and the word, *sūri*, a seer, is associated with Surya, the sun, by etymology and must originally have meant luminous. In I. 31-1, it is said of this god of the Flame, "Thou, O Agni, wast the first Angirasa, the seer and auspicious friend, a god, of the gods; in the law of thy working the Maruts with their shining spears were born, seers who do the work by the knowledge." Clearly, then, in the conception of Agni Angirasa there are two ideas, knowledge and action; the luminous Agni and the luminous Maruts are by their light seers of the knowledge, *ṛṣi*, *kavi*; and by the light of knowledge the forceful Maruts do the work because they are born or manifested in the characteristic working (*vrata*) of Agni. For Agni himself has been described to us as having the seer-will, *kavikratuḥ*, the force of action which works according to the inspired or supramental knowledge (*śravas*), for it is that knowledge and not intellectuality which is meant by the word *kavi*. What then is this great force, Agni Angirasa, *saho mahat*, but the flaming force of the divine consciousness with its two twin qualities of Light and Power working in perfect harmony,—even as the Maruts are described, *kavayo vidmanā apasaḥ*, seers working by the knowledge? We have had reason to conclude that Usha is the divine Dawn and not merely the physical, that her cows or rays of the Dawn and the Sun are the illuminations of the dawning divine consciousness and that therefore the Sun is the Illuminer in the sense of the Lord of Knowledge and that Swar, the solar world beyond heaven and earth, is the world of the divine Truth and Bliss, in a word, that Light in the Veda is the symbol of knowledge, of the illumination of the divine Truth. We now begin to have reason for concluding that the Flame, which is only another aspect of Light, is the Vedic symbol for the Force of the divine consciousness, of the supramental Truth.

In another passage, VI. 11-3, we have mention of the "seer most illumined of the Angirasas," *vepiṣṭho angirasām vipraḥ*, where the reference is not at all clear. Sayana, ignoring the collocation *vepiṣṭho vipraḥ* which at once fixes the

sense of *vepiṣṭha* as equivalent to most *vipra*, most a seer, most illumined, supposes that Bharadwaja, the traditional Rishi of the hymn, is here praising himself as the "greatest praiser" of the gods; but this is a doubtful suggestion. Here it is Agni who is the *hotā*, the priest; it is he who is sacrificing to the gods, to his own embodiment, *tanvam tava svām* (VI. 11-2), to the Maruts, Mitra, Varuna, Heaven and Earth. "For in thee," says the hymn, "the thought even though full of riches desires still the gods, the (divine) births, for the singer of the hymn that he may sacrifice to them, when the sage, the most luminous of the Angirasas, utters the rhythm of sweetness in the sacrifice." It would almost seem that Agni himself is the sage, the most luminous of the Angirasas. On the other hand, the description seems to be more appropriate to Brihaspati.

For Brihaspati is also an Āngirasa and one who becomes the Angirasa. He is, as we have seen, closely associated with the Angiras Rishis in the winning of the luminous cattle and he is so associated as Brahmanaspati, as the Master of the sacred or inspired word (*brahman*); for by his cry Vala is split to pieces and the cows answer lowing with desire to his call. As powers of Agni these Rishis are like him *kavikratu*; they possess the divine Light, they act by it with the divine force; they are not only Rishis, but heroes of the Vedic war, *divas putrāso asurasya virāḥ* (III. 53-7), sons of heaven, heroes of the Mighty Lord, they are, as described in VI. 75-9, "The Fathers who dwell in the sweetness (the world of bliss), who establish the wide birth, moving in the difficult places, possessed of force, profound,¹ with their bright host and their strength of arrows, invincible, heroes in their being, wide overcomers of the banded foes": but also, they are, as the next verse describes them, *brāhmanāsaḥ pitarah somyāsaḥ*, that is, they have the divine word and the inspired knowledge it carries with it.² This divine word is the *satya mantra*, it is the thought by whose truth the Angirasas bring the Dawn to birth and make the lost Sun to rise in the heavens. This word is also called the *arka*, a vocable which means both hymn and light and is sometimes used of the sun. It is therefore the word of illumination, the word which expresses the truth of which the Sun is the lord, and its emergence from the secret seat of the Truth is associated with the outpouring by the Sun of its herded radiances; so we read in VII. 36-1, "Let the Word come forward from the seat of the Truth; the Sun has released wide by its rays the cows," *pra brahmatu sadanād ṛtasya, vi raśmbhiḥ sasrje sūryo gāḥ*. It has to be won posses-

¹ Cf the description in X. 62-5 of the Angirasas as sons of Agni, different in form, but all profound in knowledge, *gambhīravepasah*.

² This seems to be the sense of the word Brahmana in the Veda. It certainly does not mean Brahmins by caste or priests by profession, the Fathers here are warriors as well as sages. The four castes are only mentioned in the Rīg-veda once, in that profound but late composition, the Purushasukta.

sion of like the Sun itself and the gods have to give their aid for that possession (*arkasya sātāu*) as well as for the possession of the Sun (*sūryasya sātāu*) and of Swar (*svarśatau*).

The Angirasa, therefore, is not only an Agni-power, he is also a Brihaspati-power. Brihaspati is called more than once the Āngirasa, as in VI. 73-1, *yo adribhāt prathamajā ṛtāva bṛhaspatir āngiraso havismān*, "Brihaspati, breaker of the hill (the cave of the Panis), the first-born who has the Truth, the Āngirasa, he of the oblation." And in X. 47-6, we have a still more significant description of Brihaspati as the Āngirasa; *pra saptaguṇ rtadhītim sumedhām bṛhaspatim matir acchā jigāti*, X. 47-6, *ya āngiraso namasā upasadyaḥ*. "The thought goes towards Brihaspati the seven-rayed, the truth-thinking, the perfect intelligence, who is the Āngirasa, to be approached with obeisance." In II. 23-18, also, Brihaspati is addressed as Angirasa in connection with the release of the cows and the release of the waters: "For the glory of thee the hill parted asunder when thou didst release upward the pen of the cows; with Indra for ally thou didst force out, O Brihaspati, the flood of the waters which was environed by the darkness." We may note in passing how closely the release of the waters, which is the subject of the Vritra legend, is associated with the release of the cows which is the subject of the legend of the Angirasa Rishis and the Panis and that both Vritra and the Panis are powers of the darkness. The cows are the light of the Truth, the true illumining sun, *satyam tat...sūryam*; the waters released from the environing darkness of Vritra are called sometimes the streams of the Truth, *ṛtasya dhārāḥ* and sometimes *svarvatir āpaḥ*, the waters of Swar, the luminous solar world.

We see then that the Angirasa is in the first place a power of Agni the seer-will; he is the seer who works by the light, by the knowledge; he is a flame of the puissance of Agni, the great force that is born into the world to be the priest of the sacrifice and the leader of the journey, the puissance which the gods are said by Vamadeva (IV. 1-1) to establish here as the Immortal in mortals, the energy that does the great work (*arati*). In the second place, he is a power or at least has the power of Brihaspati, the truth-thinking and seven-rayed, whose seven rays of the light hold that truth which he thinks (*rtadhītim*) and whose seven mouths repeat the word that expresses the truth, the god of whom it is said (IV. 50-4,5), "Brihaspati coming first to birth out of the great Light in the highest heaven, born in many forms, seven-mouthed, seven-rayed (*saptāsyāḥ sapta-raśmih*), by his cry dispelled the darkness; he by his host with the Rik and the Stubh (the hymn of illumination and the rhythm that affirms the gods) broke Vala by his cry." It cannot be doubted that by this host or troop of Brihaspati (*susṭubhā ṛkvatā gaṇena*) are meant the Angirasa Rishis who by the true mantra help in the great victory.

Indra is also described as becoming an Angirasa or as becoming possessed of the Angirasa quality. "May he become most Angirasa with the Angirasas, being the Bull with bulls (the bull is the male power or Purusha, *ṛ*, with regard to the Rays and the Waters who are the cows, *gāvah*, *dhenavaḥ*), the Friend with friends, the possessor of the Rik with those who have the Rik (*ṛgmibhir ṛgmī*), with those who make the journey (*gātubhiḥ*, the souls that advance on the path towards the Vast and True) the greatest; may Indra become associated with the Maruts (*marutvān*) for our thriving". The epithets here (I. 100-4) are all the proper epithets of the Angirasa Rishis and Indra is supposed to take upon himself the qualities or relations that constitute Angirashood. So in III. 31-7, "Most illumined in knowledge (*vipratamaḥ*, answering to the *vepiṣṭho angirasām viprah* of VI. 11-3), becoming a friend (*sakhīyan*, the Angirasas are friends or comrades in the great battle) he went (*agacchat*, upon the path, cf. *gātubhiḥ*, discovered by Sarama); the hill sped forth its pregnant contents (*garvham*) for the doer of the good work; strong in manhood with the young (*maryo yuvabhīḥ*, the youth also giving the idea of unaging, undecaying force) he sought fullness of riches and won possession (*sasāna makhasyan*); so at once, chanting the hymn (*arcan*), he became an Angirasa." This Indra who assumes all the qualities of the Angirasa is, we must remember, the Lord of Swar, the wide world of the Sun or the Truth, and descends to us with his two shining horses, *harī*, which are called in one passage *sūryasya ketū*, the sun's two powers of perception or of vision in knowledge, in order to war with the sons of darkness and aid the great journey. If we have been right in all that we have concluded with regard to the esoteric sense of the Veda, Indra must be the Power (*indra*, the Puissant,¹ the powerful lord) of the divine Mind born in man and there increasing by the Word and the Soma to his full divinity. This growth continues by the winning and growth of the Light, till Indra reveals himself fully as the lord of all the luminous herds which he sees by the "eye of the sun", the divine Mind master of all the illuminations of knowledge.

Indra in becoming the Angirasa, becomes *marutvān*, possessed of or companioned by the Maruts, and these Maruts, luminous and violent gods of the storm and the lightning, uniting in themselves the vehement power of Vayu, the Wind, the Breath, the Lord of Life and the force of Agni, the Seer-Will, are therefore seers who do the work by the knowledge, *kavayo vidmanā apasaḥ*, as well as battling forces who by the power of the heavenly Breath and the heavenly lightning overthrow the established things, the artificial obstructions, *krtrimān rodhānsi*, in which the sons of Darkness have entrenched themselves, and aid Indra to overcome Vritra and the Dasyus. They seem to be in the

¹ But also perhaps "shining", cf. *indu*, the moon; *ma*, glorious, the sun; *mdh*, to kindle.

esoteric Veda the Life-Powers that support by their nervous or vital energies the action of the thought in the attempt of the mortal consciousness to grow or expand itself into the immortality of the Truth and Bliss. In any case, they also are described in VI. 49-11, as acting with the qualities of the Angirasa (*angirasvat*), "O young and seers and powers of the sacrifice, Maruts, come uttering the word to the high place (or desirable plane of earth or the hill, *adhi sānu prśneḥ*, VI. 6-4, which is probably the sense of *varasyām*), powers increasing, rightly moving (on the path, *gātu*) like the Angirasa,¹ give joy even to that which is not illumined (*acitram*, that which has not received the varied light of the dawn, the night of our ordinary darkness)." We see there the same characteristics of the Angirasa action, the eternal youth and force of Agni (*agne yavi-ṣṭha*), the possession and utterance of the Word, the seer-hood, the doing of the work of sacrifice, the right movement on the great path which leads, as we shall see, to the world of the Truth, to the vast and luminous bliss. The Maruts are even said to be (X. 78-5) as it were "Angirasas with their Sama hymns, they who take all forms," *viśvarūpā angiraso na sāmabhiḥ*.

All this action and movement are made possible by the coming of Usha, the Dawn. Usha also is described as *angrastamā* and in addition as *indrataṃā*. The power of Agni, the Angirasa power, manifests itself also in the lightning of Indra and in the rays of the Dawn. Two passages may be cited which throw light on this aspect of the Angirasa force. The first is VII. 79-2,3. "The Dawns make their rays to shine out in the extremities of heaven, they labour like men who are set to a work. The rays set fleeing the darkness, they extend the Light as if the sun were extending its two arms. Usha has become (or, come into being) most full of Indra power (*indrataṃā*), opulent in riches and has given birth to the inspirations of knowledge for our happy going (or for good and bliss), the goddess, daughter of Heaven, most full of Angirasa-hood (*angirasatamā*), orders her riches for the doer of good works." The riches in which Usha is opulent cannot be anything else than the riches of the Light and the Power of the Truth; full of Indra power, the power of the divine illumined mind, she gives the inspirations of that mind (*śravānsi*) which lead us towards the Bliss, and by the flaming radiant Angirasa-power in her she bestows and arranges her treasures for those who do aright the great work and thus move rightly on the path, *itthā nakṣanto angirasvat* (VI. 49-11).

The second passage is in VII. 75. "Dawn, heaven born, has opened up (the veil of darkness) by the Truth and she comes making manifest the vastness

¹ It is to be noted that Sayana here hazards the idea that Angirasa means the moving rays (from *ang* to move) or the Angirasa Rishis. If the great scholar had been able to pursue with greater courage his ideas to their logical conclusion, he would have anticipated the modern theory in its most essential points.

(*mahimānam*), she has drawn away the veil of harms and of darkness (*druhas tamaḥ*) and all that is unloved; most full of Angirasa-hood she manifests the paths (of the great journey). Today, O Dawn, awake for us for the journey to the vast bliss (*mahe suvitāya*), extend (thy riches) for a vast state of enjoyment, confirm in us a wealth of varied brightness (*citram*) full of inspired knowledge (*śravasym*), in us mortals, O human and divine. These are the lustres of the visible Dawn which have come varied-bright (*citrāḥ*) and immortal; bringing to birth the divine workings they diffuse themselves, filling those of the mid-region," *janayanto daivyāni vratāni, āpṛnanto antarikṣā vyasthuḥ* (Riks 1, 2, 3). Again we have the Angirasa power associated with the journey, the revelation of its paths by the removal of the darkness and the bringing of the radiances of the Dawn; the Panis represent the harms (*druhaḥ*, hurts or those who hurt) done to man by the evil powers, the darkness is their cave; the journey is that which leads to the divine happiness and the state of immortal bliss by means of our growing wealth of light and power and knowledge; the immortal lustres of the Dawn which give birth in man to the heavenly workings and fill with them the workings of the mid-regions between earth and heaven, that is to say, the functioning of those vital planes governed by Vayu which link our physical and pure mental being, may well be the Angirasa powers. For they too gain and maintain the truth by maintaining unhurt the divine workings (*amardhanto daivyā vratām*). This is indeed their function, to bring the divine Dawn into mortal nature so that the visible goddess pouring out her riches may be there, at once divine and human, *devi marṭeṣu mānuṣi*, the goddess human in mortals.

“OVERHEAD POETRY”*

(In the April issues of 1954 and 1955 we published Sri Aurobindo’s comments on certain poems by an Ashram inmate which he had characterised as “overhead”—that is, as directly inspired in vision, word and rhythm by the planes of consciousness above the “poetic intelligence”, the planes called by him Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind. As poetry of this type is said by him to make the major element of what he has designated in general as “the future poetry”—the other element being creation from the inner occult and psychic levels—we are adding, for the help of both poets and critics, a few more examples, from the same writer, of this rare and difficult inspiration together with Sri Aurobindo’s brief but enlightening analytic remarks. To point the examples better, some pieces are included in which there are lines intermediate between the full “overhead” and the mental plane.)

THE FALL

Our spirit is a paradise blown down,
A sun deflowered, a leprosy of light;
But all its crumbling sacrificial sparks
Drop from the inviolate ether to arouse
An earth-apocalypse slumbering unlit,
A brazier of giant mystery
Lost like a mouth of dream whose tongue lacks fire!
The shredded silver and the shrunken gold,
Caught by this dark divinity of clay,
Shall laugh and blossom brighter than the unmarred
Roses of heaven rooted in sapphire hush.

Sri Aurobindo’s Comments:

“Not overhead except in substance, but very fine poetry. The ‘leprosy of light’ is a rather violent expression perhaps, but still....It is perhaps the rhythm of the lines that belongs to the mental rather than the overhead subtlety and largeness, though the rhythm is good, being strong and effective. The ideas and language

¹ Held over from the April issue

“OVERHEAD POETRY”

by themselves have the turn of the Illumined Mind, but the rhythmic breath and power are not of that kind. The images and language are very fine.”

OVERSELF

All things are lost in Him, all things are found:
He rules an infinite hush that hears each sound.

But fragmentary quivers blossom there
To voice on mingling voice of shadowless air,

Bodies of fire and ecstasies of line
Where passion's mortal music grows divine—

For, in that spacious revel glimmers through
Each form one single trance of breakless blue.

Sri Aurobindo's Comments:

“Higher Mind throughout, illumined. The first and third couplets exceedingly fine, perfect poetic expressions of what they want to say—the other two are less inevitable, although the second lines in both are admirable. Lines 2, 5, 6 are among the best you have written; they have a certain revelatory power.”

DEEPS

Silent I roam by the tumultuous sea
That, unreminded of man's mortal noise,
My heart may feel the imperishable voice
Waken a solitary god in me.

Travails of time are sunk: the pure deeps grow,
By their miraculous infinite of sound,
Measure of some tranquillity profound
That never human grief can overthrow.

MOTHER INDIA

Sri Aurobindo's Comments:

"It is quite up to the mark—very fine. Higher Mind, I think, with lines 6 and 7 raised up to what might be called (if we must find a name for these combinations) Higher Mind Intuition. There are various combinations possible, as in the process of sublimation each higher plane infuses itself into those below and then takes them up into itself."

NIGHT HILLS

Here on night-hills all passion-clamours cease:
And to the wonder-spacious lonely mind
The word of the incomprehensible wind
Bears but a perfume of eternal peace;

Until—on highest crags of heaven-surmise—
Evoked by a spirit moon from the heart's deep,
Plumbless inaudible waves of shining sleep
Drown the mortality of lifted eyes.

Sri Aurobindo's Comments:

Lines 2, 3, 4—"It is from the Illumined Mind that they come with a touch of the mystic intuitive, but only a touch."

Lines 6, 7, 8—"These lines have a very high poetic and mystic value. They are a mixed result of Illumined Mind and occult vision with something else that is mystically indefinite."

ANANDA

Rapture that cuts away time-transient shows
Like petals from the odour of a rose:

One breath of luminous all-absorbing hush—
So wide a love that nowhere need it rush:

Calm ether of an infinite embrace—
Beauty unblurred by limbs or longing face.

“OVERHEAD POETRY”

Sri Aurobindo’s Comments:

“Very beautiful. Higher and Illumined Minds rolled into each other with the Intuition to give an uplifting touch.”

GODS

They give us life with some high burning breath,
Life which but draws a golden road to death.
In vain we lift warm hands that quiver and cry
Unto the blue salvation of the sky.

Above, transparencies divine are spread
Of fusing fires—gay purple, eager red;
But who there heeds our love? Thwarted, alone,
We struggle through an atmosphere of stone.

The heaven-coloured distances lie dumb—
But all our hush is sleep or clay grown numb:
A blinded beauty fills our heart, a sun
Lost in gigantic self-oblivion.

Those ever-shining quietudes of bliss
How shall we know—pale wanderers from kiss to kiss?

Sri Aurobindo’s Comments:

“Very fine. The markings in the poem [at lines 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12] are meant to indicate lines of a high and inevitable felicity—revelatory in their expression and significance. Intuition seems to be their source. The others are more mental, but fine in their kind.”

RISHI

He brought the calm of a gigantic sleep:
Earth’s mind—a flicker gathering sudden gold—
Merged with unknowable vistas to come back
A fire whose tongue had tasted paradise.

MOTHER INDIA

A plumbless music rolled from his far mouth:
Waves of primeval secrecy broke white
Along the heart's shores, a rumour of deathless love
Afloat like a vast moon upon the deep.

Sri Aurobindo's Comments:

"A very fine poem, lines 1, 4 are from the Illumined Higher Mind. The second comes very splendidly from the Illumined Mind, the third is Higher Mind at a high level. The fifth comes from the Higher Mind—the sixth, seventh and eighth from the Illumined Mind touched with something from the Overmind Intuition, though the touch is more evident in 6 and 8."

SILVER GRACE

A love has sealed us one with paradise—
A kiss of crescent moon upon earth's soul
By virgin raptures dreaming in the blue
That even the pit of hell is a buried sky.
No warrior gold can pierce the veil of time;
For God's own glory here has sunk asleep,
And how shall that abyss of majesty
Brook from its summit-self a lash of light?
Therefore this love's seducing glimmer came,
This haloed serpent of the Infinite,
A white bliss curving through our blinded deeps
To give the darkness' mouth a shadowless smile.

Sri Aurobindo's Comments:

"A very fine poem throughout. The 2nd and 3rd lines are from the Illumined Mind. The first from the Higher Mind—the fourth is in substance from the Illumined Mind but there is a mental rhythm—very good and expressive rhythm, no doubt. The rest is the Higher Mind with touch of Illumination and Intuition—the last three lines are the Illumined Mind with Overmind Intuition touch, extremely fine."

FLASHES

“I cannot sing,” you told me.
And when you spoke,
Your face did the singing.

* * *

In the tumult of your joy you could not walk straight to me—
And the dance was born.
When you started to relate your ecstasy, words were not enough—
And music was born.

* * *

A white dove told a black one, “See, I am beautiful”.
The black dove thought for a moment and said,
“But we both have red feet to stand upon and equal wings to soar above.”

* * *

Water tasted bitter and I changed it.
But when honey did not taste sweet
I knew something was wrong with me.

* * *

I went to a cinema.
I saw the white screen when I entered.
I saw the white screen when I came out.
I am wiser now.

* * *

He was playing the flute.
I closed my eyes to hear him.
He has stopped playing.
I can still hear him play.

* * *

MOTHER INDIA

Once I heard a crow caw in the night.
It cawed in the morning,
And I thought it was night.

* * *

I wanted to follow footsteps;
So I went to the sandy shore nearby;
But the footsteps were all mingled.
Then I went to a lonely track;
And there were the footsteps I was looking for.

* * *

He was going to the temple daily.
One day he looked more serene but he broke the idol.
People called him an atheist but he knew he was near his journey's end.
When he died he left all his money to them for a new idol.

* * *

It was a balmy day.
But storm-clouds gathered as if from nowhere; and a storm broke.
It is again calm and sunny;
But my garden is no more there.

* * *

I asked a painter to give me a picture of a man who had embraced the cosmos.
He replied, "I am myself looking for such a picture."

* * *

He is sad today, for his dog has died.
The dog was not of a high pedigree nor would it fetch a newspaper for him;
But it always wagged its tail when he came.

* * *

FLASHES

A student misspelled a word; so his teacher asked him to write it a hundred times.
He wrote for a while but he grew tired.
The teacher said, "Then write any other word two hundred times"; and he did.
That word was his own name, and he was still not tired.

* * *

The secret of the seed is the tree;
And the secret of the tree is the seed.
But the secret of both is the One who is neither seed nor tree.

* * *

When I closed my ear to turn off the noise I lost also the music.
It was only when I intensified the music that the noise did not trouble me.

* * *

I was sitting erect to listen to you;
But when it was the time to bow down
I felt the stiffness of my neck.

* * *

I was thirsty, so my thirst took me to the lake;
But I could drink only two glasses.

* * *

I got up very early today to fill myself up with the sweetness of the early hours.
And I did not put on the light, for I wanted not to startle the night into day.

* * *

Oh musician! your music is sublime.
But it is of no help to my friend.
For he enjoys music only if it comes through a flute.

* * *

MOTHER INDIA

Extravagant you are in giving your divine nectar.
But lacking white empty vessels how shall we carry it?

* * *

I had desired that book;
But when you distributed it freely to everyone,
I took my copy just to write my name in it.

* * *

There was a little bud on a plant in my garden.
When it could not bear the rapture of its own existence, it burst into flower.

* * *

I like you and you like me.
But let us not walk directly to each other,
For we may lose the way.

* * *

Let us walk on our parallel paths,
And we shall meet at Infinity
In the full glory of our Selves.

* * *

I went to the origin of music—
And that was you, my Beloved!
From that height all is music.

* * *

My heart beats violently and it may burst.
But I do not care,
Because I know for Whom it is restless.

NAREN SAMPAT

POEMS

ROSE OF LIGHT

O SWEETNESS of the deep Soul's flame-born Face,
O Sun-gold flower of the marvellous grace,
Break ever the stone-trance of Night grown sod:
Its mournful base change with Thy touch of God!

O Greatness of the spirit-vast shadowless Truth!
O Power of the Immortals conquering breath!
O Bloom of wisdom, Smile of Eternity!
Kindle in my heart-throbs Thy ecstasy.

Rose of Light changeless, make this nothing Thine—
Each moment waiting on Thy gesture divine.

VENKATRANGA

PEAK OF LONELINESS

MOUNT of Initiation, diamond delight,
Thou sparkest the spirit, dost electrify the soul!
Holy of Holies, hidden from the world,
Isis of heaven-lands, with veils unlifted still!

School of Mystery, under the open sky
Life of wonder, lived but never told.
Magnet for human creepers about to spread wings on high,
Home for today's Olympus, greater than angels or men.

Power-station for dreamers-dreams that have to come true,
Child of Anandaloka, and School for the Masters of Time!
Heaven on earth—making a heaven of earth—
Seed of the Kingdom that Sri Aurobindo rules!

EDWIN OSCAR SMITH

MOTHER INDIA

INFINITY

LIKE a wind-driven cloud to a shore that none can measure,
I lose myself within thy infinite sky,—
A limitless space surrounds me, far I fly,
Searching in vain for thy body in the boundless azure.

I cry aloud but hear from the ethers blow
Never one voice to reply, 'End here shalt thou meet':
Only the heart mocks with its mortal beat,
A void vast menaces everywhere I go.

NRIPEN ROY

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Infinite: Sri Aurobindo. Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956. Pp. iii 45. Price: Re. 1/-

What serves as preface or foreword to this small book of poems on Sri Aurobindo's life by a young man of 24 is a pithy message from the Mother of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram in response to her poetic disciple's prayer for her blessing:

In silence
is the greatest
respect.

Lest this message should be misconstrued, we may mention that it was given with no motive of discouragement. In its bearing on the present context, we may interpret it to mean in general that even the words of utmost respect are bound to fall infinitely short of the proper respect that is due to a supreme Master like Sri Aurobindo.

Considering that difficulty and the youthfulness of the poet we may state that on the whole the work has been creditably done—particularly since biographical matter is apt to be intractable to poetic treatment. Chinmoy succeeds time and again in transmuting his facts into revealing truths with the help of an alert imagination. Defects may be spotted in places—weak lines, insufficiently strong poem-endings, easily-found or congested phrases—but on the balance there is a good deal of achievement.

The style in most poems is simple enough, and it varies pleasingly from page to page except that certain turns which may be defended as key-expressions have a tendency to recur. The technical form is not monotonous. The vision has many facets and off and on it is markedly concrete and profound at the same time. It is such occasionally by an unassuming pointedness:

The only way to grow
Is to aim beyond our reach.
We are in a ceaseless flow
To seize the fount of peace—

MOTHER INDIA

or by a packed suggestive felicity as in the last two lines of the quatrain referring to Sri Aurobindo's stay in divinely missioned hiding at Chandernagore after leaving abruptly the political scene:

A boat plying on the Ganges' breast
Carries Bengal's brave son away
To live hush-held all night and day
Within a secret, vigilant nest—

or else by a quiet yet wide-sweeping use of a metaphorical compound:

The myriad knowledge-stars in him take birth.

On other occasions we have a straightforward statement which still becomes memorable on account of its imaginative overtones:

Through the deep of night Vasishtha unveiled the truth.

A fine power too is at play sometimes, expressing much in a little space as in these three lines that almost sum up Sri Aurobindo's Yoga:

In you the flood
Of God's gold vision to create
Deathless life-blood.

A similar idea is expressed from the opposite side with an appealing homeliness by:

...For ever in Thee
The ceaseless fount of Life Divine:
The earth with heaven's height shall dine.

In a book of this type there are two dangers. One is a turbid metaphysical tone crowding high-light terms like "infinity", "eternity", "divinity" without true soul-tension. In some turns Chinmoy comes pretty close to such a tone: take a verse like

Alas! desires of men
Limit their infinite soul-potency;
And so they fail to dwell
Within thy golden immortality.

But mostly the danger is avoided by the keen heart-touch of the poet, giving sincerity to the lofty-worded ideas. In the heart-touch itself, however, is the second of the two dangers. When a disciple writes about the life of a Guru whom he regards—quite rightly—as an Avatar, devotionism is likely to run riot in facile praise or in loading every biographical event with portentous significance. Thus the third poem entitled *The Call from the West* pictures Europe as inviting Sri Aurobindo when a boy to enlighten it: the first stanza runs—

“Stay not for ever rapt in the East alone.
 We too must plunge into thy Bliss.
 O Lord of the gods! thy Presence august we crave.
 Torture our naked pride with thy Peace...”

Critics may complain here of a forced note as well of a spiritual romanticising or fancifulness. But we have to remember that the inner meaning of things is sought to be read and the conjunction here is not really between a boy of seven and a Europe hectic or haughty with materialism but between the Soul-being of the West oppressed by the outer materialistic triumphs and the hidden divinity whose instrument was the Bengali boy sent to England for a thoroughly European education which subsequently proved so great a means to charge English literature with the Master Yogi's light.

All may not agree with a defence of this kind, but as regards the matter of “facile praise” we may definitely say that though Chinmoy has plenty of praise it is usually far from facile and his undoubted devotion has been chastened by a conscience both spiritual and artistic. This conscience is not content to utter the heart unless the speech attains significant form and unless the sense of ineffable profundities envelops the leaping emotion so that the poetry keeps aware of the silence to which the Mother points in her message.

S. F. B.

ON THE VISIT OF THE SOVIET GYMNASTS

WE were astonished by the feats of the Soviet gymnasts and delighted by their superb all-round performance. They are perhaps the world's greatest in the graceful art of body-control. We were impressed by their dignified, courteous and winsome deportment, befitting those who are conscious of being ambassadors of good-will. Let us reflect on the deeper significance of their visit to India—and to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in particular—at this high moment of history.

That an *ashram* should invite a team of *gymnasts* is in itself a striking fact. But as Sri Aurobindo said,

The way of Yoga followed here has a different purpose from others, for its aim is not only to rise out of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness into the divine consciousness, but to bring the Supramental power of that divine consciousness down into the ignorance of mind, life and body to transform them, to manifest the Divine here and create a divine life in Matter.

The Master adds,

The physical consciousness and physical being, the body itself, must reach a perfection in all that it is and does which now we can hardly conceive.

The Mother has been translating this side of the ideal of the Integral Yoga into terms of a comprehensive system of Physical Education, a programme which impressed the visiting gymnasts with its potentialities. The Mother has expressed as follows her vision of a dynamic physical transformation:

In the sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions, which will give it the perfect proportions and the ideal beauty of form. And this harmony will be progressive, for the truth of being is never static; it is a continual unfolding of a growing, a more and more global and comprehensive perfection.

ON THE VISIT OF THE SOVIET GYMNASTS

That *Soviet* gymnasts should visit an *ashram* is also an important sign of the times. It is reported that our visitors were intrigued by the clear distinction drawn here between "religion" and the spiritual life. When they asked what religion the Ashram represents, they were told that we do not think in terms of religion, but rather in terms of our integral growth in the Life Divine. This Ashram is absolutely universal and non-sectarian and does not concern itself in the least with the disciple's background of religion. Transcending both "the ascetic refusal" and "the materialist denial", the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is concerned only with our utmost integral development, seeking individual integration as the indispensable foundation for a real and enduring world integration.

Soviet youth, like the youth and the intelligentsia of India and a large part of the modern world, have assumed that one must choose between "religion" and materialism of one sort or another. The Yoga and the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo are a living demonstration of a *third alternative*—an experiential approach to spiritual realities, an open-eyed quest for integral self-fulfilment for the individual, the nation and the world. This third alternative, dynamic and attractive, is destined to grow in the eyes of the world of tomorrow.

At this time when the Soviet Union has been taking many striking steps towards what may prove to be a new era of peace and freedom, it may be pointed out that Sri Aurobindo is a reconciler *par excellence* between Orient and Occident. A distinguished American scholar has remarked that Sri Aurobindo has a genius for appreciating the valid elements in many apparently irreconcilable positions, showing the essential contribution of each to a higher synthesis, a larger concord.

In his Message to America, requested on the occasion of the 15th August 1949, the Master emphasised that Orient and Occident

have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move.

The one may have had a more insistent leaning towards spirituality and the other towards material abundance, but the latter too has had its saints and sages and mystics, while the former has not lacked in this-worldly pursuits. They

have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before. There is a common hope, a common destiny; both are needed as co-workers.

MOTHER INDIA

The Mother has been teaching us to see all peoples, above the ordinary level of Cold War alignments, in the light of the Great Transformation demanded of all of us in this apocalyptic age. We should hail with profound gratitude the substantial signs of the dawn of a new era in the life of the Soviet Union and of the world. These changes are the result of the play of the great forces in whose reality and potency we profess to believe. These changes are a challenge to our powers of adaptability, a demand for extraordinary plasticity; they call for the abandonment of stereotyped Cold War reactions, in favour of a response at once realistic and creative.

In his Message to America concerning the traditional view of Orient vs. Occident, Sri Aurobindo said:

It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisation of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere.

Was it not for such a time as this that Sri Aurobindo, envisaging on India's first Independence Day "a fairer, brighter and nobler life of all mankind," predicted that "a new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race"? The visit of the Soviet gymnasts, like many other similar events, is due in no small part to the fact that India has responded to the Master Patriot's challenge on that great day in 1947, when he said of the march towards world unity,

Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development.

Was it accidental that the visit of the gymnasts of the U.S.S.R. occurred during a period of the Ashram's history which witnessed also an impressive procession of leaders of the new India to this centre? The President and the Prime Minister of India, several ministers of the Indian Union, the Governors, Chief Ministers and other officials of a number of states, the President of the Indian National Congress and a host of other leaders have visited the Samadhi and the Ashram of the Master Seer. Whatever may have been the conscious motives of these distinguished visitors, are their visits not symbolic of the

ON THE VISIT OF THE SOVIET GYMNASTS

fact that in the Divine Providence for this tremendous age there is here not only the Vision of a new world of peace and freedom, portrayed in *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and other works, but also a dynamic adequate to moving human society from a precarious co-existence to a stable and progressive world integration?

It was in a simple but moving Message that the Mother welcomed the Soviet Gymnasts at the Ashram sports ground at the beginning of their great exhibition:

We salute you, brothers, already so far on the way to the physical perfection for which we all aspire here. Be welcome in the Ashram amongst us. We feel sure that today one step more is taken towards the unity of the great human family.

JAY SMITH

Students' Section

PEACE AND SILENCE

(A TALK BY THE MOTHER)

Q. How are we to establish a stable peace and silence in the mind?

First you have to will, and then you have to try, and go on trying. There are many methods. Here is one. Sit down and, instead of thinking of fifty things, say to yourself, "Peace, peace, peace". Imagine the calmness and silence. Don't look at the thoughts, don't listen to their noise. How do you act when somebody annoys you very much and you want to get rid of him? You simply refuse to listen, you turn your head away and think of other things. Treat your thoughts in the same manner.

Snatch opportunities again and again to sit down and create the spell of "peace". Do it as soon as you wake in the morning and when you go to bed in the evening. It will have a good effect on your health also. Do it a few minutes before eating. You will be surprised how much it helps you to digest your food.

If you continue long enough, peace will not have to enter into your head: whatever you do, whatever the circumstances, it will always be there. But this takes years. In the beginning keep up the peace-formula for two or three minutes—in a very simple way. When a practice is complicated, one has to make efforts, and to make efforts is to stop being tranquil. How do you call an intimate friend to yourself? A mere effortless word and there he is beside you. Just so, you have to make peace your friend and call it.

POT-TRICK

(A Boyhood Reminiscence)

I HAVE tried to search the depths of my memory for some interesting incident of my boyhood days prior to my coming to Pondicherry. Little is there worth lifting up to the daylight. All the same I am selecting one event to serve the purpose of our home-work for the second year Prose Class of the International University of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

I was then eleven years old. A friendly club of Bhavnagar (Saurashtra) of which I was not a member invited me to play a cricket match. I had no idea of this team's capacity nor of the opponents'. Winning the toss we put in the opposite team to bat. In those times such a choice was the fashion, as it was considered a glory to tie the defeat with wickets—even a single wicket—rather than with mere runs.

I was offered the chance of being the opening bowler. My heart began to pound with anxiety; for I had never before gauged my full bowling capacity. And what worried me all the more was that my team had no second good bowler. The fate of the match hung solely on my performance. The first thing I did was to control my nervousness.

The captain of the opposite-team, as if to challenge my power, came out to open the attack of his side. He was a strong and sturdy boy, three or four years older than I. After taking the leg and off sides from the Umpire, he stood before the stumps like an impregnable mountain. Somehow I had felt that the result of the whole battle was weighed heavily on the first six balls I would deliver. The match was of a single innings meant to last sixty to eighty minutes.

So I concentrated my energy and will-power as much as I could on each of the six balls of the first "over". I did it to such an extent that bowling became the only *raison d'être* of my life!—my entire past slipped away from me no less than all idea of the future.

With a calm and steady mind I delivered the first ball of the match. The captain was cleaned bowled! Two stumps had fallen down and the third totally shaken off. I relaxed myself in a deep joy. This escape from the concentration was, however, momentary; five balls were still to go. I then delivered the second and third balls with the result that it became a hat-trick! There was such a loud clapping and shouting from both the teams that my boyish heart

did not know how to contain its exhilaration. With the coming in of the fourth batsman the atmosphere grew even more tense than before.

Had there been a limit in my aim I would have been quite satisfied with a hat-trick to my credit and cared little how the remaining two balls of the first over were delivered. But, no, that day was to show me something of which I never had the least idea. The result of the fourth ball was the immediate return of the fourth wicket! Disgusted, he kept looking behind now and then at the fallen stumps. His features wore an expression even of doubt and suspicion as the action had taken place so quickly and suddenly. So it was a pot-trick (four consecutive wickets) which I had only heard about but never seen either in a match or during practice.

Though it was only a solitary phenomenon, it exercised a profound influence on my future life. Thenceforward I began to feel that it was possible even for a boy to do whatever he wanted to, provided he had the necessary concentration and will-force at his command. It was brought home to me that hesitation, doubt and worry must be ruthlessly banished the moment we are on the field of action. Only the trust in the all-pervading Power should be our guide and light.

NAGIN DOSHI

24-12-1955

POEMS

ASCENT-DESCENT

WITH all in utter peace below,
I winged to some celestial goal.
Though spurred by a flame of far adventure—
No solitary flight of the soul!

The highest peak of mind was reached,
Where the many broke forth from the One:
Each god a self-crowned absolute,
Claiming the seven worlds for his own.

I spread out here in fullness wide—
Spirit nor clay now felt time's bond:
Uniting thus all Heaven and Earth
I prayed to the One who stood beyond.

A cloud of golden Light came down
Blazing the silver soil of our sphere;
Now filled with joy the Earth-Spirit leaped
High towards it half-way in the air.

But the air no longer was the same.
Charged with the Light's descending sweep,
Thrilled with the Ecstasy's ascent,
The gods raced down to breathe it deep!

NAGIN DOSHI

MOTHER INDIA

A CHILD'S FANCY

FROM my cottage I shall run
To the windy meads and greens,
Birds shall sing and morning sun
Then shall shed his grace intense

Over me, and distant trees
Hail me with their hundred hands,
I shall race with every breeze,
I shall conquer unknown lands.

Soaring on my wings of dream,
Leaping over peaks of cloud,
Swimming across Heaven's stream,
I shall move on, swift and proud.

I shall jump from star to star
When the sun will go to sleep,
Brave and stark a wanderer
I shall climb the mountains steep

In the moon, and set a flame
Burning there for day and night,
I shall write the loving name
Of my Lord far on that height.

PRITHWINDRA

THE FOUR AGES OF INDIA'S CULTURAL CYCLE

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

(PART II)

IN our attempts to know the answers to the points raised in the statement that "the Rig Veda may be regarded from the historical point of view as a record of a great advance made by humanity by special means at a critical period of its collective progress" we have decided not to entertain the conjectural theories based on the sciences of Comparative Philology and Ethnology. The civilisations of Mohenjodaro and Harappa are, in the opinion of experts, not of the Rig Vedic culture and we do not have any other archaeological findings which can be said to be of Rig Vedic culture. So we depend for the answers on two things: one, the interpretation of the Rig Veda and of the Mysteries of other nations by Sri Aurobindo, and, two, on the findings of the theory of evolution so far as modern thought and Science have accepted them,—also on the findings of the spiritual theory of evolution as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have expounded it.

Modern thought and Science accept the idea of a terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature in its ascending series from matter to plant, from plant to animal and from animal to man, and they state that the process is birth with the principle of heredity as its method of maintaining and keeping in continuity each evolved form of body which holds its own evolved power of consciousness. This idea was contained in the thought of the Upanishads, Puranas and Tantras long before modern thought and Science discovered it. But these ancient texts declare that along with the visible process of evolution there is an invisible subtle process, a machinery of rebirth by which the soul of man after death passes through other worlds and then takes birth again in a different body with a different type of consciousness;—this is determined by whatever is necessary for its further evolutionary progress. This idea of rebirth is slowly gaining belief among many modern thinkers on account of their researches in the occult sciences of the mind-plane and the life-plane. How these theories of rebirth and of evolution linked with the other Hindu theory of Avatars explains the problem of evolution, its purpose and its

goal, can be seen from the following quotation from Sri Aurobindo

“The Gita...applies the doctrine of reincarnation, boldly enough, to the Avatar himself, and in the usual theory of reincarnation the reincarnating soul by its past spiritual and psychological evolution itself determines and in a way prepares its own mental and physical body. The soul prepares its own body, the body is not prepared for it without any reference to the soul. Are we then to suppose an eternal or continual Avatar himself evolving, we might say, his own fit mental and physical body according to the needs and pace of the human evolution and so appearing from age to age, *yuge, yuge*? In some such spirit some would interpret the ten incarnations of Vishnu, first in animal forms, then in the animal man, then in the dwarf man-soul, Vamana, the violent Asuric man, Rama of the axe, the divinely natured man, a greater Rama, the awakened spiritual man, Buddha, and, preceding him in time, but final in place, the complete divine manhood, Krishna,—for the last Avatar, Kalki, only accomplishes the work Krishna began,—he fulfils in power the great struggle which the previous Avatars prepared in all its potentialities. It is a difficult assumption to our modern mentality, but the language of the Gita seems to demand it. Or, since the Gita does not expressly solve the problem, we may solve it in some other way of our own, as that the body is prepared by the Jiva but assumed from the birth by the Godhead or that it is prepared by one of the four Manus, *catvāro manavaḥ*, of the Gita, the spiritual Fathers of every human mind and body. This is going far into the mystic field from which the modern reason is still averse; but once we admit Avatarhood, we have already entered into it and, once entered, may as well tread in it with firm footsteps.” (*Essays on the Gita*, p. 148.)

The Rationalistic theory of evolution in vogue at present, does not accept the reality of a synthetic evolutionary Creative Consciousness greater than Mind guiding all life on earth from behind; it accepts only Matter, Life and Mind as the evolutionary principles and says that the object of evolution is the perfection of man's physical, vital and mental being. The spiritual theory of evolution accepts Consciousness with its different states and degrees of power, from its unevolved condition in mere matter to its highest possible evolvable spiritual condition in living matter, as the evolutionary principle, and declares that the object of evolution is not to stop with the perfection of man as mental being but to push him through grades of spiritual consciousness like Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind and Overmind till he reaches Supermind. Rather it is Supermind which may otherwise be called the synthetic evolutionary Creative Consciousness that has been guiding the whole of the terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature from behind the veil of Nature,

but to bring it to the front and make it act directly has been the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.¹

Now if we read carefully the history of all the ancient and modern cultures along with the history of the peoples or nations that are represented by each of these cultures and trace back the growth of each, we shall always find that the origin has been the Mysteries, which we may call symbolic culture. This fact, that the origin of the culture of a people or of a nation has been the Mysteries, is true whether the culture is that of a barbarous people or of a civilised people. We have seen in the previous articles the nature of the mental Mysteries and the spiritual Mysteries and the nations or peoples that followed these; but we have not yet examined the nature of the vital Mysteries; the following quotation from Sri Aurobindo gives us an idea of it.

“It has been contended that religion in its beginnings was nothing but a mass of animism, fetichism, magic, totemism, taboo, myth, superstitious symbol, with the medicine-man as priest, a mental fungus of primitive human ignorance,—later on at its best a form of Nature-worship. It could well have been so in the primitive mund, though we have to add the proviso that behind much of its beliefs and practices there may have been a truth of an inferior but very effective kind that we have lost with our superior development. Primitive man lives much in a low and small province of his life-being, and this corresponds on the occult plane to an invisible Nature which is of a like character and whose occult powers can be called into activity by a knowledge and methods to which the lower vital intuitions and instincts may open a door of access. This might be formulated in a first stage of religious belief and practice which would be occult after a crude inchoate fashion in its character and interests, not yet spiritual; its main element would be a calling in of small life-powers... and elemental beings to the aid of small life-desires and a rude physical welfare.”

(The Life Divine, p. 772)

Just as mental mystics call in mental and vital powers, and spiritual mystics call in spiritual, mental and vital powers to aid them in their life activities, so the vital mystics call in only vital powers; hence the vital Mysteries are the source of vital religions.

Now the synthetic evolutionary Creative Consciousness guided from behind the veil—through the various types of mystics during those early ages—the occult process of evolution, vital, mental or spiritual, by means of the

¹ The message of the essential fulfilment of this work has been recently distributed by the Mother to all her devotees in the Ashram

respective godheads of each plane as well as the overt process of evolution that we see carried out through Nature-force. It seems as though this Creative Consciousness from the very beginning of the cycle of civilisation was having its own plan and method of developing the ideal of human unity, based not on a flat uniformity but on diversity, which is being achieved now. But a living powerful and rich united humanity based on diversity needs in it all the various types of vital, mental and spiritual manhood, both of individuals and collectivities, and they have to live in harmony and peace based on the ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood. However, of these types of human societies, some may have a tendency to live in harmony, some may have a tendency always to fight and some others may be incapable of progress with the rest of humanity. In history we see from the beginning some types of human societies being altogether wiped out along with their cultures, some losing their cultures and merging with others, some being retained with their cultures and some being newly built up. But if we trace the whole process through which humanity from the very beginning of the cycle has been arriving at unity, we may know something of the working of the Creative Consciousness. To know this, the only way seems to be to follow the lines indicated by Sri Aurobindo in his writings, and the interpretation of the symbolism in the Veda, which he says at several places is the key to the interpretation of the symbolism in other Mysteries of the world. That a study of the Mysteries, and also of the Mythologies and early religions, has to be undertaken in order to possess a correct knowledge of all these things, can be seen from a quotation from Sri Aurobindo.

“There is much that is useful in the speculations of Comparative Mythology; but in order that the bulk of its results should be sound and acceptable, it must use a more patient and consistent method and organise itself as part of a well-founded Science of Religion. We must recognise that the old religions were organic systems founded on ideas which were at least as coherent as those which constitute our modern systems of belief. We must recognise also that there has been a perfectly intelligible progressive development from the earlier to the later systems of religious creed and of philosophical thought. It is by studying our data widely and profoundly in this spirit and discovering the true evolution of human thought and belief that we shall arrive at real knowledge.”
(*Mother India*, January 1954, pp. 13-14)

This “real knowledge” may be the knowledge which enables every student of it to know that “Earth life is the scene of the evolutionary unfolding of a being which moves towards the revelation of a supreme light and power and joy...” as explained in the first para of the second article of this series. Indeed

the work is vast but worth undertaking not only by individuals but by all the big universities of the world. The only qualification required for it is the capacity, while reading the ancient texts, to understand or at least to have a reflection in one's consciousness of the powers and realities of higher planes who guided humanity in its early beginnings of social life.

To arrive at this real knowledge there is another way, according to the Mother—one gets it by a sort of “inner voyage into some particular world”, without the necessity of outside information, though the former need not replace the latter. Her own words are: “All that has happened upon earth, everything from the beginning of creation till now, everything without exception has been recorded somewhere in some particular world or region of consciousness. All that man has thought, his researches and discoveries, his findings and conclusions are kept intact, carefully stored. If you want to know anything of the past history of the earth, the happening at a particular time and place, you have simply to transplant yourself into that world and look into the records.... You can certainly test and correct the information you get from your inner voyage by outside information, what others have found or what is recorded in books. The inner knowledge need not and should not replace the outer knowledge, but supplement it, both should support and complete each other. But there is a mixture about which you must be very careful.”¹

From available records of Mysteries and ancient religions, one can say that in the beginning of this cycle of civilisation, when humanity formed itself into separate societies, the primitive tribes practising vital Mysteries and religions, —into which class, the Vedas also are ignorantly put by some,—dominated the whole world; secondly, ancient collective types of mental manhood, which had a tendency to become Asuric later and of which Atlantis is one example that we now know of, succeeded the people of vital Mysteries and dominated the world for a long period of several thousands of years and were lost along with their cultures; thirdly, ancient collective types of mental manhood, human but not Asuric, like those of Egypt and of the Mediterranean coast succeeded the above and dominated the world for some thousands of years; but while the cultures of peoples were lost, the peoples themselves merged in the succeeding culture; fourthly, ancient types of spiritual manhood, like the Greek and the Roman, the Celtic and the Teutonic, all of the so-called Indo-European nations that later turned mental, have now either to turn to spiritual culture once again or destroy one another by warfare; fifthly, ancient collective types of spiritual manhood like those of India, having kept the spiritual motive of life alive, have now arrived at a stage in which they have to make their spirituality

¹ *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part VII, p. 19, by Nolini Kanta Gupta.

dynamic and lead the rest of the world in the ways of spiritual life.

One finds in books written during this and the previous decades, that there is no doubt in the minds of the Western writers about the chronology of all the above Mysteries other than the Vedic, but they always have a doubt as to that of the Vedic Mysteries. These Mysteries have been put by most of the Western writers into the class of vital Mysteries, which are the earliest, whereas the tribes who followed these Mysteries have been included in the Aryan race which somehow seems to have arisen in 3000 B.C. in the North of Asia, and is supposed to be also the ancestor of most of the modern European nations and the Persians. But the cause for all this misunderstanding may be attributed to our incapacity to understand the symbolic method of construction of the Vedic literature by the Vedic Rishis. As, Sri Aurobindo says, "All [the Vedic godheads] are in their external character powers of physical Nature; all have in their inner meaning a psychic function and psychological ascriptions; all too are various powers of some one highest Reality, *ekam sat*, the one infinite Existence".—"This is the aspect of the the Vedic teaching and worship to which a European scholar, mistaking entirely its significance because he read it in the dim and poor light of European religious experience, has given the sounding misnomer, henotheism. Beyond, in the triple Infinite, these godheads put on their highest nature and are names of the one nameless Ineffable." (*ibid*, p. 164)

Now all this is from the point of view of historical data regarding the Mysteries of the world and the process of evolution through which they passed. We shall now see what Sri Aurobindo says about the four ages, the Vedic Rishis, the Upanishads and the Avatars and the part all these played in the evolution of humanity.

About the four ages, Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Human Cycle*, that in the Satya Yuga man lives according to some high and profound realisation of his divine possibility; in the Treta he attempts to maintain his true law, his *dharma*, by will-power and force of character; in the Dwapara he attempts to maintain this *dharma* by law, arrangement and fixed convention. In the Kali Yuga, "he collapses towards the life of the instincts, impulses and desires with the reason degraded into a servant of this nether life of man."—"Therefore it is said that Vishnu is the King in the Treta, but in the Dwapara, the arranger and codifier of the knowledge and the law." (pp. 154, 155) We know that the cycle of India's four ages begins with the Rig Vedic period, the Satya Yuga, and that it is a Mystic age or an age of symbolism. About the Rishi who guided the Aryan community towards perfection Sri Aurobindo writes:

“The spiritual man who can guide human life towards its perfection is typified in the ancient Indian idea of the Rishi, one who has lived fully the life of man and found the word of the supra-intellectual, supra-mental, spiritual truth. He has risen above the lower limitations and views all things from above, but also he is in sympathy with their effort and can view them from within; he has the complete inner knowledge and the higher surpassing knowledge. Therefore he can guide the world humanly as God guides it divinely, because like the Divine he is in the life of the world and yet above it.” (pp. 200, 201)

And then Sri Aurobindo says that the sages of the Veda and Vedanta relied entirely upon intuition and spiritual experience. As regards the nature of intuition he writes: “Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest. Intuition gives us that idea of something behind and beyond all that we know and seem to be which pursues man always in contradiction of his lower reason and all his normal experience and impels him to formulate that formless perception in the more positive ideas of God, Immortality, Heaven and the rest by which we strive to express it to the mind. For Intuition is as strong as Nature herself from whose very soul it has sprung and cares nothing for the contradictions of reason or the denials of experience. It knows what is because it is, because itself it is of that and has come from that, and will not yield it to the judgement of what merely becomes and appears. What the Intuition tells us of is not so much Existence as the Existent, for it proceeds from that one point of light in us which gives it its advantage, that sometimes opened door in our own self-awareness. Ancient Vedanta seized this message of the Intuition and formulated it in the three great declarations of the Upanishads, ‘I am He,’ ‘Thou art That, O Swetaketu,’ ‘All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman.’” (*The Life Divine*, p. 64-65)

Then regarding the spiritual victories which tend to be constantly repeated in the experience of humanity, Sri Aurobindo states:

“Thus in images of physical Nature the Vedic poets sing the hymn of our spiritual ascension. That ascension has already been effected by the Ancients, the human forefathers, and the spirit of these great Ancestors still assist their offspring; for the new dawns repeat the old and lean forward in light to join the dawns of the future. Kanwa, Kutsa, Atri, Kakshiwan, Gotama, Sunahsepa have become types of certain spiritual victories which tend to be constantly repeated in the experience of humanity. The seven sages, the Angirasas, are waiting still and always, ready to chant the word, to rend the cavern, to find

the lost herds, to recover the hidden Sun. Thus the soul is a battle field full of helpers and hurters, friends and enemies. All this lives, teems, is personal, is conscious, is active. We create for ourselves by the sacrifice and by the word shining seers, heroes to fight for us, children of our works." (*Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, p. XLVI)

The process of the Rishi's mind is altogether different from that of ours, though we too by a certain inner discipline can attain to the same status. It is due to this difference that we find it difficult to understand or believe in his achievement. Further, Sri Aurobindo says about the Vedic Godheads: "They are not only the powers of the One, but conscious of their source and true identity; they know the Brahman, they dwell in the supreme Godhead, their origin, home and proper plane is the superconscient Truth. It is true they manifest themselves in man in the form of human faculties and assume the appearance of human limitations, manifest themselves in the lower cosmos and assume the mould of its cosmic operations; but this is only their lesser and lower movement and beyond it they are for ever the One, the Transcendent and Wonderful, the Master of Force and Delight and Knowledge and Being." (*Kena Upanishad*, p. 110)

This state of things continued through the age of Satya Yuga, which, as we shall see, may be said to have passed through four periods. A decline is quite visible in the last period. Sri Aurobindo says about this decline: "The Veda was already a mass of myth and ritual. The power had begun to disappear out of the symbolic ceremony; the light had departed from the mystic parable and left only a surface of apparent grotesqueness and naivete.

"The Brahmanas and the Upanishads are the record of a powerful revival which took the sacred text and ritual as a starting-point for a new statement of spiritual thought and experience. This movement had two complementary aspects, one, the conservation of the forms, another the revelation of the soul of the Veda,—the first represented by the Brahmanas,¹ the second by the Upanishads." (*Mother India*, December, 1953, pp. 69,70)

Sri Aurobindo interprets the need of this change from the Vedic to the Upanishadic age in these terms: "The old poise of culture between two extremes with a bridge of religious cult and symbolism to unite them, the crude or half-trained naturalness of the outer physical man on one side of the line, and on the other an inner and secret psychic and spiritual life for the initiates

¹ Necessarily these and other appreciations in the chapter are brief and summary views of certain main tendencies. The Brahmanas, for instance, have their philosophical passages.

could no longer suffice as the basis of our spiritual progress. The human race in its cycle of civilisation needed a large-lined advance; it called for a more and more generalised intellectual, ethical and aesthetic evolution to help it to grow into the light. "But here he says there was a danger that "the greater spiritual truth already gained might be lost in the lesser confident half-light of the acute but unilluminated intellect or stifled within the narrow limits of the self-sufficient logical reason. That was what actually happened in the West, Greece leading the way". In India, however, the case was different. "The ancient spiritual knowledge and the spiritual tendency it had created were saved in India from this collapse by the immense effort of the age of the Upanishads. The Vedantic seers renewed the Vedic truth by extricating it from its cryptic symbols and casting it into a highest and most direct and powerful language of intuition and inner experience." (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*. Pp. 166, 167)

From the above quotations, it is evident that the first two ages of India can never correspond to the first two ages of Greece or of any of the Western nations, except that the first age in all is symbolic. Secondly we may note that the gulf which developed in the course of the Vedic age between the initiated Aryan and the uninitiated Aryan was bridged by a revival of the Vedic spiritual culture through the cult of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. The Brahmanas were the basis for Shrauta-Grihya-Dharma sutras which contained rules for the ritualistic method of aesthetic, ethical and intellectual progress of Aryan life. The Upanishads were the basis for spiritualisation of the intellect through an intuitive approach. The community consisted of the four Varnas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, of whom the first three alone were initiated by the Brahmin priests; these formed the class of the twice-born Dwijas who alone were supposed to be fit, as a rule, for spiritual life though there were always exceptions to the rule. Thus it seems that the people from all the four Varnas of the Vedic age—though predominantly from the first two—became the initiated of the second age and these formed the first three Varnas. But the non-Aryan tribes who accepted the Dharma and who could not be initiated became the Shudras, the fourth Varna of the Aryan community. In this way the Aryan community itself was widened though still a new set of initiated and uninitiated classes again developed. However, the power of the Rishis to protect the Aryan community from the non-Aryan tribes, like the animal man and the Asuric man, was not sufficient and at the end of the second age, as the Puranas and the Ramayana say, the Divine had to descend as a human being to protect it for a further advance; and that was Rama.

Sri Aurobindo says about Avatarhood and Rama:

“An Avatar is one who comes to open the Way for humanity to a higher consciousness.”

“An Avatar is conscious of the presence and power of the Divine born in him and governing from within his will and life and action; he feels identified inwardly with that divine power and presence.”

“As for the Avatarhood, I accept it for Rama because he fills a place in the scheme—and seems to me to fill it rightly—and because when I read the Ramayana I feel a great afflatus which I recognise and which makes of its story—mere faery-tale though it seems—a parable of a great critical transitional event that happened in the terrestrial evolution and gives to the main character’s personality and action a significance of the large typical cosmic kind which these actions would not have had, if they had been done by another man in another scheme of events...”

“His business was to destroy Ravana and to establish Rama-rajya—in other words, to fix for the future the possibility of an order proper to the sattwic civilised human being who governs his life by the reason, the finer emotions, morality, or at least moral ideals, such as truth, obedience, co-operation and harmony, the sense of domestic and public order,—to establish this in a world still occupied by anarchic forces, the Animal mind and the powers of the vital Ego making its own satisfaction the rule of life, in other words, the Vanara and the Rakshasa.” (*Letters of Sri Aurobindo, 2nd Series*, pp. 506, 508)

It is significant to note here that the Asuric civilisation of Ravana resembles the Asuric civilisation of Atlantis and the periods given to them by the Indian traditions and by history respectively agree with each other. But here in India, the Asuric culture was destroyed and the animal-natured human society was perhaps absorbed into the Aryan community. With the close of the period of Rama, the second age of India’s cycle also ends, and the age of the Puranas with its Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva begins. Comparing the Vedic and the Puranic systems, Sri Aurobindo says: “The central spiritual truth remained in both systems the same, the truth of the One in many aspects. The Trinity is a triple form of the one supreme Godhead and Brahman; the Shaktis are energies of the one Energy of the highest divine Being. But this greatest religious truth was no longer reserved for the initiated few; it was now more and more brought powerfully, widely and intensely home to the general mind and feeling of the people....The idea of the Divinity in man was popularised to an extraordinary extent, not only the occasional manifestation of the Divine in humanity which founded the worship of the Avatars, but the Presence discoverable in the heart of every creature. The systems of Yoga developed themselves on the same common basis.” (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, p. 173) Here again we see that the religious truth of the Veda spread to other than the initiated, to all

people within the fold of the Hindu community, and they could all worship their gods in temples which were at once places of devotion, knowledge and yogic practice for spiritual realisation.

Then at the end of the Dwapara the Divine had again to descend in the form of a human being, as Krishna, to establish Dharma and make the new principle "Overmind"¹ available to humanity on earth. According to the Hindu traditions, the next age is that of the Tantras. Regarding this period Sri Aurobindo says: "The emotional, the sensuous, even the sensual motions of the being, before they could draw the soul farther outward, were taken and transmuted into a psychical form and, so changed, they became the elements of a mystic capture of the Divine through the heart and the senses and a religion of the joy of God's love, delight and beauty. In the Tantra the new elements are taken up and assigned their place in a complete psycho-spiritual and psycho-physical science of Yoga." (*Ibid*, p. 356)

Thus at the end of every age and the beginning of the next, one part of man's total being is taken up for spiritual progression, and the fold of the Hindu community widened till it reaches all the people of India. It was in the last age that Sanskrit was slowly replaced for religious literature by the dialects of tribes, which later developed into the present literary languages; this was done so that religion might reach the masses. It was at this stage, when the people of India required more time for a general progress, that foreigners invaded her—even centuries before Christ—and disturbed her progress. Yet India recovered and is on her way to a new spiritual life. The details of the transitions, the conversions and the growth of religious forms, and of the political social and economic forms that depended upon them can be had only when the ancient texts are looked into.

Now from what we have seen as well as from the writings of Sri Aurobindo not referred to here on this subject, the period of Rig Veda cannot conclusively be put as either 50,000 B.C. or 3,000 B.C. From a general view of the other Mysteries of the world and from the nature of the evolution of the civilisations of the world, it seems that it is more probable that it began earlier rather than later, and that during the last age of the cycle which is from 3,000 B.C. a sub-cycle corresponding to the four ages of the main cycle, the symbolic, the typical, the conventional and the declining might have taken place; and that may be the cause of all this confusion. However, its incongruities can be more easily explained on the 50,000 years hypothesis than on the 3,000 years one. To be sure of it all a fresh approach to all the texts can be made on the basis of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Rig Veda.

¹ Overmind is the highest plane of the Spiritual Consciousness, it is below the Supermind, the Divine Truth-Consciousness. It is a vast Cosmic Mind capable of reconciling divergent aspects of Reality.

However, we may say briefly in answer to the points raised in the quotation at the beginning of the article that the "special process" of the Rîg Veda was the combined method of the mystic parable, the Mantra of the Rîg Veda with its symbolic sacrifice, the cult of Yagna, by which intuition was brought down to act on the physical plane, it was a critical period in the collective progress of humanity, because in that age lived mystics of all kinds with an awareness of the secret forces and powers of Nature that exist behind and above man's outer life and had the capacity to bring down these forces to act upon the earth, and thus exerted an enormous influence on man; to counteract the occult Nature-powers that non-spiritual mystics bring down, mystic spiritual powers have to be brought down, and that is what the Rishis did. If this had not been done, it seems there would have been no scope for the spreading of spiritual life upon the earth through these four ages.

Thus we see in the first age of India's cycle, that of the Vedic Rishis, that their spiritual culture was followed by the primitive tribes of India, on account of which they were called Aryans, meaning those who practised the Aryan way of life, and the rest whether in India or outside were called non-Aryans; in the second age, that of the Upanishadic Rishis, the spiritual culture of the Vedic Rishis was practised by all those who accepted the Dharma as laid down in the Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads and Sutras, and were called Sanatana Dharmins, while the rest of humanity were non-Sanatana-Dharmins: in the third age, the age of the Puranas, all those who followed the Vedic culture and accepted the Puranic Mythology and worshipped its gods were called Hindus, and the rest were called Mlecchas; in the fourth age, all those who accepted the Tantric cult of worship of the Divine Mother and adopted Tantric principles either in the institution of Sandhyavandanam and Japam of the Vedic cult or adopted it in the worship of Puranic gods in temples or of various goddesses, which were different aspects of the one Divine Mother, were still looked upon as following the spiritual culture of the Veda, and as such every Indian was a Hindu.

In the next cycle, —the one that we are living in,—a new line of supramental evolution in the terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature, as gradually manifested by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, will be followed by all, whether consciously or unconsciously, and since no one will be outside its pale, it will lead the whole of humanity to a spiritual culture. Thus the spiritual culture which was started first by the Rîg Vedic Rishis began with intuition as its basic power, developed into overmind through the instrumentality of Krishna, and is finally culminating into supermind through the instrumentality of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

NARAYANA C. REDDI

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

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

VII

To the Romantics the supernatural was a wide mystery with many recesses and revelatory aspects. The one thing it was not was some Aloofness excluding the natural. Its activity as Nature was—to revert to Whitehead’s language—organic, but in the ultra-Whiteheadian sense that finds perhaps its most philosophical account in Wordsworth’s poetry when he writes in the ninth Book of his *Excursion*:

To every Form of being is assigned
An active Principle:—howe’er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures; in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate’er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe.

Here we may add: “And this is Nature supernatural.” For piquancy’s sake we may note that by this natural supernaturalism the Soul of all the worlds with whom we commune by seeking solitude is said by Wordsworth to be itself knowing no solitude, no “romantic chasm”, since it is an omnipresence overflowing the divisions and parts that are its unnumbered visible forms, an Infinite in which all that looks confined partakes of an inviolable liberty without barriers of space or time. And it is because of this secret spiritual Whole, not only

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affecting the parts and thereby rendering them more than elements of a mechanical aggregate but also existing in its own rights as transcendent of them, that Nature is precious to Wordsworth: Nature he loves not for its beauty alone—he loves it basically for the liberation it promises beyond the mortal, the finite:

Whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude and only there.

Infinitude that is also Eternity—a release from barriers of time as well as space: this is what Nature supernatural holds out to Wordsworth, as he realised most vividly during his journey through the Simplon Pass when he “entered a narrow chasm” which carries to its deepest suggestion the Romanticism conjured up for us by Coleridge’s “savage” and “holy” and “enchanted” gorge:

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

The sense of both Eternity and Infinity through Nature is the core of the philosophy and religion of Romanticism. It makes it more than what is commonly understood as Pantheism or, rather, it makes it the true Pantheism as distinguished from the false. In that travesty the defects of Nature are taken to characterise God since God and Nature are believed to be identical instead of the former exceeding the latter even though constitutive and pervasive of it. Wordsworth himself was accused of identifying God with Nature, and we may be deluded into agreeing with his accusers on the evidence of a line like

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...God and Nature's single sovereignty,

which occurs in the 1805 version of *The Prelude* and which he altered in the 1850 version to

...Presences of God's mysterious power
Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty.

De Selincourt holds that the poet was here trying “to cover up the traces of his early pantheism”. It is true that the later Wordsworth inclined more towards orthodox Christianity and was eager not to be found tainted with what orthodox Christians took to be Pantheism. But in his own earlier Pantheism the “single sovereignty” he spoke of did not cabin God within Nature: it merely refused to make Nature extraneous to God. In the 1805 version he clearly combined, as C. Clarke has stressed, the singleness of God and Nature with God's transcendence by writing of

...Nature's self, which is the breath of God

and repeating the metaphor from breathing in the lines:

...Great God!
Who send'st thyself into this breathing world
Through Nature and through every kind of life
And mak'st man what he is, Creature divine...

The early Wordsworth once actually went out of his way to repudiate vehemently the charge of identifying God with Nature. In a letter to Mrs. Catherine Clarkson in 1814 about the misinterpretation by her friend of the religious views expressed in *The Excursion*, he wrote: “Where does she gather that the author of *The Excursion* looks upon Nature and God as the same? He does not indeed consider the supreme Being as bearing the same relation to the Universe as a watch-maker bears to a watch. In fact, there is nothing in the course of religious education adopted in this country, in the use made by us of the Holy Scriptures, that appears to me so injurious as the perpetually talking about *making* by God. Oh! that your correspondent had heard a conversation which I had in bed with my sweet little boy, four and a half years old, upon this subject the other morning. ‘How did God make me? Where is God? How does He speak? He never spoke to *me*.’ I told him that God was a spirit, that he was not like his flesh which he could touch, but more like his thoughts, in his mind,

which he could not touch. The wind was tossing the fir trees and the sky and light were dancing about in their dark branches, as seen through the window. Noting these fluctuations, he exclaimed eagerly. 'There's a bit of him, I see it there!' This is not meant entirely for Father's prattle; but for Heaven's sake, in your religious talk with children say as little as possible about *making*."

Obviously Wordsworth's God is more than visible and tangible Nature, but He is not all outside Nature: He is not the maker of a world quite other than Himself: the world is His own emanation and it is what it is—good, bad, indifferent—through a difference of manifestation or non-manifestation by His substance in terms of space and time, of matter and life and mind. The later orthodox Wordsworth himself does not forget completely this emanation-sense of his early days. He can still refuse to make God stand over against Nature as a watch-maker facing a watch: he seeks a *via media* between orthodox Christianity and Nature-mysticism by conceiving Nature as a piece of art, an imaginative creation in which God's Self gets expressed with an inner warmth and intimate subjectivity as a poet's being gets expressed in a poem and as a watch-maker's soul does not get expressed in a time-piece. The young Wordsworth, of course, is entirely an emanationist. To him God, even when seeming absent, is yet concretely within Nature and keeps everywhere a possibility of revealing the infinite and the eternal of His true Self which is also the ultimate being of Nature. It is such a divinity that Wordsworth speaks of in his perhaps most-quoted lines:

And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains...

It is worth noting here that the Spirit who is God is in the mind of man who perceives and thinks no less than in the objects perceived and thought about by man. Being Spirit He would be most intensely accessible in man's own consciousness, and the search of God within is Wordsworth's master-

message provided we do not cleave it from his constant sense that the within-ness is not restricted to humans but is the same vast Wonder everywhere, a depth of meadows and woods and mountains just as much as of ourselves, a depth which awakens in us most when we search for it as a Wideness one in all, a depth that is at once Bliss and Strength and Illumination and Righteousness. Yes, Righteousness too, an “inner light” which guides and elevates and shows the highest “duty” not by mere dry precept framed by the outer mind but by a soul-intuition bringing “vital feelings of delight” and largening the individual conscience to the secret power of a controlling law felt operative from behind all appearances of Nature. That is why Wordsworth could say to “Duty”—

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong—

and that is why he is not striking a mere sentimental note when he writes—

One impulse from a vernal wood
Can teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can.

Wordsworth’s is a morality of Nature-mysticism and not of Nature-sentimentalism. He is not blind to “Nature red in tooth and claw” any more than he is blind to the wickedness in man, but beyond both goes his poetic sight to the secret Godhead that is the truth of man’s being and he strives for a life-suffusing Apocalypse full of “the joy of elevated thoughts.”

Unfortunately it must be admitted that after an extraordinary decade of creative experience Wordsworth the moralist got the better of the mystic in him just as the intellectual in him got the better of the poet. But we are discussing him as the embodiment *par excellence* of the new Romanticism in England. And to complete our picture we must glance at two other sides of his natural supernaturalism. We have described his God as both immanent and transcendent. We may touch now on one implication of the transcendence which is not generally recognised: a double-shaded implication—what we, quoting a phrase of Wordsworth’s own, may call “unknown modes of being” and what in addition we may call after Plato the prenatal bliss of the soul. Both the shades join with suggestions floated or flashed out from Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan*. The woman wailing for her demon lover and haunting the romantic chasm is matched by

the episode recounted in *The Prelude* of the boy Wordsworth pushing off the shore in a boat found tied to a willow tree within a rocky cave, the moonlight all about him, his view fixed

Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; for above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.

We are told how, suddenly, as he rose upon the stroke and the boat went heaving through the water, from behind that steep crag which had appeared to be the sole limit of the scene,

a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And, growing still in stature, the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree.

Home the boy went through the meadows, in a grave mood—

but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea, or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Here, no less than in the lines where he recounts how, after stealing trapped woodcocks, he heard

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Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motions, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod,

we have the occult, as genuine as in any spectral perception of Coleridge’s—
or of Blake’s, either, when he speaks of

The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

or when, dazzled by the dreadful beauty he symbolises as “Tiger”, he asks

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

The occult is also as genuinely here as in any visionary sensation of Shelley’s,
though in a more formidable shape of vagueness than the Shelleyan

Dreams and adorations,
Winged persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies.

The vague and the formidable, however, are not the sole features one may
contact in the mysterious regions transcending our universe. There are also
“the milk of paradise” and the unshadowed lovelinesses hinted by Blake—

Ah, Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller’s journey is done—

and the magical felicities that haunted Shelley throughout his life as if he were
an exile from them and that are poignantly evoked by him in the last lines of
the lyric *To Jane*:

Though thy song overpowers,
Sing again, with thy dear voice revealing
A tone

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Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

This far world figures in Wordsworth too in those lines of his Immortality Ode:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home.

It is this prenatal populating of Heaven by human souls that, according to Wordsworth, makes the child see Heaven all about it, the earthly "Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves" transmitting the light of their own archetypes, as it were, from the beatific Beyond.

Indeed a complex mysticism of Nature is Wordsworth's, hardly covered by a superficial use—complimentary or pejorative—of the term "Pantheism". But the term in its deepest and largest connotation is most apt, particularly because all that is on earth is enveloped by it with supreme significance. Wordsworth's eyes pierced to the paradisaical and the eternal through the mundane and the temporal—

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears—

and death was robbed of the fearful visage it bears to the uninitiated, but there was no stress on a hope beyond the grave. Nature was tinged with God enough to create the "cheerful faith"

that all which we behold
Is full of blessings,

and the stress was on realising the "glory" and the "dream" here and now, amid the daily dust:

Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!

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But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

Perhaps Wordsworth uttered the last word on his complex mysticism—though in a style more epigrammatic than mystic—when he apostrophised the Skylark:

Type of the wise, who soar yet never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

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