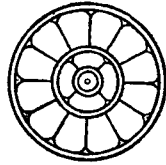


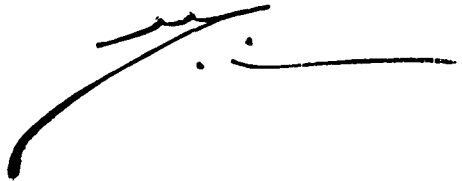
# MOTHER INDIA

JULY 1956

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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

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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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)

### SUPERMIND, RATIONAL MIND AND MENTAL EDUCATION

*Q: Now that the Supermind has manifested, why cannot one pass directly from the rational mind to the Supermind instead of doing what "The Synthesis of Yoga" mentions—the ascent first to a region above the mind and then to a state of consciousness still greater, the supramental light of the divine Gnosis?*

Who has said that one cannot pass directly? In *The Synthesis of Yoga* there is the description of what was to be done in order to come into contact with the Supermind and prepare the ground for its manifestation. But now that the Supermind has entered the earth's atmosphere, I do not see why one single fixed process should be imposed on its manifestation. If it wishes to illumine directly an instrument which it finds suitable, or ready and adapted, I see no reason why it should not do so.

And I repeat: who has said that it cannot? Nobody. What Sri Aurobindo has described is something else and it is in effect what has happened. It was the necessary preparation for the manifestation to take place. But now why and on what basis should one particular process be imposed on the supramental action and that action not have the liberty to chose its own means?

I think that all possibilities may be foreseen and that all sincere aspiration and total consecration is likely to get a response. The processes, the means, the transitions, the transformations will be innumerable in their nature, and it is not at all that things will be done in one manner and not otherwise.

In the main, whoever is ready to receive even a tiny bit or a particular aspect of the supramental consciousness and light ought to receive it automatically. And the effects of this consciousness and of this light will be numberless, because surely they will adapt themselves to the possibility, the capacity of each, according to the sincerity of his aspiration.

The more total the consecration and intense the aspiration, the more integral and intense can be the result. But the effect of the supramental action will be multiple, infinitely varied, not forced to follow one precise line and the same

## MOTHER INDIA

line for all. This is impossible, because it is contrary to the very nature of the supramental consciousness.

The very quality of the atmosphere is changed; the consequences ought to be infinitely varied—but perceptible.

However, this does not mean that anyone, at any time and anyhow, is going to become at a stroke a supramental genius. Such a thing must not be expected.

I would say: if only it can be stated that one is now a little less foolish than before, it will already be something!

*Q: Will the new influence come into the domain of education? In the system of education we follow there is still, as Sri Aurobindo has said, "the brilliant poverty of the human intellect".*

It is high time the system changed. People have a lamentable habit of copying what has been done in the past and is done by others. I have been saying this for long. The argument is: we should do a thing because it is done everywhere. I reply: it is perhaps just for that that we should not do it, because if all others do it, what is the use in our doing the same?

*Q: But without your intervention, how is one to do anything else?*

Why do you ask me this? You should first change your system of education—change it according to the principles of the Supermind—at least try to do so. One should not ask, one should do it. If you go on in the same rut, you can go on in it indefinitely. You must strive to get out of it.

At the moment I am in constant discussion on this subject. Just recently I defended the right of everyone to remain in ignorance if that pleases him. I am not speaking of ignorance in the spiritual sense—the world of ignorance in which we are. I am speaking of ignorance according to the classical idea of education. Well, I say that if there are people who do not want to learn and do not like to learn, they have the right not to learn.

The sole thing which is our duty to tell them is: "Now you are of an age when your brain is in a state of preparation. It is being built. Each new thing you study makes one convolution the more in your brain. The more you study, think, reflect, work, the more complex and complete grows your brain in these little convolutions. And as you are young, it is the time when this can be best done. That is why it is the human custom to choose the period of youth for learning: it is extremely easier then. And it is evident that until the child can be just a little conscious of itself, it should be subjected to some rule because it has not yet the capacity to choose for itself.

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

This age can vary—it depends on people, on each individual. But, in short, it is agreed that during the period of seven years stretching from the age of seven to the age of fourteen, one begins to touch the age of reason. If one is helped in that period, one can become a reasonable being. There can be geniuses before seven—geniuses there can always be. But the general rule is that the child is not conscious of itself and does not know why or how it should do things. It is the time when we should give it a small but sufficient basis to be not altogether a little animal, to belong to the human race, by an elementary intellectual development.

After that, there is a period of seven years in which it ought to learn to choose—choose what it wants to be. If it wants to choose to have a brain rich, complex, developed, powerful in its functioning, well, it should learn to work, because by work, by reflection, by study, by analysis and all that goes with them one's brain gets formed.

At the age of fourteen you are ready—or you ought to be ready—to know what you want to be. And then I say: if round about that age there are children who categorically declare, “Intellectual development does not at all interest us, we do not want to learn, we want to stay ignorant”, I do not see what right anybody has to impose education on them and to wish to raise their levels.

There are those who are below, there are those who are at another stage. There are people who can have most remarkable capacities and who yet have no taste for intellectual development. One can warn them that if they do not work, if they do not study, then when they are grown up they will find themselves perhaps embarrassed *vis-à-vis* the rest of humanity. But if it is all the same to them and if they wish to live a life which is not intellectual, I consider that no one has the right to compel them.

This is my constant quarrel with all the professors of our school. They come and tell me: “If the children do not work, they will be stupid and ignorant as grown-ups.” I reply: “But if it pleases them to be stupid and ignorant, what right have you to interfere?”

One cannot have compulsory knowledge and intelligence. That is all.

Now, as to the belief that while abstaining from all effort and all study you will become geniuses—and geniuses supramental—do not be under any illusion: it will never happen. For, even if you touch a higher light, by an inner aspiration or by divine Grace, you will have nothing inside the brain to enable you to express it. It will then remain in an altogether nebulous state and will touch nothing in your outer existence. But if it pleases you to be like that, nobody has the right to oblige you to be otherwise. One has to understand that you have enough awareness to be able to choose.

Fundamentally, the only thing the teachers should do assiduously is to teach

the children to know themselves and to choose their own destiny, the path to be followed—to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves, determine themselves. It is infinitely more important than teaching them what has happened on the earth before, or indeed even how the earth has been built, or finally even all sorts of things which are a most necessary foundation if one wishes to live the ordinary life in the world, because if you do not know these things, then immediately whoever beats you intellectually would point at you, saying, “Oh he is an idiot, he knows nothing!”

But, after all, no matter at what age, if you are studious and have the will, you can take books and start working; you do not need to go to school for that. If you wish to learn anything, if you wish to study, there are enough books in the world for you to read. There are more books than necessary.

What, however, is very important is to know what you want. And for that a minimum of liberty is required. One should not be under a compulsion or an obligation. You should be able to do things gladly. If you are lazy, well, you should know what it means to be lazy. In life the lazy ones are forced to work ten times more than the others, because what they do they do ill and they are obliged to do it again. But all this has to be learned by experience, it cannot be imposed upon you.

The mind, if one does not pull it up, is something floating and imprecise. If one has not the habit to concentrate, it will fluctuate all the time. It does not stop anywhere and it swims in a world of imprecision. And when one wishes to fix one's attention, it hurts! There is just a little effort and then: “Oh it is tiring, it hurts!” Then one does not make the effort and lives in a sort of haze, most of the brain smoky and vague, with no precision or exactitude or clarity. One has more of impressions than of knowledge. You then live in an approximation and keep within you all kinds of contradictory ideas which are chiefly sensations, sentiments, emotions and have very little to do with thought and are all “dimnesses”, as it were.

But if you wish to attain precise, concrete and clear thinking on a definite point, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, fix yourself, concentrate yourself. And the first time you do so, it literally hurts and is so fatiguing!

But if you do not persist in your attempt, all your life you will remain in a state of fluidity. For when it comes to practical things which put you in the presence—because, despite all, one is always in the presence—of a more or less large number of problems to be resolved, problems altogether practical, then in place of the power to seize the elements of the problem, set them face to face with one another, look at the question from all sides, rise above and see the solution, you will be tossed within the whorls of something grey

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

and uncertain, you will be as with so many cobwebs wreathing your head—but you will not catch anything.

I am speaking of the most simple problems, not of decisions concerning the world or humanity or even a country. I am speaking of problems of your daily life. All will become cottony.

Well, it is to avoid this that, when your brain is in a state of preparation, you are being told: "Instead of letting it be formed loosely, try to give it a bit of exactitude, precision, the capacity to concentrate, to choose, decide, confront one thing with another, make use of reason.

Of course it is understood that reason is not man's supreme capacity and that it has to be surpassed; but it is also evident that if you do not have it you live a life completely incoherent, you do not even behave in a rational manner. The least thing will upset you totally and you will not even know why, and still less how to remedy it; while someone who has established in himself a state of active and clear reason can face attacks of every kind—attacks emotional or attacks that are tests, in some way or other, because life is entirely made up of these matters—all unpleasant things—which may be small but which, by the measure of him who feels them, are very great because they are to his measure. Well, the reason can draw back a little, look at them, smile and say: "Oh, no, one need not make much ado about nothing."

If you do not have reason, you will be like a cork on a rough and confused sea. I do not know if the cork suffers, but its condition does not seem to me very advantageous!

Now, after having said this—which I have said often before and am ready to say again as often as you want—I am all for leaving you entirely free to choose whether you wish to be a cork on a tossing sea or to have a clear precise perception and a sufficient knowledge to be able to proceed just where you want to proceed. For, a certain clarity is indispensable in order to follow the path one has chosen. I am not at all for your becoming erudites—very far from it; for then one goes to the other extreme: one fills one's head with so many things that no place is left for the higher Light; but there is a minimum which is indispensable for not being a cork.

*Q: It is said that we do not study enough because of too much insistence on games and on physical education. Is this true?*

Who says it? Is it people who do not like physical education? I do not believe it is true. Do you remember the first article Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Bulletin*? It replies to these people in a completely categorical way. I believe the reason is—and I take the whole blame on myself—that you have been given



freedom to a fantastic degree, my children. I do not think that there is any other spot in the world where children are as free, but I am afraid it is difficult to know how to use such freedom.

However, the experiment is worth trying. You do not appreciate it, because you do not know how it is when things are otherwise. To you it seems quite natural. But it is very difficult to know how by oneself to organise one's own liberty. Still, if you manage to do it, to give the proper discipline to yourself—and for higher reasons, not for passing examinations, making a career to please one's professors, carrying away a lot of prizes, or any other ordinary reason that children have in order not to be scolded or punished; we shall pass over all such reasons—oh well, if you manage to give a discipline to yourself—each his own discipline, there is no need to follow that of others—simply because you want to progress and to draw out of yourself the best that you can, then you will be far superior to those who have the ordinary school-discipline. It is this that I wish to try. Note, I am not saying I am disappointed; I have still a very good hope that you will profit by this unique opportunity. But all the same there is something you have to find: it is *the necessity of an inner discipline*. Without discipline you cannot get anywhere, without discipline you cannot even live a normal life, the life of a normal man. But instead of having the conventional discipline of ordinary society or of an ordinary institution, I had wished and I still wish that you should have the discipline you could yourself give to yourself through love for perfection, your own perfection, the perfection of your being.

Mark that if one does not discipline one's body one cannot even stand up on one's feet, one will remain like children who go about on all fours. If you do not discipline yourself you cannot live in society, cannot live except all by yourself in a forest and not perhaps even there. Just because I am averse to conventional social disciplines you need not refrain from all discipline. I would wish each one to find his own discipline in the sincerity of his inner aspiration and the will to realise himself. And the aim of those who know, whether they be professors, instructors or whatever else—their *raison d'être* in this matter is to direct you, to help you. When you are in a situation which seems to you difficult, you submit your problem and, with their personal experience, they can say to you: "No! it is not like this or like that and you must do this or do that." Then, instead of making you learn by force of theories, principles and self-styled laws and a knowledge more or less abstract, they are there to give you direction, from the most material to the most spiritual things, each following his own field and capacity.

It is quite evident that if you are thrown into the world without the least technical knowledge, you can do very dangerous things. Take a child who knows

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

nothing; the first thing it will do, if for example it gets hold of match-sticks, is to burn itself. And in this field, from the purely material point of view, it is good that there are people who know and can direct you; because otherwise if each has to learn by his own experience he will take many lives to learn the most necessary matters. That is the true use of professors and instructors. They have learned, more or less practically, or by a special study, and they can guide you in matters that one must indispensably know. This makes you gain a lot of time. Their use is to answer your questions.

And, truly, you should have a brain alive enough to have questions to pose.

20-6-1956

## THE BODY-SENSE AND SADHANA

(Some Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

*Q. Sometimes one feels, in the midst of an experience, that the physical form or the organ where the experience seems located does not exist at all.*

A. That kind of non-existence of the body or of some part of it is a frequent experience in sadhana. (15-9-1934)

*Q. It also happens that when the experience is of a voidness one feels the whole body to be as light as cotton-wool.*

A. Yes, it becomes like that. In the end you feel as if you had no body but were spread out in the vastness of space as an infinite consciousness and existence—or as if the body were only a dot in that consciousness. (22-9-1934)

*Q. Occasionally the whole head becomes as if unreal—no substance is felt there.*

A. That happens when the consciousness is liberated from the body sense. (6-10-1934)

*Q. The consciousness feels as if the Pure Existence were materially descending into one, down to the neck. But how can that be?*

A. The Pure Existence is not something abstract but substantial and concrete. Moreover it is descending into the body, so it is quite natural to feel it materially. (16-10-1934)

*Q. It is said that to fix Peace in the outer physical is impossible until the supramental descent takes place.*

A. Who says that? Peace can be brought down into the physical to its very cells. It is the active transformation of the physical that cannot be completely done without the supramental descent. (11-12-1934)

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

### POETIC INSPIRATION

31-3-1936.

MYSELF: In regard to writing poetry, not only is my vital lazy but also my mind does not know precisely how to silence itself. This second point applies to X too. How then does he manage to receive from the Above?

SRI AUROBINDO: The difference is that as his mind has opened to the Above, the Above can turn its activity into an activity of the Inspiration; its quickness, energy, activity enable it to transcribe quickly, actively, energetically what comes into it from the Above. Of course if one day it becomes silent also, it may possibly become the channel of a still higher Inspiration.

MYSELF: Did X's vital become active because somehow he could more easily draw in the Inspiration?

SRI AUROBINDO: X's vital strength is inborn, though it may not have at first been open to the poetic inspiration. When it did, it could leap at once with full energy and gave itself entirely to the flow.

MYSELF: Is silencing the mind to be done only at the time of writing?

SRI AUROBINDO: Silencing the mind at the time of writing should be sufficient, even not silencing it but its falling quiet to receive.

MYSELF: One of my methods in composing is to try to find out the rhymes.

SRI AUROBINDO: Just the thing you should not do. Let the rhyme come, don't begin dragging all sorts of rhymes in to see if they fit.

MYSELF: Do you want to say that if I have discovered some lines I must not think of the next lines, but try instead to keep absolutely silent?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the ideal way; but usually there is always an activity of the mind jumping up and trying to catch the inspiration. Sometimes

## MOTHER INDIA

the inspiration, the right one, comes in the midst of this futile jumping, sometimes it sweeps it aside and brings in the right thing, sometimes it asserts itself between two blunders, sometimes it waits till the noise quiets down. But even this jumping need not be a mental effort—it is often only a series of suggestions, the mind of itself seizing on one or eliminating another, not by laborious thinking and choice, but by a quiet series of perceptions. This is method No. 2. No 3 is your Herculean way, quite the slowest and worst.

MYSELF: While one person breaks his head over a few lines, another composes three or four poems.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is fluency, not necessarily inspiration; Southey used to write like that, I believe. But you don't call Southey an inspired poet, do you?

MYSELF: You once brought "the organisation of the Supermind in the physical consciousness" into the talk about your poetic inspiration. What is the connection between the two?

SRI AUROBINDO: Excuse me, it was you who brought in Overmind etc. in connection with my poetry and asked why having these things I had to write *Savitri* many times instead of pouring out 24,000 lines a day.

MYSELF: I have worked today from 1-30 to 6-15 p.m. and composed only 16 lines! Is this a sign of laziness?

SRI AUROBINDO: But that is quite magnificent—16 lines in one day, 3 1/5 lines an hour about! Remember that Virgil used only to write 9 lines a day. At this rate you will end by being twice as inspired and fluent as Virgil.

4-4-1936

MYSELF: I am sending you a poem. Do you find it good? Even if it is so, where does my credit lie after so much correction? The credit is all yours.

SRI AUROBINDO: Your credit lies in the substance which could not realise its possibilities because of your damnable errors in rhythm. It was good poetry in substance but spoiled by errors of form. What the hell do you mean by trying trochees like

    In whose | gilded | shackles | we laugh | and weep,  
    Into | a profound | stillness | of lone | sky-heights,

or worst of all

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

The <sup>/</sup>fin|<sup>/</sup>ite for | one <sup>/</sup>brief | <sup>/</sup>moment | climbs.

Do you think you are adult enough yet for such Hitlerian violences to English metre?

MYSELF: Do you find in my piece some influence of your poem *Rishi* which I read a few days ago?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be there, but I did not find it. The only result was a greater elevation and strength in the poetic speech. No objection can be made to an influence like that. It is imitation and reproduction that are objectionable.

25-4-1936

MYSELF: In one letter you spoke of fictitious stresses. What is meant by them? Can you not illustrate them in a poem? I am enclosing a *carte blanche* for the purpose.

SRI AUROBINDO: I meant simply stresses which are conventionally supposed to be there for the sake of the metre....What are you dreaming of, Sir? A poem as an illustration of my bit of prosodic grammar? Inspiration would run away to Pelion and never return if I did such a shocking thing. I am keeping your *carte blanche*, but the odds are that it may be fitted to quite another purpose.

NIRODBARAN

# THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE HUMAN FATHERS

THESE characteristics of the Angirasa Rishis seem at first sight to indicate that they are in the Vedic system a class of demigods, in their outward aspect personifications or rather personalities of the Light and the Voice and the Flame, but in their inner aspect powers of the Truth who second the gods in their battles. But even as divine seers, even as sons of Heaven and heroes of the Lord, these sages represent aspiring humanity. True, they are originally the sons of the gods, *devaputrāḥ*, children of Agni, forms of the manifoldly born Brihaspati, and in their ascent to the world of the Truth they are described as ascending back to the place from whence they came; but even in these characteristics they may well be representative of the human soul which has itself descended from that world and has to reascend; for it is in its origin a mental being, son of immortality (*amṛtasya putrah*), a child of Heaven born in Heaven and mortal only in the bodies that it assumes. And the part of the Angirasa Rishis in the sacrifice is the human part, to find the word, to sing the hymn of the soul to the gods, to sustain and increase the divine Powers by the praise, the sacred food and the Soma-wine, to bring to birth by their aid the divine Dawn, to win the luminous forms of the all-radiating Truth and to ascend to its secret, far and high-seated home.

In this work of the sacrifice they appear in a double form,<sup>1</sup> the divine Angirasas, *ṛṣayo divyāḥ*, who symbolise and preside over certain psychological powers and workings like the gods, and the human fathers, *pitāro manuṣyāḥ*, who like the Ribhus, also described as human beings or at least human powers that have conquered immortality by the work, have attained the goal and are invoked to assist a later mortal race in the same divine achievement. Quite

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that the Puranas distinguish specifically between two classes of Pitris, the divine Fathers, a class of deities, and the human Ancestors, to both of whom the *pinda* is offered. The Puranas, obviously, only continue in this respect the original Vedic tradition.

apart from the later Yama hymns of the tenth Mandala in which the Angirasas are spoken of as Barhishad Pitris along with the Bhrigus and Atharvans and receive their own peculiar portion in the sacrifice, they are in the rest of the Veda also called upon in a less definite but a larger and more significant imagery. It is for the great human journey that they are invoked; for it is the human journey from the mortality to the immortality, from the falsehood to the truth that the Ancestors accomplished, opening the way to their descendants.

We see this characteristic of their working in VII.42 and VII. 52. The first of these two hymns of Vasishtha is a Sukta in which the gods are invoked precisely for this great journey, *adhvarayajña*,<sup>1</sup> the sacrifice that travels or is a travel to the home of the godheads and at the same time a battle: for thus it is sung, "Easy of travelling for thee is the path, O Agni, and known to thee from of old. Yoke in the Soma-offering thy ruddy (or, actively-moving) mares which bear the hero. Seated, I call the births divine" (verse 2). What path is this? It is the path between the home of the gods and our earthly mortality down which the gods descend through the *antariksa*, the vital regions, to the earthly sacrifice and up which the sacrifice and man by the sacrifice ascends to the home of the gods. Agni yokes his mares, his variously-coloured energies or flames of the divine Force he represents, which bear the Hero, the battling power within us that performs the journey. And the births divine are at once the gods themselves and those manifestations of the divine life in man which are the Vedic meaning of the godheads. That this is the sense becomes clear from the fourth Rik. "When the Guest that lodges in the bliss has become conscious in knowledge in the gated house of the hero rich (in felicity), when Agni is perfectly satisfied and firmly lodged in the house, then he gives the desirable good to the creature that makes the journey" or, it may be, for his journeying.

The hymn is therefore an invocation to Agni for the journey to the supreme good, the divine birth, the bliss. And its opening verse is a prayer for the necessary conditions of the journey, the things that are said here to constitute the form of the pilgrim sacrifice, *adhvarasya pśaḥ*, and among these comes first the forward movement of the Angirasas; "Forward let the Angirasas travel, priests of the Word, forward go the cry of heaven (or, of the heavenly thing, cloud or lightning), forward move the fostering Cows that diffuse their waters, and let the two pressing-stones be yoked (to their work)—the form of the pil-

<sup>1</sup> Sayana takes *a-dhvara yajña*, unhurt sacrifice; but "unhurt" can never have come to be used as a synonym of sacrifice. *Adhvara* is "travelling", "moving", connected with *adhvan*, path or journey from the lost root *adh*, to move, extend, be wide, compact etc. We see the connection between the two words *adhvan* and *adhvara*, in *advha*, air, sky and *adhvara* with the same sense. The passages in the Veda are numerous in which the *adhvara* or *adhvara yajña* is connected with the idea of travelling, journeying, advancing on the path.



grim sacrifice," *pra brahmāṇo angiraso nakṣanta, pra krandanur nabhanyasya vetu; pra dhenava udapruto navanta, yujyātām adri adhvarasya peśaḥ* (VII. 42-1). The Angirasas with the divine Word, the cry of Heaven which is the voice of Swar, the luminous heaven, and of its lightnings thundering out from the Word, the divine waters or seven rivers that are set free to their flowing by that heavenly lightning of Indra the master of Swar, and with the outflowing of the divine waters the outpressing of the immortalising Soma, these constitute the form, *peśaḥ*, of the *adhvara yajña*. And its general characteristic is forward movement, the advance of all to the divine goal, as emphasised by the three verbs of motion, *nakṣanta, vetu, navanta* and the emphatic *pra*, forward, which opens and sets the key to each clause.

But the fifty-second hymn is still more significant and suggestive. The first Rik runs, "O Sons of the infinite Mother (*ādityāso*), may we become infinite beings (*aditayaḥ syāma*), may the Vasus protect in the godhead and the mortality (*devatrā martyatra*); possessing may we possess you, O Mitra, and Varuna, becoming may we become you, O Heaven and Earth," *sanema mtrāvāruṇā sananto, bhavema dyāvāprthivī bhavantaḥ*. This is evidently the sense that we are to possess and become the infinities or children of Aditi, the godheads, *aditayaḥ, ādityāso*. Mitra and Varuna, we must remember, are powers of Surya Savitri, the Lord of the Light and the Truth. And the third verse runs, "May the Angirasas who hasten through to the goal move in their travelling to the bliss of the divine Savitri; and that (bliss) may our great Father, he of the sacrifice, and all the gods becoming of one mind accept in heart." *Turaṇyavo nakṣanta ratnam devasya savitur iyanāḥ*. It is quite clear therefore that the Angirasas are travellers to the light and truth of the solar deity from which are born the luminous cows they wrest from the Panis and to the bliss which, as we always see, is founded on that light and truth. It is clear also that this journey is a growing into the godhead, into the infinite being (*aditayaḥ syāma*), said in this hymn (verse 2) to come by the growth of the peace and bliss through the action in us of Mitra, Varuna and the Vasus who protect us in the godhead and the mortality.

In these two hymns the Angirasa Rishis generally are mentioned; but in others we have positive references to the human Fathers who first discovered the Light and possessed the Thought and the Word and travelled to the secret worlds of the luminous Bliss. In the light of the conclusions at which we have arrived, we can now study the more important passages, profound, beautiful and luminous, in which this great discovery of the human forefathers is hymned. We shall find there the summary of that great hope which the Vedic mystics held ever before their eyes; that journey, that victory is the ancient, primal achievement set as a type of the luminous Ancestors for the mortality that was

to come after them. It was the conquest of the powers of the circumscribing Night *rātrī paritakmyā* (V.30-14), Vritras, Sambaras and Valas, the Titans, Giants, Pythons, subconscious Powers who hold the light and the force in themselves, in their cities of darkness and illusion, but can neither use it aright nor will give it up to man, the mental being. Their ignorance, evil and limitation have not merely to be cut away from us, but broken up into and made to yield up the secret of light and good and infinity. Out of this death that immortality has to be conquered. Pent up behind this ignorance is a secret knowledge and a great light of truth; prisoned by this evil is an infinite content of good; in this limiting death is the seed of a boundless immortality. Vala, for example, is Vala of the radiances, *valasya gomataḥ* (I. 11-5), his body is made of the light, *govapuṣo valasya* (X. 68-9), his hole or cave is a city full of treasures; that body has to be broken up, that city rent open, those treasures seized. This is the work set for humanity and the Ancestors have done it for the race that the way may be known and the goal reached by the same means and through the same companionship with the gods of Light. "Let there be that ancient friendship between you gods and us as when with the Angirasas who spoke aright the word, thou didst make to fall that which was fixed and slewest Vala as he rushed against thee, O achiever of works, and thou didst make to swing open all the doors of his city" (VI. 18-5). At the beginning of all human traditions there is this ancient memory. It is Indra and the serpent Vritra, it is Apollo and the Python, it is Thor and the Giants, Sigurd and Fafner, it is the mutually opposing gods of the Celtic mythology; but only in the Veda do we find the key to this imagery which conceals the hope or the wisdom of a prehistoric humanity.

The first hymn we will take is one by the great Rishi, Vishwamitra, III. 39; for it carries us right into the heart of our subject. It sets out with a description of the ancestral Thought, *pitryā dhīḥ*, the Thought of the fathers which can be no other than the Swar-possessing thought hymned by the Atris, the seven-headed thought discovered by Ayasya for the Navagwas; for in this hymn also it is spoken of in connection with the Angrasas, the Fathers. "The thought expressing itself from the heart, formed into the Stoma, goes towards Indra its lord" (Rik 1). Indra is, we have supposed, the Power of luminous Mind, master of the world of Light and its lightnings; the words or the thoughts are constantly imaged as cows or women, Indra as the Bull or husband, and the words desire him and are even spoken of as casting themselves upwards to seek him, e.g. I. 9-4, *giraḥ prati tvam ud ahāsata...vṛṣabham patim*. The luminous Mind of Swar is the goal sought by the Vedic thought and the Vedic speech which express the herd of the illuminations pressing upward from the soul, from the cave of the subconscious in which they were penned; Indra

master of Swar is the Bull, the lord of these herds, *gopatiḥ*.

The Rishi continues to describe the Thought. It is "the thought that when it is being expressed, remains wakeful in the knowledge," does not lend itself to the slumber of the Panis, *yā jagrvir vīdathe śasyamānā*; "that which is born of thee (or, for thee), O Indra, of that take knowledge." This is a constant formula in the Veda. The god, the divine, has to take cognizance of what rises up to him in man, to become awake to it in the knowledge within us, (*viddhu, cetathaḥ, etc.*), otherwise it remains a human thing and does not "go to the gods," (*deveṣu gacchati*). And then, "It is ancient (or eternal), it is born from heaven; when it is being expressed, it remains wakeful in the knowledge; wearing white and happy robes, *this in us is the ancient thought of the fathers,*" *seyam asme sanajā pītryā dhīḥ* (Rik 2). And then the Rishi speaks of this Thought as "The mother of twins, who here gives birth to the twins; on the tip of the tongue it descends and stands; the twin bodies when they are born cleave to each other and are slayers of darkness and move in the foundation of burning force" (Rik 3). I will not now discuss what are these luminous twins, for that would carry us beyond the limits of our immediate subject: suffice it to say that they are spoken of elsewhere in connection with the Angirasas and their establishment of the supreme birth (the plane of the Truth) as the twins in whom Indra places the word of the expression (I. 83-3), that the burning force in whose foundation they move is evidently that of the Sun, the slayer of darkness, and this foundation is therefore identical with the supreme plane, the foundation of the Truth, *ṛtasya budhmaḥ*, and, finally that they can hardly be wholly unconnected with the twin children of Surya, Yama and Yami,—Yama who in the tenth Mandala is associated with the Angirasa Rishis.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus described the ancestral thought with its twin children, slayers of darkness, Vishwamitra proceeds to speak of the ancient Fathers who first formed it and of the great victory by which they discovered "that Truth, the sun lying in the darkness." "None is there among mortals who can blame (or, as it rather seems to me to mean, no power of mortality that can confine or bind) our ancient fathers, they who were fighters for the cows; Indra of the mightiness, Indra of the achievement released upward for them the fortified pens,—there where, a comrade with his comrades, the fighters, the Navagwas, following on his knees the cows, Indra with the ten Dashagwas found that Truth, *satyam tad*, even the sun dwelling in the darkness" (Rik 4-5). This is the usual image of the conquest of the luminous cattle and the discovery of the

<sup>1</sup> It is in the light of these facts that we must understand the colloquy of Yama and Yami in the tenth Mandala in which the sister seeks union with her brother and is put off to later generations, meaning really symbolic periods of time, the word for "later" signifying rather "higher," *uttara*.

hidden Sun; but in the next verse it is associated with two other related images which also occur frequently in the Vedic hymns, the pasture or field of the cow and the honey found in the cow. "Indra found the honey stored in the Shining One, the footed and hoofed (wealth) in the pasture<sup>1</sup> of the Cow" (Rik 6). The Shining One, *usriyā* (also *usrā*), is another word which like *go* means both ray and cow and is used as a synonym of *go* in the Veda. We hear constantly of the *ghṛta* or clarified butter stored in the cow, hidden there by the Panis in three portions according to Vamadeva; but it is sometimes the honeyed *ghṛta* and sometimes simply the honey, *madhumad ghṛtam* (IX. 86-37) and *madhu*. We have seen how closely the yield of the cow, the *ghṛta*, and the yield of the Soma plant are connected in other hymns and now that we know definitely what is meant by the Cow, this strange and incongruous connection becomes clear and simple enough. *Ghṛta* also means shining, it is the shining yield of the shining cow; it is the formed light of conscious knowledge in the mentality which is stored in the illumined consciousness and it is liberated by the liberation of the Cow: Soma is the delight, beatitude, Ananda inseparable from the illumined state of the being; and as there are, according to the Veda, three planes of mentality in us, so there are three portions of the *ghṛta* dependent on the three gods Surya, Indra and Soma, and the Soma also is offered in three parts, on the three levels of the hill, *triṣu sānuṣu*. We may hazard the conjecture, having regard to the nature of the three gods, that Soma releases the divine light from the sense mentality, Indra from the dynamic mentality, Surya from the pure reflective mentality. As for the pasture of the cow we are already familiar with it; it is the field or *kṣetra* which Indra wins for his shining comrades from the Dasyu and in which the Atri beheld the warrior Agni and the luminous cows, those of whom even the old became young again. This field, *kṣetra*, is only another image for the luminous home (*kṣaya*) to which the gods by the sacrifice lead the human soul.

Vishwamitra then proceeds to indicate the real mystic sense of all this imagery. "He having Dakshina with him held in his right hand (*dakṣiné dakṣiṇāvān*) the secret thing that is placed in the secret cave and concealed in the waters. May he, knowing perfectly, separate the light from the darkness, *jyotir vṛṇīta tamaso vijānam*, may we be far from the presence of the evil" (Riks 6, 7). We have here a clue to the sense of this goddess Dakshina who seems in some passages to be a form or epithet of the Dawn and in others that which distributes the offerings in the sacrifice. Usha is the divine illumination and Dakshina is the discerning knowledge that comes with the dawn and

<sup>1</sup> Name *goh*. *Nama* from *nam* to move, range, Greek *nemo*, *nama* is the range, pasture, Greek *namos*.

enables the Power in the mind, Indra, to know aright and separate the light from the darkness, the truth from the falsehood, the straight from the crooked, *vṛṇā vijānan*. The right and left hand of Indra are his two powers of action in knowledge; for his two arms are called *gabhasti*, a word which means ordinarily a ray of the sun but also forearm, and they correspond to his two perceptive powers, his two bright horses, *harī*, which are described as sun-eyed, *sūracakṣasā* and as vision-powers of the Sun, *sūryasya ketū*. Dakshina presides over the right-hand power, *dakṣiṇa*, and therefore we have the collocation *dakṣiṇè dakṣiṇāvān*. It is this discernment which presides over the right action of the sacrifice and the right distribution of the offerings and it is this which enables Indra to hold the herded wealth of the Panis securely, in his right hand. And finally we are told what is this secret thing that was placed for us in the cave and is concealed in the waters of being, the waters in which the Thought of the Fathers has to be set, *apsu dhīyam dhīse*. It is the hidden Sun, the secret Light of our divine existence which has to be found and taken out by knowledge from the darkness in which it is concealed. That this light is not physical is shown by the word *vijānan*, for it is through right knowledge that it has to be found, and by the moral result, *viz.* that we go far from the presence of evil, *duritād*, literally, the wrong going, the stumbling to which we are subjected in the night of our being before the sun has been found, before the divine Dawn has arisen.

Once we have the key to the meaning of the Cows, the Sun, the Honey-Wine, all the circumstances of the Angirasa legend and the action of the Fathers, which are such an incongruous patchwork in the ritualistic or naturalistic and so hopelessly impossible in the historical or Arya-Dravidian interpretation of the hymns, become on the contrary perfectly clear and connected and each throws light on the other. We understand each hymn in its entirety and in relation to other hymns; each isolated line, each passage, each scattered reference in the Vedas falls inevitably and harmoniously into a common whole. We know, here, how the Honey, the Bliss can be said to be stored in the Cow, the shining Light of the Truth; what is the connection of the honey-bearing Cow with the Sun, lord and origin of that Light; why the discovery of the Sun dwelling in the darkness is connected with the conquest or recovery of the cows of the Panis by the Angirasas; why it is called the discovery of that Truth; what is meant by the footed and hoofed wealth and the field or pasture of the Cow. We begin to see what is the cave of the Panis and why that which is hidden in the lair of Vala is said also to be hidden in the waters released by Indra from the hold of Vritra, the seven rivers possessed by the seven-headed heaven-conquering thought of Ayasya; why the rescue of the sun out of the cave, the separation or choosing of the light out of the darkness is said to be done by an all-discerning knowledge; who are Dakshina and Sarama and what is meant by Indra holding the hoofed

wealth in his right hand. And in arriving at these conclusions we have not to wrest the sense of words, to interpret the same fixed term by different renderings according to our convenience of the moment or to render differently the same phrase or line in different hymns, or to make incoherence a standard of right interpretation; on the contrary, the greater the fidelity to word and form of the Riks, the more conspicuously the general and the detailed sense of the Veda emerge in a constant clearness and fullness.

We have therefore acquired the right to apply the sense we have discovered to other passages such as the hymn of Vasishtha which I shall next examine, VII. 76, although to a superficial glance it would seem to be only an ecstatic picture of the physical Dawn. This first impression, however, disappears when we examine it; we see that there is a constant suggestion of a profounder meaning and, the moment we apply the key we have found, the harmony of the real sense appears. The hymn commences with a description of that rising of the Sun into the light of the supreme Dawn which is brought about by the gods and the Angirasas. "Savitri, the god, the universal Male, has ascended into the Light that is immortal and of all the births, *jyotir amṛtam viśvajanyam*; by the work (of sacrifice) the eye of the gods has been born (or, by the will-power of the gods vision has been born); Dawn has manifested the whole world (or, all that comes into being, all existences, *viśvam bhuvanam*)" (Rik 1). This immortal light into which the sun rises is elsewhere called the true light, *ṛtam jyotiḥ*, Truth and immortality being constantly associated in the Veda. It is the light of the knowledge given by the seven-headed thought which Ayasya discovered when he became *viśvajanya*, universal in his being; therefore this light too is called *viśvajanya*, for it belongs to the fourth plane, the *turiyam svid* of Ayasya, from which all the rest are born and by whose truth all the rest are manifested in their large universality and no longer in the limited terms of the falsehood and crookedness. Therefore it is called also the eye of the gods and the divine dawn that makes manifest the whole of existence.

The result of this birth of divine vision is that man's path manifests itself to him and those journeyings of the gods or to the gods (*devayānāḥ*) which lead to the infinite wideness of the divine existence. "Before me the paths of the journeyings of the gods have become visible, journeyings that violate not, whose movement was formed by the Vasus. The eye of Dawn has come into being in front and she has come towards us (arriving) over our houses" (Rik 2). The house in the Veda is the constant image for the bodies that are dwelling-places of the soul, just as the field or habitation means the planes to which it mounts and in which it rests. The path of man is that of his journey to the supreme plane and that which the journeyings of the gods do not violate is, as we see, in the fifth verse where the phrase is repeated, the workings of the gods, the

divine law of life into which the soul has to grow. We have then a curious image which seems to support the Arctic theory. "Many were those days which were before the rising of the Sun (or which were of old by the rising of the Sun), in which thou, O Dawn, wert seen as if moving about thy lover and not coming again" (Rik 3). This is certainly a picture of continual dawns, not interrupted by Night, such as are visible in the Arctic regions. The psychological sense which arises out of the verse, is obvious.

What were these dawns? They were those created by the actions of the Fathers, the ancient Angirasas. "They indeed had the joy (of the Soma) along with the gods,<sup>1</sup> the ancient seers who possessed the truth; the fathers found the hidden Light; they, having the true thought (*satyamantrāḥ*, the true thought expressed in the inspired Word), brought into being the Dawn" (Rik 4). And to what did the Dawn, the path, the divine journeying lead the Fathers? To the level wideness, *samāne ūrve*, termed elsewhere the unobstructed vast, *urau ambādhe*, which is evidently the same as that wide being or world which, according to Kanwa, men create when they slay Vṛitra and pass beyond heaven and earth; it is the vast Truth and the infinite being of Aditi. "In the level wideness they meet together and unite their knowledge (or, know perfectly) and strive not together; they diminish not (limit not or hurt not) the workings of the gods, not violating them they move (to their goal) by the (the strength of) the Vasus" (Rik 5). It is evident that the seven Angirasas, whether human or divine represent different principles of the Knowledge, Thought or Word, the seven-headed thought, the seven-mouthed word of Brihaspati, and in the level wideness these are harmonised in a universal knowledge; the error, crookedness, falsehood by which men violate the workings of the gods and by which different principles of their being, consciousness, knowledge enter into confused conflict with each other, have been removed by the eye or vision of the divine Dawn.

The hymn closes with the aspiration of the Vasishthas towards this divine and blissful Dawn as leader of the herds and mistress of plenty and again as leader of the felicity and the truths (*sūnṛtānām*). They desire to arrive at the same achievement as the primal seers, the fathers and it would follow that these are the human and not the divine Angirasas. In any case the sense of the Angirasas legend is fixed in all its details, except the exact identity of the Panis and the hound Sarama, and we can turn to the consideration of the passages in the opening hymns of the fourth Mandala in which the human fathers are explicitly mentioned and their achievement described. These hymns of Vamadeva are the most illuminating and important for this aspect of the Angirasa legend and they are in themselves among the most interesting in the Rig-veda.

<sup>1</sup> I adopt provisionally the traditional rendering of *sadhamaḍaḥ* though I am not sure that it is the correct rendering.

THE UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS OF ARJAVA  
(J. A. CHADWICK)

(WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S COMMENTS)

CATULLUS ON CICERO

(*A Translation*)

MOST skilled in speech of all who are descended  
From Romulus, whether they live in our time  
Or lived before or shall henceforth be living,  
O Marcus Tullius, to thee be rendered  
The utmost thanks by worst of all the poets,  
Catullus, who is worst by that same measure  
As you of all K.C.s are far the greatest.

1932 (?)

(Questions: "The original runs:

Disert̄issimē | Rōmūlī nē|pōtūm,  
Quōt̄ sūnt | quōt̄quē fū|jere, | Mārcē | Tūlli,  
Quōt̄quē | post alīs erunt in annis,  
Grāt̄iās tibi | maxi|mas Cāt̄ullus  
Āgit | pēssimū | omni|jūm pō|jēta,  
Tānto | pēssimū | omni|jūm pō|jēta  
Quānto | tu optimū | omni|jūm pā|trōnū.

Lines 1 and 5 begin with an iamb. But should not the initial foot be a spondee (or dactyl) if the metre is *l'hendécasyllabe phalécien*? Also, has not Catullus begun lines 3 and 4 with a trochee?

George Lafaye observes 'Catulle se fait si humble dans cette pièce qu'on s'est demandé si elle n'était pas tout entière ironique. La raison, à elle seule, ne paraît pas suffisante.' Would you not say that Catullus was bound



to have looked upon Cicero the man as a pompous ass, however sincerely he may have admired Cicero the man of letters?

The metre I have tried to use seems very flat and dead here? Or is that merely because Catullus is not in this piece writing poetry?”)

Sri Aurobindo's Comment:

“Of course the spondee is the usual first foot, but it seems that Catullus felt himself free to vary it sometimes by any dissyllabic foot—iamb or trochee. Such variations add to the grace and ease of his treatment of the metre.

I am not sure how his contemporaries regarded Cicero—were they not hypnotised by his eloquence, scholarship, literary versatility, conversational and epistolary powers, overflowing vitality? One would think that men like Catullus and Caesar would see through him, though. There is certainly a note that sounds very like irony in the last three lines, but it is very subtle and others than Cicero may have regarded it as a graceful eulogy enhanced by the assumption of extreme humility (though only a courteous assumption) in the comparison between the *poeta* and the *patronus*.

The translation is a good one and the turn of the close is clever and gives it the needed point with a touch of persiflage. I don't think the metre sounds flat. But there is something in Catullus that no version however skilful can render.<sup>1</sup> The other translation is very graceful and apt in its expressions. But what you say there is right and it seems to me that a translation can easily command that union of exquisite style with exquisite delicacy of execution in the metre. One would have to pass it through oneself and bring it out again in a sort of original re-creation—but, if that could be successfully done, it would be a transformation rather than a translation. In your translation the lines

Or provoked by proffered finger  
Rapid thrust from beak of mischief

seem to me to get something of the Catullan manner.”

### UNRESTING WATER

Landscape | engraven | through and through,  
Underground, | aloft up | on the hills,  
In quiet | of valley-slopes, by change

<sup>1</sup> The poem to which the succeeding remarks refer cannot be traced. (Editor)

Ever work|ing, wave on | subt̄le w̄ave,  
 Till bareness | turns to sc̄ulptured | filigree,—  
 Runes of earth | gigantic|ly inscribed.

If writ with | a water | graving-tool,  
 Aeon-wiel|ded, O how | unreḡarding  
 Were the s̄olemn | and bound-by-|tribal-law  
 Change-resist|ers,—even | though they viewed  
 The shifting | of channels | year by year  
 Where the riv|er fretted | evermore.

1932 (?)

(Questions: “Not attempting rhyme for the moment, I have tried the above exercise in quantitative metre. Why is it so far from the rhythm and delicacy and smoothness of your *Trance*? Apart from the modulations, is it because of the pauses within the line and the enjambement? Or on account of *stress* being relied on too often to provide a ‘long’ syllable which has a quantitatively short vowel? Or on account of pauses coming *within* a foot, as in I. 3?

In addition to the modulations you have used, do you approve any of the following:

First or third line	$\begin{array}{c} \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \\ \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \end{array} \left  \begin{array}{c} \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \\ \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \end{array} \right  \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u}$
Second or fourth line	$\bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u} \quad \bar{u}$

Sri Aurobindo’s Comment:

“I think spondees or long feet should be avoided in this metre—because spondees or long feet change the fundamental character of the movement.

On consideration I think that the main difficulties in the way of a perfectly flowing movement are the imperfect anapaests—‘though they viewed’, ‘subtle wave’, some of the modulations, e.g. ‘turns to sculptured’ or in the second line of the second stanza ‘O how unregarding’ which does not agree with the fundamental movement. I do not think the reliance on stress has any contrary effect—reliance on stress for quantity is inevitable in a line of English poetry. As for the pauses, they are to be avoided if you want a perfectly lyrical movement—but in the graver movement you have adopted I do not think they can be an obstacle if not too numerous.”

(Questions: “Your ban on paeons or other tetrasyllabic feet entails, presumably, rejection of all feminine rhymes—so that here the third paeon ‘unregarding’ should be replaced by an anapaest? But could not a glide third paeon be used for a modulation in place of an amphibrach at the *beginning* of lines—as in l.9, ‘Wēre the sōlemn’, though that is a full paeon, not a glide paeon? And how do you regard the shortening of an amphibrach to a tribrach?”)

“Yes, probably the paeon can be allowed there. About the tribrach I don’t know. It would again depend on the place and how it is done.”)

WILD BRIAR WITH WHITE ROSES AT MIDSUMMER,  
RED HIPS IN THE FALL

The dreamer | enquiring | “What is earth?”  
                   Dreamed an answer: “Mingling of all else.”  
 In spring again life has | meadowland  
                   Dwelling-place: | and midsummer bestows  
 A rose-lit | enduring | milky way—  
                   Hedges white | with briar | set abloom—,  
 And mystic | Night fragrance | —till the fall  
                   Like a dawn | of paleness | is at hand  
 With gossamer grey-web | overlay,  
                   Briar brightening makes a | rim of red  
 Forerunners | to sunrise | newly born,  
                   Victor Life’s renewal | and uprise.

(Question: “I have marked all the modulations here—the imperfect anapaests, marked  $\cup$ , are perhaps the most disturbing? Yet I seem almost further away from the subtle rhythm of *Trance*.”)

Sri Aurobindo’s Comment

“The imperfect anapaests are an obstacle, the impression they give is of another metre. The reason why you are farther away is, I think, simply because of the passing of the sense from one stanza to another which gives a long flowing movement more suitable to alcaic verse than to so elementary and

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essentially brief a metre. A long movement needs a more ample line and stanza. I think the principle of this metre should be to say a few very clear-cut things in a little space. At least it looks so to me at present—though a more free handling of the metre might show that the restriction was not justifiable.”

(More Questions on *Unresting Water*: “In lines 4-5:

Ever-working, { crevicing  
                          channelling the bare  
                          chiselling

Rockside to a sculptured filigree

is perhaps possible? Yet it brings in the enjambement from an anapaest-ended line to the next, which you say is undesirable?)

“ I think it was continuation from verse to verse that I found undesirable. I do not remember what I said about enjambement of this kind; I suppose that it depends on how it is done. It has a perfectly good effect here.”

(Question: “Is enjambement from a cretic-ended line to the next line also to be avoided?”)

“It is the same thing—it depends on how it is done—I think it is quite permissible.”

## ALCAICS

(*A free ‘transcription’ of a poem by Anilbaran into quantitative metre*)

Earth, held in death’s despair, wakens because of the  
Dream-woven flower-veils tenderly swathing it,  
Emparadised deep in Beauty’s Cradler—  
Mother of Dreams, from whom Victory springeth!

Each lingers awestruck beholding the terrible  
Unveiled resplendent flash of thy feet going  
Down secret ways: each overwhelmed  
Heart is abased to the earth in wonder.

Triumphant in All-Might! Orisons flow from the  
God-visioned flame-souls: luminous and arrowy  
Go now thy Light-Bolts, setting Thee victor  
Over the glooming of vanquished evil.

MOTHER INDIA

Joy crowneth Thee, O rescuer from sorrow.  
Great thy deliverance, fronting the hinderers.  
All who implore Thee find at thy feet  
    Haven of newly won Strength and Power.

Death-shrinking limbs rejoice, gain liberation—  
Fore-dread of old age passes away from them.  
Touched by thy grace, our wave-lashed living  
    Wafted to halcyon joy-lit calm.

As a candle veiled in sunlight is the pale glimmer  
Gold seemeth, mid thy soul-enthraling lustres.  
Lives, unlit mirrors, worlds uncounted  
    Gloomfast in shadow await Thee, Victor.

Spirit may enshrine Thee, nectar of the Blessed;  
Heart know the cadence heaven is builded from;  
Worshippers win thy high-held rapture—  
    Mother of Music, enfolding our Peace.

1932 (?)

## THE MOON-SWAN

THY moon-swan is adrift upon the sky-seas of light  
    With wings of unmeasured peace,  
    A timeless delight,  
A marvel of calm god-intensities.

It floats above the range of human time  
    Above the expanse of space,  
    Its presence sublime  
Illumining the death-masked earth-face.

A ray of bliss it throws across the dark  
    Into the far summit-end  
    Piercing the stark  
Vastness of cosmic sleep to ascend

The lone peripheries of the Unknown  
    And the grandiose peak,  
    Timeless, alone  
It calls the Gold and the Unique

To lean from Its immaculate flame-top  
    Into matter's well,  
    And earth shall drop  
Her soulless vesture inscrutable.

The swan of moon upon its sky-seas of light  
    Is spirit's mystic boon—  
    A bridge ageless, white,  
Between the clay-abyss and God-noon.

ROMEN

## NEW ROADS

### BOOK V

#### THE ALCHEMY

PASSED was the Hour when heaven and earth had met,  
And the first surprise of New-Awakened-Day.  
Gone that first great Moment when the Dawn  
Had entered into man's eternal Self.  
Those hints and intimations of our lives  
Suggesting vaster Laws of our own being  
Were gathered now as indisputable Truth,  
A Sun, new-risen in the discovered soul  
Where God Himself at last had entered in.

A Silence ringed the universe around—  
The secret fane, deep in the aspiring heart,  
Burst into Knowledge, Love and vibrant Force;  
Became the centre of a cosmic Whole,  
One with a vaster Law than heaven and earth.  
Those laws which man had striven to obey,  
Laws of vital heavens, small mental worlds  
Which stood before as delegates of Light  
Were now transcended—passed were the peaks of mind  
And man at last looked into the eyes of Truth.

Sun-rings of harmony enveloped earth,  
Offering man the Bliss of brighter worlds  
Beyond the erstwhile limits of his mind  
Where soul and consciousness were wings of flight  
In hued peripheries of Light and Sound  
Where high vibrations kissed invisible Powers  
To echo in the psychic heart of earth.  
All seemed the Law of some vast Alchemy;  
The outcome of a bold Experiment

## NEW ROADS

Which earth and heaven had laboured to achieve  
Across the long millenniums of the years.  
A new reliance grew in heart and mind,  
A new security beyond our ken  
Was born in heightened states of consciousness,  
Established there an intuitive sight  
Which saw the Truth behind all common things  
And found its knowledge by identity—  
A surer movement with inherent power  
Informed the urge in our mortality.

Earth soared between two Principles of Light  
Which fashioned worlds of golden consciousness  
And 'hardened' Truth into a diamond Bliss  
To rest a jewel upon the Brow of God.  
So was it possible for man to rise  
Beyond the peaks of his humanity,  
Beyond the former ceiling of the gods—  
For Light now issued forth from Matter's deeps  
As too it flowed from Supramental heights  
To here create an echelon of Bliss  
Where man may climb from self to the Supreme;  
Found here on earth new states of consciousness,  
The self-unfolding Spirit of the Truth  
Revealing Light and Love, and Beauty's Face  
Upon the Dawn of One Divinity.

Though this great Act of Transmutation bore  
Within itself the hope of future years  
Man as a whole still held to ignorance  
Or found not constancy within his soul  
Enough to consecrate his very all.  
Either he knew and turned to face the Light  
Or else, unconscious, fled the Great Unknown.  
Either he sensed the Hour of Light had come,  
Answered the Truth within his flowering heart  
To surrender to the Mother of the World,  
To give his all and all that he possessed—  
The inevitable recognition of his faith.  
Or else he ran away from his own Self,



## MOTHER INDIA

Turned back towards his native ignorance,  
Back to his dim lethargic world of 'ease'—  
The 'safe' slow-moving known somnambulant hour  
From which his trial of consciousness awoke;  
Back to the former 'comfort' of his days  
As if to shield his soul from too much Light.  
O Light! O Light! O Morning of the world!  
New-made with golden fingers diamond bright.  
O pure winged Energy of mystic Flame!  
Fashioning flowers from worlds of occult Joy—  
Truth-tools, Time-tempered in Eternity!  
Swift, come into Matter while all earth awaits  
The puissant Force of Aspirations' Law,  
The shining Answer to the Mother's Prayer.  
Swift into earth before the Titan wakes  
Once more to tempt destruction on the world.  
Swift, come into man that man may know himself,  
Find his true summit on thy wings of Light—  
Soul-born, transmuted into Consciousness  
Upon bright rays of Immortality.

NORMAN DOWSETT

# *Students' Section*

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## POEMS

### RISE, SOUL!

LIKE seeds that burst out through the muddy womb  
And lift their folded leaves towards the sky,  
Like stars that rise from night's far-floating gloom  
And tremble on the waves of infinity,

O lift, my lonely Soul, thy aspiring flame,  
Purging the mind of its profound distress  
And scattering the hungry clouds that maim  
The spirit's white immortal loveliness.

Rise, Soul, above my thought-tormented brain,  
Above the night and its huge cloudy sleep,  
Like a winged spark renounce the sea and plain  
And plunge into the heavens' unfathomed deep.

Beyond the dream of this star-tremulous night,  
Rise, Soul, toward God's everlasting Height.

RANAJIT

FISHERMEN'S SONG

DELAY no more, 'tis evenfall,  
    Delay no more!  
O listen to the tender call  
    Along the shore.

Behold the sky in darkness thick:  
    Alone a star  
Reminds us of the twinkling wick  
    In a home afar.

A forlorn sea-gull's way-lost cry  
    Hovers to evoke  
For us the waiting mother's sigh  
    Mid cottage smoke.

O row still faster, faster row!  
    Look how the sea  
Is swelling and the surges glow  
    Incessantly.

Delay no more, the night is dumb,  
    O speak no more,  
But see the dancing spirits come  
    Upon the shore.

PRITHWINDRA

## THE FOUR AGES OF INDIA'S CULTURAL CYCLE

### SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER: THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR LIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

“To Thee who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment, all we owe to Thee.”

Such is the epigraph that has been got written on Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi by Mother. The all that Sri Aurobindo willed, the all he attempted, the all he prepared and achieved for us is covered by and included in the five aims and ideals of his childhood which were mentioned in the previous issue of this journal. It has also been mentioned there that the order of achievement of the acts of Creative Divinity is the Real, the Idea and the phenomenon. We may now definitely say that the five ideals have already been achieved in the Real, that is on the causal plane, by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and that they are getting achieved on the subtle and the physical planes. Till now History has not been in the habit of recording Cosmic events or achievements enacted on the causal or spiritual plane, but in a society with the subjective idea of life, History may develop new forms and methods of recording such events. Whatever it is, a new spirit of two great world-ideals, one, that of human unity, and two, that of individual freedom of man—ideals which seem quite contradictory to each other—have captured the Mind of man, even of the ordinary man, as though they were the settled Dharma of the present age. It is now only a matter of time for the representative leaders of humanity to know the ways of achieving them. Slowly and yet definitely political, social and economic conditions too are so developing everywhere that every individual will have all the facilities for his cultural and spiritual growth. Thus even on the subtle and physical planes, there is practically no opposition of any world-forces at present with regard to the first three ideals of Sri Aurobindo. Everybody who has some imagination can see this except the man of pure physical mind whose consciousness is not open to the vital and mental forces that are behind the ideals which are taking the mass of humanity unconsciously towards its goal. It is only the fourth ideal of Sri Aurobindo, the gift by India of its spiritual knowledge and

the means to spiritualise the life of the human race that has as yet to gather definite momentum. As yet all the cultural missions to foreign countries organised by the people and sponsored by the government have been only ethical, intellectual and aesthetical. With regard to the spiritual culture, both the people and the government have to take the initiative. But it is a fact that a greater number of individuals are being attracted towards the spiritual ideal. As regards the fifth ideal, that of the supramental manifestation, since it is no more a promise but a living fact and reality working here on earth, it will certainly work out its way and the more we open ourselves to its guidance the more effective will be our advance.

Now leaving aside the Idea stage and the phenomena stage of the achievement of Sri Aurobindo's five ideals, the fulfilment of which alone will lead the human race to a better and higher life, we shall consider here the spiritual stage. Of the five ideals, the last one which both he and the Mother have held from their early childhood is altogether a new thing in the spiritual history of mankind, so new that it is impossible for a human being to achieve it; only the Divine himself by taking human birth can achieve it, and this is a belief that has come to us traditionally from our spiritual forefathers. The Divine descended into the forms of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, took upon Himself through them the burden of humanity in order to exceed it; the Divine became human in order to show humanity how to become divine. There is therefore in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother a double element—human in front and divine behind. All this gives us an impression of unfathomableness about them. But the fact is there, the fact of their human birth, their Sadhana,—though for the earth-consciousness and not for themselves,—and yet the way they achieved it is also the way we have to follow to achieve that in ourselves. We have also seen how the Hindu theory of Avatarhood is connected with the scientific theory of evolution and explains more thoroughly the process of new-creation on earth; and now what has been done by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother only completes that part of the evolutionary process which needed to be completed. As such, the bringing down of a new principle, Supermind, into the earth-consciousness by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, requires to be carefully considered by all those who are interested in these things.

Sri Aurobindo began his first stage of Yoga in 1904, at the age of 32. About it, he writes: "It took me four years of inner striving to find a real way, even though the divine help was with me all the time....After four years of Pranayam and other practices on my own, with no other result than an increased health and outflow of energy, some psycho-physical phenomena, a great outflow of poetic creation, a limited power of subtle sight (luminous patterns and figures,

etc.) mostly with the waking eye, I had a complete arrest and was at a loss. At this juncture I was induced to meet a man without fame whom I did not know, a bhakta with a limited mind but with some experience and evocative power. We sat together and I followed with an absolute fidelity what he instructed me to do, not myself in the least understanding where he was leading me or where I was myself going. The first result was a series of tremendously powerful experiences and radical changes of consciousness which he had never intended—for they were Adwaitic and Vedantic and he was against Advaita Vedanta—and which were quite contrary to my own ideas, for they made me see with a stupendous intensity the world as a cinematographic play of vacant forms in the impersonal universality of the Absolute Brahman.” (*Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, pp. 126-127). The disappearance of our false separative individuality and the living in our eternal Being,—call it Sunyam as the Buddhists do, or call it the Divine like the Hindus and other esoteric religions—was the first great spiritual experience that Sri Aurobindo had in 1908. This is the highest spiritual experience that Buddha and Shankara got, and it is for the attainment of this experience that Buddha established his discipline of the eight-fold path of Dharma; so too, it is for the attainment of this experience that Shankara, taking all that was good in Buddhism and denouncing all that went against Hinduism, established The Shanmatas, the six sects of Hindu religion. The result of their preaching was not to spiritualise the collective life of man but to keep the spiritual motive of life alive and to spiritualise a few souls and give them liberation—*mukti*. Sri Aurobindo's ideal was not this; so he did not take the result of 1908 to be final.

As regards the second stage of his Yoga, he says: “it took me ten more years of intense Yoga under a supreme inner guidance to trace it out and that was because I had my past and the world's past to assimilate and overpass before I could find and found the future” (Ibid. p. 126.) In this period his second great realisation was “that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore jail and of which he has spoken in his speech at Uttarpara.” (Ibid, p. 107) Along with these two realisations he had other equally great spiritual realisations in Alipore Jail, “that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind”. (Ibid, pp. 107, 108) On 4th April, 1910, he reached Pondicherry which, as he says, acted as a place of refuge in which he could complete his Yoga unassailed by the agents of the then British Government in India. A monthly philosophical journal *Arya* was started in August 1914, which continued for about seven years. By 1918, the year which ended the second stage of his Tapas or Sadhana, and during which he assimilated his own past and the world's past, he had finished writing

on the two subjects, "The Ideal of Human Unity" and "The Psychology of Social Development"; these were later published in book form, the latter under the caption, "*The Human Cycle*". Both the books show how completely Sri Aurobindo had assimilated, as no other person had done before, the world's past with regard to the political, social and economic aspects of life as well as the aesthetic, ethical and intellectual aspects, and how these aspects have been working in the collective consciousness of men from the beginning of the Cycle to lead it to human unity and to the beginning of a new Cycle of spiritual culture; and the way of initiating the new cycle, as mentioned therein, is by a new spiritual religion of humanity, which, as he says, means "the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of the divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us, oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of co-operation, but a deeper brotherhood, a real and inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded. There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself so that it may be developed in the life of the race." (*The Ideal of Human Unity*. pp. 322, 323.)

Thus by the end of 1918 which is the end of the second stage of his Sadhana, he found a true ideal method to solve the problem of world-unity. But to find an ideal solution is one thing and to make it effective is another thing, and what after all was the condition of the world at the end of 1918 and at what stage of fulfilment were the five ideals of his childhood? Perhaps there was nobody in India then to think of and organise a movement on a mass scale for the freedom of India. Mrs. Annie Besant had perhaps started a Home-Rule League to work out self-rule for India but under the British domination. And then there was nobody to think of Asia and its regeneration in terms of all its peoples and of its ancient culture. Then as regards the third ideal, the first World War had just ended and perhaps there was in the process of formation the idea of a League of Nations which could think of humanity in terms of peace, justice and world-unity. But all these movements were miles apart from the way of Sri Aurobindo's solution of the problem. His fourth ideal would not be effective so long as India was not free and, as regards the fifth ideal, the descent of the Supermind into Matter, he writes even so late as 1933 that "the Supramental has not descended

into the body or into Matter—it is only at the point where such a descent has become not only possible but inevitable; I am speaking, of course, of my experience. But as my experience is the centre and condition of all the rest, that is sufficient for the promise.” (*Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, p. 215.) So the only course for Sri Aurobindo to achieve his ideals, even the first three, was by an inner process and by a superior inner power capable of acting on world-affairs. It required a Yoga of Acquisition of Inward Essential Power, which could act on and establish the world-future, and this is what was done from 1918 to 1933. About the application of spiritual knowledge to the world, Sri Aurobindo writes, “The only real difficulty which took decades of spiritual effort to carry out towards completeness was to apply the spiritual knowledge utterly to the world and to the surface psychological and outer life and to effect its transformation both on the higher levels of Nature and on the ordinary mental, vital and physical levels down to the subconscious and the basic Inconscience and up to the supreme Truth-consciousness or Supermind in which alone the dynamic transformation could be entirely integral and absolute.” (*Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, p. 140) The important spiritual events of this period are the starting of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the taking up of its management by the Mother in 1926 and the complete descent of the Krishna Consciousness into the physical. Sri Aurobindo writes about it that the 24th November 1926, “was the descent of Krishna into the physical. Krishna is not the Supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya, he supports the evolution through the Overmind leading it towards the Ananda”

Since 1933, at the beginning of each year, on the New Years' day, a prayer is given us by the Mother. She has said about these prayers that they are “a historic recording of the psychological development of the world's events.” By the year 1933, Supermind had descended into the mental and the vital and though it had not descended into the physical, it was indirectly acting on the physical body of Sri Aurobindo as well as on the subconscious and the inconscient of the earth-consciousness. From the letter about the birth-day present of India's independence to him by the Divine,—published in the previous issue,—we see that Sri Aurobindo, on the one hand, was acting on world-affairs by the direct instrumentation of Overmind which was receiving all its influence from Supermind, and on the other hand was acting on the inconscient of the earth-consciousness to reduce its resistance to the descent of Supermind into it. This process continued from 1933 to 1950, December 5, on which day Supermind was fixed in the physical consciousness of the earth, and it is for achieving this supreme act of fulfilment that the Divine through Sri Aurobindo



“sacrificed himself into Matter in order to reawaken there the consciousness which had become unconsciousness. It is this sacrifice of the Divine giving himself into Matter—that is to say, his diffusion into Matter—that justifies the sacrifice of Matter to the Divine and makes it inevitable. It is one single movement of reciprocity. Because the Divine has given himself and spread himself everywhere in Matter in order to awaken it to the Divine consciousness, Matter is automatically under the obligation to give itself to the Divine; it is a mutual and reciprocal sacrifice.” (*Bulletin of Physical Education*, April 1953, p. 55) This period of Sri Aurobindo’s sadhana from 1933 to 1950, marks, if we may so call it, his Yoga of the Work for the World by Overmental direct Action (or Supramental indirect action). Pages 70 and 71 of *Sri Aurobindo on Himself* show the various world-affairs on which Sri Aurobindo acted directing the course of world-life towards progress. The beginning of peace after World War II itself coincided with his birthday, in 1945, for Japan surrendered on August 14. The next day, the Mother issued to us her prayer to the Divine on behalf of the earth-consciousness in these terms:

“The Victory has come, Thy Victory, O Lord, for which we render to Thee, infinite thanks-giving.

“But now our ardent prayer rises towards Thee. It is with Thy force and by Thy force that the victors have conquered. Grant that they do not forget it in their success and that they keep the promises which they have made to Thee in the hours of danger and anguish. They have taken Thy name to make war, may they not forget Thy grace when they have to make the peace.”

In the course of this period which is the fourth stage of his Sadhana, just as the second World War with all its details is a historical event, all the acts of application of the Spiritual power of Sri Aurobindo either on the minds of men which produced physical results, or on the universal physical Nature itself, or on the psychological being of the earth consciousness, as the Annual prayers indicate, are all historical events. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother may not have mentioned all the events they achieved, but what they themselves have mentioned are as much historical events as any physical event recorded by historians. 1950 brought to an end the fourth stage of Sri Aurobindo’s Sadhana for the earth-consciousness; the extent of the achievement of his childhood days’ five ideals is too well-known to need to be given here. Though the process of their fulfilment is quite visible and seems to follow the lines of development as they are given in *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Human Cycle*, still only when all the ideals are completely achieved, his work of the establishment of a Spiritual Age would begin to bear visible fruit.

With reference to the descent of Supermind into the physical consciousness

of the earth on the 5th of December, we may note these quotations. "The earth-consciousness does not want to change, so it rejects what comes down to it from above—it has always done so. It is only if those who have taken this Yoga open themselves and are willing to change their lower nature that this unwillingness can disappear." (*Letters, 2nd Series*, page 438). "If this [Supramental] evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers." (From the Message of 15th August 1947). "Nevertheless, even the Divine when he incarnates upon earth is subject to the same law of progress. The instrument for his manifestation, the physical being which clothes him should be in a state of constant progress and the law governing his personal self-expression is in a way linked with the general law of earth's progress. Thus even the embodied God cannot be perfect upon earth unless and until men are ready to understand and accept perfection. It will be the day when all will be done out of love for the Divine and not, as now, out of a sense of duty towards Him". (*Bulletin of Physical Education*, April 1953, p. 55.)

"That the [Supramental] change may arrive, take form and endure, there is needed the call from below with a will to recognise and not deny the Light when it comes, and there is needed the sanction of the Supreme from above. The power that mediates between the sanction and the call is the presence and power of the Divine Mother. The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda." (*The Mother*, pp. 82, 83).

From the above quotations, it is evident, firstly, that the Sanction of the Supreme, through Sri Aurobindo, for the descent of Supermind, had been there for a long time, but the earth-consciousness was not ready to receive it; secondly, that the earth-consciousness could be opened to it only through a strong aspiration; and thirdly, that it is the power of the Mother that mediates between the call from below and the sanction from above to bring down the descent. As soon as Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, what he had called the Mind of Light got realised here in the earth-consciousness through the Mother.

About the true nature of this Mind of Light, the Mother says, "The Supermind had descended long ago—very long ago—into the mind and even into the vital; it was working in the physical also but indirectly through those intermediaries. The question now was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said it could be possible only if the physical

## MOTHER INDIA

mind received the supramental light. The physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material. This physical mind receiving the supramental light Sri Aurobindo called the Mind of Light."

Two lines from a poem by a disciple of Sri Aurobindo aptly describe the result of the new realisation:

The core of a deathless sun is now the brain  
And each grey cell bursts to omniscient gold...

Here a new period in the Sadhana of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for the earth-consciousness begins and this Sadhana may be called the Yoga of Work for the World by Supramental direct action. As a result of this direct action, the Mother has promised that Sri Aurobindo's ideal of Unity for India will be achieved before the end of 1957. Now that they are applying Supramental force on the earth-consciousness direct, due to a lessening of resistance some more descents of this Light have taken place, as the following messages of the Mother show. The first is dated 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." The second is of 24, April, 1956. "The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality. It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it." Along with these messages, the following quotation may be read with interest. "Certainly, when the Supramental does touch earth with a sufficient force to dig itself into the earth-consciousness, there will be no more chance of any success or survival for the Asuric Maya...." (*Letters 2nd Series*, pages 83, 84). It may be concluded from these writings of theirs that the future of the world from now, and as a result of supramental manifestation and its work here, is undoubtedly bright and all fear of world wars is removed altogether from the face of the earth.

For the present, the writings that can give us data about the Mother's inner life and achievements are not as numerous as those that we have of Sri Aurobindo; still what we have of her, the "Prayers and Meditations", her earlier writings and her ever-growing Messages and talks that are being recorded, are enough for writing any amount of history of her inner life and achievements. Since it is the one Absolute Divine, descending for the purposes of Supramental creation, into human birth in two forms, the Supramental Sat and the Supramental Chit, or as we may call the Super-Soul and the Super-Nature, the Mother is as much an Avatar as Sri Aurobindo is, the One Divine in two forms. Sri Aurobindo says, "The Mother's consciousness and mine are

## THE FOUR AGES OF INDIA'S CULTURAL CYCLE

the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness—if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers. (*Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, page 361) And again he says, “The Mother and myself stand for the same Power in two forms. Ishwara-Shakti, Purusha-Prakriti are only the two sides of the one Divine (Brahman).

From the beginning, even in her childhood, she was a liberated person, and her Sadhana was not for herself, but for the earth. What has been quoted in the previous issue from her early writings gives us an idea that her plan was to bring down a new principle of evolution, a new Power of Truth from above, which has been termed “Supermind” by Sri Aurobindo. As her writings show, her approach to the Divine from the very beginning was integral, in the sense that all is Brahman including this world, which is quite opposed to the approach in which the world is Maya or Mithya and which creates a world-shunning attitude in those that practise the discipline based on it. Her foreward of 1912 clearly says that there is an inner Divinity in all human beings, which can be lived, not in some other world, but here on earth, and that the life of man has to be organised in such a way as to find that inner divinity and manifest it in the actual daily life. It becomes clear that her approach to the Divine is not based on merely universal compassion and the idea of *Anityam asukham lokam mam* like most of the current spiritual aims, but is based on a universal and transcendental compassion and the idea of *Nityam sukham lokam mam*.

NARAYANA C. REDDY

(To be continued)

## “CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

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

### IX

“If we wish to distinguish a single characteristic which differentiates the English Romantics from the poets of the eighteenth century,” writes C.M. Bowra, “it is to be found in the importance which they attached to the imagination and in the special view which they held of it. ..Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, despite many differences, agreed on one vital point: that the creative imagination is closely connected with a peculiar insight into an unseen order behind visible things.... They brought to poetry not merely surprise and wonder and vision, which after all may be found in much great poetry, but something else which was more characteristically their own and may perhaps be regarded as the central quality of their art. In their vivid perception of visible things, they were almost in the same moment to have a vision of another world, and this illuminates and gives significance to sensible things in such a way that we can hardly distinguish them from the mysteries which they have opened and with which they are inextricably connected.... The Romantics believed that what matters most is this interpenetration of the familiar scene by some everlasting presence which illuminates and explains it. It is this which makes Romantic poetry what it is, and this above all is due to the Romantic trust in the imagination, which works through the senses to something beyond and above.... Unlike their German contemporaries, who were content with the thrills of *Sehnsucht*, or longing, and did not care much what the *Jenseits*, or ‘beyond’, might be, so long as it was sufficiently mysterious, the English Romantics pursued their lines of imaginative enquiry until they found answers which satisfied them. Their aim was to convey the mystery of things through individual manifestations and thereby to show what it means.... The unseen world is more vividly present because it is displayed in a single actual case.... The powers which Wordsworth saw in nature or Shelley in love are so enormous that we begin to understand them only when they are manifested in single, concrete examples.... The essence of the Romantic imagination is that it fashions shapes which display these unseen forces at work, and there is no other way to display

them, since they resist analysis and description and cannot be presented except in particular instances....In them we see examples of what cannot be expressed directly in words and can be conveyed only by hint and suggestion.”

One wonders how a Movement which Bowra has thus distinguished with admirable accuracy in the sentences we have strung together from him can ever be adequately described by Lucas's formula about Romanticism. We recall some of his labels: “spontaneous feeling”, “the release of the Unconscious” and some of his definitions: “The essential difference between Classicism and Romanticism is that the control exerted by the conscious mind, particularly by the sense of reality and the sense of society, is strict in the first—while in the second it is relaxed, somewhat as in drunkenness or dream”, or, again, “The eighteenth century had always had at its ear two voices, like the warning Daemon of Socrates; one whispering ‘That is not intelligent’, the other ‘That is not done’. Romanticism seems to me, essentially, an attempt to drown these two voices and liberate the unconscious life from their tyrannical repressions. Like the accompanying French Revolution, it is the insurrection of a submerged population; but, this time, a population of the mind.” Even when Lucas concedes that “the description of Romantic literature as simply ‘dream-work’ does not quite suffice” and that “except in its extreme forms, it does usually retain a super-ego, an ideal of conduct, often a highly quixotic one” and that the “dream-life” he has in view is what we have a feeling of in poems like Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* or Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner* or Morris's *The Haystack in the Floods*—even when he opines that “health, both in life and in literature, lies between excess of self-consciousness and excess of impulsiveness, between too much self-control and too little” and that “the Romantic intoxication of the imagination suspends the over-rigid censorship exerted by our sense of what is fact and our sense of what is fitting”, he is too far out in tracing to the Freudian Subconscious or Unconscious the Movement in English poetry which began in 1789 with Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and ended in its typical characteristics with the deaths of Keats and Shelley.

Doubtless, the Freudian “impulses and drives” had a say in certain parts of this Movement and a much greater one in the Romanticism of the Continent which it shares in as well as exceeds. Sri Aurobindo has called the general Romantic literature of the period “brilliant and confusedly complex but often crude and unfinished” and he has further said: “Much of it we can now see to have been ill-grasped, superficial and tentative; much, as in Chateaubriand and in Byron, was artificial, a pose and affectation; much, as in the French Romanticists, merely bizarre, overstrained and overcoloured; a later criticism condemned in it a tendency to inartistic excitement, looseness of form, an unintellectual shallowness or emptiness, an ill-balanced imagination. It laid

itself open certainly in some of its more exaggerated turns to the reproach,—not justly to be alleged against the true romantic element in poetry,—that the stumbling-block of romanticism is falsity.”

But in his summing-up, Sri Aurobindo has not only said: “Nevertheless, behind this defective frontage was the activity of a considerable force of new truth and power, much exceedingly great work was done, the view of the imagination was immensely widened and an extraordinary number of new motives brought in which the later nineteenth century developed with a greater care and finish and conscientious accuracy, but with crudities of its own and perhaps with a less fine gust of self-confident genius and large inspiration.” Sri Aurobindo has also said, marking the distinction of the English Romantics: “The superiority of the English poets who lead the way into the modern age is that sudden almost unaccountable spiritual impulse, insistent but vague in some, strong but limited in one or two, splendid and supreme in its rare moments of vision and clarity, which breaks out from their normal poetic mentality and strives constantly to lift their thought and imagination to its own heights, a spirit or Daemon who does not seem to trouble at all with his voice or his oestrus the contemporary poets of continental Europe.” And, further, Sri Aurobindo brings a keen ear to distinguish the several shades of the English Romantic utterance: “We find the tongue of this period floating between various possibilities. On its lower levels it is weighted down by some remnant of the character of the eighteenth century and proceeds by a stream of eloquence, no longer artificial, but facile, fluid, helped by a greater force of thought and imagination. This turn sometimes rises to a higher level of inspired and imaginative poetic eloquence. But beyond this pitch we have a fuller and richer style packed with thought and imaginative substance, the substitute of this new intellectualised poetic mind for the more spontaneous Elizabethan richness and curiosity; but imaginative thought is the secret of its power, no longer the exuberance of the life-soul in its vision. On the one side we have a quite different note, a sheer poetical directness, which sometimes sinks below itself to poverty and insufficiency or at least to thinness, as in much of the work of Wordsworth and Byron, but, when better supported and rhythmised, rises to quite new authenticities of great or perfect utterance, and out of this there comes in some absolute moments a native voice of the spirit.”

Sri Aurobindo is not blind to the defects of these pioneers of a new poetry in the history of the West. About the tendencies that suddenly developed in them out of Rousseauistic Romanticism, he writes: “Insufficiently supported by any adequate spiritual knowledge, unable to find securely the right and native word of their own meaning, these greater tendencies faded away or were lost by the premature end of the poets who might, had they lived, given them

a supreme utterance.” The poets of the spiritual dawn had no clearly seen or no firmly based constant idea of the kind of work which the Light in them demanded: “they get at its best only in an inspiration over which they have not artistic control, and they have only an occasional or uncertain glimpse of its self-motives. Thus they often give to it a form of speech and movement which is borrowed from their intellect, normal temperament or culture rather than wells up as the native voice and rhythm of the spirit within, and they fall away easily to a lower kind of work. They have a greater thing to reveal than the Elizabethan poets, but they do not express it with that constant fullness of native utterance or that more perfect correspondence between substance and form which is the greatness of Shakespeare and Spenser.”

With a critical grip Sri Aurobindo sets in proper psychological relation to its immediate past and to the succeeding age the English Romantics’ “brilliant and beautiful attempt to get through Nature and thought and the mentality in life and Nature and their profounder aesthetic suggestion to certain spiritual truths behind them.” This attempt, he explains, “could not come to perfect fruition, partly because there had not been the right intellectual preparation or a sufficient basis of spiritual knowledge and experience and only so much could be given as the solitary individual intuition of the poet could by a sovereign effort attain, partly because after the lapse into an age of reason the spontaneous or the intenser language of spiritual poetry could not always be found or, if found, could not be securely kept. So we get a deviation into another age of intellectual, artistic or reflective poetry with a much wider range, but less profound in its roots, less high in its growth; and partly out of this, partly by a recoil from it has come the turn of recent and contemporary poetry which seems at last to be approaching the secret of the utterance of profounder truth with its right magic of speech and rhythm.”<sup>1</sup>

Yes, Sri Aurobindo has eyes wide-open to the defects of the English Romantics who were singers of a complex Pantheism, but his criticism proceeds from above and not below: he gives no quarter to any disposition to minimise these poets or to see their highest inspiration as other than genuinely revelatory of a divine Reality. Apropos the reason why they could not live up wholly to the Light in them he writes: “This failure to grasp the conditions of a perfect intuitive and spiritual poetry has not yet been noted, because the attempt itself has not been understood”. The first gap in understanding lay in the critical mind of the nineteenth century. “That mind was heavily intellectualised, sometimes lucid, reasonable and acute, sometimes cloudily or fiercely romantic,

<sup>1</sup> This was written in the middle of 1918, when Whitman, Meredith and Stephen Phillips were recent and Carpenter, AE and Yeats were contemporary.



psychological, but in none of these moods and from none of these outlooks capable of understanding the tones of this light which for a moment flushed the dawning skies of its own age or tracing it to the deep and luminous fountains from which it welled." What is here said about the nineteenth century in general applies equally to obtuse or unsympathetic critics of our own day, particularly those who tend to read Freudian forces in the entire Romantic Movement and do not discern in its greatest manifestation what Wordsworth calls

The feeling of life endless, the great thought  
By which we live, infinity or God,

and the presence of—in Wordsworth's lines again—

that serene and blessed mood  
In which the affections gently lead us on,—  
Until the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motions of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things—

the mystic mood in which the

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe

is directly touched and in which on the one side, it is felt as an "everlasting motion" and, on the other,

Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal silence.

Perhaps it may be urged that certain statements by the Romantics themselves point, in a broad sense, Freudward. Has not Wordsworth declared: "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"? Certainly, but the declaration was meant to condemn the literary artifice of the eighteenth century and make poetry natural and sincere, true to the heart. All poetry has to express feeling—but also more than feeling. Has not Wordsworth defined it further as "Emotion recollected in tranquillity"? And has he not warned us against taking spontaneity to be that of a careless or thoughtless person? He

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says: “Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply.” He condemned the abstractions of both the dry intellect divorced from life and of the merely pragmatic “prudential understanding”, but what he wanted was always “a supreme comprehensiveness of intellect and passion” and his ideal was always to be

he whose soul hath risen  
Up to the height of feeling intellect.

It is the “feeling intellect” to which, according to him, the master faculty of poetic creation becomes possible: Imagination, the visionary insight whose activity he believed with Coleridge to resemble the workings of the “Infinite Mind”.

To forget that the Romantic Movement was an imaginative soar from the basis of the feeling intellect is to misconstrue its entire genius. To forget this was also the folly of several practitioners of the new Romanticism. Sri Aurobindo, regarding that Romanticism as the early child of “modern intellectualism” which differs from the Classical mind, pierces to the essence of its genius and puts his finger too on the mistakes of some of the Romantics. The whole passage—from which we have already made an extract when dealing with the Miltonic mind and the modern—is worth close attention:

“The poetry which arises from this mentality is full of a teeming many-sided poetic ideation which takes up the external and life motives not for their own sake, but to make them food for the poetic intelligence, blends classical and romantic motives, adds to them the realistic, aesthetic, impressionist, idealistic ways of seeing and thinking, makes many experiments and combinations, passes through many phases. The true classic form is then no longer possible; if it is tried, it is not genuine, for what informs it is no longer the classic spirit; it is too crowded with subtle thought-matter, too brooding, sensitive, responsive to many things; no new Parthenon can be built whether in the white marble subdued to the hand or in the pure and lucid spacings of the idea and the word: the mind of man has become too full, complex, pregnant with subtle and not easily expressible things to be capable of that earlier type of perfection. The romantic strain is a part of this wider intelligence, but the pure and genuine romanticism of the life-spirit which cares nothing for thought except as it enriches its own being, is also no longer possible. If it tries to get back to that, it falls into an affectation, an intellectual pose and, whatever genius may be expended upon it, this kind cannot remain long alive. That is the secret of the

failure of modern romanticism in Germany and France. In Germany, Goethe and Heine alone got away from this falsity and were able to use this strain in its proper way as one enriching chord serving the complex harmonic purpose of the intelligence; the rest of German literary creation of the time is interesting and suggestive in its way, but very little of it is intimately alive and true, and afterwards Germany failed to keep up a sustained poetic impulse; she turned aside to music on the one side and on the other to philosophy and science for her field. The French mind got away very soon from romanticism and, though greatly enriched by its outbreak into that phase, went on to a more genuine intellectual and intellectually aesthetic form of creation. In England with the greater spontaneity of its poetic spirit the mistake never went so far. The poetry of the time of Wordsworth and Shelley is sometimes called romantic poetry, but it was not so in its essence, but only in certain of its moods and motives. It lives really by its greater and more characteristic element, by its half spiritual turn.... Only in drama was there, owing to the prestige of Shakespeare, an attempt at pure romanticism, and therefore in this domain nothing great and living could be done, but only a record of failures."

The "pure romanticism" of which Sri Aurobindo speaks is, as we already expounded at an early stage, of two sorts, both of them arising from the creative Life Force: "the external Teutonic kind sensational and outward, appealing to the life and the senses", and "the delicate and beautiful, the imaginative and spiritual Celtic". The two are mixed up, according to the composite English genius, in the Elizabethan Romanticism, the first preparing "the ground-type of the Elizabethan drama", while the second "throws its ...beauty and force and fire and its greater depth of passion across the drama and makes it something more than a tumultuous external action and heavily powerful character-drawing." In the new Romantic Age of English poetry, which is founded not on the Life Force but on the creative Intelligence, we have three elements at work. One is the Teutonic—"much poetical thinking or even poetical philosophy of a rather obvious kind, sedate, or vigorous, prompt and direct or robustly powerful, but not the finer and subtler poetical thought which comes easily to the clear Latin intellect." This element we find in Wordsworth in his more outward moments, in Byron without his Titanism and unrest. Next is something of the "fine calm and measured poetical thinking of the Greeks and the Latin races which deals sovereignly with life within the limits of the intellect and the inspired reason." This occurs in more elevated Wordsworthian passages as well as in parts of Shelley's *Alastor*, *Julian and Maddalo*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Adonais* and of his fragment *Triumph of Life*; also in sections of Keats's *Hyperion*, here and there in the famous Odes and almost wholly in the fragment of an Ode ending with the line,

Leaving great verse unto a little clan.

But neither of these elements creates the typical new Romantic Age whose birth is from a Celticism of the Intelligence, “an excitement of thought seeking for something beyond itself and behind life through the intensities of poetical sight” and bringing in “a look upon Nature which pierces beyond her outsides and her external spirit and lays its touch on the mysteries of her inner life and sometimes on that in her which is most intimately spiritual.” At its intensest this Celticism “strives to rise beyond the English mould, seems about to disengage itself and reveal through poetry the Spirit in things.”

The Celtic intensity of the new Romanticism is sometimes sought to be affined to the temper of the Middle Ages. Lucas says that the Mediaeval is no essential part of the Romantic, but what he means is that the essence of the Romantic is the mind taking a holiday from the rational and the restrained and letting loose the Unconscious and that this need not always take a Mediaeval form. Mediaevalism, however, he does regard as a main affinity of the Romantic, for, as he says, the Middle Ages, besides idealising passion, were “mystical, mysterious, and remote”. But these adjectives connote for him the Mediaeval man’s abeyance of the critical faculty, inordinate love of wonders, sense of fay and goblin and devil about him in endless anarchy: for Mediaeval man always anything might happen. Surely this has some relation to certain moods of a poem like *The Ancient Mariner* or *Christabel*: what relation has it to the larger sweep of the supernatural that the Celtic intensity brings? And even in *The Ancient Mariner* Coleridge goes far beyond Mediaeval superstition and fantasy, the haunting horrors in Gothic settings that in his time were being revived by several writers who wanted to be “Romantic”: his poem broke into “a boundless sea”, as Bowra remarks, “with days of pitiless sun and soft nights lit by a moon and attendant stars”, a spaciousness and grandeur and loveliness of Nature are here, a delighted dwelling on seascape and skyscape and on creatures of the deep and of the air, a shaking of the human soul to vague inner recesses, a sinking of it to subtle agonies and a soaring of it to secret ecstasies, a sense of the unity of all creation in a strange universal love, a complex spiritual symbolism woven into primitive gestures. We are no longer in the Mediaeval mind, but only in a mediaevalised version of the new Celtic intensity. Mediaevalism was one of the strands in the Romantic imagination, but even as such it was seldom left uncoloured through and through by a vision more magical, more profound.

In Keats’s *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* too we have a Mediaeval setting—“knight-at-arms”, “pacing steed”, “an elfin grot”, “a lady in the meads” who was “a faery’s child”,—but again we are in the light of a Celtic vision, a vast and

intense subtlety is hinted in the dream which the ailing knight speaks of at the end:

I saw pale kings and princes too,  
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
 They cried—'La belle Dame sans Merci  
 Hath thee in thrall!

We are in the presence of some perilous World-Witchery, some alluring Maya of the life of the senses and the passions, a reverse side to the obverse which feels the Divine in the heart's affections and in the imagination's embrace of the beautiful on earth. Shelley is tinged by the Mediaeval also: witness, among other things, his "high-born maiden in a palace-tower". The Romantic attitude in general towards love was, as Sri Aurobindo has written, "sentimental end emotional, attempting to lift it out of the coarseness of life into a vital-mental idealism", and it tried "to resuscitate the attitude of chivalry and the troubadours." But there was much more in it for Shelley. *Epipsychidion*, that apostrophe to Emilia Viviani which, together with *Prometheus Unbound* and *Adonais*, is considered by Sri Aurobindo as the most typical work of Shelley's of long breath is not just a rhapsody of Mediaeval love: at its most blazing it seeks to kindle to a kind of cosmic soul-emotion through the sensuous and sentimental, through the enamoured heart's response to

All that is insupportable in thee  
 Of light and love and immortality!  
 Sweet benediction in the eternal Curse!  
 Veiled glory of the lampless Universe!

Even the religious consciousness of the Middle Ages cannot be said to reincarnate in the spirituality that shines through Wordsworth and Shelley. Shelley had to deny the Christian God in order to reach the Divine. Wordsworth, like Coleridge, conformed to the Christian faith in later life, but at the crest of their poetic creativity they subscribed to what we have called a complex Pantheism. Blake too stood outside the Christian conventions. Indeed, remarks Sri Aurobindo, the drift of the modern mind in the spiritual direction "is too large in its aim and varied in its approach to be satisfied by any definite or any fixed symbolic or hieratic method, it cannot rest within the special experience and figures of a given religion. There has been too universal a departure from all specialised forms and too general a breaking down of the old cut channels; in place of their intensive narrowness we have a straining through all

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that has been experienced by an age of wide intellectual curiosity to the ultimate sense of that experience.” If there is any affinity to things past, it is to the many-sided monistic, monotheistic, pantheistic, polytheistic synthesis of the occult, the mystical, the spiritual we come upon in the Indian Upanishads and Bhagwad Gita.

**K. D. SETHNA**

*(To be continued)*