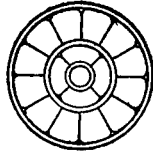


# MOTHER INDIA

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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

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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*SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF*

*Q: I have a strong faith that you are the  
Divine Incarnation. Am I right?*

*A: Follow your faith — it is not likely  
to mislead you.*

*12-8-1935*

*Sri Aurobindo*



THE MESSAGE  
OF  
*November 24, 1957*

Who is the superman? He who can rise above this matter-regarding broken mental human unit and possess himself universalised and deified in a divine force, a divine love and joy and a divine knowledge.

If thou keepest this limited human ego and thinkest thyself the superman, thou art but the fool of thy own pride, the plaything of thy own force and the instrument of thy own illusions.

*Ari Anshudo*

## THOUGHTS AND APHORISMS\*

SRI AUROBINDO

WHEN I speak, the reason says, "This will I say"; but God takes the word out of my mouth and the lips say something else at which reason trembles.

\*

They say that the gospels are forgeries and Krishna a creation of the poets. Thank God then for the forgeries and bow down before the inventors.

\*

A man came to a scientist and wished to be instructed; this instructor showed him the revelations of the microscope and telescope, but the man laughed and said, "These are obviously hallucinations inflicted on the eye by the glass which you use as a medium; I will not believe till you show these wonders to my naked seeing". Then the scientist proved to him by many collateral facts and experiments the reliability of his knowledge but the man laughed again and said, "What you term proofs, I term coincidences, the number of coincidences does not constitute proof; as for your experiments, they are obviously effected under abnormal conditions and constitute a sort of insanity of Nature." When confronted with the results of mathematics, he was angry and cried out, "This is obviously imposture, gibberish and superstition; will you try to make me believe that these absurd cabalistic figures have any real force and meaning?" Then the scientist drove him out as a hopeless imbecile; for he did not recognise his own system of denials and his own method of negative reasoning. If we wish to refuse an impartial and open-minded enquiry, we can always find the most respectable polysyllables to cover our refusal or impose tests and conditions which stultify the enquiry.

\*

\* From the first part, under the same name, of the forthcoming series, to be published by the Ashram, of Sri Aurobindo's early writings.

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To the senses it is always true that the sun moves round the earth; this is false to the reason. To the reason it is always true that the earth moves round the sun; this is false to the supreme vision. Neither earth moves nor sun; there is only a change in the relation of sun-consciousness and earth-consciousness.

\*

For nearly forty years I suffered constantly from the smaller and the greater ailments....When I renounced the aid of medicines, then they began to depart from me like disappointed parasites. Then only I understood what a mighty force was the natural health within me and how much mightier yet the Will and Faith exceeding mind, which God meant to be the divine support of our life in the body.

\*

Life, Life, Life, I hear the passions cry; God, God, God, is the soul's answer. Unless thou seest and lovest Life as God only, then is Life itself a sealed joy to thee.

\*

...Monogamy may be the best for the body, but the soul that loves God in men dwells here always as the boundless and ecstatic polygamist; yet all the time—that is the secret—it is in love with only one being.

\*

To feel and love the God of beauty and good in the ugly and the evil, and still yearn in utter love to heal it of its ugliness and its evil, this is real virtue and morality.

\*

To exalt one virtue,—compassion even,—unduly above all others is to cover up with one's hand the eyes of wisdom. God moves always towards a harmony.

\*

## THOUGHTS AND APHORISMS

Atheism is the shadow or dark side of the highest perception of God. Every formula we form about God, though always true as a symbol, becomes false when we accept it as a sufficient formula. The Atheist and Agnostic come to remind us of our error.

\*

God's negations are as useful to us as His affirmations. It is He who as the Atheist denies His own existence for the better perfecting of human knowledge. It is not enough to see God in Christ and Ramakrishna and hear His words, we must see Him and hear Him also in Huxley and Haeckel.

\*

To listen to some devout people, one would imagine that God never laughed; Heine was nearer the mark when he found in Him the divine Aristophanes.

\*

Three times God laughed at Shankara, first, when he returned to burn the corpse of his mother, again, when he commented on the Isha Upanishad, the third time when he stormed about India preaching inaction.

\*

Mankind has used two powerful weapons to destroy its own powers and enjoyment, wrong indulgence and wrong abstinence.

\*

There are two who are unfit for greatness and freedom, the man who has never been a slave to another and the nation that has never been under the yoke of foreigners.

\*

I have failed, thou sayest. Say rather that God is circling about towards His object.

\*



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Great saints have performed miracles; greater saints have railed at them; the greatest have both railed at them and performed them.

\*

Thus said Ramakrishna and thus said Vivekananda. Yes, but let me know also the truths which the Avatar cast not forth into speech and the prophet has omitted from his teachings. There will always be more in God than the thought of man has ever conceived or the tongue of man has ever uttered.

\*

What was Ramakrishna ? God manifest in a human being; but behind there is God in His infinite impersonality and His universal Personality. And what was Vivekananda ? A radiant glance from the eye of Shiva; but behind him is the divine gaze from which he came and Shiva himself and Brahma and Vishnu and OM all-exceeding.

\*

Be wide in me, O Varuna; be mighty in me, O Indra; O Sun, be very bright and luminous; O Moon, be full of charm and sweetness. Be fierce and terrible, O Rudra; be impetuous and swift, O Maruts; be strong and bold, O Aryama; be voluptuous and pleasurable, O Bhaga; be tender and kind and loving and passionate, O Mitra. Be bright and revealing, O Dawn; O Night, be solemn and pregnant. O Life, be full, ready and buoyant; O Death, lead my steps from mansion to mansion. Harmonise all these, O Brahmanaspati. Let me not be subject to these gods, O Kali.

\*

## THE WORK OF SRI AUROBINDO

(*A Talk on the All-India Radio, 21-8-1957*)

I MAY begin by what might appear a personal reminiscence. But I believe it brings before us more than one fact of the versatile personality that Sri Aurobindo was. It was at Baroda in 1907 when he came after the famous session of the Surat Congress that he gave a scheme of revolutionary organisation to my elder brother, the late C. B. Purani, a well-known public worker of Gujarat. We started the organisation and brought it to a stage when we found that we could launch upon an active revolutionary programme. It took us ten years to prepare the ground. Then, in 1918, I went to Pondicherry to seek permission from Sri Aurobindo for starting the work. I knew that he had undergone a great change in his outlook since his yogic realisation in the Alipore jail where he had seen Lord Narayana in all men and even in all objects. In fact, he had left active politics by 1910 and, though there was some connection with the Secret Revolutionary Societies till 1913, all his active participation ceased from 1914.

I saw him at Pondicherry in December 1918 and sought his permission for starting active work. I asked : "What about starting active work ?" He remained silent for some time and then said, "I suppose it is necessary to take up active work."

"But you gave the inspiration for starting the revolutionary work."

"Yes. But I don't think it necessary to carry out the said programme now. Suppose India is going to be free without revolutionary activity. Well, then ?"

I was frankly puzzled. Then he asked me about my Sadhana, my spiritual life. But to me, at that time, spiritual life was secondary and the political freedom of India was primary. So I put to him my difficulty : "Sadhana is all right. India is a country in whose blood the impulse for spiritual life flows. But how are the Britishers to be driven from India ? And in the present world who will listen to the spiritual message of slaves ? It is not possible to concentrate on Sadhana unless India becomes free".

He repeated his earlier statement : "Suppose an assurance is given that India will be free without revolutionary activity".

I asked him plainly : "Who can give such an assurance ?" Let the listener

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remember that I was talking to him in the year 1918 when the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were on the anvil and India's freedom was nowhere on even the most distant political horizon.

After a long pause he quietly said, "Suppose I give you the assurance".

I was puzzled. It was he who had inspired thousands of young men to dedicate their lives to the freedom movement, he who had given a sound rationale and at the same time a most inspiring philosophy of nationalism and had fought intellectually among the moderates and defeated them on their own grounds. He had played a conspicuous and decisive role in framing the nationalist mind of India. He had sacrificed everything for the Country and had almost gone to the gallows and was saved by a divine intervention. Love for Mother India was one of the moulding influences throughout his life. I could not think that he could give me either a false or a doubtful assurance.

I said : "If you can give the assurance, then I can take it."

After a pause he replied : "I give you the assurance that India will be free without revolutionary activity".

Even with this definite assurance my mind, though quieted, was not quite satisfied. So while taking my leave I asked him what to me was a question of life or death : "Are you quite sure that India will be free ?"

The Yogi in him became fully awake and, looking at the distant sky, said gravely : "You can take it from me that it is as certain as the rising of the sun tomorrow. The Decree has already gone forth; freedom may not be long in coming."

This little incident shows how much he loved India and Indian freedom and to me it also revealed how true are the foundations of our spiritual culture. For, it was by his Yoga Shakti that he had got the certainty of India's freedom. Let me remind the listener that this freedom of Mother India which he had prophesied in 1918, nearly 40 years ago, came on his own auspicious birthday—August the 15th. The date is doubly significant to my mind. It signifies that political freedom is given to India in order to resuscitate her spiritual life and give it to humanity.

I have told you already that during the year of his detention under trial Sri Aurobindo resumed the practice of Yoga which his political work had prevented him from pursuing. As a result of his Sadhana he experienced the presence of Narayana as a basic reality of the individual and the cosmos. He gave public utterance to this experience in 1909 on his release in the famous speech delivered at Uttarpara, a suburb of Calcutta.

This spiritual illumination was the turning point in Sri Aurobindo's life. He wanted to discover whether the experience he had obtained could become a normal point of man's consciousness. And, if it could be so made, he wanted

## THE WORK OF SRI AUROBINDO

to work out the psychological results—the transformation of nature that might follow in the life of man. To him this illumination was the revelation of man's destiny on earth and its attainment the one key to the solution of man's problems.

But this did not mean, as most people suppose, that he had retired into some height of spiritual experience devoid of any further interest in the world or in life. It could never mean that, for, the very principle of his Yoga is not only to realise the Divine and attain to complete Spiritual Consciousness but also to take all life and all world activity into the scope of this Spiritual Consciousness and base life on the Spirit and give it a divine meaning. In his long retirement Sri Aurobindo kept a close watch on all that was happening in the world and in India and actively intervened whenever he found it necessary, but nobly with a spiritual force and silent spiritual action. For it is a part of the experience of those who have advanced in Yoga that besides the ordinary forces and activities of the mind and life and body in Matter there are other forces and powers that can and do act from behind and from above. There is also a spiritual dynamic power which can be possessed by those who are advanced in the Spiritual Consciousness though all do not come to possess or, possessing, to use it, and this power is greater than any other and more effective. It was this force which Sri Aurobindo used at first only in a limited field of personal work but afterwards in a constant action upon world forces.

He remained in Pondicherry from 1910 to 1950. During these years, he created a vast literature, and an Ashram of several hundred aspirants grew up spontaneously around him. The Ashram is now perhaps the biggest spiritual centre with an international importance. To it has now been added the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre—an educational institution training up students from all over the world in the way of life advocated by Sri Aurobindo.

Among his chief works are : *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, *Essays on the Gita*, *On the Veda*, *The Future Poetry* and the epic *Savitri*. There are many other smaller books on various topics.

In his prose masterpiece, *The Life Divine*, he shows that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that one Self but divided by a certain separateness of consciousness. It is possible to remove this veil by a psychological discipline, by Yoga, and become aware of the Divinity within us all, the Lord who is also our own true Self.

This one Consciousness and Being is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it releases itself. Consciousness appears in what seems

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to be inconscient and, once having appeared, is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and enlarge towards a greater and greater perfection. Evolution begins with Matter, goes up to Life and has reached Mind. This evolution is not a linear progress, it is emergent—*i.e.*, each phase revealing altogether new powers not found in the last one: Life has characteristics different from Matter, Mind has powers that mere Life does not possess. Man is the representative of this mental consciousness.

But evolution has not come to its end, man is not, and is not, intended to be, its final product. Man is a transitional being, he has to exceed his present mental consciousness and reach a higher level of Truth-consciousness which, though superconscient to him at present, is potential to him and attainable.

The basis of all experience is consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is the fundamental fact of existence. This consciousness, that has been in man, is capable of ascent and enlargement. It is not confined to one horizontal plane. It is multi-dimensional. If, in our modern outlook, we accept and work out the unlimited potentiality of Matter and Energy, there is no reason why we should limit the potentiality of Life and Mind and the Human Spirit.

The ultimate reality, Sri Aurobindo shows us, is not, a void or zero or a contentless remote Absolute or an anthropomorphic God—unconnected with the cosmos. Rather it is an Omnipresent Reality not only transcendent but also immanent in the cosmos—a dynamic Divine Reality—if I may say so, a Mother Consciousness, as much as a Father Consciousness, that holds the creation to its bosom. It is a sustaining power of the Divine that keeps the universe going so that one day man may realise on earth his divine destiny.

Sri Aurobindo represents the type of transformed humanity of the future and in that sense is the founder and precursor of a divine race of men. It is the proud privilege of India to understand, follow and embody his great spiritual message of a divine life on earth so that India may be able to give it to humanity.

A. B. PURANI

# THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(THE PICTORIAL PRINCIPLE IN THOUGHT)

*All that escaped conception's narrow noose  
Vision descried and gripped; their seeing thoughts  
Filled in the blanks left by the seeking sense.*

SAVITRI (Book II, Canto XI)

## I. WINGED THOUGHTS AND THE WITNESS HUSH

"OUT of our thoughts we must leap up to sight"<sup>1</sup>: such, indeed, is the command on all those who would aspire after the pristine glory and the absolute inevitability of true Knowledge; for, then alone

...the Unmanifest reflects his form  
In the still mind as in a living glass.<sup>2</sup>

This luminous seizing and contact, this internal vision, *dr̥ṣṭi*, "is to the spirit what the eyes are to the physical mind and one has the sense of having passed through a subtly analogous process. As the physical sight can present to us the actual body of things of which the thought had only possessed an indication or mental description and they become to us at once real and evident, *pratyakṣa*, so the spiritual sight surpasses the indications or representations of thought and can make the self and truth of all things present to us and directly evident, *pratyakṣa*."<sup>3</sup> This seer-knowledge is always more authentic than a thinking knowledge; for a consciousness that proceeds by sight is a greater power for knowledge than the consciousness of the thinker. Indeed, our surface cognition is so constituted that it derives in different degrees from a fourfold order of knowledge. "The original and fundamental way of knowing, native to the occult self in things, is a knowledge by identity; the second, derivative, is a knowledge by direct contact associated at its roots with a secret knowledge by identity or starting from it, but actually separated from its source

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, B.II, C.II.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 951.

and therefore powerful but incomplete in its cognition; the third is a knowledge by separation from the object of observation, but still with a direct contact as its support or even a partial identity; the fourth is a completely separative knowledge which relies on a machinery of indirect contact, a knowledge by acquisition which is yet, without being conscious of it, a rendering or bringing up of the contents of a pre-existent inner awareness and knowledge."<sup>1</sup> The true knowledge, the essential knowledge, is not then merely an intellectual conception or clear discrimination of the truth, nor is it even an enlightened psychological experience of the modes of our being; it is essentially a "realisation", in the full sense of the word, a knowledge by absolute identity. The return journey, so to say, towards *the* knowledge passes then through three successive internal movements: vision, experience and identity. The first word to man in his adventure of the Apocalypse is to replace his "seeking Mind" by the "seeing Soul" and to acquire a status of knowledge where "sight was a flame-throw from identity"<sup>2</sup>. For then only will man be made a Rishi or Kavi and no longer a mere thinker.

## II. THE CHAMELEON'S CAMOUFLAGE

But in his present normal status, man, the mental being, cannot command this supreme vision, "the lucent clarity of a pure regard"<sup>3</sup>. On the contrary, the human mind, which relies mainly on thought, conceives that to be the highest or the main process of knowledge. The intellect does not consider that it knows a thing until it has reduced its awareness of it into a system of representative mental concepts. But the inner being of man is never satisfied with this "...staple or dry straw of Reason's tilth"<sup>4</sup>: its demand is for the concrete. In fact, "our nature sees things through two eyes always, for it views them doubly as an idea and as fact" and therefore every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes translated into a concrete experience.

And what is the basic trait of this concrete seizing of an object? It is primarily and essentially 'vision'; for, among all biological species man is clearly distinguished by the predominant role that 'perception' plays in his noetic framework. "It is the organ of vision—and not the auditive, tactile or olfactory sense organs—that has made man the '*homo sapiens*' "<sup>5</sup>. In fact,

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 469

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri*, B. II, C. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* B. II, C 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, B. II, C. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Abel Rey, *La Science dans l'Antiquité*, p. 445.

“in the physical world there are always two forms of knowledge, the direct and the indirect, *pratyakṣa*, of that which is present to the eyes, and *parokṣa*, of that which is remote from and beyond our vision. When the object is beyond our vision, we are necessarily obliged to arrive at an idea of it by inference, imagination, analogy, by hearing the descriptions of others who have seen it or by studying pictorial or other representations of it if these are available. By putting together all these aids we can indeed arrive at a more or less adequate idea or suggestive image of the object, but we do not realise the thing itself; it is not yet to us the grasped reality, but only our conceptual representation of a reality. But once we have seen it with the eyes,—for no other sense is adequate,—we possess, we realise; it is there secure in our satisfied being, part of ourselves in knowledge. Precisely the same rule holds good of psychical things and of the Self.”<sup>1</sup>

This essential all-sufficient superiority of ‘vision’ over other senses (compare the French saying : *voir, c’est comprendre*) has led man to identify knowledge with Light in all spheres of comprehension. Thus, Goethe in his last moments calls for light and more light; and the ancient Upanishadic utterance epitomizes for ever the ardent prayer of all seekers after knowledge : *tamaso mā jyotirgamaya*, “lead me out of darkness ‘to light’”. And the poet Pope—did he not take recourse to the same image in order to bring out the significance of Newton’s advent in the field of science ?

Nature and Nature’s laws lay hid in night.  
God said, “Let Newton be !”—And there was light.

It is thus not at all a chance phenomenon that a great number of terms actually used to represent intellectual operations are nothing but so many visual metaphors : intuition (f. L. *tuert tut* : look), prevision, theory (from Gk. *theoreo* : behold), demonstration (from L. *monstrare* : to show), viewpoint, clarity, etc.

Man is thus impelled almost imperatively to fall back upon the images of ‘visions’ even in the ethereal domains of abstract thought, or rather—I should say—in order to compensate for this very abstractness. And, what is more, if we examine carefully, we shall find that “thought in itself, in its origin on the higher levels of consciousness, is a perception, a cognitive seizing of the object or of some truth of things which is a powerful but still a minor and secondary result of spiritual vision...In mind there is a surface response of perception to the contact of an observed or discovered object, fact or truth and a consequent conceptual formulation of it; but in the spiritual light there is a deeper percep-

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 347.



tive response from the very substance of consciousness and a comprehending formulation in that substance, an exact figure or revelatory ideograph in the stuff of the being,—nothing more, no verbal representation is needed for the precision and completeness of this thought knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

The present essay is an attempt at showing that an ever insistent, although mostly unconscious, thirst for this spiritual vision, *dr̥ṣṭi*, “the desire of the moth for the star”—creates in man, the mental being, the exigence of ‘visualisation’ in diverse domains of his intellectual activity. It is natural, of course, that this ‘perception’, in the fashion of a chameleon, changes its aspect from domain to domain, and even in the same domain from one individual to another; but, however covert, camouflaged or transfigured, it is invariably there with its lurking presence. We propose to study this interesting phenomenon in its polychrome manifestation.

### III. THE POET’S EYE

We commence our study with the Poet, but we do not propose to occupy ourselves long with him; for, it is almost an axiomatic truth recognised on all hands that ‘vision’ is the principal, if not the unique, *point d’appui* of a poet. “Poetry, like the kindred arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, appeals to the spirit of man through significant images, and it makes no essential difference that in this case the image is mental and verbal and not material. The essential power of the poetic word is to make us see, not to make us think or feel; thought and feeling must arise out of or rather be included in the sight, but sight is the primary consequence and power of poetic speech.”<sup>2</sup> For “sight is the essential poetic gift. The archetypal poet in a world of original ideas is, we may say, a Soul that sees in itself intimately this world and all the others and God and Nature and the life of beings and sets flowing from its centre a surge of creative rhythm and word-images which become the expressive body of the vision; and the great poets are those who repeat in some measure this ideal creation, *kavayah satyaśrutāḥ*, seers and hearers of the poetic truth and poetic word.”<sup>3</sup>

And even if always not from this lofty spiritual vision, the poet’s eye weaves often an exquisite drapery of art out of scientific and—what is more startling—of mathematical imagery, too. The English poet Shelley is a striking case in point. (Remember *à propos* the significant compliment to him offered by A.N.

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 893-40.

<sup>2</sup> *The Future Poetry*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p. 41.

## THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

Whitehead : "If Shelley had been born a hundred years later, the twentieth century would have seen a Newton among chemists.") In fact, Shelley's mind was absorbed in scientific ideas and this can be illustrated by lyric after lyric. Now, let the philosopher-mathematician himself speak:

"I will choose one poem only, the fourth act of his *Prometheus Unbound*. The Earth and the Moon converse together in the language of accurate science. Physical experiments guide his imagery. For example, the Earth's exclamation,

'The vaporous exultation not to be confined !'

is the poetic transcript of 'the expansive force of gases', as it is termed in books on science. Again, take the Earth's stanza,

'I spin beneath my pyramid of night,  
Which points into the heavens,—dreaming delight,  
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;  
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,  
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,  
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep'.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now listen to the mathematician in Whitehead for the quite unexpected but all the more revealing comments he has to offer on this particular piece of poetry :

"This stanza could only have been written by someone with a definite geometrical diagram before his inward eye—a diagram which it has often been my business to demonstrate to mathematical classes. As evidence, note especially the last line which gives poetical imagery to the light surrounding night's pyramid. This idea could not occur to any one without the diagram. But the whole poem and other poems are permeated with touches of this kind."<sup>2</sup>

### IV. 'I-THOU' AND 'I-IT'

Whitehead refers to the diagram floating before the poet's inward eye; now, the thinker, too, is often guided in his deliberations by an inner background of specific vision. What is, after all, the relation between the poet and

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86.

the thinker; or, rather what should be the true attitude of a thinker *vis-à-vis* the poet in him, if at all he happens to be one of those marvellous prodigies : Poet-Philosophers or Philosopher-Poets ? For "it is well to insist that the native power of poetry is in its sight, not in its intellectual thought-matter, and its safety is in adhering to this native principle of vision and allowing its conception, its thought, its emotion, its presentation, its structure to rise out of that or compelling it to rise into that before it takes its finished form. The poetic vision of life is not a critical or intellectual or philosophic view of it, but a soul-view, a seizing by the inner sense."<sup>1</sup> Thus it will be altogether absurd and futile to ask the poet to philosophise for philosophy's sake or even to overburden his creation with metaphysical matter. For, as we have seen above, true poetry does not consist at all in "philosophic thinking, but in spiritual seeing, a rush of spiritual intuitions throwing themselves inevitably into the language of poetry, shaped out of fire and life, because that is their natural speech and a more intellectual utterance would have falsified their vision."<sup>2</sup>

But does it mean then that poetry in its essence is always a soliloquy, and that it is eternally doomed to have no 'message' at all ? The answer is an emphatic 'No'. "Philosophy has its place and can even take a leading place along with psychological experience as it does in the Gita. All depends on how it is done."<sup>3</sup> In true poetry "the thinking is not intellectual but intuitive or more than intuitive, always expressing a vision, a spiritual contact or a knowledge which has come by entering into the thing itself, by identity."<sup>4</sup> And the thinker proper steps in when this intuitive visional knowledge has to be communicated to Mind and Reason; it has then to be put into a system of concepts and constructs. For, as Buber has pointed out in another context, the vocative relation 'I-Thou' is the fundamental relation from which 'I-He', 'I-World', 'I-Object' relation is only derived. The world of which the philosopher speaks is an abstraction, an artefact of concepts. The philosopher is forced to speak about "the Existent" in the third person whereas the supreme poet in his vision knows it through his "personal encounter". "Directly do we live in the world of dialogue, but we incessantly transform the relation I-Thou (which is subjective) into the objective relation I-It."<sup>5</sup>

Thus the thinker, too, will be able to express more and more the true knowledge in proportion as he leans on the inner vision as his secret support. If he happens to be a poet-philosopher, let the thinker in him first of all fall

<sup>1</sup> *The Future Poetry*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Savitri, Letters*, pp. 833-34.

<sup>4</sup> *Savitri, Letters*, p. 835.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel-Hugo Bergman, *Philosophy and Religion*.

## THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

silent in reverent hush and let the poet behold and give shape; and once this is adequately done, let the philosopher translate the vision thus gained in terms of conceptual thought. In our modern times, the philosopher Heidegger expressly wanted to do something of the sort—although in this case there was not the fusion of the two personalities in the same individual. In fact, Heidegger sought to give expression to his essential thought in the form of a commentary on the poet Holderlin.<sup>1</sup>

### V. PICTORIAL THINKING

A profound thinker seeks no doubt the nourishment of his conceptual scheme in the effulgent source of an inner vision. But, what is more interesting, his thinking itself often assumes a pictorial appearance. For, as has been aptly described by M. Masterman-Braithwaite, whenever we think most deeply, we nearly always throw the whole logical machinery over. At such times we 'doodle' we compare, we 'match'; we write down isolated words, we draw pictures on the edge of the paper, we make models. Nor is this a primitive vestigial habit; for recent psychological and ethnological researches show that when we have to act quickly, we still, in an only extended sense of the words, think *pictorially*.

This curious phenomenon variously termed as 'representational meaning', 'pictorial thinking', 'metaphor using' and 'imaging' has been a bugbear with the linguistic philosophers: whether to dismiss it altogether as alogical and emotive, or rather to accept the fact at its face value and then to seek for its explanation. The group of philosophers headed by Mrs. Langer, I.A. Richards and W. H. Price stubbornly insist that this phenomenon can never be explained away, it has to be explained. For, on a close scrutiny we find that this pictorial principle extends its domain far and wide and penetrates even into the inner recesses of philosophical thinking, so much so that Masterman Braithwaite could not help posing the interesting query:

"The question arises as to whether the same pictorial principle does not often operate in our thinking on a larger scale, even though we may not perhaps have noticed it. It is a plausible hypothesis that it operates, in English, in figures of speech such as simile and metaphor. Does it also operate upon a larger scale still? Is it, for instance, upon this same principle that such a composite 'picture' as Spinoza's Ethics is built up? If so, we could talk, in an exact sense, about 'metaphysical pictures'. Is it also upon this principle that is based the use of analogy and model in scientific theory, particularly in the biological sciences?"

This last sentence leads us to the study of the exigence of 'visualisation'

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Delfgaauw, *Heidegger et Holderlin*.

in the domain of science. We purport to show that here, as elsewhere, this secret 'perception' takes on many different hues and always plays a very dominant role—both positive and negative—in the development of scientific enquiry.

## VI. THE PUZZLE OF THE CRYPTOGRAM

The initial objects of science are of course the things experienced in perception, and their most general characters are position in space and time. The basic procedure of an empirical science being always observation, scientific description starts with observation. "Never stray far away from the observable": such has been the prescription enjoined on the scientist again and again during the long and chequered history of the development of science. And in our day Rudolph Carnap has shown that by a method of reduction, of which definition is a special case, all terms of science are introduced by statements which involve other terms designating perceptible things and properties. Thus following Carnap, Victor F. Lenzen has analysed some biological terms like 'species', 'genus', 'events in organism', 'metabolism', 'regeneration', 'growth', etc. to point out how all of these terms can be reduced, step by step, to the level of perceptible criteria.

I used the word 'level': this reminds me of the interesting classification of levels offered by Korzybski. In fact, scientific knowledge has been gained through a process of successive abstraction out of the field of immediate sense-experience. These different phases of abstraction have been termed by Korzybski the non-verbal 'level of the event', the non-verbal 'objective level', the verbal 'descriptive level' and the symbolic 'inferential level'. True science starts only with this last level of abstraction. For science is much more than a simple description of apparatus and of the raw data of observation. It is above all 'interpretative'. This interpretative side of science seeks to relate direct observations to a logical framework of concepts. Did not Leibniz long ago describe the procedure of science as like the solving of a cyptogram? And this is indeed a deep and exact remark. In scientific research, we receive messages from Nature in an unknown code. The aim of science is precisely to break this code. And in this attempt at deciphering the cabbalistic messages from Nature, the scientist has to speculate, he has to theorise—is not 'speculation' derived from *speculari*, to spy out, just as 'theory' from *theoreo*, to behold?—and then to create concepts after concepts. In this characteristic method of science, "the method of foresight based on insight" as Jacob Bronowski would style it, what is a concept if not "a key to unlock a maze,...providing a pattern into which a mass of otherwise unrelated phenomena could be fitted."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James B. Conant, *On Understanding Science*, p. 88.

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Thus although science starts with the field of the observables and in the final account every hypothesis will be deemed to be confirmed only when the phenomena predicted on its basis can be *observed*, it is no less a fact that in the interregnum the scientist has perforce to weave a world of concepts and constructs that may very well vie in their abstraction with those of the sister field of Philosophy. To give only a single instance, let us consider the concepts of mass and force introduced in science by Newton and his immediate predecessors like Galileo. "Mass and force are not in any definable sense real entities, discovered by turning a microscope on nature, and there seen manifestly to cause her behaviour. They are concepts whose isolation makes the behaviour of nature orderly. In discovering these concepts, Galileo and Newton were not making a statement of fact. They were finding units of a code, an alphabet in which mechanics could be written coherently and consistently."<sup>1</sup>

We propose to show in the present section that even in this domain of 'abstraction of abstraction'—to borrow a Leibnizian locution—the man of science is secretly supported from behind by the sense of 'visualisation'. As a matter of fact, science offers the spectacle of a variegated stage on which this strange mono-actor, 'exigence of visualisation', plays its role of multi-hued appearance: visions and imaginations, analogy and model-framing, symbols and nomenclatures are only some of its great many avatars. But before we pass on to the consideration of these roles in turn, let us first pause a while to probe into the feeling of a man of science whenever a new discovery is made, a new concept framed or a novel theory built up. It is, as we shall see, essentially a feeling of 'vision'. To exemplify this point I shall choose two cases almost antipodal from the point of view of the history of modern science.

### VII. 'WATCHERS OF THE SKIES'

The first instance dates from the seventeenth century, almost in the beginning of modern chemistry. Jean Rey, the French chemist, who was the first to announce clearly the Law of Conservation of Mass, becomes well-nigh a visionary poet while speaking of his new discovery. Let us listen to what he has to say in the concluding part of his paper, *The Increase in Weight of Tin and Lead on Calcination* (1630):

"Behold now this truth, whose brilliance strikes the eye, which I have drawn from the deepest dungeons of obscurity. This it is to which the path

<sup>1</sup> James R. Newman (Ed.), *What is Science?* p. 430.

## MOTHER INDIA

has been hitherto inaccessible.... Cardan, Scaliger, Fachsius, Coesalpinus, Libavius, have curiously sought it, but never perceived it. Others may be on its quest, but vainly if they fail to follow the road which first of all I have made clear and royal : all others being but thorny footpaths and inextricable byways which lead never to the goal. The labour has been mine : may the profit be to the reader, and to God alone the glory.”

Let us now come down to the twentieth century scientist Gilbert N. Lewis and allow him to speak for himself about “that thrill of excitement which came to us when we first heard the strange but alluring doctrine of Relativity : I remember one long summer night through which Richard Tolman and I raised one objection after another, but always in vain, until we were convinced of the truth of relativity, and when with this conviction I, a young chemist, had the temerity to present the first paper on the principle of relativity before the American Physical Society it was a sense of exaltation like that which one experiences...” Here he adds significantly from Keats :

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken ;  
Or like stout Cortez—when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific, and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Such is then the ecstatic thrill of a scientist whenever he chances upon a new discovery (we cannot but note here the suggestiveness of the word ‘discovery’). But how are these discoveries made at all ?

*(To be continued)*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

## THE NAMELESS POINT

AND we have sought, and found our truth  
Hidden within the Nameless point,  
Between all forms of diversity.  
We have shielded ourselves from pain  
By renouncing our Worldly pleasures.  
Withdrawn from delusion, at one with the point,  
We have feared to step out again  
Into the ignorance and pleasures of men  
Lest the subtle arms of illusion wind tightly  
Their softness about us, killing our wisdom again.  
But will we lose this vision divine  
If we enter once more this game of joy ?  
Let us hold fast to our knowledge  
Yet enter the world, awake to the balance of all things.  
Excluding all, alone in the point  
We yearn for life, for action, for love and play.  
Shall we lose our wisdom indeed  
If we leave the point to become the sphere ?  
Here, encompassing all diversity, yet apart,  
May we not take joy in man and in life ?  
Let us expand from the point to the sphere ;  
Excluding all, let us encompass all  
By including all opposites within us,  
In a grand perfection of balance.  
If we would know joy—we must have motion within. '  
The more life we can surround with love  
The greater will be our gladness.

IRWIN L. ARL



## GIFT TO THE ALL-GIVER

*(An Incident)*

ON October 22, the Kali Puja Day, the Mother came downstairs to give general blessings and distribute her message to the sadhaks of the Ashram.

When the blessings were over, many of the sadhaks still waited in the Meditation Hall for the Mother's parting look before her return upstairs. The Mother cast her gorgeous smiling glance on a pot of roses in bloom, among other flowers arranged in a coloured hush around the rosewood chair-throne of the Blessed One.

She enquired as to whom that rose-plant belonged. The sadhak-in-charge, who had sent that fortunate plant for decoration-purpose, happened to be present. As he stepped eagerly forward to say that he had arranged to bring the plant there, the Mother asked, in a soft earnest tone : "Can you give me these flowers ?"

The sadhak could not but pour out : "Yes, they all belong to you, certainly they are all yours." Then his eager fingers busied themselves in plucking the ten roses which, by their number, stood symbolising mystical "Perfection" of Psychic Love and Surrender. The Mother of Infinite Bounty took with child-like gratitude the ten blooms in her caressing palms, rose from her throne and went upstairs, leaving behind her the perfume of her love and bliss.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## THE VISION OF THE GOOD IN PLATO

(Continued from the October issue)

### IV

ALTHOUGH the Idea of the Good is the highest principle of Platonic metaphysics, Plato has been rather reticent in speaking about it. There is practically no systematic exposition of this supreme Idea in any one single Dialogue. When Aristotle, hearing Plato's lectures on the Good published some of his notes, Plato repudiated them. Plato never liked the publication of these notes and in the Seventh Epistle he complains :

“There is no writing of mine on this subject nor ever shall be. It is not capable of expression like other branches of study; but, as the result of long intercourse, and a common life spent upon the thing, a light is suddenly kindled as from a leaping spark, and when it has reached the soul, it thenceforward finds nutriment for itself. I know this, at any rate, that if these things were to be written down or stated at all, they would be better stated by myself than by others and I know too that I shall be the person to suffer most for their being badly set down in writing. If I thought they could be adequately written down and stated to the world, what finer occupation could I have had in life than to write what would be of great service to mankind, and to reveal Nature in the light of the day to all men ? But I do not even think the effort to attain this a good thing for men, except for the very few who can be enabled to discover these things themselves by means of a brief indication.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Burnet this is not really mystery-mongering, as has been said; it is simply the statement of the true theory of all higher knowledge, education and learning. The dawn of real knowledge implies awakening in the very depths of the being, by which one becomes aware of the indescribable and ineffable,—the idea of the Good. It is to be apprehended not so much through the mind but through the soul. It is a kind of knowledge that emanates, grows and finds its culmination in the soul of man, in his essential being. Plato insisted

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Burnet—*Thales to Plato*, p. 221.

that each one should learn the lesson for himself. The mission of the teacher is to inspire the quest, it is for the pupil to discover the treasure. Each individual has to hew out his own path into the unknown. Each must climb the path up the steep mountain, from the top of which alone the vision can be seen in all its splendour. That is why the final mystery about this supreme principle of the Good is not clearly disclosed in intellectual terms, but left to the findings and realisation of the individual seeker.

But, be that as it may, the fact remains that Plato has not worked out in intellectual terms this supreme principle of which he has an intuitive vision. He has not supplied the logical steps by which the principle so seen and felt can be interpreted. He has here, a definite advantage over his interpreters. The interpreter may find out the dry bones of his deepest thought, but the spirit of it will be less easy to reproduce.

“Here we see”, writes S. K. Maitra, “the advantage which a philosopher has over his interpreters. The philosopher gets an intuition of truth, like the poet and notes it down. How he arrives at it he does not know. If asked to show the logical steps by which that truth can be reached, he will in most cases fail, for he did not reach it by any logical process....Now the difficulty about the idea of the Good is that it is an idea and yet not an idea. It is so much more significant, so much more universal and yet so much more concrete than all other ideas that it looks more like a towering peak rising precipitously from the valley of the Ideas than any continuation of it.”<sup>1</sup>

## V

Plato gives us a brief account of the nature of the Idea of the Good in the Sixth and the Seventh Book of his *Republic*. The nature of Good is revealed in the conversation between Adeimantus and Socrates, where the latter prescribes for the guardians of the state to take the “longer road” of reaching the highest knowledge which is their proper calling. The text of the conversation is as follows :

ADEIMANTUS : What, is there a knowledge still higher than this—higher than justice and other virtues ?

SOCRATES : Yes, there is...

ADEIMANTUS : A right and noble thought; but do you suppose that we shall refrain from asking you what is this highest knowledge ?

<sup>1</sup> *Meeting of the East and the West in the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 259.

## THE VISION OF THE GOOD IN PLATO

SOCRATES : Nay, ask if you will; but I am certain that you have heard the answer many times and now you either do not understand me or, as I rather think, you are disposed to be troublesome; for you have often been told that the idea of the good is the highest knowledge, and that all other things become useful and advantageous only by their use of this. You can hardly be ignorant that of this I was about to speak, concerning which, as you have often heard me say, we know so little; and, without which any other knowledge or possession of any kind will profit us nothing. Do you think that the possession of all other things is of any value if we do not possess the good ? Or the knowledge of all other things if we have no knowledge of beauty and goodness ?

ADEIMANTUS : Assuredly not."<sup>1</sup>

It is very clear from what Plato says here that there is a kind of knowledge which is of a unique type, much higher, much deeper than mere matter-of-fact knowledge. It is, indeed, the highest knowledge, the supreme wisdom by acquiring which we are able to possess every other kind of knowledge. This type of knowledge corresponds to the Brahmanvidya of the Upanishads. The Upanishadic seers often draw the distinction between the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge, *aparā vidyā*, and *parā vidyā*. The Greek philosophers make also a similar distinction between Doxa and Episteme or between Scientia and Sophia. Scientia is knowledge of facts, but Sophia is knowledge of values. In the Platonic epistemology this distinction appears in the form of opinion and truth. Truth implies the knowledge of the eternal, the immutable and the absolute. In the Mundaka Upanishad, Shaunaka, the disciple, asks Rishi Angiras, "Lord, by knowing what does all this that is become known?"<sup>2</sup> To him Angiras replies, "Twofold is the knowledge that must be known of which the knowers of the Brahman tell, the higher and the lower knowledge."<sup>3</sup> Of these the lower knowledge is the Vedas, and the knowledge of grammar, of etymology, of metre, of the science of the heavens; while the higher knowledge is that by which alone the imperishable being is reached. Like the seers, Plato is emphatic and clear not only that the knowledge of the Good is the superior knowledge, but also that it is the supreme value; for without the knowledge of

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, VI 505, Jowett's translation.

<sup>2</sup> शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः प्रपच्छ

कस्मिन् नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतेति ॥३॥ *Mundaka Upanishad*.

<sup>3</sup> तस्मै स होवाच । द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद् ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च ॥४॥

the Good, "any other knowledge or possession of any kind will profit us nothing". In other words, our education and learning is incomplete and useless without the knowledge of the Good. We come across exactly the same idea in the Chhandogya Upanishad where Narada, after acquiring knowledge of various sciences and arts, came to Sanata-Kumar for acquiring the knowledge of this supreme value. The list of subjects which Narada had studied is quite formidable, but his learning was incomplete, and even useless, as he was lacking in knowledge of the supreme value. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Maitreyi echoes the same idea when she begs of her husband Yajnavalkya, "what shall I do with that which cannot give me immortality?"<sup>1</sup> Plato enjoins it upon the rulers of the state that they must be initiated into this mystic knowledge, otherwise all their learning and education are useless. The guardian of the state, the philosopher-king, "Rajarshi", must be a realised soul, one who is endowed with the synoptic vision of the Real,—the Idea of the Good.

## VI

Having described the knowledge of the Good as the highest knowledge and supreme value, Plato proceeds further to determine the character of the Good. In a very significant passage of the *Republic* the discussion regarding the nature of the Idea of the Good proceeds as follows :

SOCRATES : Now, that which imparts truth to the known and the power of knowing to the knower, is what I would have you term the Idea of the good, and this you will deem to be the cause of science, and of the truth in so far as the latter becomes the subject of knowledge; beautiful too, as are both truth and knowledge, you will be right in esteeming this other nature as more beautiful than either; and, as in the previous instance, light and sight may be truly said to be like the sun, and yet not to be the sun, so in this other sphere, science and truth may be deemed to be like the good, but not the good, the good has a place of honour yet higher.

GLAUCON : What a wonder of beauty that must be which is the author of science and truth, yet surpasses them in beauty; for you surely cannot mean to say that pleasure is the good ?

<sup>1</sup> येनाह नामृता स्वा किमह तेन कुर्याम् । Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

## THE VISION OF THE GOOD IN PLATO

- SOCRATES : God forbid, I replied; but may I ask you to consider the image in another point of view ?
- GLAUCON : In what point of view ?
- SOCRATES : You would say, would you not, that the sun is not only the author of visibility in all visible things, but of generation and nourishment and growth, though he himself is not generation.
- GLAUCON : Certainly.
- SOCRATES : In like manner the good may be said to be not only the author of knowledge to all things known but of their being and essence, yet the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power.<sup>1</sup>

Here, Plato clearly indicates as to how the Idea of the Good is the Absolute Reality, the primordial condition and the first truth of existence, “*devanam Prathama vratani*”, for which philosophy primarily seeks, because they are the key to all other truths. This is nothing more or less than the truth proclaimed by the Vedas, “the One existent whom the sages call by many names”. This is the Upanishadic Absolute Reality, the Brahman, the Cause, origin and substance of all things, an absolute Existence whose nature is Consciousness and Bliss. A careful analysis of the nature of the Idea of Good as described by Plato at once reveals its three aspects : existential, logical and axiological. Existentially, the Idea of the Good is the Supreme Existent, the Ultimate Reality, the transcendental and the universal cause of everything,—“the cause of science and truth”, “not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence and yet the good is not essence but far exceeds essence in dignity and power”. Logically, it is Supreme Knowledge, or Thought, or Consciousness, *Cit*, the transcendental condition of all intelligibility and understanding, “that which imparts truth to the known and the power of knowing to the knower.” Further, Plato also indicates that it is not only Consciousness but force, for it is—like the sun, which is the cause of all visibility in all visible things, and of generation, growth and nourishment in the physical world—the cause of being and essence. Axiologically, the idea of the Good is the Supreme Value, the greatest beauty and delight, “what a wonder of beauty that must be, which is the author of science and truth, and yet surpasses them in beauty”. It is this aspect of reality, “reality as value”, which Plato has more emphasised than the other two aspects.

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, VI p. 509, Jowett's translation.

Bradley distinguished in all reality two aspects, the aspect of existence and the aspect of content, which he called respectively the "that" and the "what". But he failed to distinguish in the content the two clearly separable elements, namely, the logical element and the value element. If he had not done so, he would have made a tripartite division of the aspects of reality into an existential, a logical and a value aspect as is done in Indian philosophy. As a matter of fact every proposition, since it is a statement about reality, has a threefold character. The proposition, for example, "This pencil is blue" indicates not only an existence expressed by the term "This pencil", and a logical content expressed by the word "blue", but also a value content which is not expressed but which has to be understood if the full meaning of the proposition is to be stated. The "blueness" of the pencil has a value both for the person who makes the judgment and the person who hears it, although no explicit value predicate like good or bad is used. Windelband is correct when he says that there are some propositions which are exclusively value judgements and there are others where the value element is lacking. But Western philosophy has somehow missed sight of this important aspect of reality. "The eye of Indian thought saw the third aspect of the self and of Brahman, besides the universal consciousness active in divine knowledge, besides the universal force active in divine will, it saw the universal delight active in divine love and joy."<sup>1</sup> Fortunately enough, Plato was not blind to this aspect of reality as the supreme beauty and delight of all existence. In another passage of the *Republic* he writes: "Moreover I (Socrates) said you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs for their souls are ever hastening into the upper worlds where they desire to dwell, which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted."<sup>2</sup>

The Idea of the Good is, therefore, at once the ultimate existent, the supreme consciousness and the highest bliss. The conception of reality as Sachchidananda in the Upanishads fairly corresponds to the Idea of the Good although the term Sachchidananda is far more significant and expressive of the three aspects of reality than the Idea of the Good. Sometimes the Idea of the Good is treated merely as an ethical value, because the term is not itself well-expressive of the three aspects. The term Sachchidananda at once clearly expresses the triune character of reality, Sat expressing the existential aspect, Chit the logical aspect, and Ananda the value aspect.

<sup>1</sup>. *Heracitus*, Sri Aurobindo, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>. *Republic*, VI, p. 505, Jowett's translation.

VII

Let us now turn to another significant element of the Idea of Good where it is compared with the symbol of the sun. The sun as a mystic symbol has been used by the Vedic Rishis and the Upanishadic seers time and again to indicate the nature of the ultimate reality. The sun represents the highest reality in the physical world and is the cause of all generation and creation, the author of all visibility and sight in things. The Idea of the Good is also the Sun-Idea and as such represents the Absolute Reality and is the cause of all essence and being, the transcendent condition of all intelligibility and understanding. As the sun is the source of all physical light and warmth and the eye of the world, so too the Good is the parent and lord of all light and truth, —the root-eye of all seeing and knowing. As the sun is untouched by the blemishes of the world below, so too the Idea of the Good is not soiled by anything it creates and generates.<sup>1</sup> In the seventh Book of the *Republic* Plato says, "But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort, and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual, and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed." (517)

VIII

There are other sides to the Idea of the Good, the hints of which Plato has given us in his various dialogues. Truly speaking, his conception and vision of the Good as the ultimate Reality is the mystic's vision of Reality. Wherever he speaks of it, he grows ecstatic and luminous and describes it as something inexpressible. There is, undoubtedly, a rich view of mysticism in Plato. The ancient Greek tradition bears testimony to the existence of various mystical cults, of the Orphics, the Dionysians, and the Apollonians. Greek mystics like Pythagoras and Heraclitus exercised a tremendous influence on Plato. During the twelve years that Plato spent in travel after the death of Socrates, he visited Egypt, Italy, Sicily, and possibly also some other countries, and it is said that during this period he came in contact with Oriental mys-

<sup>1</sup>. cf. *KathaUpamshad*

सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षुर्न लिप्यते चाक्षुषैर्बाह्यदोषैः ।

एकस्तथा सर्वभुतान्तरात्मा न लिप्यते लोकदुःखेन बाह्यः २-५-११



ticism. But there are no definite historical proofs to this effect, although Plato's writings show the profound stamp of oriental mysticism, myths, symbols and allegory. Scholars like Dr. Urwick believe that Plato was definitely influenced by the Vedantic thought of India. Be that as it may, Plato's writings are full of mystical tenets and parables. In the mystic symbolism of the numbers which is found in the *Timaeus* we see a clear influence of Pythagorean mysticism. The entire description of creation from the mouth of a Pythagorean philosopher is highly mystical. Plato's conception of beauty in the *Symposium* and that of love in the *Phaedrus* are products of mysticism. The description of the body as a prison and the longing of the philosopher for release from the world of sense and becoming into the bliss of the soul-life is deeply mystical. The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, the parable of the Cave in which men are lost in darkness and ignorance, the description of the Corybante's dance are also proofs of his mystical vision.

Like a true mystic, Plato believed in revelation as a medium for the expression of the Invisible and the Unknowable. He always depended more on intuition and inspiration as true modes for the apprehension of Reality than on anything else. Revelation to him meant a divine afflatus springing from within, the result of inspiration through God-intoxication. In a brilliant passage of the *Ion*, explaining the origin of poetical composition through the divine afflatus, Plato writes, "The authors of the great poems do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art, but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, possessed by a spirit not of their own. Thus the composers of lyrical poetry create those admired songs of theirs in a state of divine insanity.... Thus every rhapsodist or poet... is excellent in proportion to the extent of his participation in the divine influence, and the degree in which the Muse itself has descended on him... and thus it appears to me,... that these transcendent poems are not human, as the work of men, but divine as coming from God".<sup>1</sup> This passage gives us a very good account of the way in which all great mystical poetry as well as all true philosophy worth the name is produced. It was in this way that the Vedic Rishis composed their hymns and the Upanishadic seers set forth their spiritual visions. Plato, in this sense, was a real poet, 'Kavi' in the Vedic sense of the term and his description of the Idea of the Good appears as a transcendent poem, the origin, significance and value of which are revealed to only seers and poets like him.

(Concluded)

K. C. PATI

<sup>1</sup>. Quoted from R.D. Ranade's *Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, p. 9.

## KATHA UPANISHAD

(*A Commentary*)

ALL the Upanishads deal with essentially and fundamentally the same ultimate Truth, but the approach of each Upanishad is different. Although the ultimate Reality is one, still it admits of an infinite number of ways of presenting it, for the One always contains the Many. The approach of the Isha Upanishad is a comprehensive grip over the integral reality of the Brahman, while that of the Kenà is a more limited one, *viz.*, a psychological approach; the latter's starting-point is the human mental consciousness as it is constituted on the surface with all its shortcomings, whereas the former takes its firm stand from the very beginning on the higher consciousness which intimately knows the oneness of the whole universe. Both these Upanishads refer to the double character of the universe, the objective and the subjective, the physical and the supraphysical, this world of Matter and other worlds of subtler substances. But still it can be noticed that the allusions contained in these two Upanishads to the other worlds, although not unimportant, still do not occupy a prominent place, nor does either of them make it its sole preoccupation. For neither of them is primarily concerned with ideas about the supraphysical states of existence. Moreover the aphoristic language and the laconic style so admirably adopted by both, although to a larger extent by the Isha than by the Kena, do not permit of a more extensive dealing with this important aspect of the integral truth. And it is precisely this aspect that is made the starting-point and is treated at some length by the Katha Upanishad. As a matter of fact, this knowledge about the other worlds is made a gate of entry into the knowledge of the Supreme.

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The supreme transcendent Reality is for ever ineffable by our faltering human speech, but it is not the utterly ineffable; it can be described by a speech which would not insist on the clear-cut and trenchant expression so much loved by the logical intellect of man; it can also be hinted at by a plastic symbol-language. The Vedic seers utilise both these methods to a very great extent and the Upanishads too, especially the older ones, take up the same tradition, but still there is a great difference. The seers of the Upanishads have those ancient Vedic symbols

vibrating in their memories, but not everything they say is clothed in the raiment of symbols, for they use more often than not the direct metaphysical expression and thus their style and language are more readily comprehensible by the modern mind. But still the language of the Upanishads remains intuitive and does not become the language of the intellect, which it did in the later philosophical systems. The language of the Katha Upanishad too illustrates this transition : in some passages it is the symbolic expression that predominates, in certain others the metaphysical, but nowhere do we find any thesis or hypothesis based on mentally reasoned out ideas.

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I.i.1\*

Like the Parable of the Gods in the Kena, the Katha too contains the story of Nachiketas and Yama, which runs through the whole of the Upanishad, but remains to the fore in the earlier portion only and later on recedes into the background. The story of Nachiketas may well have been intended by the seer to be symbolic, in the manner of the Upanishadic authors and also in the manner of the expanded versions of such legends found in the Purāṇas, If we accept this interpretation of the Upanishadic tale we can certainly see a deep symbolic meaning in most of the names of the persons mentioned in the Upanishads. In the Veda, indeed, such names are almost always symbols having spiritual significance. The name Vasistha, for instance, was not the name of a particular person but only a title signifying 'the most substantial' or 'the most opulent', where the superlative degree of 'vasu', substance or wealth, is deliberately used to suggest symbolically the spiritual wealth or substance, viz., the realisation of the Supreme; so also the name 'Gotama' or 'Gautama' was a title of honour given to the seer who had attained the highest level of spiritual consciousness, for the word 'go' or 'gau', literally meaning a cow, is used as a symbol for a ray of physical light which in its turn becomes a symbol for a ray of spiritual illumination or spiritual consciousness. So also the names or titles Gr̥tsamada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Viśwāmitra and others can be made to yield their psychological meanings. That this was the real intention of the Vedic and Upanishadic seers in using these names is borne out by a good deal of evidence gathered from the Vedas and the Upanishads themselves. But this is not the place for going into that subject. At the same time we cannot set it aside altogether in the interpretation of this Upanishad which in its very commencement gives us such names as Vājaśravasa and Nachiketas capable of bearing deep spiritual

<sup>1</sup> *Om uśan ha vai vājaśravasaḥ sarvavedasam dadau tasya nachiketā nāma putra asa.*

significances. We will therefore first try to penetrate into the symbolic depths of these names before taking up anything else.

In this connection it would be interesting to reconstruct the genealogy of the illustrious Nachiketas from the Upanishadic and Purāṇic traditions and then see what we can make of it with the help of the spiritual doctrine presented in this Upanishad. From the very first line of this Upanishad it can be seen that Vājaśravasa was the father of Nachiketas. In Stanza 10 Vājaśravasa is referred to as Gautama and in Stanza 11 as Auddālaki Āruṇi. From this we can reconstruct the genealogy of the Gautamas, for obviously Gautama is the name of the family and not merely of the individual; the Veda would refer to the members of the same family in a collective fashion as *Vasiṣṭhāsaḥ*, *Viśvāmitrāsaḥ*, and *Gotamāsaḥ*. This family-name may either refer to the natural father-son-grandson line, or if that too is symbolically interpreted, as indeed it is in certain other Upanishads, it would mean the line of persons having had the same spiritual realisation or even the teacher-disciple line. Or going a step farther in the same direction, we can say that it does not refer to any persons at all but is only a queer way in which these ancient texts give us the connection between the various elements which go to form the complex web of spiritual realisations. In this last case the symbol-language of the seers would reach its extreme point. But at the same time we need not go to the extreme of saying that persons bearing the names mentioned did not at all exist or were only the creations of the imaginative minds of the seers or simply personifications of some abstract psychological qualities or experiences. We are not however here concerned with the historicity or otherwise of these persons; we shall limit ourselves only to the profound psychological significances suggested by their names.

We shall start from the top person in the genealogy, *viz.*, Aruṇa, the great-grandfather, or perhaps the great-great-grandfather, of Nachiketas. In the Veda the Sun or *Sūrya* stands for the Supramental Light. Aruṇa is the charioteer of *Sūrya* who drives his car drawn by the seven-headed horse or by seven horses. As the word 'go' or cow signifies in the Veda the Consciousness, so the word '*Aśva*' or horse signifies Energy or Force in movement. Thus Aruṇa regulates the movements of the Supramental Force in its coming down towards the nether triple worlds of the lower hemisphere, *aparārdha*, just as Uṣā brings down the Supramental Light. The word *Aruṇa* can be traced to the Sanskrit root *ṛ* or *ar* meaning 'to move forward'; thus it belongs to the same family as *ṛtu*, *ārya*, *ari*, etc.

His son Uddālaka, referred to by his patronymic as Āruṇi elsewhere is a very famous figure both in the Upanishads and in the Purāṇas. One legend connected with him tells us that when he was a small boy studying in the Ashram

of his Guru Āpoda Dhaumya, on one occasion the latter casually remarked in the presence of his several disciples that rain-water falling in corn-fields should not be allowed to be drained away. It happened to be a rainy day and the child Uddālaka went to the Guru's corn-fields. He found that the water was rushing away from a gap in the wall erected around the field. Right from the morning he tried to fill up the gap with earth his small hands could carry, but to no avail. Till late he went on with his work but when he finally saw that all his labour was in vain and the rain was still pouring down, he put himself in the gap in a frantic effort to carry out his Guru's word. On the other side, Dhaumya not finding Uddālaka in the Ashram became anxious about him and went in search of him to the fields. He found him on the gap of the wall. Whatever be the other implications of this legend, it is possible to interpret it symbolically. *Uddālaka* or *Uddāraka* (from *dr-dār-* to tear, to break through) is symbolic of the Overmind force penetrating through the lower triple consciousness of the mind, vital and physical and bringing down the higher Light into the lower hemisphere, he is the son of Aruna, the charioteer of the Supramental Sun. Not only does Uddālaka bring down the force from the overhead regions, but also, like Shiva holding the waters of Gargā on his head, prepares the lower Nature in order to make it capable of holding the overhead rain in the fields of evolutionary life and preventing it from escaping into the unformulated cosmic wideesses. The rain (Parjanya) is symbolic of the illumined mental energies brought down by the Maruts in order to make fertile this earthly field of evolution. The name Āpoda Dhaumya too can be symbolic, āpoda meaning the giver or bringer of Waters (the cosmic waters of existence) and dhaumya—belonging to *dhūma* or smoke, which is a word having very deep psychological significance, *viz.*, the obscurity of the regions of the Subconscious and the Inconscious, in which the Supramental Light descends, or it may also mean the *Putryāna* path characterised by smoke, night, dark fortnight, etc.

If, thus, Uddālaka is the Overmind or Illumined Mind consciousness, his son Vājaśravas is obviously the Inspiration which comes down in profusion from the same levels. The word *śravas* in compounds like *Satyaśravas*, *Vṛddhaśravas*, *Vājaśravas* and others commonly found in the Veda, means divine Hearing, just as *dṛsti* means divine Sight. *Vāja* means plenitude or strength. Thus the word *Vājaśravas* would mean one who possesses the plenitude or power of the divine Inspiration or Hearing, which is so necessary for the awakening of the human soul towards the Divine. As a matter of fact it is this inner awakening that gives the human soul its spiritual birth. And thus Nachiketas, the human soul here manifested in the Ignorance, gets his new spiritual birth from Vājaśravas or Vājaśravasa.

But it is not impossible that this Vājaśravasa is not identical with Vājaśravas, but only his offspring. The divine Inspiration or Hearing remains deep down somewhere in the human heart in the earlier stages of the unconscious Yoga which the human being involuntarily and unknowingly follows, and only slowly does he become possessed of a conscious aspiration towards the Divine. This aspiration is hinted at by the seer, by the word *uśan*. Vājaśravasa would then mean the human aspiration, born of the divine Impulsion, Vājaśravas. In this case Nachiketas would be the grandson of Vājaśravas and the son of Vājaśravasa. It is the aspiration that gives birth,—spiritual birth,—to the human soul dwelling in Ignorance.

The word *uśan* literally means desiring, but would, in this way of interpreting the symbols, mean desiring the Divine and thus, aspiring for the Divine. In the Rīgveda we find this word so used, in various forms of it such as *uśatīh*, *uśjah*, *uśanas*, etc. Nachiketas is the human soul evolving in Ignorance yet inwardly possessed of Knowledge; only that Knowledge has not yet been able to come to the front. And therefore he is Na-chiketas (literally, not possessed of wisdom) only in his surface self. We shall have occasion later on to refer to this double aspect of the human soul, *viz.*, ignorant in the surface manifestation and full of knowledge within the depths. The word Nachiketas is cognate to the Vedic words *cit*, *cetanā*, and is also related to the other set of Vedic words *cikivān*, *ketu*, *ketana*, etc. The original stem is *cit* or *kit*, both meaning to know, to be conscious of.

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In the very first stanza of the Upanishad the seer has given or rather hinted at the two basic spiritual elements, *viz.*, aspiration and self-giving. The first is suggested by the word *uśan* and the second by *sarva-vedasam dadau*; Vājaśravasa, desiring the Divine, gave all he had. The word *vedasa* apparently means wealth, and in ancient times money was not the only thing considered to be wealth; cows and horses too formed part of the individual's riches, perhaps more so than even money. But the word *vedasa* is also connected with the root *vid* meaning to know; in this sense it would mean knowledge. We also know that in the Vedic symbolism the cow stands for consciousness and the horse for energy or force. Thus to the Upanishadic sage this transition from the physical wealth to the intellectual and spiritual wisdom and strength was a very natural one. In this sense the word *sarva-vedasam* would mean all the knowledge he had. When we aspire for the higher knowledge of the Spirit the lower intellectual knowledge, which is only a pale shadow of the former, has to be given up, the mind silenced and the consciousness fixed on the Divine. The

## MOTHER INDIA

giving up of all that we physically and psychologically possess is a *sine qua non* for the attainment of the All. By giving up the all one attains the All. This shows that Vājaśravasa was doing Yoga and in that he had come to such a stage where the lower knowledge had to be abandoned in favour of the higher. This Yoga was, in the Veda, symbolised by the Yajna or sacrifice.

### I. i.2\*

Everything great or small in the Vedic sacrifice was a symbol of some psychological movement, for the sacrifice was only the Yoga represented in different terms. The giving of Dakshina was an important element in the sacrifice; ceremonially, Dakshina was a gift and it consisted of gold, cows and horses. The symbolic meaning of the word is Divine Discernment, from the root word *dakṣa* which is connected with the Latin word *dexter* and Greek *dexios*. The Sanskrit word *dakṣiṇā* along with both these Greek and Latin forms of it and also the English word *dexter* mean the right-hand side, right. The English word *dexterity* meaning cleverness or skill also corresponds to the Sanskrit *dakṣa* and *dakṣiṇā*. Moreover, the Sanskrit word *dakṣiṇā* means the southern direction. It is said that, when one faces the East, on one's left side is the North and on the right side is the South. That is why the South is known as *dakṣiṇa* direction. But in that case why is the North not called *vāma* instead of *uttara* ? It seems there is some other reason for this. The word *dakṣiṇa* means that which is full of dexterity, full of wisdom, full of law and uniformity; the word *vāma* on the other hand is derived from the root *van* which means to take delight or enjoy. From both Vedic and Puranic sources we know that Yama is the ruler of the South. We will later on see what connection Yama has with *dakṣiṇā* or *dakṣa*. But here it is enough to note that *vāma* means the way of bliss and freedom and whim and caprice, while *dakṣiṇa* means the way of dexterity and understanding and law and orderliness. It is this distinction that characterises the two Tantric paths known as the *Vāma-mārga* and *Dakṣiṇa-mārga*; one is the path of delight and the other the path of knowledge. The two paths are the natural developments out of the original Sat-chit-ananda, the *dakṣiṇa* path arising out of *chit* and the *vāma* out of *ānanda*. It was only later on that the *vāma-mārga* deteriorated into quite undesirable methods and became a licentious and even perversely obscene cult.

*Dakṣiṇā* is the goddess of divine Discernment and has her home in the overhead planes of consciousness, especially in the Overmind. So long as

\**tam ha kumāram santam dakṣiṇāsu nīyamānāsu śraddhā viveṣa. so' manyata.*

one is on the mental plane one is guided by the mental judgement and discrimination. But this is not the infallible guidance; more often than not it misguides us and leads us into committing errors. When we go into the overhead planes it is replaced by a far higher and unerring light and this light comes to us from *Dakṣiṇā*. Not only is it a light but also a dynamic Force, for, as we rise higher, the division between consciousness and effective power, which is so very marked on the mental level, begins to diminish and ultimately, when we reach the Supramental, is entirely gone. This *Dakṣiṇā* is intimately connected with the symbolic Yajna; for the Vedic sacrifice was both an ascent and a journey (*adhvara*) towards these higher planes of consciousness and being. This ascent is effected by Yoga. And in Yoga this faculty of Discernment has an important role to perform. In fact, the Veda always has this idea behind its mantras whenever they refer to *Dakṣiṇā*. In Rigveda x. 107. 1 we read, *mahi jyotiḥ pitṛ-bhir dattam āgād, uruḥ panthā dakṣiṇāyā adarśi*, 'the Great Light given by our Ancestors has come and the wide path of Discernment is seen.' Further in x. 107. 9 we find, *dakṣiṇā 'śwam dakṣiṇā gām dadati, dakṣiṇā candram uta yaddhuraṇyam*, 'Dakshina gives strength (lit. horse), Dakshina consciousness (lit. cow), and Dakshina light (lit. gold) which is full of bliss.' In another passage I. 125. 6 it is said —*dakṣiṇāvanto amṛtam bhajante*, 'those who have Discernment enjoy immortality.'<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from all this that what the word *dakṣiṇā* means in this Upanishad is not the physical gift of money, cows etc. given as a fee to the priest, but has got a deeper psychological meaning. This will become still more clear when we will consider the third stanza, in which cows are alluded to.

In this stanza Nachiketas is referred to as *Kumāra*. The word means a young boy, but it also means 'unwedded'. Nachiketas, although he is the human soul in Ignorance, still aspires towards the Divine and has an opening deep down within him through which the higher Inspiration, *śravas*, can enter. But still he is only an aspirant and does not possess the full God-knowledge nor is he united in Yoga with the Divine; his consciousness has not yet become wedded

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note the Puranic story in which it is stated that the Prajāpati Daksha had given his twenty-seven daughters in marriage to Chandra, of whom only one, Rohini, became the favourite of the latter. The story is a long one and need not be given here in full, but every detail of it is symbolic. Daksha is this discernment and Chandra is the Delight. Rohini is the bliss growing in the evolutionary progression of the human soul. A similar symbolism can also be read in the story of Krishna and Rādhā, where Krishna is stated to have been born when Chandra or the moon was in the asterism Rohini and Rādhā is the daughter of Vṛishabhānu, literally the sun in Taurus. Rādhā is the principle of love and delight in the human soul and Krishna of the bliss of the Supreme. The delight and love of the human soul when touched by the Supramental Light (Bhānu—lit. the sun), in its fullness of creative descent (Vṛisha—lit. the bull, means the strong creative force) turns itself towards the Bliss of the Divine.



to the Divine Lover of all. 'Although', says the Upanishad, 'he was as yet a boy unwedded, still while the Dakshinas were being led past or carried, faith took possession of him.' The rising up of faith is the first step towards the knowledge of the Divine. *Śraddhāvān labhate jñānam*. But this *śraddhā* or faith should not be merely a fleeting impulse of the moment, it must rise in a tremendous upsurge, it must become one's lasting passion, *śraddhā āviveśa*; it must be an *āveśa* welling up from within and not a *p.aveśa*, entry or touch coming from outside, for nothing that comes from outside can become a thing permanent in us. The outer circumstance or environment may become an instrument or *m-rutta* for the inner faith to manifest itself, but it cannot be by itself sufficient for such a radical change as is essential for the attainment of the Divine. Faith must take possession of the whole being or at least of the central or major part of it, before the life could take an irrevocable turn towards spirituality. Such a turn has now come upon Nachiketas. Aspiration, self-giving, discernment and faith are the four pillars on which the spiritual edifice is to be supported; the first two are mentioned in the first verse and the remaining two in the second.

What is the connection between discernment and faith, *dakṣiṇā* and *śraddhā* and why are they brought together here in this manner? Nachiketas was still a boy, but once discernment is awakened, *dakṣiṇāsu nīyamānāsu*, the faith which is always imbedded in every human soul, though not yet manifest, comes up like a flood and drowns Nachiketas in its swirling eddies. A sudden conversion takes possession of him and henceforth he is not the ignorant soul that he was before this moment. Something has come upon him with the rapidity of a lightning-flash. This suddenness and rapidity are the characteristics of all intuitive discernment that comes from the overhead planes of consciousness.

Not only is there a close connection between discernment and faith, but also between faith and Yama and between discernment and Yama. A passage in the Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad throws great light on this point. We shall quote it here in full and try to see what it has to say about this matter.

*kim-devato'syām dakṣiṇāyām diśi asi iti, yama-devatā iti, sa yamaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti, yaḥṇa iti, kasmin nu yaḥṇaḥ pratiṣṭhita iti, dakṣiṇāyām iti, kasmin nu dakṣiṇā pratiṣṭhitā iti, śraddhāyām iti; yadā hyeva śraddhatte'tha dakṣiṇām dadāti, śraddhāyām hyeva dakṣiṇā pratiṣṭhita iti, kasmin nu śraddhā pratiṣṭhitā iti, hṛdaye iti hovācha, hṛdayena hi śraddhām jānāti, hṛdaye hyeva śraddhā pratiṣṭhitā bhavati ityevamevautad yājñavalkyaḥ. (Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad. III. 9. 21)*

The passage is a conversation between Yājñavalkya and one of his disciples. The first question asked is 'What is your godhead in the southern direction?'

and the answer given is 'Yama is that godhead.' The word used for south is *dakṣiṇā*, which we have already seen represents the higher discernment and the godhead presiding over it is Yama, the Universal Law that governs the world. It is an all-wise Law that arranges everything in the world and the rules that govern the universe are iron rules which cannot be set aside by anyone. An all-discerning Fate or Providence or God or, to use a Vedic word, *ṛta* has made these laws and compels everyone to abide by them. The world is not a chaos but a well-ordered cosmos and each individual and each thing as well as each small or big collectivity has got a law of its own which it has to follow. As the Gita says, everyone is compelled by his own nature or *prakṛti*, *sva-bhāva* and the action of each one is at every moment determined, *nyatam*, by an all-ruling Power. But at the same time it becomes clear, as one attains to a greater and greater understanding and knowledge, that this Power or Godhead is not an autocratic dictator who simply takes delight in showing off its or his authority and control, but that it or he is full of wisdom and discernment and arranges everything and every event according to that wisdom, *yāthā-tathyataḥ*.

This is the inner meaning of Yama, for Yama is *nyama*, law or order or uniformity, of which death is only one pre-eminently striking aspect. Yama is the cosmic Law and as such he is everywhere, in the pettiest negligible thing as well as in the most important, for everything is governed by laws, everything follows the curve of birth and growth and destruction. This Law always displays divine wisdom or discernment, *dakṣiṇā*, and thus the two came to be so closely associated together.

The second question put is 'On what is this Yama or Law supported or founded?' and the answer is given laconically in a single word, which strikes at the very heart of the whole mystery of the universe and its manifestation: 'On *Yajña* or Sacrifice is this Law stabilised.' The universe cannot exist without this Law of Sacrifice; in fact, it could not even have come into existence without it. As the Gita says, "With sacrifice as their companion, the All-Father created these peoples", *saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ*. Every creature and thing in the universe has to give sacrifice in order that the universe may continue to exist. "Indeed sacrifice is imposed and, where need be, compelled by the universal World-Force; it takes it even from those who do not consciously recognise the law,—inevitably, because this is the intrinsic nature of things. Our ignorance or false egoistic view of life can make no difference to this eternal bedrock truth of Nature. For this is the truth in Nature, that this ego which thinks itself a separate independent being and claims to live for itself, is not and cannot be independent nor separate, nor can it live to itself even if it would, but rather all are linked together by a secret Oneness. Each existence is conti-

nally giving out perforce from its stock; out of its mental receipts from Nature or its vital and physical assets and acquisitions and belongings a stream goes to all that is around it. And always again it receives something from its environment in return for its voluntary or involuntary tribute. For it is only by this giving and receiving that it can effect its own growth while at the same time it helps the sum of things. At length, though at first slowly and partially, we learn to make the conscious sacrifice; even in the end we take joy to give ourselves and what we envisage as belonging to us in a spirit of love and devotion..."<sup>1</sup> All these ideas are found packed together within that single-word answer 'yañe'.

The third question is then asked, 'On what is this sacrifice founded?' and the answer given is, 'on *dakṣiṇā*' in both the meanings of that word, on giving and on discernment, for the greater the self-giving, the greater the understanding of the law which governs the universe; the ritualistic outer *yajña* is founded on the gifts given and received, the symbolic inner *yajña* is founded on discernment that descends in the consciousness of the giver of sacrifice when that consciousness opens up to the higher planes of existence, and the self-giving of the lower to the higher.

This answer leads to the fourth question, *viz.*, 'On what is this *dakṣiṇā* founded?' 'On faith,' is the reply given, 'for it is when one has faith that one gives *dakṣiṇā*, for *dakṣiṇā* is indeed based on faith.' "This faith is essentially the secret *śraddhā* of the soul, and it is brought more and more to the surface... by an increasing assurance and certainty of spiritual experience."<sup>2</sup> Discernment depends greatly on this inner *śraddhā*, for there may intervene periods of darkness, when everything may appear as lost, but the soul carries on towards the ultimate goal undeterred by them until finally it arrives at the higher illumination, where faith is fulfilled in knowledge.

And then the last question is put, 'On what is faith supported?'. And the reply is 'on the heart', not the outer which is the seat of emotions, but the inner heart, the secret seat of the soul, *hṛdaye guhāyām*, 'for it is by this secret heart, the soul, that one knows the faith, for faith is indeed supported on this inner heart.'

This passage clearly shows the close inter-relations between all these important spiritual elements, the Law, divine Discernment, Faith, and the soul. It is interesting to note another little point in connection with this word *dakṣiṇā*, *viz.*, how did it come to signify, like its Latin and Greek form dexter, the right side, Even the word right in English has got this double sense, one mean-

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo : *On Yoga* I. Pp. 120-121.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* P. 889.

## KATHA UPANISHAD

ing opposite of left and another meaning opposite of wrong. It is because the right hand is usually more efficient and full of dexterity than the left. In the Hindu tradition, the right hand is considered to be auspicious and all the religious ceremonies are enjoined to be performed by the right hand and not by the left, the inner meaning of which is that every outer ceremonial act should be done with *dakṣiṇā* or deeper understanding and discernment and not simply mechanically. The word *pradakṣiṇā* (going round a holy place or an object of adoration like an idol, keeping it to our right) has also the same meaning. Another Sanskrit word, *dākṣiṇya*, which means courtesy, suavity of manners, politeness, refinement, etc., is also derived from this same deeper psychological sense of the word *dakṣiṇā*. And lastly, the Gujarati word for right, *jamaṇo* is really Yama-no or pertaining to Yama, the Lord of the *dakṣiṇa diś*, the southern direction.

*(To be continued)*

BABHRU

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo on India** : Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, 'B' Road, Churchgate, Bombay-1. Pages 66 ; price 40 nP.

The appearance of this brochure, presenting Sri Aurobindo's views on India at this juncture when she is passing through a crucial process of self-purification and self-becoming and when in the adventure of her striding progress great inner and outer issues are at stake, will be greatly welcomed by those who seriously look for light. Its nutshell-contents hold the true vision of India's role in world-affairs and the true means of finding her soul around which shall be built the living structure of her culture.

In this pocket book which seems to have become popular, the Seer-Philosopher touches and throws light on all aspects of life, religious or philosophic, scientific or aesthetic, psychological or political. Hinting at the true solution of India's problems that confront her in her self-becoming, he gives the core of truth that is essentially India. He demands of us particularly not to imitate the European mind in the country's growth and development, for, says he, "the peculiarity of the Indian eye of thought looks through the form, looks even through the force, and searches for the spirit everywhere.... The ultimate truths are truths of the spirit and the truths of the spirit are the most fundamental and most effective truths of our existence powerfully creative of the inner, salutarily reformatory of the outer life...while for the European mind the ultimate truths are more often truths of the ideative intellect, the pure reason."

While going through the brochure one feels that the publishers' intention was to make the book a representative rather than an exhaustive culling of Sri Aurobindo's views on India. For instance, there are passages in *Ideals and Progress*, *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*, *Speeches* and other books, which are equally inspiring. An important omission seems to be the passage on India's future in his 15th August 1947 message which could have been included with advantage.

It would enhance the value of this book, if suitable headings were given to the different quotations and mentioned under the *Contents* page. We hope the publishers will take these points into consideration in their next edition.

The beacon-message focussed in these pages, with a beautiful coloured picture of the author on the cover-page, if carried through the seeking and receptive hearts of this expansive lion-land, "one of the oldest races and greatest civilisations on this earth, the most fecund in greatness, the deepest in life, the most wonderful in potentiality", can be of immense help towards the essential and the widest basis for a welding of the different strains of the country into "an organised national unity". Thus "the sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world."

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

LITTLE is known of Subramania Bharati outside Tamil Nad. He is remembered as one of the notable patriots thrown up by the surge of Indian nationalism in the early years of the century, a patriot who was also a born poet in Tamil. Beyond that nothing is known or considered worth while to be known. And yet, in the land of his birth and labours, he is held in the highest reverence, almost apotheosised as a divine poet who was the chosen mouthpiece of Bharata Shakti. There is not a Tamilian on whose lips his notes have not danced, none in whose heart-strings his words have failed to vibrate. Who was this remarkable man ? Why was he called Bharati ? What is his uniqueness as a poet ? Was he anything more than a bard of nationalism ? What did he think ? What did he write ? And finally, what is his place in the illustrious gallery of the leaders who inspired and shaped the movement of national regeneration and liberation ?

It is happy to find light on these questions in the book, *Subramania Bharati (A Memoir)*<sup>1</sup> by Prof. P. Mahadevan. The book is the first adequate biography of Bharati in English. The many-sided personality that forms the subject-matter of it is unique ; but the equipment of the author is equal to the task. He has brought to bear all the gifts of literary insight and criticism—for which he is well known—on his study of Bharati and his works ; he puts his metrical skill to capital use in his English renderings of choice selections from the poet's writings ; his familiarity with the genius of the language in which the poet expressed himself and his own sense of humour, objectivity and facility of expression in English, have all combined to give a most enjoyable and informative biography of Subramania Bharati—a pleasure so far denied to the non-Tamil-knowing public.

Subramaniam was born on 11-12-1882 at Ettayapuram where his father Chinnaswami Iyer, a protégé of the local Zamindar, had just succeeded in starting one of the first textile mills in South India. He lost his mother in his fifth year ; his father married again but to the good luck of the boy the step-mother was a very affable soul. Subbiah—abbreviated form of the longer Subramaniam—was of a shy and dreamy temperament, paid no attention to

<sup>1</sup> Atri Publishers, Madras 17.

his lessons and developed an incorrigible obstinacy ; at times he would return home empty-handed, his slate and books thrown away.

The enterprising father who had planned a large future for his son was disappointed and sent him to his uncles at Tirunelveli with the hope that the change would prove beneficial. And indeed it did,—for a time. He progressed well and soon became the most popular boy in the school as he began to show precocious genius in composing impromptu verses in Tamil. However, there seems to have been a set-back later and he found himself detained in a class without promotion. Subbiah made up his mind that he had enough of these studies and returned forthwith to his parental home. Though he took no more interest in class-room studies, he was fond of reading classics in Tamil and English and he assimilated them with ease. He also showed an unusual capacity for inspired utterance. The Zamindar (of Ettayapuram) came to hear of the remarkable capacities of the boy and sent for him; he was so much enraptured by his talents that thereafter the youngster was treated on a par with other pundits and scholars of the court. Subbiah took it as a matter of course and participated in the functions of assemblies with a poise and confidence that would have done credit to more aged shoulders. As usual with human nature, the other members of the court found it hard to swallow that this callow youth should not only move on equal terms with them but threaten to become the favourite of the patron, and before long one of them decided on a public humiliation of the boy. He had known that the lad had failed to get through his school tests and he chose this tender spot to strike at. Subbiah loftily replied that he had no use for that kind of education. He challenged any one of the assembly to hold debate with him on any subject and that too without prior preparation. The boy was hardly 15. Let the author describe the scene :

“The older pundits were taken aback; but one of them was persuaded to pick up the gauntlet. The contest was held at a special sitting of the durbar at which the Rajah himself was present. Lots were cast and the Pundit was called upon to initiate the debate. The subject chosen was ‘Education’. It soon came to the turn of the lad of fourteen to reply. He made it such a humorous, incisive and eloquent performance that the entire audience agreed that it was much the better of the two. An old and respected member of the court stood up and spoke for the rest. ‘God bless you, Subbiah. I declare you winner and it is also the overwhelming opinion of all assembled here. Henceforth be you known as ‘Bharati’.” (P. 17)

Bharati’s stock rose high. He came to be attached to the Rajah’s court; he became the favourite of the heir-apparent to the Gadi. One of his pleasant duties, we are told, was to read Tamil classics to his patron.

## SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

Bharati married in 1897; bride Chellammal was only seven. Soon afterwards his father died leaving him penniless. Apart from the pecuniary want which stared him in the face, he was feeling the need of a more adequate equipment in formal education. An aunt of his and her husband were settled in Banaras and thither went the young man; he was duly welcomed and petted by the childless couple :

“He took undue advantage of the old couple’s fondness for him, and soon developed into a spoilt youth. His manners and habits underwent a change for the worse. He neglected the due performance of his daily prayers, he cut his hair after the English style, having got rid of the odious tuft enjoined by custom and holy srutis, and loved to dress himself with inconsequent eclecticism from head to foot. The *tout ensemble* gave him more the appearance of a Muslim than a Hindu. But the moustache which he grew proved to be the most offensive part of the translation.”  
(P. 21)

However, Bharati applied himself diligently and passed the matriculation examination in the first division.

While at Banaras, he took an increasing interest in the political happenings in the country and this news somehow trickled down to his wife in Kadayam in the far south. The poor girl was frightened by her relatives with the spectre of the Andamans for her husband and she wrote a touching letter imploring him to give up all these dangerous activities.

Some time later Bharati returned to Ettayapuram for a while. By now he was politically very much awake and a fervent admirer of Shelley and Byron; he even started a Shelleyan Guild. He was inspired by the history of the French Revolution, by the doings of Mazzini and Garibaldi. He found the semi-feudal conditions in the Zamindari Estate irksome, and made no secret of this aversion in his outpourings against the old order of things, with the result that interested parties succeeded in prejudicing the Raja against him. We next see Bharati in Madurai in 1904 as a Tamil Pundit in a school for a few months—a period noted for his patriotic poetry and poems loaded with political satire—and then in Madras where he was taken by G.Subramanya Iyer to work in the newly started Tamil Daily *Swadeshamitran* of which he himself was the editor.

Bharati’s duties in the *Swadeshamitran* office were not something he could enthuse about; he had to render into Tamil all the news that came in English. The cautious editor did not allow him to write political articles though after some time he permitted him to write on social and allied topics. Bharati did his work with much gusto. He was paid Rs. 30 per month. In the meanwhile



political events were gathering tempo; the nationalist agitation following the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon, the floating of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in Tamil Nad and the tribulations it was passing through in the rate war by foreign shipping concerns, and the general awakening of the people to their own rights—all these had released a concatenation of forces into whose orbit Bharati was naturally drawn as fish to water. He attended the Calcutta sessions of the Congress in 1906 as a delegate and a journalist. Before he returned he met Sister Nivedita for whom he had developed a profound regard for her services to the country, specially to Indian womanhood. The author gives an interesting account of the interview :

SISTER NIVEDITA : My son, are you married ?

BHARATI : Yes, mother, I'm married. I have also a daughter who is two years old.

S.N. : Very good, but why have you not brought your wife with you ?

B : (in faltering voice) It is not usual in our community to bring our womenfolk out with us. Further she knows nothing about politics.

S.N. : (not quite pleased) My son, I am sorry to find one more Indian who considers women no better than slaves. What is the value of your education if it does not help you to bring up your womenfolk to your own level ? Don't you realise that the country will never advance or prosper if one half of it is ignorant, backward and superstitious ?

B : I'm sorry mother, hereafter—

S.N. : Quite right, hereafter at least don't look down upon your wife. Treat her as your equal, and you will find how soon she learns things for herself. And another thing...

B : Yes, mother—

S.N. : Forget all caste distinctions. In God's eyes all are born equal and are equal. Love your fellowmen ..

B : (eagerly) Yes, mother. I know we are all children of the mother-land...

S.N. : Will you promise ?

B : (fervently) I do, mother, I shall...

S.N. : That's right. Some day, I'm sure you will become famous. God bless you. (p. 44)

Soon after his return from Calcutta, Bharati left the *Swadeshmitran* and with the help of some friends (particularly S.N.Tirumalachari) started

two weeklies, *India* in Tamil and *Bala Bharata* in English (1907). *India* was printed on red paper in keeping with its revolutionary character and its circulation soon went up to 4,000 copies. He also began to introduce his poems to the public by reciting them on special occasions. Bharati had a powerful voice which held the audience spell-bound. He wrote vigorously in his weeklies and directed the withering fire of scorn on the Moderates, especially on their leader in Madras, V. Krishnaswami Iyer—the most renowned patron of arts, letters and public causes in his day. The Moderate leader, however, seems to have taken it all as part of the game and it does great credit to his broad-mindedness that it was his affluence that made possible the first publication of the poems of Bharati.

The author recounts how G. Natesan, the suave founder-editor of the *Indian Review* who was a liaison between the warring factions of the citizenry, arranged a meeting between the two political foes. Bharati was unwilling and said: "I don't like him and he will certainly not like me. Nothing will come of such a meeting. So drop it." But

"Natesan's earnestness carried the day. 'Alright' replied Bharati somewhat diffidently, 'but on one condition. Don't tell him who I am.' To this Natesan agreed.

And so one evening, when the lawyer had returned from court and was taking his ease in his garden in the midst of his friends, Natesan came in followed by a stranger who stood modestly behind. After greetings and some desultory talk, Krishnaswami Iyer noticed the stranger and asked who he was. 'A Tamil poet,' replied Natesan promptly, 'he has composed many songs; and as you are fond of Tamil poetry also, I have brought him to sing some of them to you.' 'Indeed, ask him to go ahead then,' he replied genuinely interested...when at a signal from Natesan, Bharati started to sing his *Vande Mataram* song, all sounds ceased. Half-way through as Bharati got into his stride and the tempo quickened, Krishnaswami Iyer sat up in his chair and followed the poet's voice in undisguised admiration. The first song was followed by two others entitled now *Naattu Vanakkam* and *Engal Naadu*.

The patron was in a transport of delight. He said: 'Wonderful! How fresh, original and inspiring! But, young man, you are hiding your light under a bushel. These songs should be printed and broadcast throughout the country so that our children learn to sing them everywhere.' Natesan butted in at this point: 'That's exactly what he has come for and where you come in. The poverty of poets is proverbial. And so...'

'Alright,' replied the patron. 'I shall see that 10,000 copies of them are immediately printed and distributed free.' He is also said to have

instructed his clerk to give the poet Rs. 100/- as a token of his esteem. Then he turned to him, and asked : 'May I know your name ?' Bharati stood silent and nervous, but Natesan soon came to his rescue. 'This is the very same person who has been attacking you in the columns of *India* —Subramania Bharati. I have dragged him here by main force.' Krishna-swami Iyer rose to the occasion. In his pleasantest manner, he is said to have replied : 'I don't care for the politician, let's forget him. But I am glad to know and admire the poet.' " (pp. 49-50)

Bharati attended the famous Surat session of the Congress in 1907 where the Organisation split into two. He had long wanted to meet Tilak, the Maharashtrian stalwart, for whom he had the highest veneration. Indeed, in his work *Jnaanaratam* his poetic imagination conceives Dharmaraja himself, the supreme Justicier of Right and Wrong, in the likeness of Tilak: 'A benign, majestic figure looking remarkably like Tilak, but eternally young.' : Bharati

"went in search of him from camp to camp, but could not find him. Added to his troubles was rain which had rendered the road to the newly laid Congress Pandal slushy and impassable. Wading through knee-deep mud, Bharati came across a party of volunteers engaged in repairing a breach in the pathway. A man holding an umbrella over his head was directing operations, moving from place to place. A captain of the volunteers, he was attending to a piece of essential work which he finished in time to enable the delegates and visitors to use the road with safety and comfort. Bharati saw him at a distance, and coming nearer felt sure it was Tilak. Even in repose, his eyes seemed two pools of smouldering fire. Bharati asked no questions, but fell prostrate at his feet and touched them, forgetting the rain, the dirt and the mud. It was enough for him that he had obtained the *darshan* of his hero and leader." (pp. 56-7)

Events took a precipitate turn after the Surat imbroglio; the suppressed and pent-up fury of the extremists erupted in a series of bomb outrages in the country and the Government came down with a heavy hand. New legislation was passed, eminent leaders like Sri Aurobindo and Tilak were jailed. The air was thick with rumours of the impending arrest of Bharati and it required much pressure by friends before he could be persuaded to go to Pondicherry in the French settlements instead of getting immobilised behind the prison bars in British India. So it was in 1908 that Bharati entered Pondicherry where he was to be joined later on by Sri Aurobindo and V.V.S.

Iyer who together “were to prove the trinity of a renaissance in the South which slowly but surely radiated its influence all over India not merely in the political sphere, but in literary, philosophic and cultural fields as well.” (P.62)

At Pondicherry Bharati secured lodgings from an accommodating landlord.<sup>1</sup> His friends arranged to shift the printing press where *India* used to be printed at Madras to Pondicherry so that the weekly could continue. When resumed, the issues of the journal were devoured by the public with avidity, their appetite increasing with each successive measure taken by the authorities in India to suppress their circulation. The police confiscated all copies in transit by post; those found reading it were threatened and remittances for subscription were stopped with the result that the journal (as also the daily *Vijaya* which was started a little later after the resumption of *India*) had to cease publication early in 1910.

That year arrived Sri Aurobindo from Chandernagar *via* Calcutta and V.V.S. Iyer from England after a series of escapades from the Police on his way. The coming together of these three political personalities sent jitters into the British Indian authorities. Spies were sent to watch and report the activities of these exiles; *agents provocateurs* were employed to involve them in compromising situations. They even got the French Police to conduct house-searches. The author narrates an amusing incident :

“They began with the lodging of Sri Aurobindo. The French officer who was in charge of the police party was young, courteous and cultured. As he came up to Sri Aurobindo working at a table which was littered over with books, he took up one of them and found it to be in Greek; picked up another and found it in Latin. Both were ancient classics. He then turned to Sri Aurobindo and asked him :

‘Are these books yours ?’

‘Yes’, replied Sri Aurobindo.

‘And do you know Greek and Latin ?’

‘Yes’, replied Sri Aurobindo smiling.

‘I beg your pardon then’ replied the young officer, ‘sorry for the intrusion,’ and he returned with his myrmidons in a hurry.” (P. 68)

<sup>1</sup> The house where Bharati spent the larger part of his exile in Pondicherry is now in a semi-dilapidated condition. Efforts by the Bharati Memorial Committee to acquire the house have not been, however, successful because of the proverbial cupidity which is second nature with a section of our countrymen.

## MOTHER INDIA

The vexations continued. In the year 1911 the disturbing political portents in Europe brought England and France together and the British Indian Government took the opportunity to induce the French authorities in Pondicherry to legislate the Alien's Act by which those who were not full-fledged citizens of French India could not stay there for long; of course there were a few exceptions, one of which was that even a non-citizen could stay provided he got five honorary magistrates to support the desirability of his person. The position of the political refugees became difficult. The situation, however, was managed by Bharati who had come to know one of the leading citizens, Calve Shankara Chettiar.<sup>1</sup> This worthy gentleman collected the required signatures within a day and the authorities were once more checkmated.

All, however, was not politics. Sri Aurobindo had left the problem of Indian Freedom for solution to other hands in the wake of the larger problem of humanity which had come to claim his increasing attention. It is not correct to say, as the author does, that Sri Aurobindo's retirement was a reaction following the immediate failure of the political movement he had led with such distinction; nor is it true that he resigned himself to an indefinite recession of the possibility of Indian Freedom (P. 135). It had been revealed to Sri Aurobindo, during the series of spiritual realisations that crowded on him from the moment of his incarceration, that his overt role in the national struggle was over, that the leadership to guide the Movement to its destined fruition was another's and that thenceforward his work lay in a different direction. Sri Aurobindo made no secret of it and announced the tidings in unmistakable terms on a number of occasions. In a letter written in 1932 he states :

“I may also say that I did not leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there; such an idea was very far from me. I came away because I got a distinct Adesh in the matter and because I did not want anything to interfere with my Yoga. I have severed connection entirely with politics, but before I did so I knew from within that the work I had begun there was destined to be carried forward, on lines I had foreseen, by others, and that the ultimate triumph of the movement I had initiated was sure without my personal action or presence. There was not the least motive of despair or sense of futility behind my withdrawal.”

<sup>1</sup> It may be mentioned that it was in his house that Sri Aurobindo stayed for the first six months after his arrival in Pondicherry. The house is still intact and is being looked after by the Ashram under a mutually helpful arrangement with the landlord's family

*Vide* also his interview published in the Weekly *India* in January 1910:

“Since 1907, we have been living in an era which is full of hope for India. Not only India, but the whole world will see sudden upheavals and revolutionary changes. The high will become low and the low high. The oppressed and the depressed will be elevated. The nation and humanity will be animated by a new consciousness, new thought, and new efforts will be made to reach new ends. Amidst these revolutionary changes India will become free.”

Sri Aurobindo launched on a voyage of discovery of the key to the Riddle of the Universe to which all other questions were subsidiary. He sounded to the depths all the wisdom gathered by the human spirit in the East as well as in the West, peered into the future with the eye of the Seer perfected in his *tapasyā* and commenced to work out and give expression to the body of thought and illumination that was emerging from his endeavours, for the elevation and eventual transformation of the very nature of man. It was to such a milieu of spiritual and cultural synthesis that Bharati was drawn. The author writes :

“Apart from the community of their political sympathies, they soon discovered others in a common love of Sanskrit, of poetry and of philosophy. Sri Aurobindo alone kept up his interest in all of them *pari passu*, and at the same pitch all through his life. V.V.S. Iyer did his best work as translator and critic of ancient classics, while Bharati not only kept pace with both in the catholicity of his literary interests, but also transmuted all his experience to the pure gold of poetry. Under the stimulus of Sri Aurobindo’s new humanism, Bharati undertook an intensive study of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*, making a Tamil version of some of them with his own special commentary. Under the same influence, he also entered the lists against the traditional upholders of Sri Sankara’s Maya doctrine.... Thus the three came together to refresh themselves from a common pool of intellectual and emotional experiences, while each went his own way developing his genius in individual directions. Of the three, Sri Aurobindo was the master-mind and developed, even for an Indian, genius in a unique direction which is as indescribable in the sequel as it was unpredictable in prospect.” (Pp. 75-6)

In this part of the story the author remarks that neither V.V.S. Iyer nor Bharati could be said to be shaped by Sri Aurobindo “in any significant facet” of their personalities. This may be—and is indeed very much so—in the case of V.V.S. Iyer who never belonged to what one may call the intimate circle of the Sage. Iyer had no deeper contact with him and except on one occasion (on which we need not dwell here) he did not come within the personal aura of

Sri Aurobindo. But it is quite different with Bharati. The spiritual and religious strains in his personality were almost entirely developed by the influence of Sri Aurobindo. This is not to say that Bharati had no knowledge of Indian spiritual tradition or had not read the varied scriptures of the land. Indeed he had as large an acquaintance with it as any one of his intelligence could be expected to. What he gained from Sri Aurobindo was the real insight, an eye for the core of Truth behind forms, an opening in his being to a sense of the realities of a vaster Existence looming over the material, and the power to render his perceptions into a word-vehicle, at once living and transparent. The author himself says elsewhere in the book :

“Bharati had certainly a meagre equipment compared to that of Sri Aurobindo. He had already made his *devoirs* to Sanskrit—the fountain source of Hindu culture. Specially during his Kası residence, he must have savoured its glories from many scholars living there. But his systematic study of the yogic side of our ancient literature seems to have been undertaken only under the guidance of Sri Aurobindo. The impress of Sri Aurobindo on Bharati may be studied in his Preface to the Gita, in his translations of one chapter of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras with comments of his own, and above all, in the pervasive influence of Shakti or Mother or Parashakti which has become the theme of a considerable body of his devotional poetry.” (P. 136)

Eye witnesses narrate how day after day Bharati would come and join the small gathering around Sri Aurobindo where a variety of subjects used to be discussed. In the earlier days he would question and contest Sri Aurobindo’s reluctance to be bound by the letter of the scriptures in his efforts to resuscitate and present the true spirit of the ancient heritage of India; he was particularly vehement, we are told by those present, against Sri Aurobindo’s refusal to accept the interpretation of Sayana as the final word on the import of the Vedas and also his rebuttal of the Mayavada of Sankara. However, as time passed by, Bharati grew less and less vocal in his protests and one day, to the surprise of all, he himself turned round and went at it with hammer and tongs. There is no doubt that a definite individuality took shape in Bharati as a result of his continuous contact with the personality of Sri Aurobindo. His forceful rejection of Maya as the real nature of the world, the synthesis of the life of man and the cosmos which he visioned in line with the Vedic seers, his concept of Superman as essentially a spiritual being liberated from and dominating over Nature, are significant testaments to the inspiration he drew from the Prophet of the Life Divine. In the words of the author :

“Bharati’s own powers matured under the genial warmth of Sri Aurobindo’s guidance and encouragement. Patriotism continued to be his primary religion; but it gradually became intertwined with and enriched by the experiences of an expanding intellectual horizon and an awareness of spiritual realities commonly associated with the mystic state.” (P. 82)

During his stay of full ten years’ in Pondicherry Bharati wrote largely. Though most of his writings have found their way into print, it is a pity that one manuscript got lost (suspected to have been mistakenly removed by the agents of the C.I.D.). It was a novel in sixty chapters, *Chunna Shankaran*. Bharati was urged by friends to write it again; but after doing a few chapters he gave up the attempt with the result that Bharatiana has lost a considerable chunk which is said to have been specially interesting for its autobiographical element. We shall come to his other works a little later.

Bharati decided to end his exile at the end of the first World War and left Pondicherry on 20-11-1918. He was promptly arrested as he set his foot on the Indian soil and was detained in Cuddalore Jail till Dec. 14, 1918 when he was released on his giving an undertaking not to engage in political activities and to notify the police every change of his address. Why did Bharati, the fiery patriot that he was, agree to this course of action which he would never have dreamt of ten years earlier? Indeed, if he had given such an undertaking then, he need not have gone into exile at all! The author discusses the question with candour and sympathy. A decade of confined life in Pondicherry found Bharati in a state of collapse. His will and mental faculties had been undermined by his addiction to opium—a legacy of his earlier years at the court of Ettayapuram; added to that constant poverty, the privation and insecurity facing his family had ground his grit and powers of resistance to such an extent that when influential friends pressed him to end the exile and change his environment he gave in.

He went straight to Kadayam and returned to Madras only two years later except for a brief visit to the city during Gandhiji’s visit in 1919. His meeting with Gandhiji was typically abrupt and temperamental. The author writes :

“One afternoon when the Mahatma was engaged in conference with Sri C. R. Satyamurti, A. Rangaswamy Iyengar and other workers, Bharati went in, sat down beside the Mahatma after greeting him with folded palms, and then disclosed the purpose of his unauthorised intrusion. ‘Mr. Gandhi’, he began, ‘may I request you to preside over a meeting at 5-30 p.m. today at which I am to address the public?’

Gandhi turned to Sri Mahadev Desai and asked him what engagements



he had for that evening. Mr. Desai replied that he had to be present elsewhere at that hour. Gandhiji then turned to Bharati and said : 'I'm sorry, this evening is out of the question. But if you could arrange the meeting for tomorrow evening... ?

Bharati cut him short with a peremptory negative and added : 'Let me take leave of you Mr. Gandhi. But permit me to wish you success in your new movement. You have my best wishes in that regard.' And he was off the next moment, leaving every one somewhat dazed with his rush tactics. But Gandhiji who had remained imperturbable throughout then asked to know who the visitor was. Although all assembled there knew all about Bharati, it was left to Sri C. R. to reply : 'He is the poet of our Tamil Nad.' Gandhiji then said : 'You must cherish and protect him then. I hope there are enough people to take care of him.' "

During these years Bharati visited a number of places in the South meeting friends and admirers; this period is notable for his erratic ebullitions and sorry exhibitions of his frustration-complex, some of which the author faithfully records in one whole chapter (XIII). Witness, for instance, his self-eulogising epistles to his former patron, Raja of Ettayapuram, his unpredictable behaviour at public meetings, his quixotic proposal to challenge Poet Tagore and wrest the Nobel prize from him, his idea of taking the world by storm, in the manner of Vivekananda, by speaking on Religion, his visit to the Trivandrum Zoo where he proclaimed himself to the lion in the cage : "King of beasts, know that I am Bharati, king of poets", etc., etc. He had developed a maniacal obsession of unrecognised merit.

On his return to Madras he joined the *Swadeshamitran*. In his spare time he busied himself with public meetings and gatherings of friends. On one occasion he issued a manifesto projecting the publication of a collected edition of his works in forty volumes. He appealed to the public to subscribe Rs. 20,000 in debentures for the purpose and assured them of a profit of over a lakh of rupees. As the author observes, it is a mystery whether Bharati had anything like the manuscript material required for so many volumes. For all the available works now published do not come to more than three or four volumes. It is unlikely that so much could be lost. Obviously he was in one of his "moods".

The end came soon. He used to visit frequently the Sri Parthasarathi temple in Triplicane near his lodgings and sing his songs in its precincts. He also spent a little time with the temple elephant feeding it with bananas or cocoanuts. On one of such visits in June 1921, the elephant suddenly went berserk, seized him in his trunk and tossed him aloft. Bharati fell down unconscious. He never really recovered from this shock. He was continually ill, drugged himself with

opium more and more. He passed away on the 11th of September 1921, prematurely, frustrated and penniless. We are told that his companions had to go round for collection to meet the minimum expenses for his obseques and only the last minute generosity of a friend made it possible to give him the customary funeral.

There is a pleasantly informative chapter in which the author gives deft sketches of the various interesting personalities associated with the poet. Sri Tirumalachari; his brother Srinivasachari who followed Bharati to Pondicherry from Madras and carried the printing press with him, making it possible to publish the *India* and *Vijaya*; Surendranath Vokkaliga Arya *alias* Ethirajulu Naidu, an embittered nationalist who turned Christian, went to America on the initiative of the Danish Mission, and was responsible for the abortive attempt to have the Bible translated by Bharati; B. O. Chidambaram Pillai, "the first Tamilian in modern times to sail his own ship over the high seas"; Ponnu Murugesan Pillai, a most fervent admirer and host of the poet; Kanaka Subburatnam "who rechristened himself as Bharati Dasan, and who was a poet with a precious if thin trickle of the divine afflatus"; Manikyam Chettiyar, the suave and helpful landlord at Pondicherry; Va Ra (V. Ramaswami Iyengar), the author of the well-known biography of the poet in Tamil; "Police" Krishnaswami Iyer and others

Coming to the works of Bharati, it is a matter of satisfaction that they are now the property of the nation. The government of Madras took over the entire copyright some years ago and in a laudable gesture presented it to the public. Most of his writings are in Tamil,—prose, poetry, prose-poetry,—and a few, a slender portion, in English. We have no means of ascertaining their chronology with any definiteness. The author gives a synoptic and critical appraisal of these under convenient heads. He first deals with Bharati's poetry—patriotic, devotional and philosophical. A section each is devoted to :

*Kannan Pattu*, the series of poems (23) on the model of the work of Sukhabramam in the *Bhagavatam*, bringing to the fore the conception of Creation as the Lila of the divine Purusha and Shakti, represented on the human level in terms of the love of the sexes.

*Panchali Spatham*, a long poem in five sections in which he projects the national struggle into the setting of the Gambling Episode of the Mahabharata. "Draupadi becomes Mother India in her tribulations. Duryodhana, Sakuni and Dussassanan become the forces of evil and of unashamed exploitation. They represent the gospel of power in its crudest form. Bhishma (perhaps consciously caricatured) becomes the mouth-piece of moderates, while a great deal of sympathetic understanding is bestowed on the blind old king Dhritarashtra." We are told that Bharati considered *Panchali Spatham* as his *magnum*

*opus* and was disappointed that the public failed to acclaim it with plaudits. The biographer's evaluation of the poem is interesting :

...“it would be unusual for an epic whose appeal is almost entirely between the lines to become a best-seller. Nor can we endorse the poet's partiality for the composition as representing the high-water mark of his genius. Quite obviously the patriotic complex ran away with the poet, and caused him to assess the work of his epic higher than it is entitled to, on merits. Essentially it is the work of a translator, albeit a gifted, poetic and consummate artist as well. It provokes comparisons with the original, and sets up echoes which, however pleasant, remind us of the derivative character of the poem.” (Pp. 163-4)

*Kuyil Pattu*—an unusual love story breathing the atmosphere of the kingdom of Aesop and Panchatantra, the Jataka tales and an Arcadia. The author considers *Kuyil Pattu* to be the “purest and most gorgeous efflorescence of Bharati's genius.” And he concludes the section :

“The three great poems together illustrate the genius of Bharati as belonging to the first order. They are magnificent representatives in modern Tamil of the lyric, the dramatic and narrative forms of literature. Even more interesting is the fact that each of them also suggests the other two forms in the course of its evolution. Thus the *Kannan Pattu* is full of *tableaux vivants*; and a masque can be arranged with the help of passages culled from them to represent *Krishna Leela* in a modern setting. The dramatic appeal of *Panchali Sapatham* is enriched by the lyric intensities of individual characters through whom the author conveys his own *saeva indignatio*. As for the *Kuyil Paattu* it contains both a superb narrative recalling the easy mastery of his medium by a Chaucer or a Keats and a love-poetry of the most melting kind. The dramatic element is pushed to the point of becoming melodrama. But the poet stands all through above his material while bending it to his purposes with lordly ease. His glances flit from earth to heaven, while his creative powers proceed to give his fancies a local habitation and a name. The entire poem is not more than 750 lines, but what exciting layers of suggestions and meaning cluster over and under it ! It is also the only poem which speaks in the symbols of a universal language—that of love and, by the same token, it is the only poem which can suffer least from translation.” (Pp. 168-9)

The author mentions a piece of satire by Bharati, written while at Pondicherry, lampooning Mrs. Besant and her followers. It was entitled *Fox with*

*the Golden Tail* and proved a great hit, especially among those opposed to the politics of the Theosophical leader; the pamphlet ran into two editions in no time. But, the author tells us, Bharati himself did not think much of it or of the public taste for such stuff. He also speaks of a version according to which Bharati was "indifferent to the praise of the screed by Sri Aurobindo himself." On a point of factual correction, we would like to inform the author that this writing merely provided an occasion for good-humoured hilarity to the company present when it was read out before Sri Aurobindo, and the poet heartily joined. The work came in for enjoyment and appreciation purely as a *jeu d'esprit* without reference to the personalities involved. It is not correct to say that Bharati was indifferent. On the other hand he took pains to have the manuscript revised and polished into elegance by competent hands to make it as perfect as possible. (It is another story how Dr. Besant herself reacted to this broadside. When Bharati wished to meet her some years later, she refused point-blank and it required a good deal of persuasion before she agreed to receive him.)

The author then rapidly views the prose works of Bharati : his famous Preface to his translation of the Gita into Tamil; imaginative writings like the *Jnaanaratm*, *Chandrikai*, *One-sixth*; *Essays on Social Reform*, *Upliftment of Women*, *Refinement of Standard in the Fine Arts*, etc. Also noted are prose poems on the beauties of Nature with an undercurrent of Vedantic monism, and lastly writings in English comprising his renderings of some of his own poems, of Vedic hymns, the songs of Alwars and Nayanmars, his *sententiae* and a few essays remarkable for their grasp of currents in modern thought and their significance.

The fame of Bharati rests on his role as a poet of patriotism; but that was only one aspect of his many-faceted personality. For he was not merely an evangelist of nationalism; he had the vision of the brotherhood of man and unity of nations. He was a humanist. He felt the heart-beats of the oppressed and the depressed in society and was one of the first to toll the knell of social inequalities in the country. He was an inspired reformer. His soul was awakened to the Dynamic Truth of God, Nature and Man and he strove to seize and direct the gaze of his fellow-men to the true meaning of life, to the verities of Love, Beauty, Joy and Power. He was a philosopher with a vision, a Voice with a mission.

M. P. PANDIT

## IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT?

### *Some Criticisms and Suggestions*

17

THE equation of Sandrocottus with Chandragupta I is recommended also by the fact that the son of Sandrocottus is named by Strabo as Allitrochades or Amitrochades and by Athenaeus as Amitrachates.<sup>1</sup> Our scholars have seen in the name a Greek echo to an Indian title reconstructed variously as : *Am-trakhāda* ("devourer of enemies"), *Amtraghāta* ("slayer of enemies"), *Am-trasvāti* ("terror to enemies"), *Amritakhāda* ("Eater of ambrosia").<sup>2</sup> The last may be ignored as too free by substitution of Amrita for Amitra. All the rest are plausible, and all imply the son of Sandrocottus to be a great warrior. Now, not only Bindusara, the son of Chandragupta Maurya, is unknown to sober history as a great warrior,<sup>3</sup> but Samudragupta, the son of Chandragupta I, is historically famous as a conqueror of the first quality. None could deserve the title with more fitness : the Allahabad Pillar *praśasti* is the most glorious monument we have of a conqueror's career. Besides, we get from it a term about Samudragupta which is specially applied to him by even the later Gupta inscriptions and which provides another possibility of the terminal component in the title under discussion : the term is *Sarvorā-jachchhetā* ("mower of all kings") and with its clue we may read Amitrachates as *Amtrachchhetā* ("mower of enemies") and find that title eminently apt for Samudragupta.

A second suggestion may be that Amitrachates is not really a title but the actual name of the son of Sandrocottus. We may remember that the dropping of the letter S as an initial sound in foreign names was a frequent practice among the Greeks. The Sindhu became the Indus and even Sandrocottus became Androcottus in Plutarch<sup>4</sup> as well as in Appian.<sup>5</sup> If Amitrachates is a name with an initial S omitted, we have in reality Samitrachates to deal with and it sounds very much like a variant of Samitracottus and can be equated with Samudragupta.

<sup>1</sup> Barua, *Asoka and His Inscriptions*, Part I, pp. 46

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p 309, footnote 4, and *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Lives* (Everyman Ed.), Vol. 2, p. 518.

<sup>5</sup> *Syriaca*, 55.

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How well Samudragupta fits into the place we have submitted for him may be seen also by glancing at a couple of passages from his Allahabad Pillar inscription.<sup>1</sup> Here he is mentioned as one

“Whose imperious commands were fully gratified, by giving all (kinds of) taxes and obeying (his) orders and coming to perform obeisance, by the frontier-kings of Samatata, Davaka, Kāmarūpa, Nēpāla, Kartipura, and other (countries), by the Mālavas, Arjunāyanas, Yaudhēyas, Madrakas, Ābhiras, Prārjunas, Sanakānikas, Kākas, Kharaparikas, and other (tribes);—

“Whose tranquil fame, pervading the whole world, has generated by establishing (again) many royal families, fallen and deprived of sovereignty, whose binding together of the (whole) world, by means of the amplitude and the vigour of (his) arm, was effected by the acts of respectful service, such as offering themselves as sacrifices, bringing presents and maidens, (giving) Garuda tokens, (surrendering) the enjoyment of their own territories, soliciting (his) commands etc., (rendered) by the Daivaputras, Shāhis, Shāhānushāhis, Śakas, Murundas, and by the people of Simhala and (other) dwellers in islands;—who had no antagonist of (equal power) in the world...”

A number of bells are rung in our minds by some of the phrases. When we read of “presents and maidens” being offered, we remember both Strabo and Appian saying that Seleucus entered into marriage relations with Sandrocottus. Although different parties are involved, the same custom occurs in both the contexts and it is noteworthy that we have no reference to such a custom in any other Indian king’s record and that the reference before us occurs in just the record of a king whom on other evidence we have placed immediately after the time of Sandrocottus. The involvement of different parties is itself just as it should be, since, on our hypothesis, it was Samudragupta’s father and not he who negotiated with Seleucus.

Let us next look at the tribe-names. They start with the Malavas and at once recall the Malloi who offered Alexander a stiff resistance in the Punjab where in his time they “lived in the land lying north of the confluence of the Rāvi and the Chenāb”.<sup>2</sup> It is most interesting to note two things in relation to them. First, while they are known in later history as peoples only of western India, their immediate companions in the inscription can be taken to show them in the north-west in Samudragupta’s time. Second, these companions—the Arjunayanas, Yaudheyas, Madrakas and Abhiras—can themselves be linked, like the Malavas, with Alexander’s campaign, though not so directly.

<sup>1</sup> Kjelhorn’s translation in *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III. The Gupta Inscriptions, no. 1, pp. 10-17.

<sup>2</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 163.

The Yaudheyas are mentioned by as old a writer as Panini<sup>1</sup> and "the heart of the Yaudhêya territory may have been the éastern Punjâb":<sup>2</sup> the *Brihat Samhitâ* "locates them in the northern or north-western division of India along with the Arjunāyanas."<sup>3</sup> Jayaswal<sup>4</sup> writes: "The find-spot of Yaudhêya coins suggests that an unnamed state beyond the Beas reached by Alexander was theirs." Altekar<sup>5</sup> agrees with Jayaswal: "The great republic beyond the Beas, of which Alexander's army heard alarming reports in 326 B.C., was most probably the Republic of the Yaudhêyas." Cunningham prefers to identify them with the Ossadioi or Assodioi with whom Alexander fought: the latter name he connects up with the name Ajudhiya which is a variant for Yaudhêya."<sup>6</sup> Their neighbours the Arjunayanas who "have been assigned to the region lying west of Agra and Mathurâ about the Bharatpur and Alwar States of Râjputâna",<sup>7</sup> may have been, according to some scholars,<sup>8</sup> the Agallassoi who fought Alexander after the submission of the Sibae (Sivis) near the Jhelum in the Punjab and who are also called by the Greeks Agesinae or Argesinae, names which McCrindle thought near to "Arjunayana".<sup>9</sup> "The Madrakas or Madras...had their capital at Śākala (modern Siālkot in the Punjâb)", says Sircar<sup>10</sup>, adding that they "were probably subjects of the younger Porus (Paurava king) in the days of Alexander." As for the Abhiras, "the most important section of the people", says Sircar,<sup>11</sup> "lived in the northern Konkan and the adjoining part of the Marāthā country", but about the Abhiras in Samudragupta's inscription he<sup>12</sup> says: "it is uncertain whether the reference here is to the Ābhira kingdom in the north-western Deccan." He<sup>13</sup> inclines to place them in central or western India—believing, as he does, that Samudragupta flourished in the fourth century A.D. The moment we put this Gupta emperor in the fourth century B.C. we have to pay attention to other facts noted by Sircar<sup>14</sup> himself: "In one context the *Mahābhārata* places the Ābhiras in Aparantā; but in another it associates the people with the Śūdras, and assigns both the tribes to the land near Vinasēna where the Sarasvatī lost itself in the sands of the Râjputâna desert. The Ābhiras are also found in association with the Śūdras in Patañjali's *Mahābhāshya*." Patañjali takes us to the pre-Christian era and the association he and the author of the *Mahābhārata* make for the tribe joins up with the one noticed in the Greek historians

<sup>1</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> *Hindu Polity*, I, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> *The Journal of the Numismatic Society*, XI, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> Mookerji, *Indian Civilisation*, p. 272, footnote 1.

<sup>7</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 162.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50-1

<sup>9</sup> Mookerji, *Op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160, footnote 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160, footnote 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221

and suggests a new locale. For, as Sircar<sup>1</sup> mentions in a footnote: "In the second half of the fourth century B.C. when Alexander invaded north-western India, the Śūdras, called Sodroi by the Greeks, lived in northern Sind to the south of the Punjāb rivers."

As regards the remaining tribes in the same list—the Prarjunas, Sanakanikas, Kakas, Kharaparikas—Raychaudhuri<sup>2</sup> says that their territories lay probably in central India. "The Prārjunas", he adds, "are mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya (p.194) and are located by Smith in the Narsinhapur District of C.P. A clue to the locality of the Sanakānikas is given by one of the Udayagiri inscriptions of Chandragupta II. The Kākas find mention in the Mahābhārata VI.9.64—*Rishika Vīdabhāh Kākas Tanganā-Pacatangānā*". There is geographically nothing about them to make us doubt the location we have given to the others. Nor is there chronologically anything to demand a revision of our placing Samudragupta a little after Alexander's time.

The only debatable element comes in the next passage, where occur "the Daivaputras, Shāhis, Shāhānushāhis, Śakas, Murundas" and "the people of Simhala". Modern historians put the bearers of the first five names considerably after the age of Sandrocottus and regard Simhala as a late name for Ceylon. But the moment we attend to the Indian view of the Sakas and, analysing Varahamihira, consider 551 or 550 B.C. as the Saka Era' mentioned by that astronomer, we commit no anachronism about those five names, for all the names historically hang together. The first three are applied to the Kushanas who are supposed to have come soon after the Sakas and later dominated them. "Daivaputra" is a Sanskritisation of the Chinese title T'ien-tzu meaning "Son of Heaven" and no compelling reason exists for thinking that it came into use later than the early part of the third century B.C. Here we may point out that today the first three names are regarded as 'the appellation of one single Kushana king contemporaneous with Samudragupta either in the Punjab or beyond and they are read as Daivaputra-Shahi-Shahanushahi.<sup>3</sup> The one title in this triple appellation which may not look old enough is Shahanushahi. Sircar<sup>4</sup> writes that the Indian Shahanushahi is the same as the modern Persian Shahanshah and the old Persian Kshayathia Kshayathianam. The last title is found in the inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes. But it is a fact, noted also by Sircar,<sup>5</sup> that on the reverse of the coins of Kanishka we have the title Shaonano Shao which is equivalent to it and to the Indian Shahanushahi. Sircar dates Kanishka to 78 A.D. and thus grants that nearly two and a half centuries before

<sup>1</sup> Mookerji, footnote 1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Political History of Ancient India*, p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, pp. 144, 145 footnote 1, 153; *The Classical Age*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, pp. 147-8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



the current dating of Samudragupta "Shahanushahi" could have been used by Indians. On what grounds can we rule out its use in the immediately post-Alexandrine period? The Kushanas who used it are tribes well-known to India in antiquity; all historical scholars accept that Indian literature knows of them as Tusharas or Tukharas (the same as Ptolemy's Tokharoi or Tuchari) and that Tukhara was the name of a northern district in Bactria where the Kushanas had once settled. Like the Yavanas and Sakas the Tusharas are also regarded by the Book of Manu as indigenous Indian Kshatriya tribes forced to settle in the north-west and beyond because of their non-observance of the Vedic religion. And together with the Yavanas and Sakas they are listed in the Puranas<sup>1</sup> as a people that came into India during or soon after the time of the Andhras and established Mlechchha rule in certain parts. If, therefore, we put the Andhras, as we have done, between 798 and 387 B.C. the Puranas would lead us to expect not only the Sakas but also the Kushanas to be mentioned by Samudragupta as a people he came into contact with during his campaign for a far-flung sovereignty. Puranic chronology finds the Daivaputra-Shahi-Shahanushahi of the Allahabad inscription perfectly in place in the early part of the third century B.C.

The Sakas, of course, are equally in their right place from the Puranic viewpoint. And the presence of the Murundas too is in keeping with it. For the Vayu Purana<sup>2</sup> distinctly mentions them in the company of the Sakas and the Tusharas. Hemachandra's *Abhūdhanachintāmani* (IV, 26) makes them the people of Lampaka (modern Lamghan) on the northern bank of the Kabul river, and Sten Konow points out that *Muruṇḍa* is the later form of a Saka word meaning "lord, master". The one tribe missing in the inscription is the Yavanas. Perhaps in Samudragupta's time it was not prominent enough to deserve separate mention: in fact, in no inscription of the Guptas do the Yavanas figure. After Asoka's time during which they are twice mentioned in inscriptions with their traditional Indian associates, the Kambojas, the only Indian inscription<sup>3</sup> in which they are found with any of their traditional associates is the one at Nasik of the Andhra queen Bala Sri, in which her son Gautamiputra Satakarni is said to have been the destroyer of the Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas (*śaka-yavana-pahlava-mśūdana*). Gautamiputra seems to have destroyed the Yavanas sufficiently to render them inconspicuous for the rest of the Andhra dynasty and the whole of the Gupta dynasty. Their inconspicuousness is indeed an extra proof of Samudragupta's contemporaneity with Alexander's immediate successors, for neither as an Indian tribe of the north-west nor as a supposedly

<sup>1</sup> Pargiter, *The Dynasties of the Kahl Age*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Allan, *The Cambridge Shorter History*, 1943, p. 59.

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pre-Alexandrine Ionian colony are they taken notice of by Alexander's historians under any name even vaguely corresponding to that under which their neighbours in India knew them. All other inscriptions—and they are considerably post-Alexandrine—in which Yavanas are named are, as Otto Sten has observed,<sup>1</sup> those in which the term Yavana is used as either a personal designation or as the designation of a corporate body and those in which it stands clearly for a Greek personage, *e. g.* the Besnagar and the Theodoros inscriptions.

To return to the Sakas and Murundas. In Samudragupta's day the Sakas were in two places, Saurashtra and the north-west. "That he penetrated far into the territory of the Śakas of the north", says Allan,<sup>2</sup> "...is clear from the influence of their coinage on his." In Saurashtra were the Western Satraps, the Kardamakas. Who were in the north-west? If we take Samudragupta to be in the early part of the third century B.C. we may look for the north-western Sakas among the tribes encountered by Alexander himself. None mentioned by the Greeks bears a direct resemblance to the word Saka. But we do hear of the Assakenoi whose capital is called Massaga by the Greeks, which corresponds to the Sanskrit Maśakāvati.<sup>3</sup> Four centuries later Ptolemy<sup>4</sup> lists the Massagetai or Massagetæ among the Sakai and puts them along the range of Askatangka. S.N.Majumdar<sup>5</sup> comments: "The Massagetæ were the Maśakas described in Sanskrit Literature as the warrior tribe of the Śakas." Evidently, the people whose capital was Massaga were a section of the Saka Massagetæ.

But perhaps it was not to these Sakas that Samudragupta acted the overlord. Perhaps it was to the Sakas who are directly mentioned by Alexander's historians. Diodorus,<sup>6</sup> while describing the shape of India, says that the country is on its northern side "divided by Mount Hemodos from the part of Skythia which is inhabited by those Skythians who are called the Sakai." If we are to be literal we must believe Samudragupta to have made his power felt as far as the trans-Hemodus region.

The Murundas (called also the Mundas in one Purana<sup>7</sup>) of Samudragupta's inscription, if placed in the third century B.C., facilitate the solution of a problem. They link up by their name with the Maroundai in Ptolemy's *Geo-*

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Culture*, Vol I., p. 351-57

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. XXV.

<sup>3</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p 43

<sup>4</sup> McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, edited by S.N. Majumdar, 1927, pp. 284, 318.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 397.

<sup>6</sup> McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Pargiter, *Op. cit.*

*graphy*. Raychaudhuri<sup>1</sup> unhesitatingly accepts the connection although the latter are located in the east, a little above the Ganges-delta. But, in trying to identify them, McCrindle,<sup>2</sup> after saying that their name is preserved to this day in that of the Mundas, and that originally they may have been connected with "the Muraṇḍa, a people of Lampāka (Lamghān) at the foot of the Hindu-Kōh", who brought gifts to Samudragupta, tells us : "The theory that these Muraṇḍa, on being expelled from the valleys of the Kōphês by the invasion of the Yetha, had crossed the Indus and advanced southwards into India till they established themselves on the Ganges, in the kingdom mentioned by Ptolemy, is, as Saint-Martin has clearly proved (*Étude*, pp. 329, 330) utterly untenable, since... Samudragupta...reigned subsequently to the time of Ptolemy, and they could not therefore have left their ancestral seats before he wrote." S.N. Majumdar<sup>3</sup> goes even further than McCrindle and rejects also the older annotator's suggestion of Mundas. About the Maroundai he writes : "These cannot be connected, as Dr. McCrindle has clearly noted, with the Lampāka-Muraṇḍa of Lamghān; for we find them in the north-west even during the reign of Samudragupta, as his Allāhābād Pillar Inscription shows. The word cannot be equated with *Mundas* as Dr. McCrindle has done; for the loss of the second syllable cannot be explained. I propose to connect *Maroundai* with the *Maladas*, *Māladās* or *Mānadās* of the Epics and *Purānas*..." The whole difficulty of relating the Murundas with the Maroundai, whether by supposing a migration into India or by any other theory, arises solely because our historians have placed Ptolemy nearly two hundred years before Samudragupta instead of nearly four hundred and forty years after him. Once the chronology is made Puranic, neither a connection between the people of Ptolemy and the tribe of Samudragupta nor the theory of the latter's migration eastwards need be doubted—provided sufficient evidence is forthcoming for either.

So far the Allahabad Pillar has presented no serious obstacle to the Puranic chronology. But what about the term Simhala ? Can we claim that it is as ancient as the time of the son of Sandrocottus ? Megasthenes<sup>4</sup> employs the term Taprobane which is obviously the Greek form of the name Tamraparni applied in Indian Literature both to a river in South India and to the island of Ceylon, and he calls the inhabitants of this island Palaeogoni. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (c. 70-80 A.D.)<sup>5</sup> states that Taprobane was the old name of the island and that in his time it was known as Palae Simoundou. But as the section in which this is stated is acknowledged to be hopelessly corrupt we may rather credit Ptolemy (c. 130-140 A.D.)<sup>6</sup> who remarks that the island of Taprobane

<sup>1</sup> *The Political History of Ancient India*, p.373

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 390.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

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which is called Salike in his time was formerly called Simoundou. S.N. Majumdar<sup>1</sup> comments that in the phrase "formerly called Simoundou" the word "formerly" is evidently a mistranslation of the first part "Palae" of the "Palae Simoundou" of the *Periplus*. Practically the same name occurs in Pliny (23-79 A.D.)<sup>2</sup> who makes Palaesimundus the island's capital town as well as the river on whose bank it stood. The name seems to be fairly old and, since Megasthenes has the term Palaeogoni about the people of Taprobane, it seems likely that Palaesimoundou was current also in his day. But do Taprobane and this name exclude any other appellation?

If we understand that Taprobane or Tamraparni is really an echo of the name of a South-Indian river celebrated both in literature and inscriptions (even Asoka is supposed by several scholars to have meant the country or the people of this river in R. E.s II and XIII)<sup>3</sup>, we should be able to see that this name could not be distinctive for Ceylon, an original label for this island as an individual entity. Again, the name Palaesimoundou is non-distinctive if we are to explain it as does Majumdar<sup>4</sup> in a note where he says about Taprobane: "In Kautiliya's *Arthaśāstra* (II, xi) it has been referred to as *Pāra-samudra* (an alternative form of which is, according to a sutra of Pānini, *Pāre-samudra*) which means 'of the other side of the ocean'. Now a confusion of *Pāre-samudra* and its synonym *Pāre-sindhu* produced the Palae Simoundou of the *Periplus*." We should be able to see that Palaesimoundou in the sense of *Pāre-samudra* can only be a generality for all lands or islands beyond the ocean and could get attached to Ceylon merely because Ceylon was the most important neighbouring place across the sea. The need for a special individual name is still not satisfied.

In old Sanskrit writings we find a distinctive label, Lanka, which is utterly unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome. We find also Simhala. But how old is this term? The earliest epigraphical mention is held to be in a Nagarjunikonda inscription dated more than seventy-five years before the time currently ascribed to the Allahabad Pillar record. But surely c. 250 A.D. is not the earliest date for the term. The immediate foreign antecedents of the modern "Ceylon" were—according to McCrindle<sup>5</sup>—Sailan, Zeilan, Serendib, Sirdlediba, Serendivus and Ptolemy's Salike. The last form is conjectured by McCrindle to be a mistake for Saline<sup>6</sup>, and both he and Majumdar<sup>7</sup> consider it and the other later forms to be derived from Simhala. At least the Pali form of Simhala which

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> B.A.Saletore in *Indian Culture*, Vol. I, pp. 665-72.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 392-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: p. 252.

<sup>6</sup> *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 254, 391.

is Sihala<sup>1</sup> seems evidently allied to the name Ptolemy gives to the inhabitants of Salike : Salai. We need not therefore hesitate to think Simhala older than the date of Ptolemy's *Geography* : c. 130-40 A.D.

The Pali *Mahāvamsa*<sup>2</sup> applies the name "Sihala" no less than "Lanka" and "Tambapaṇṇi" to Ceylon. In connection with Vijaya, the traditional founder of the Aryan colony there, it mentions the origin of this name for the island : Aiyangar<sup>3</sup> sums up its story—"From Simhavāhu or Simhala, the father of Vijaya, the island received the name Simhala-dvīpa, the Arabic Serendib, the Portuguese Ceilão, and the modern Ceylon." According to this account, Simhala is an ancient designation and there should be no surprise on finding it even in an inscription of the time of Amitrachates.

Perhaps it can be traced in the very term Palaesimoundu which we have concluded to be as old as Megasthenes. Simoundou may not be a foreign cross between the indigenous Samudra and Sindhu. If we take the form Simundus employed by Pliny we can note that it is not quite unlike Serendivus which has in its last part the Sanskrit *dvīpa* ("island"). Now the main word "Simha" ("lion") from "Simhala" may be used to form a contracted compound *Simhadvīpa* instead of *Simhaladvīpa*. Such a compound would be just as valid as the familiar "Simhapura" for a kingdom mentioned by Hiuen Tsang in the Punjab region. And it is most interesting to remark that this kingdom was also called Simhala.<sup>4</sup> The suffix "la", as is well-known, indicates "city", "kingdom", "country", and here it gets dropped when "pura" is used : we have not Simhalapura but Simhapura. Analogously we may have Simhadvīpa rather than Simhaladvīpa for the island of Ceylon. Then Simundivus or Simundus would not be an illegitimate foreign transcription : the insertion of the nasal ("n") in the second syllable would even be according to the Prakrit tendency marked by Majumdar<sup>5</sup> of वक्र-दित्वात् नुम (*vakra-ditvāta nūm*). With "Palae" as a prefix, the compound Palaesimundus would correspond to the Indian *Pāre-simhadvīpa* and would have a meaning on the analogy of the Palaeogoni of Megasthenes which is best explained<sup>6</sup> in the manner of Goldstücker by taking goni as *janās* ("a people") so that the whole expression Palaeogoni would stand for *pāre-janās* and mean "a people on the other side of the waters". Palaesimundus would similarly stand for "the island of Simha on the other side of the waters." The compound *Pāre-simhadvīpa* is not found in Indian Literature; but neither is *Pāre-janās* which is the only reasonable interpretation of the word in Megasthenes.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 235

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> VII, 7. 41, 42.

<sup>4</sup> D.C. Sircar on p. 60 of *Indian Culture*, Vol. VIII

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253

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If the above line of thought is correct the possibility that Simhala is sufficiently old to appear on the Allahabad Pillar in the time of Amitrachates acquires a concrete body. But its correctness is not indispensable : the fact that the name precedes Ptolemy's time is sufficient to remove in general the bar to making it contemporaneous with the son of Sandrocottus.

We have now a manifold mass of evidence rendering it extremely plausible that Sandrocottus was Chandragupta I. In order to crown it we have to answer a few questions which pose difficulties. We shall take up these difficulties and, after dealing with them, reconstruct the chronology of the first Guptas.

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

# Students' Section

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## THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

(On Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, Book II, Part 2, Chapter XXIII,  
"Man and the Evolution", paragraphs 1 & 2)

*Q. I have not understood what "Consciousness-Force" is and so I have understood nothing.*

The first thing to understand is the very first sentence which lays down the fact, and it is the development of this principle that constitutes the rest of the paragraph. The essential thing to understand is what Sri Aurobindo establishes as the *raison d'être* and the very basis of the universal existence. In our readings here, we are beginning at the end of the book, the last six chapters. Throughout the commencement of the book Sri Aurobindo has taken up, one after another, all the theories explaining the how and the why of the universe and of existence; taking up these theories, he has carried them to their extreme limit, explained fully what they want to say, and at the end proved where they stand incomplete and imperfect, and he has given the true solution. All this is as finished, behind our present reading,—we would have taken something like ten years to pass through all of it, and it would have needed of us all sorts of knowledge, a great intellectual development, to be able to follow with profit. But we are starting at the moment where Sri Aurobindo has already proved from the purely intellectual point of view what the *raison d'être* of existence is and he has formulated it thus :

"A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter, in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence."

Sri Aurobindo is not occupying himself here with the whole universe, he has caught hold of earth-life, that is to say, our life upon the earth, as a symbolic and concentrated representation of the *raison d'être* of the whole universe. In fact, according to the most ancient traditions, the Earth, from the profound spiritual viewpoint, has been created as a symbolic concentration of the universal life so that the work of transformation may be done more easily, within a reduced space, as it were, where all the elements of the problem are gathered together in order that, in the concentrated condition, the action may be total and more effective.

For this reason Sri Aurobindo speaks only of terrestrial existence, but we should understand that it is a concentrated symbolic representation,—in other words, that it represents a universal action. Thus Sri Aurobindo tells us that the central motive, that is to say, the *raison d'être* of terrestrial existence, is to awaken, to develop and finally to reveal in the total manifestation the Spirit that lies hidden at the core of Matter and works from within to the surface and pushes this Matter towards a progressive development which liberates it.

In the external appearances, such as show themselves to us, you see at first the mineral kingdom with the stone, the earth, the minerals which, for us in our outer consciousness, seem absolutely inconscient. However, behind this inconscience, there is the life of the Spirit, which is completely concealed, which is as if asleep, although that is only an appearance, and which from within works to transform little by little this Matter seeming entirely inert, so that its organisation prepares itself more and more to manifest consciousness. Thus Sri Aurobindo tells us here that this veil of inert Matter is at first so total that for a superficial look it is something without life or consciousness. When you pick up a stone and look at it with your ordinary eyes and your ordinary consciousness, you say : "It has no life, it has no consciousness." But for one who knows how to see behind appearances, there is hidden in the centre of Matter, in the heart of each material atom, the supreme divine Reality, and this Reality works from within, step by step through the millennia, to change this inert Matter into a matter sufficiently expressive to be able to reveal the indwelling Spirit.

There is then, starting from the stone, a progression of the history of life ; one can see how, by the successive species, there appears at a leap a rudiment of life and a sort of organisation, that is to say, an organic substance capable of revealing life. Amidst the mineral kingdom and the vegetable kingdom there are strange species, transitional elements ; one does not know whether they belong still to the mineral or already to the vegetable. With the vegetable kingdom, naturally life appears, since there is growth, transforma-



tion. A plant pushes, develops, grows, and with the first phenomenon of life arrives also a phenomenon of decomposition and disintegration which is indeed more speedy, relatively, than in the stone. A stone, if it lies protected from the shock of other forces, can last indefinitely, it seems, whereas the plant follows a curve of growth, ascension, decadence and decomposition, but all this with a consciousness extremely subdued.

Those who have studied the vegetable kingdom in detail have well perceived that there is here a consciousness. For example, the plants need the sun in order to live, the sun represents the active energy which makes them grow, so if you put a plant in a spot where there is no sun, you will see it climb, climb, always climb, strive and endeavour to reach the light. In a virgin forest, for instance, where man does not interfere, there is a sort of struggle among all the plants : they make a great effort to catch the light of the sun. Even if you put a flower-pot in a rather small courtyard, surrounded by walls, where the sun does not come, a plant which in its normal state hardly exceeds a few feet will be seen to lengthen itself, twist round the obstacles, strain to find the light.

Thus there is a consciousness, a will of life which already is manifested. And little by little, with the development of species, you reach again a transitional passage between what is not altogether a plant and what is still not an animal. There are many species like that, which are very interesting. Certain plants, for example, are carnivorous, they are like an open mouth,—you throw a fly inside, and there ! they swallow it up. Here is not quite a plant, not quite an animal. There are many such.

Then you come to the animal. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the first animals, like the corals and the sea-anemones, from a plant, there is hardly any consciousness, but you have so many known animal species right up to those that are superior animals, and these are truly conscious. They have their own independent will. They are very conscious and possess a wonderful intelligence, like the elephant, for instance,—you know all the stories that have been told about the marvellous intelligence of this animal. So we have now a very marked appearance of the mind, and by this progressive development one passes to a species probably vanished, whose traces one recovers, a species neighbour to the ape, if it is not the ape such as we know, but it is already an animal moving on two feet,—and from there we come to man.

One cannot say that from the very beginning of his evolution man displays intelligence brilliantly. But already there is an action of mind, the commencement of a sort of independence, an independent reaction to the milieu and to the forces of Nature. And with man himself there is a clear gamut up to the higher being who is capable of the spiritual life.

THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

*Q. Sri Aurobindo here writes : "This consciousness...develops slowly till in more organised forms of living Matter it reaches its climax of intelligence and exceeds itself in Man."*

This is what I am going to tell you : at his highest point man begins to be completely independent of Nature,—“completely” is a bit of exaggeration, let us say that he can become completely independent. A man who has realised in himself the spiritual consciousness, who has a direct rapport with the divine Origin, is literally independent of Nature, the force of Nature.

And it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls “exceeds itself”: that is, the inner divine consciousness, the supreme spiritual Reality, in its effort to develop a conscious means of self-manifestation, has arrived at a being capable of having a direct rapport with it, without subjecting itself to Nature’s processes.

23-10-1957

K. D. S.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION

*(The Presidential Address to the Section on Moral and Religious Education  
at the All-India Educational Conference, Delhi.)*

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(1)

RELIGION, in its central and essential aspiration, consists of man's seeking for the Infinite, the whole, the greater and the higher in existence. This seeking is inherent in his nature as a finite being. As such he takes up in thought, will and emotion a distinct attitude towards the wider existence and in consequence experiences a larger awareness, wonder, admiration, awe, reverence, love, faith, trust and a will for service and consecration. At the highest he experiences and enjoys that Existence as a fact. This essential experience expresses itself variously in creed, rite and ceremonial, personal habit and social life, as required by the level of development and the historical circumstances of the people concerned.

The external forms of religion easily tend to become hard and rigid and often tend to be taken as the essential fact of religious life. But, in fact, the essence of religion is the inner awareness, the feeling and will of aspiration and the actual identification which one experiences with the Infinite. This is the true spiritual element in religion and its essential inspiration.

This experience has a unique quality of its own. The more common experience of life is that of a multiplicity of finite objects and their mutual relationships. The religious experience is of the whole, the all, of unity, harmony and peace. It is the experience of the last context of all experience of finite objects.

The value of this experience is the essential value of religion and religious education.

(2)

The unique quality of religious experience, its essential feeling for the whole, makes its cultivation indispensable for a proper integration and fulfil-

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ment of personality as also for the integration of knowledge as such. Therefore the growth and development of this quality of experience, of an appreciation of the Whole, should be an integral part of education.

The analytical approach, which has been rather exclusively pursued in knowledge in the modern scientific age, has led to excessive specialisation and otherwise increased the spirit of separation and division. The complementary synthetic approach, that of unities, harmonies and the whole, now calls more and more. The cause of peace is essentially bound up with it. Hence ways and means must be found to incorporate this approach in education; and religion, which seeks a relation of the whole man to the whole existence, is pre-eminently the seeking of life which is relevant to it.

(3)

It is interesting that this approach is capable of cultivation through all activities, academic and others, of educational life. The teaching of subjects, when carried on in a sense of seeking, appreciation and adoration of the vast and infinite Truth, itself tends to evoke and develop the essential religious feeling. In this approach Truth looms large and dominates the mental horizon and the human ego takes a subordinate and humble position. However, teaching can as well be pursued with a greater emphasis on the seeking ego, so that the ego dominates the situation. There the total situation is essentially dichotomous, the ego seeks to conquer and possess a vast field of the non-ego and, as it succeeds in it, it develops a stronger self-feeling, pride of itself. This is the field of strife, struggle and division, not of peace, harmony and unity. This is the attitude of non-religion as opposed to that of religion, and it is present quite a good deal in religion, and it can easily be absent elsewhere.

In non-academic activities too, the same two attitudes, the egoistic and that of the whole, are possible. And if the latter is taken, we shall develop more and more a sense and appreciation of harmony, unity, peace, common good, social oneness, love, justice and the like.

(4)

But, while the essential value of the religious attitude can be exercised and gained through all the normal academic and other activities of educational life, yet certain specific exercises have been found in human experience to be particularly useful. They are of worship, devotion and service offered to one's most cherished idol of life, which may be an image of the Supreme Divine or any deity or a personality, past or present. Opportunities and facilities

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for this too should be provided in the educational institutions. A hall of worship for all, where all the adorables are honoured and worship is offered in all forms, could become the soul of the institution embodying its best inspiration and highest consecration. Apart from this, an occasion of silent meditation, as an exercise in making oneself calm and peaceful or the thinking of some great thought or inspiring personality or reviewing the previous day or making a good resolution or offering an inner adoration or inwardly saying a prayer, should be included in the daily programme of scholastic life. This is simple to arrange and its value too can be more easily appreciated.

However, the widest and deepest benefit of the religious attitude will become available in the pursuit of literature, the arts, science and practical work if the approach of love and adoration of Truth and of openness to it, rather than of egoistic self-assertion, is adopted more and more.

### (5)

The attitude of aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment is similar to the religious one. Both involve a larger and fuller play of the object of attention rather than of the attending subject. Hence the exercise and development of the aesthetic sense will contribute to the growth of the qualities aimed at and covered by the religious attitude. Accordingly the school environment should contain objects of art and it should breathe an atmosphere of aesthetic taste.

### (6)

For the cultivation of the aesthetic capabilities music has a special efficacy and convenience. It is a familiar means for evoking and developing the deeper qualities of peace, unity and harmony. It also opens up to the individual new resources of joy. Its proper cultivation can contribute much to the development of the religious attitude and the synthetic qualities of consciousness.

## MORAL EDUCATION

### (I)

Religion is, as we have stated above, essentially a matter of the whole man's relation to the whole of Reality. Morality is, on the other hand, particularly the field of habits. It is the quality of the settled way of a person's will. Good habits mean good reactions to different situations of life. Morality is,

therefore, a part of religious life. It is a necessary preparation for the perfection of religious life, which means the achievement of fulfilment through union and identification with the Supreme Reality.

Hence Morality and religious life culminate in a spiritual fact, the union of the human with the Divine, of the finite with the Infinite. The Spiritual is, therefore, the aim in morality as well as in religious life. It is also the inspiration for both. Without it both tend to become external and mechanical.

(2)

The development of a proper character is an urgent social need of an individual during the early plastic period of his life. But it may be recognised that religion, which tends to evoke total consecration of one's energies to a superior existence, is a great aid to the shaping of character. Other motivations, social approbation and disapprobation or success in life, are rather superficial in their reference and action. Religious consecration can reshape life more comprehensively.

(3)

Now so far as the growth of moral life and character, in their own appeal and resources, is concerned, the most powerful incentive is the example, *i.e.*, character in action, lived and enjoyed. The Mudaliar Report very rightly sets up an integrated personality as the goal of education and then with great insight affirms the integration of the teacher's personality as the most important educational influence.

Hence moral character is not a matter of instruction. It is a matter of example and, next, a matter of persistent exercise. Attitudes of honesty, sincerity, conscientiousness, responsibility, co-operation and the like should be exercised in all situations and activities of curricular life. The objective physical results of actions, by themselves, should not be accepted as sufficient, if the growth of character of the students is intended and desired.

(4)

The value of craft and other manual work and sports is particularly great in giving discipline to the body, creating a sense of joy and mastery in its activities and helping the formation of right and honest habits of work and life.

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Sports, in particular, should engage every boy and girl a good deal and provide a healthy exercise and outlet for their overflowing energies. When sports are provided in sufficient variety and are encouraged intelligently, then their contribution to the mental and moral growth too becomes considerable. Sports are ordinarily provided as a means of physical education alone, but when their value for mental and moral growth too comes to be recognised, then their place in our educational life will become as honoured as of any subject of study, and even more.

(5)

The so-called indiscipline among students is in a large part due to the restlessness and waywardness caused by the excess and effusiveness of the uncanalised youthful energy. Manual work and sports should provide a fairly large field for the expression and utilisation of it. The absence of it is doing tremendous moral and physical harm to the young generation.

(6)

Faults of behaviour are easily looked upon as 'offences' and 'sins'. They are, in fact, deformations of the individual's will, which are always remediable, though some easily and some with much difficulty. To call the faults 'offences' and 'sins' unnecessarily attributes to the boy an anti-social self-assertion or personal inferiority. On the other hand, what is necessary is that the boy's sympathy and understanding should be secured for recognising that they are wrong movements of will capable of being set right. And the method that can achieve this correction consists of a repeated exercise of self-dissociation from or rejection of the wrong movement and an acceptance of the right one and action in accordance with it.

A handling of such faults with proper sympathy and understanding can itself be a contribution to the growth of moral standards in an institution.

(7)

Moral character is primarily a cultivation of the will. But emotions are intimately connected with it and without an education of the emotions an education of will can never succeed. Therefore, the right emotions and feelings of social and personal harmony, joy, common good, clear conscience, self-mastery, independence, good will, love, understanding, sympathy and the like must be repeatedly exercised and developed. They make the cultivation of

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION

moral character much easier. This requires a progressive and systematic re-education of the separative and divisive emotions like anger, hatred, fear, jealousy into these more comprehensive feelings.

A handling, rather suppressive and violent, which creates emotional conflicts will evidently jeopardise the growth of moral character.

(8)

The factors, which exercise a disintegrating influence on moral character, must be specially mentioned. The more serious ones are :—

1. Idleness.

A useful and interesting occupation for the leisure time is always an important educational problem, since idleness works negatively and undoes much of the good otherwise achieved.

2. Wrong examples.

3. Inconsiderate treatment of students.

(9)

Experience shows that students feel the deepest and the most enduring gratitude towards those teachers who have inspired them in the Moral and Religious way, *i.e.*, helped the growth of certain qualities of character in them and otherwise given them some deep aspiration of life. That is understandable too. It is these that continue to help them in later life and afford an abiding satisfaction. A teacher too really becomes a 'teacher' by virtue of these higher qualities. It is then that he becomes really worthy of respect. The great 'teachers' of humanity were all, in fact, personifications of these very qualities.

INDRA SEN



## LORD !

LORD ! make me a slave of thy lotus-Feet,  
Thy smile-lit flower-face fire-sweet  
Has troubled my being's manifold sleep,  
O priceless pearl of my life's dumb deep !

Life without Thee is a self-willed doom,  
A tortuous lure of the poison-bloom.  
Inevitable Word of the Silence-gold !  
O Breath world-bearing ! take me and mould

Out of my dust, as Thou wilt in Thy Grace,  
Thy child ever more, O Love's Wonder Face !

VENKATRANGA

## ALLONS, ENFANTS

"THE French language", trumpeted the "manifesto" of the privately run, six-months-old *Office du Vocabulaire Français*, "is threatened." Threat: the English language. By last week, in response to the manifesto, 5,000 Frenchmen had sent in lists of objectionable neologisms that had sneaked into the language from Britain and the U.S. "The danger", the manifesto had warned, "is grave"—and 4,999 out of the 5,000 patriotically agreed.

The 4,999 were dead set against such outrages in French as *best-seller*, *black-out*, *brain-trust*, *cover-girl*, *fair-play*, *new-look*, *pin-up*, *rush*, *starlett*, *surprise-party*, *up-to-date* and *week-end*. Some suggested a wholesale Gallicizing of the Anglicisms so that *starter* would be *starteur*; *speaker*, *spiqueur*; *dancing*, *dancingue*; *meeting*, *métingue*; and *week-end*—which France once tried to convert into *ouiquinde*—*vécande*. They railed against such verbs as *supervisionner*, *solutionner*, *déceptionner*, *kidnapper* (pronounced *keednappay*) and *knockouter*. Nor did they see any excuse for *le pull-over*, *le racing*, *le music-hall* or *le grand shelem* (as in bridge).

One man suggested *belle à la page* for *pin-up*, *vacancelle* for *week-end* ("A delicious equivalent," said the Office). A composer wanted *union de têtes* for *brain-trust*, and an author thought *couvre-feu* made *black-out* completely superfluous.

As the Office sorted out its lists last week, it was actually waging only the latest of many campaigns to save the French language from corruption. The *Comité d'Etude des Termes Techniques Français* lashes out at such words as *dumping*, *fading*, and *automation*. One Paris police prefect became so apoplectic over O.K. that his gendarmes switched to *d'acc* (short for *d'accord*, meaning agreed). Air France is deeply troubled by such sentences as "*Le booking-clerk reçut la visite d'un prospect et demandait une réservation pour un inclusive tour.*" Nor would the airline approve were any of its planes to *crasher*.

Of all purists, none has been more diligent than the language student who compiled a list of "camouflaged Anglicisms"—which are obviously even more dangerous than ordinary ones. A military offensive, he pointed out, is now *majeure* rather than *grande*. Losses are *sévères*, and a situation that was once *sans changement* is now *inchangée*. Acci-

dents with the *transport motorisé* are *fatals* rather than *mortels*. Bad diplomacy that would once create *frottements* now produces *frictions*. Impressions, once *produites*, are now *créées*, and everyone is talking about something called *intégration*. A good worker is no longer *capable* but *efficient*. *Prendre contact* or *entrer en relations* have given way to *contacter*. Virtually any problem can be *clarifié* instead of *éclairci*. Police no longer *procèdent à* an inquiry, they *conduisent* it, while judges *décrètent* death penalties rather than *prononcent* them.

Indeed, so wholesale have been the borrowings and so effective the camouflage that even scholars accept Anglicisms without *discrimination* instead of without *distinction*. Even time has lost its old sense. Once a *décade* lasted just ten days. Now it goes on for ten years.

On hearing of the *Office's* manifesto and list of Anglicisms, London's *Punch* declared it pretty *gauche* for the French to be talking so much *blague*. "On the basis of this list," said Author H.F.Ellis, "a Frenchman may very well be heard to say, given the occasion, '*Le groggy manager est dans le grill-room,*' or even '*Venez au bungalow de ma tante le week-end. Elle donne un up-to-date surprise party dans le jardin*'...It is nonsense to say that these sentences do not enrich a language. They ennoble it. They give it *élan*, *panache*, a certain—how do they say?—*chic*."

"We are," continued Ellis, "admirably poised to strike back, if need be ...There must be give-and-take in these matters [or] co-existence becomes impossible. If the French decide to root out 'toast' and 'rugbyman,' we can easily do without *belles-lettres* and *pied-à-terre*. There is a lot to be said for dropping *tour de force* and *bijou* without waiting for further moves on their side...Away, if they insist on carrying on the war *à outrance*, (with) their *douceurs*, their *débris* and their *débâcles* and all such *bourgeois bric-à-brac*. It is as easy to write R.I.Y.P. as R.S.V.P. any day."

(With acknowledgements to *TIME*, August 26, 1957)

## GREEK TRAGEDY

*(Continued from the last issue)*

(3)

THE poet who first defeated Aeschylus in one of the dramatic competitions in a Bacchic festival was Sophocles (495-406 B.C.). Sophocles, in his early days, impressed by the success and greatness of Aeschylus, tried to imitate his grandeur and sublimity but it did not suit his character. His genius soon discovered the true line of development and set out in search of yet undiscovered paths in poetic and dramatic literature. The characterisation became more living and the introduction of a third actor on the stage lessened further the importance of the chorus and gave a freer and larger scope to dramatic actions.

He got his plots like all the others from Homer, the perennial source of Western classical literature. But Sophocles gave to the Homeric stories a stamp of his own. He did not magnify them as Aeschylus did, nor did he dissect them as Euripides was to do later. He depicted them more or less as they were, as he knew them. But there was one strong presiding idea that modified largely his personages or rather it was that idea which made them. Man is not psychologically free, he has not only to bear the consequences of his own deeds but also to pay the forfeit for all evil done by his predecessors. He is dogged night and day by fate. The curse on a family, just or unjust, works out through generations and harasses a man during his whole life. But is man then doomed eternally? Is suffering his only lot? No; Sophocles says that the pangs and sufferings purge the being of all sins and ultimately it attains redemption.

Sophocles was the mean between Aeschylus and Euripides. He possessed something of the magnanimity of Aeschylus and something of the power of psychological analysis of Euripides. In him we find the constant interplay of the human with the divine. Gods and men were taken on the same level. Men were lifted higher than their ordinary status of existence and the gods were drawn down into a comparatively lower level than the gods of Aeschylus. He sometimes showed the conflict of two different characters, as Antigone and Ismene, and sometimes like Euripides the internal conflict, as in Oedipus. And because he had both these faculties of seeing man in relation to the gods

and seeing him only from the human point of view Sophocles achieved a greater success and also a greater universality in the treatment of his characters.

Sophocles never tried to philosophise or preach through the chorus as did Aeschylus. He did not wrestle with thoughts; they came naturally in the course of the unfolding of action. His thoughts and his philosophy of man and life were given by his characters so that there are sometimes two irreconcilable opinions on the same subject. But we must remember that dramatists are not philosophers and need not have a consistent system. In life we have many conflicting opinions and the drama is a representation of life, so it is very natural that different characters, brought up in different circumstances, under different social conditions and with different mental and vital constitutions should have different opinions. So the opinion of Ismene clashes with the opinion of Antigone, but we cannot ultimately say which is true.

One of the ideas that runs through most of his plays is that 'the root of evil is in arrogance, wilfulness and tyranny'. So we have all the conflicts in life, the conflict between the state and individual liberty as in *Antigone* or the conflict between Creon and Oedipus.

As a craftsman Sophocles certainly was greater than Aeschylus. He had a more sensitive and more masterly grip over the technique. He made his scenes more effective and vivid and more akin to life. His plays were well-chiselled and built with care and skill and a definite finish. One of the devices he used for holding his audience in suspense and expectancy, in the dire premonition of some overhanging catastrophe, was the dramatic irony whose ample use in *Oedipus the King* makes the play at once more tragic and more successful. Apart from dramatic irony he resorted to other conceits, as the bringing together of two entirely opposite characters and thus making the scenes richer in action. Sophocles was less imaginative than his older rival but on the other hand he had a greater lucidity and a sweep of action and movement which gave an intenser life-energy to his plays.

Third and the last of the three great tragic poets was Euripides. When he entered the stage he found it ready for him. The dramatic technique, the art of character-portraying and the dialogue had reached a certain standard of perfection with Sophocles. But Euripides did not altogether follow the path traced by his predecessors.

He deliberately broke away from all previous traditions both in the conception of characters and in their working out. The intervention of gods in human activities only occasionally recurred in his mind, as in *Hippolytus* where the gods are but symbols of two aspects of human nature. They took active part in the real development and progress of the whole play. And even where the gods came directly into the action they were almost divested of their divi-

nity as in *The Bacchae* where Dionysus, the god of wine, is as human as any human being. The only godlike virtue in him is his power,—feters and prison-walls cannot bind him—but he has in quite a big dose the human vice of vengeance.

Unlike Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides dwells more fully on the inward conflict of the divided human personality. The clash here is not between two distinct individuals but solely an inner struggle with one's own passions. This psychological treatment of the characters is very modern in its nature and his analysis of the human mind must be considered very profound according to the criteria of modern psycho-analysis. The typical example of such analysis is *Phaedra*.

He tried to break away from all traditional views of life and man, and formulated independent and unorthodox opinions about them. There is always a strong strain of scepticism and even pessimism in most of his plays. His satire and irony sometimes are very mordant. He generally deals with the lower vital passions of man and brings out the morbidity of human nature. But nevertheless his conception and understanding of these vital and subconscious parts of man are quite true and based on real experience, for we know that his life was very eventful and not very easy and comfortable. And here lies the real greatness of Euripides. He studied human problems from a human level without referring them to any superhuman powers. He had a penetrating insight into the joys and sufferings of his characters. He saw not only the weakness and morbidity of man's vital nature but also its strength and determination. He has created the pathos and agony that rise from the unfulfilment of human passions and on the other hand he has also shown the mastery of man over his passions, the strength of human character unflinching in all circumstances.

Euripides did not deal much with theological problems, he was mainly concerned with the society and its ethical problems.

As a technician he was by far inferior to Sophocles and even Aeschylus. It seems that he consciously ignored the technical development made by Sophocles. He perhaps sought novelty and distinction and in doing so missed the perfection and even deviated from the classical sobriety and lucidity. At times we find him sacrificing dramatic action for long broodings on psychological questions.

But he was a great experimentator in dramatic craftsmanship. He tried to free drama from the classical rules and standards set by Sophocles. In some of his plays he has not strictly kept the unity of time. He altogether diminished the importance of the chorus. Though sometimes long, the choruses never formed an inseparable part of the play. They were added as mere lyrical interludes for entertaining the spectators.

One of the greatest drawbacks of Euripides was his characterisation. It was weak and we may almost say that he has no individual characters; he has created merely some psychological types. The characters do not stand out in relief as separate entities. We feel that we could find many other Phaedras, Hippolytuses or old Cadmuses, for they represent some psychological principles which are common to most men. Euripides does not depict the aspect of life peculiar to one individual which is essentially different from that of any other human being. He has, instead of individualising the characters, generalised them. So when we meet Phaedra, Hippolytus or Cadmus we do not find a man or a woman : we simply stand before a fluid mass of ideas and principles. This weakness in Euripides becomes prominent when we compare him with Sophocles. In Sophocles, Antigone is quite different from any other woman; we can at once distinguish her from Ismene. Her way of thinking, speaking, acting is distinct from those of others. She has a peculiarity of her own which gives her a separate and living personality. It is only she who can say :

It was not God that gave me such commandments,  
 Nor Justice, consort of the Lords of Death,  
 That ever laid on men such laws as these  
 Nor did I hold that in your human edicts  
 Lay power to override the laws of God,  
 Unwritten yet unshaken—laws that live  
 Not from today, nor yet from yesterday,  
 But always—though none knows how first made known.  
 I had no mind to answer to the gods  
 Transgressing *these*, for fear of any man.  
 I knew my life was forfeit. Well I knew,  
 Without your proclamation. If I die  
 Before my day, why then so much the better !  
 Does death not come as blessing when, like mine,  
 A life lies loaded with calamities ?  
 Therefore to meet this doom that waits for me  
 Can grieve me nothing. Had I left unburied  
 My own born brother's body, grief indeed  
*That* would have been : but *this* ! I care not for it,  
 And if my actions seem to you a fool's,  
 Maybe it is a fool condemns my folly.

Compare her speech with Ismene's and you can at once see the difference between the two characters : Antigone strong and resolute, revolting against

GREEK TRAGEDY

the tyranny and oppression of the state, and Ismene an ordinary woman enduring patiently all the abuses of the state and the strong. Ismene says to Antigone :

Think how we two must die a grisly death,  
If we defy the law and break this edict  
Of Creon's sovereignty !  
Ah, yet remember we are only women,  
Not made to war with men. And then, again,  
We are only subjects of the mightier,  
Bound to obey in this—or worse than this :  
Therefore, entreating those beneath the earth  
To pardon me for what I do perforce,  
I shall bow before our rules. For indeed  
It is mere folly, striving past our powers.

But in Euripides we feel as if the speeches were distributed arbitrarily. What Phaedra says could very well suit the tongue of her Nurse. Let us read two speeches, one of Phaedra, the other of the Nurse.

*Phaedra* : Oft in the night's long watches I have pondered  
What cause it is brings human lives to ruin.  
I cannot think it is defect of reason  
Leaves us undone. For many have discernment,  
To me the truth seems other.  
We well know what is good; we understand,  
Yet will not face the struggle—some are idle,  
Some sacrifice their honour for the sake  
Of pleasure—life can bring so much of pleasure—  
Long hours of talk; and idleness, sweet poison,  
  
And our own sense of pride. Two kinds there are  
Of pride—one not dishonourable; but one—  
False, and a household curse. If men judged rightly,  
They could not use one word to name them both.

*Nurse* : .....Worldly wisdom  
Warns us to let unhandsome things be hid.  
Vain to be too elaborate in life.  
Even the beam that bears the roof aloft  
Cannot be wholly straight. What hope for you  
To swim from such deep waters safe to shore?



In these two passages there is the same note of pondering, the same objective coldness. There is not the strong feeling of subjectivism which could distinguish Phaedra from the Nurse. The speeches are interchangeable.

Neither has Euripides a plot in his plays, what he has is only a theme. He develops the theme throughout the whole play. He weaves in the dialogues, monologues and choruses only to support it.

In his whole make-up Euripides was very modern. He had the psychological approach to life and was very realistic, almost in the perverted sense of modern realism with all its gruesome and unhealthy attributes. It is in this realism and in his method of treating the theme that he is akin to the modern dramatists.

His last play *The Bacchae* forms a link between the classical and the modern drama. It is so far away from the classical sobriety and so near to the modern unrest ! The wild passion of its characters suits exactly the modern temperament. So, after this play, in the natural trend of dramatic evolution there could no more be any classical play. One would have to return to Aeschylus or Sophocles, but that would only be a failure; for we cannot revert the current of progress. Thus with Euripides and *The Bacchae* ended the great line of Greek tragedy.

The most astonishing feature about Greek tragedy is its rapid ascension to glory within fifty years, passing through all the intermediary stages of development. Aeschylus gave the strong masculine sentiments, violent and magnified actions, grandeur of supernatural forces and, along with these, new ideas of morality and of justice. After him came Sophocles with his lofty ethical discrimination and his great intellectuality; not pre-eminently a philosopher but a great dramatic craftsman he gave his characters more life and a distinct personality, bringing them nearer to reality. Last of the three came Euripides with his cynical temperament, his power of psycho-analysis and his violent reaction against past habits, religions and social conduct. His plays lost the integrality of Sophocles, yet developed very persuasively his new principles in great isolated scenes. His characters lost individuality but were handled in a manner which made them more human, more tragic, more realistic.

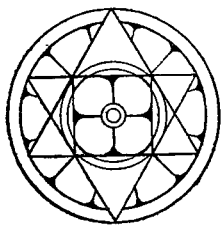
Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides had most of the classical characteristics in common but they had one great difference which gave them their separate brilliancy : Aeschylus was mainly a philosopher, Sophocles a dramatist, and Euripides a psychologist.

( Concluded )

RANAJIT

*Sri Aurobindo International University Centre*

**T H E A T R E**



**P R O G R A M M E**

**O F T H E**

*Dramatic Performance*

*on the occasion of the*

**F O U R T E E N T H   A N N I V E R S A R Y**

**O F T H E**

*Ashram School*

**1st December, 1957**

**at 6 p. m.**

# I

## THE VIRTUES

(A DANCE INTERPRETATION)

THIS story is taken from The Mother's book *Paroles D'Autrefois*—"Words of Long Ago," which although first published here in Pondicherry in 1946 was written in France at the beginning of the century. The Mother tells us it is a story for both the very young and the elders alike, for although it is a tale told to children—and are we not all Her children?—it takes place in the Palace of Truth itself.

This Palace, high above the ordinary clouds of our mortality, had within its centre a secret sanctuary and few were they who ever found the way to it. However, there were some who did, not men, but beings who are, upon earth, worshipped by the name of "Virtues"—gods and goddesses, and our story is of a certain festive meeting when they all were together in the vestibule of this Palace of Truth.

The vestibule was a great hall, luminous with a thousand sparkling fires, it was the Hall of Intelligence. The virtues arrived one by one but soon formed themselves into groups of natural sympathies, happy for once to find themselves together who were usually dispersed among worlds of alien beings.

Sincerity presided over this festive occasion with her two faithful attendants, Humility and Courage. Near them stood a woman heavily veiled, only her piercing eyes visible through the veils. She was Prudence.

There was one who seemed to move among them all like a sweet radiance yet who at the same time appeared to remain always close to each one. She was Charity, vigilant, calm, active yet discreet. With her was her twin sister Justice, and Goodness, Gentleness, Patience, Faith, Compassion and many others pressed around her like some bright escort.

All were there, or so they thought. But suddenly, upon the golden threshold there appeared a new-comer. It was with great reluctance that the guardians on duty at the gates had agreed to admit her, for they had never seen her before and they were not at all impressed by her appearance. She looked so young and frail, dressed in her simple mauve robe, almost poor. Timid and embarrassed, she took a few steps forward, obviously at a loss to find herself in such brilliant company; she stopped, not knowing to whom she should go.

After a short discussion with her companions Prudence came over to her and said :

"We, who are assembled here in this Palace, all know one another by name and merit and we are naturally surprised at your coming, for you appear to be a stranger among us ; at least we do not seem to have seen you before. Would you be good enough to tell us who you are ?"

Then, with a sigh, the new-comer answered :

"Alas ! I am not surprised that I seem to be a stranger in this Palace. I am so seldom invited anywhere.

My name is **Gratitude.**"

## II

### THE DESCENT OF AHANA

THE Descent of Ahana, is one of Sri Aurobindo's most dramatic poems and naturally lends itself to dramatic presentation of a very powerful kind.

This magnificent poem with its orchestration of symphonic hexameters, is the original version of the poem published as "Ahana" in "Ahana and other Poems" and later included in Sri Aurobindo's "Collected Poems and Plays" where the portion chosen was considerably revised and enlarged.

This dramatic presentation of the poem is interpreted for the stage as two symphonic movements.

#### *The First Movement*

As the curtain rises, AHANA is discovered seated on Her supreme heights : "far couched on the void"—beyond Time and Space in Her 'Sleep' of the centuries. A call from the Silence stirs Her to waken. It is the Voice of the gods who "have mapped out Time and measured its spaces", who would compel Her by drawing Her back to Her earthly task mid the sunbeams and flowers if their hands could but reach Her. They invoke Her to speak. She demands to know why She should return to the labour of the world. She has escaped from the working and suffering and fled the pitiless pressure. She turns again to the Silence and Wideness to receive Her.

But the Gods and the Titans reply in force that She must bend to their uses, for She was made to serve the world. Mighty as She is, yet is She a slave to earth and its creatures, to whom She must yield.

Powerful is Her reply to the irresistible might of the Gods and Titans, meeting their challenge with words of their own language, facing them with their own violence. Yet She also remembers the earth and even appeals to its luminous movements to deliver Her Soul from this "death."

She asks : Who are you...that call me ? "I am in love with your whispers and snared by your bright incompleteness." And She calls on them to speak.

These luminous movements of the earth are the representative aspirations of Humanity; and now that the channel is open they invoke Her with an ardent intensity to descend to them from Her high summits of Consciousness. The Gods thrill with Her fall, the Titans are exultant, and man in his sojourn waits for the resultant godhead.

"Calm like a goddess, alarmed like a bride" Her spirit descends—for She was made for their mightier living, but, saying : I descend, "yet while I fall I will threaten you"—"So shall you prosper or die as you use or misuse and deceive me."

This is the end of the First Movement.

## *The Second Movement*

On the rise of the curtain AHANA is now seen halted on the peaks of the world, listening to the mighty and uplifting Voice of Heaven. (These five lines are taken from Savitri VII. 6.)

Before Her have arrived earth's luminous movements to meet Her. They, the highest representatives of humanity, are the peaks of human aspiration which embody the three terms of—love—knowledge—power, the three well-known paths of yogic discipline, *bhakti—jñāna—karma yogas* : The Hunters after Joy—The Seekers after Knowledge—The Climbers in the quest for Power. AHANA invites these representatives of the soul of humanity to speak. They each invoke Her in their own way with various arguments and pleadings, —all, such vivid poetic images that we are powerfully brought face to face with the universality of the Poet's Consciousness. At one moment we are as if with Kalidasa on a cloud-flight over Nature's high-hung plateaus. The next moment we are looking down over the verdant isles of Cyprus, where Artemis, goddess of the chase, flees through the glades. Then the voice of the Soul of Joy and Devotion transports us to the garden of Brindavan seeking our beloved Krishna. But then, another garden comes into sight, introducing a Biblical image from the Old Testament,—the garden of Eden, recalled by the voice of the seeker of Knowledge. The argument finds its resolution in the line :

“Vainly redeemers come but not yet availed to deliver.”

Then the Light increases, She allows Her magnificence to be seen in the Form of the formless All-Beautiful.

They are all taken up into Her Embrace in awe and wonder and merge themselves into a trinity of aspiration. All live in the one Voice of Love and Devotion imploring this “First white dawn of the God-Light” to break through the margins of twilight—stoop down to mortality, that earth may be a “kin-soil to heaven”.

AHANA at last replies to earth's heart of eternal longing, promising that now She will come, and Midnight shall sunder. She will come, bringing Knowledge and Power from the Heights and Joy to the arms of mortality.

She will come, for She has captured the Divine and knows now the rhythm of His Play. She will come, to teach us the Dance, the Song, and the Singer —and so lead us to take our place in the eternal Ras of Immortality.

### III

## LUMIÈRE SANS OBSCURITÉ

The story is printed separately—in the original French with an English translation. It will be reproduced in *Mother India*.

## SRI AUROBINDO'S SHRINE IN DELHI



### Historical

A Centre for Sri Aurobindo's work had been in existence in Delhi since 1943, but it was in February 1956 that a regular branch of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, was opened. A little later a School after the ideals of Integral Education was started. But we had our greatest joy when the Mother agreed to give us certain relics of Sri Aurobindo for a Shrine here.

### The Shrine

To enshrine Sri Aurobindo's relics we have built a simple monument. It is a small structure with a square low base and a dome supported by four pillars. Its architectural style is in keeping with that of other monuments in and around Delhi. In the centre of the base there is a cube with a lotus on the top in red marble. On the sides of the cube Sri Aurobindo's symbol is engraved in *bas relief*.

These symbols are revealed and living figures of Truth and their inherent powers. They are known as *Yantras* in India and are commonly used in worship as bodies of invoked deities. Their potency is an accepted fact.

The red lotus symbolises Sri Aurobindo's Consciousness and the cube the Supramental Truth He came to realise. The four petals of the lotus signify the four principal powers of His creative energy and the twelve outer petals represent the manifested powers working for perfection.

The symbol engraved on the sides of the cube consists of two intersecting equilateral triangles with their apexes pointing above and below.

"The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both (the central square) is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme (the lotus).

The water (inside the square) represents the multiplicity, the creation."

## The Relics

The relics (Hair and Nail) are contained in a gold casket which is the innermost of a series of four caskets one within the other.

The gold casket is within a silver one, the silver casket within a sandalwood one and the sandalwood casket within a rosewood one. Each casket has a symbol of Sri Aurobindo embossed on its lid. The series of four represents the four planes of consciousness which Sri Aurobindo embodies. The gold represents the supramental consciousness, the silver the spiritual consciousness, the sandalwood the mental consciousness and the rosewood the physical consciousness.

The relics will arrive at Safdarjang Airport on 4th December at 3-30 P.M. from Pondicherry. They will be received there and taken to the Delhi Branch of the Ashram, where a meeting will be held.

### *Tentative Programme*

Arrival at Safdarjang	... ..	4th Dec. at 3-30 P.M.
Meeting at the Ashram	... ..	About 5 to 6-30 P.M.
Music & Meditation	... ..	..... ..
Lecture	... ..	Shri Haribhau Upadhyaya
Lecture	... ..	Dr. Indra Sen

### **Installation of the Relics**

The installation of the relics will be done by Dr. C. D. Deshmukh on 5th December at a public gathering at 9-00 A.M.

Music	... ..	9.00 to 9.15
Meditation	... ..	9.15 to 9.25
Messages	... .. <i>Shri Yash Pal Jain</i>	9.25 to 9.35
Welcome	<i>Shri Haribhau Upadhyaya</i>	9.35 to 9.50
Installation of Relics		
& Address	<i>Dr. C.D.Deshmukh</i>	9.50 to 10.20
Significance of		
the Shrine	<i>Dr. Indra Sen</i>	10.20 to 10.45
Thanksgiving	<i>Shri Surendranath Fauhar</i>	10.45 to 10.55
Bande Mataram	... ..	10.55 to 11.00

## **Those Desiring Association**

All those who have a sincere sentiment and feeling for Sri Aurobindo, his earlier political work or later spiritual work, are cordially invited to join this function of receiving Sri Aurobindo's relics in Delhi and their installation in the monument erected for the purpose. Anybody can join the RECEPTION COMMITTEE and contribute financially, materially or in work and service as desired.

## **Sri Aurobindo Month**

**5th November—5th December**

On 5th December Sri Aurobindo passed away and this is the date chosen by the Mother for his Presence to be installed at Delhi. It is proposed that we devote a whole month to receiving him. We will remember him, think of him, read his inspiring literature, carry his message to others, organise meetings and share all this with larger numbers.

It will be a noble dedication to concentrate during this month on the inspiration of Sri Aurobindo and seek benefit from it.

## **Sri Aurobindo Shrine Working Committee**

- |                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Shri Haribhau Upadhyaya   | — <i>Chairman</i>  |
| 2. Shri Yashpal Jain         | — <i>Secretary</i> |
| 3. Shri Surendranath Jauhar  | — <i>Treasurer</i> |
| 4. Shrimati Sucheta Kriplani |                    |
| 5. Shri K. C. Reddy          |                    |
| 6. Dr. Indra Sen             |                    |

## **SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM**

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*Located on Main Road to Qutab Minar—Milestone 9 miles 4 furlongs*

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