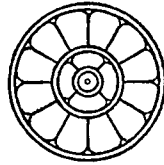


MOTHER INDIA

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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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Vol. X

No. 9

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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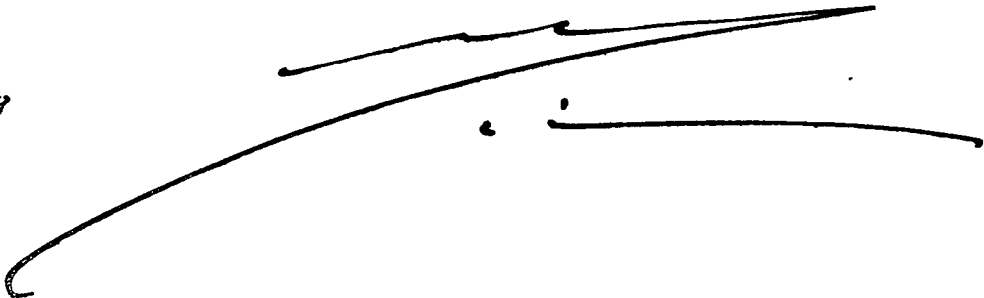
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NOTE

The next issue will be a joint one of November and December. It will be published on December 5.

Let the Lord of Truth
be always with you.

1.9.58



CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO
MEDICAL SECTION

17-10-1936

MYSELF : Well, Sir, you have made people believe that medicines and doctors are no good and at the same time could not infuse into them sufficient faith in you. Result—they have fallen between two stools !

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, T and S used both to get cured without need of medicines once on a time. The later development has evidently come for your advantage so that you may have elementary exercises in *samata*. I have had a lot of schooling in that way and graduated M.A. Your turn now.

If you had treated them in the pre-ashram period, do you think their comments if not at once cured would have been more filled with a holy awe and submission to the doctors ?

Exactly—for these are poor little uneducated people. But are the big brains at bottom less unreasonable and insistent ? All alike, sir, in one way or another. Man who is a reasoning animal no doubt, but not a reasonable one.

18-10-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : A descent cannot possibly produce nausea and vomiting etc. There can, if one pulls down too much force, be produced a headache or giddiness; both of these go if one keeps quiet a little, ceases pulling and assimilates. A descent cannot produce blood pressure, madness or apoplexy or heart failure or any other illness.

Illness does not rise up by the descent of the Force; nor hereditary taint nor madness. They come up of themselves, as in X's case who never had even the smallest grain of a descent or a Force anywhere. It is only after he went off his centre that we are putting Force (not as a descent, but as an agent) to keep him as straight and as sound as possible.

MYSELF : In the case of an illness, how do you then decide whether it is the recrudescence of an old illness or the action of a dark force or even some experience ? From the description supplied to you ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, certainly—just as you go by the symptoms of a case as seen by you and as related by the patient.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

MYSELF : I thought that it is not possible to have spiritual experiences, especially major ones, without your previously having knowledge about it.

SRI AUROBINDO : Previously ? My God, we would have to spend all our time prevising the sadhaks' experiences. Do you think Mother has nothing else to do ? As for myself, I never revise anything, I only vise and revise. All that Mother revised was that there was something not right in Y, one part of him at odds with his aspiration. That might lead to trouble. That is why *entre nous* I want him to find out what part of him did not want the descent.

What I gather from Y's letter is that he felt great intensity of descent (much greater than he had before) and got into a panic (because of the indescribable sensation) and thought he might be going mad like Z (Z's madness was not the result of a descent), so nervous that he upset his stomach and possibly his circulation also. That is the only possible explanation if it is not an attack of illness over which it is for the doctors to pronounce, not me.

There are sensations that are due to descent and not troublesome or dangerous at all, there are others that are physical. But the description is necessary in order to distinguish.

The difficulty is that he has got the fear and the association in his mind of the descent with the disturbance.

MYSELF : You wrote to X : "before there can be a resumption of the sadhana". What exactly did you mean in connection with his trouble ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I meant by sadhana the positive side (descent etc.). What I indicated was that there was a part of the being which was afraid of the descent, didn't want it and by its fear got this trouble. This must be found out and put right before calling any descent again.

MYSELF : He complained of nausea.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, that's a physical ailment, not a yogic phenomenon.

MYSELF : Cannot the illness be due to the action of a dark force ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not through the descent, but through the fear a dark Force might strike in. That is what it is trying with many people .

MYSELF : Seeing some of these "upsets" I feel pulled down. I ask myself: "Well, my friend, whither, whither are you going ? What awaits you ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : Perhaps the Paratpara Purusha beyond even the Purushottama....But why this pulled downness ? You are not pulling down Purushottama or any other gentlemen from the upper storey, are you ? It is strain and want of rest, I suppose. Sleep, sleep ! Read Mark Twain or write humorous stories. Then you will be quite chirpy and even M won't feel heavy to you,

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19-7-1937

MYSELF : I dreamt that the Mother is building a very big hospital. Dream of a millennium in advance ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It would be more of a millennium if there were no need of a hospital at all and the doctors turned their injective prodding instruments into fountain pens—provided of course they did not make misuse of the pens also.

MYSELF : Why furious about injective instruments, sir ? They are supposed to be very effective.

SRI AUROBINDO : That does not make an increase of hospitals, illnesses and injections the ideal of a millennium.

MYSELF : But why the deuce are those instruments to be replaced by fountain pens ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I was simply adopting the saying of Isaiah the prophet, "the swords will be turned into ploughshares", but the doctor's instrument is not big enough for a ploughshare, so I substituted fountain pen.

14-3-1937

MYSELF : I find that as a result of your Force A had one vomiting only.

SRI AUROBINDO : Evidently my Force is growing just as my handwriting is improving.

30-3-1937

SRI AUROBINDO : Miracles can be done, but there is no reason why they should be all instantancous, whether from Gods or doctors.

4-4-1937

SRI AUROBINDO : It is no use discussing these matters. The Mother's views are too far removed from the traditional nostrums to be understood by a medical mind, except those that have got out of the traditional groove or those who after long experience have seen things and can become devastatingly frank about the limitations of their own "science."

Ideas differ. Both the Mother and Pavitra were horrified at the idea of a child of four months being given a purgative. The leading Children's Doctor

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

in France told the Mother no child under 12 months should be given a purgative, as it is likely to do great harm and may be dangerous. But here we understand it is the practice to dose children freely with purgatives from their day of birth almost. Perhaps that and over-administration of medicines is the cause of excessive infant mortality.

6-4-1937

SRI AUROBINDO There is a vegetable called "bubble and squeak." That describes the two methods you propose. "Bubble" is to go on tossing symptoms about in the head and trying to discover what they point to—that is your method. "Squeak" is to dart¹ at a conclusion (supported by a quotation) and ram some inappropriate medicine down the patient's throat—that's X's method. But the proper method is neither to bubble nor to squeak.

Your logical brain box, sir, is such a rule-of-thumb Dr. Johnsonian sort of affair that it is quite impossible to satisfy. If ever you succeed in emptying the brain box of its miscellaneous contents and being mentally silent then you will discover how these things are done.

Well, so that's how the Mother's statements are understood! A free permit for anything and everything calling itself an intuition to go crashing into the field of action! Go at it, indeed! Poor it!

What the Mother says in the matter is what she said to Dr. Manilal with his entire agreement—viz. reading from symptoms by the doctors is usually mere balancing between possibilities (of course except in clear and simple cases) and the conclusion is a guess. It may be a right guess and then it will be all right, or it may be a wrong guess and then all will be wrong unless Nature is too strong for the doctor and overcomes the consequences of his error—or at the least the treatment will be ineffective. On the contrary if one develops the diagnostic flair one can see at once what is the real thing among the possibilities and see what is to be done. That is what the most successful doctors have, they have this flashlight which shows them the true point. M agreed and said that the cause of the guessing was that there were whole sets of symptoms which could belong to any one of several diseases and to decide is a most delicate and subtle business, no amount of book knowledge or reasoning will ensure a right decision. A special insight is needed [that] looks through the symptoms and not merely at them. This last sentence, by the way, is my own, not M's. About development of intuition afterwards—no time tonight.

From NIRODBARAN

¹ Uncertain reading (Ed.)

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

THE ACTION OF THE HIGHER FORCE

Q. While rising a little beyond the human mind one sees and feels a direct and straight path. Its one end is at the seventh centre and the other high above, in fact so high that one cannot see but can have only an impression of it. This road has many stations.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the line of connection between the spiritual mind, through higher mind, illumined mind, intuition, overmind to the supramental.
(27-6-1935)

Q. You wrote, "It is comparatively easy to go high when the way is opened. The difficulty is to bring down the power of these states." Rising above, one rarely thinks of bringing down anything oneself. For one always thinks it is enough if one can dwell there: whatever is to be brought down or worked out below in one's lower planes will be accomplished by the Mother's Force alone.

SRI AUROBINDO : If you can rise always, it can be done like that, but the inertia prevents that, then there must be a descent to remove the obstacle. The will for that must be there.
(19-9-1935)

Q. Are not bhakti, self-giving, love and joy very essential for the present state of my sadhana ?

SRI AUROBINDO : All comes in its time. One has to go on quietly and steadily increasing the higher consciousness till it takes possession of the vital and physical parts.
(14-3-1935)

Q. At times even the will and aspiration supporting one's sadhana gets covered up.

SRI AUROBINDO : If you cannot do anything else, you must at least remain detached—there is always a part of the being that can remain detached and go on persisting, calling down the force from above.
(6-3-1935)

Q. If a sadhak is not fully conscious of his oneness with the Mother at all times and in all conditions the inertia can veil the heart and the inner being in some periods and make him feel that everything is lost.

SRI AUROBINDO : Even then the self ought not to be veiled—it must remain consciousness.
(16-4-1935)

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

Q. Kindly see that my obscure nature does not push me away from my true self or the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO : You must remain always aware of the self and the obscure nature must not be felt as the self but as an instrument which has to be put into tune with the self. (16-4-1935)

Q. Why do you not ask me to forget all about the obscurity of the inertia and the subconscious as you did about my sciatica ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If you can do so until the higher consciousness is entirely fixed and you yourself can live above in the Self with fixed peace, calm and joy in the inner being, it would be good. This is the ideal method—but is not always possible. (17-4-1935)

Q. A time comes when one reaches a consciousness which is full of sheer silence, peace, bliss and freedom. They are so rich, deep, and intoxicating at least to our human experience that one may not take the trouble to march forward. One may choose to remain plunged in them for ever !

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the goal for most Yogas, but for us it is the beginning and basis. For it is the state of spiritual liberation which was all they wanted. (23-4-1935)

Q. Is it wrong to have remained very much in the higher consciousness and thought little of bringing it down into the lower nature to change it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Your tendency was to go up and to leave the higher consciousness to deal with the lower nature without any personal effort for that. That could have worked all right on two conditions (1) that the peace and force would come down and occupy all down to the physical (2) that you succeeded in keeping the inner being uncovered by the outer nature. The physical failed to absorb the peace, inertia rose instead; force could not come down; the suggestions from the outer nature proved too strong for you and between these suggestions and the inertia they interrupted the sadhana. (25-10-1935)

Q. Does not the Mother wish one to remain above, and will not her Force do what is necessary for the lower nature ?

SRI AUROBINDO : One can remain in the higher consciousness and yet associate oneself with the change of the lower nature. No doubt it is the Mother's force that will do what is necessary, but the consent of the sadhak, the association of his will with her action or at least of his witness vision¹ is necessary also. (25-10-1935)

¹ Tentative reading (Ed.)

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Q. Unless one gets stabilised in the spiritual consciousness how can one bring down anything of lasting value ? Moreover, when one has already climbed up, is it not better one should first settle oneself there ?

SRI AUROBINDO : There is no fixed rule in such things. With many the descent comes first and the ascension afterwards, with others it is the other way ; with some the two processes go on together. If one can fix oneself above so much the better. I have explained to you why it did not happen. (26-10-1935)

Q. I am glad you have shown me the mistake committed in the past sadhana. In future I shall be more careful. Perhaps at that time it was necessary to stay above as much as possible detaching oneself from the (lower) human nature ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I have not said that you made a mistake. I have simply stated what happened and the causes. If you had been able to remain above and let the Force come down and act while you were detached from the outer nature, it would have been all right. You were able to go up because the Peace descended. You were not able to remain above because the Peace could not occupy sufficiently the physical and the Force did not descend sufficiently. Meanwhile the inertia rose, you got troubled more and more because of the vital suggestions in the outer nature and the rush of inertia, so you were unable to keep detached and let the Force descend more and more or call it down more and more. Hence the coming down into the physical consciousness. In saying all that I am not giving any blame, or saying you made a mistake or acted against the Mother's Will. These notions of mistake or not doing the Will are your own, not mine.

Q. When asked if I should draw the Mother's Force down as much as I could, you replied, "Let it come in". Does it mean that I should not draw it down, but rather leave it to its own choice to enter ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I mean that you need not pull it down, but you should aid its entry by your full aspiration and assent. (27-10-1935)

Q. Does living in the higher consciousness make any fundamental change in one's lower nature ? The ego and the physical vital seem practically the same as ever.

SRI AUROBINDO : The action of the higher consciousness does not usually begin by changing the outer nature; it works on the inner being, prepares that and then goes outward. Before that whatever change is done in the outer nature has to be done by the psychic. (25-10-1935)

Q. What is the difference between divinisation and supramentalisation ? How can anyone divinise his nature unless it is supramentalised ?

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO : The Divine can be realised on any plane according to the capacity of that plane, as the Divine is everywhere. The Yogis and saints realise the Divine on the spiritualised mind plane; that does not mean they become supramental. (25-10-1935)

Q. "After all the Divine is infinite and the unrolling of the Truth may be an infinite process or at least, if not quite so much, yet with some room for new discovery, and new statement..." In that case are not the Vedas or the Upanishads wrong in declaring that all the Truth is hidden in them and there can never be any new Truth?

SRI AUROBINDO : Where do the Vedas or Upanishads declare that ? I never heard of it. It is people who say that about them, not the Vedas or Upanishads themselves. (25-10-1935)

Q. How does the Mother's Force act on us ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't quite understand the question. It acts in all sorts of ways according to the possibility, the circumstances, the need, the nature etc. (30-10-1935)

Q. I was told that when the struggle is strong (as is the case at present) there intervene some forces of light which fight against the ego, and the vital being. May I be informed what forces of light are concerned with my present condition ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Forces that try to bring the true consciousness and to replace these stupidities of the ordinary vital nature (ego, sex, jealousy, envy etc.) (6-11-1935)

Q. The intervention of these forces is from above. But does not our individual soul or Jivatman do something when such struggles are going on in its instrumental being ?

SRI AUROBINDO : They usually do if the personal will makes itself their instrument. (6-11-1935)

From NAGIN DOSHI

THE ISHA UPANISHAD

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Nirranjan from the Bengali Essays in "Vividha Rachanavali")

I

THE main obstacle that stands in the way of accepting the straightforward meaning of the Isha Upanishad and rightly understanding its inner truth about the Brahman, the Self and the Divine, is Mayavada, Illusionism, preached by Shankaracharya and the commentary he wrote on this Upanishad. The one-pointed drive towards withdrawal that is Illusionism and the much-praised inaction of the Sannyasi are completely at variance with the Isha Upanishad. If the meaning of the slokas is strained and tortured to give an opposite sense, the solution of this quarrel becomes impossible. The Upanishad in which it is written : "Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years", and again : "Action cleaves not to a man"—the Upanishad which proclaims with courage : "Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone", and again says : "By the Birth one enjoys Immortality", how can that Upanishad be reconciled with Mayavada, Illusionism and the path of withdrawal ? A highly erudite person, who was possibly the chief sponsor of Monism in South India after Shankara, expunged it from the list of the twelve Upanishads and installed the Nrisimhatalia in its place. Shankaracharya was not so daring as to alter the prevailing canon. The Upanishad was a "Sruti" (heard scripture), and Illusionism was a subject for enquiry in the "Sruti", and as such, he assumed, the meaning of the "Sruti" could not but be favourable to real Illusionism.

If "jagat" [in "Isha vasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat"] meant the earth, then the meaning would be : "all that is moving on the earth in motion", that is to say, all men, animals, insects, birds, torrents and rivers etc. This meaning is absurd. In the language of the Upanishads, the word "sarvamidam" signifies all the visible objects of the universe, not of the earth. Therefore we must understand by the word "jagati" the Shakti in movement manifested as the universe and by the word "jagat", all that is a movement of the motion of the Prakriti whether present as a living being or as matter.

THE ISHA UPANISHAD

The contradiction lies between these two : the Ishwara and all that is in the universe. Unlike the Ishwara who is immobile, the Prakriti, the Shakti, is in movement, always engaged in work and world-wide motion; all that exists in the universe is also a small universe in movement which is always, at each instant, the meeting-place of creation, preservation and destruction, the restless and perishable, the opposite of the immutable. The eternal contradiction does not become evident if we place on one side the Ishwara and on the other the earth and all that is in movement on the earth. This Upanishad opens with the eternal contradiction observed by everybody which puts the immutable Ishwara on one side and on the other the restless Prakriti and all that she possesses in the universe created by her, all ephemeral objects.

The whole Upanishad is constructed upon this contradiction and its resolution. Later on, the author of the Upanishad, while discussing the nature of the Ishwara and the nature of the universe, brings up thrice the same problem but each time with a different approach. First when he talks about the Brahman, he demonstrates the opposition of the Purusha and the Prakriti and in these few words, “anejad” (unmoving) and “manaso javiyaha...tad ejati tannajati” (“swifter than Mind, That the Gods reach not, for It progresses ever in front. That, standing, passes beyond others as they run. In That the Master of Life established the Waters. That moves and moves not.”) he explains that both are Brahman : the Purusha is Brahman, the Prakriti and the universe which is her outward form are also Brahman. Again while speaking of the Atman, he explains the opposition between the Ishwara and everything concerning the universe. The Atman is the Ishwara, the Purusha....

If it is squeezed, then most surely the true hidden meaning, that is to say, the doctrine of Illusionism, will be forced out because of the pain : this was the conclusion that overpowered Shankaracharya, and he wrote a commentary on the Isha Upanishad.

Let us hear on the one hand what the commentary of Shankara says, and on the other what the Upanishad has truly to say. The author of the Upanishad right in the beginning compares the truth of the Ishwara with the Truth of the universe and indicates their fundamental relation.

“Isha vasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat”, “All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is ‘jagat’ within ‘jagati’ or individual universe in movement”—the still all-pervading controller Purusha and the Prakriti in motion—the Ishwara and the Shakti. As the name of Ishwara has been given to the Immutable, we have to understand that the true relation between the Purusha and the Prakriti is this : “jagat” depends on the Ishwara, is governed by Him and accomplishes all work by His will. This Purusha is not only a witness and giver of sanction but Ishwara, the knower, the director of action;

the Prakriti is not the controller of action but she works out the destiny, the mistress but dependent on the master, the obedient active Shakti of the Purusha.

Then we observe that "jagati" is not simply the Shakti in movement, not simply the principle which is the cause of the universe; she is also present as the universe itself. The ordinary meaning of the word "jagati" is "the earth", but it cannot apply here. By combining these two words "jagatyam jagat" the author of the Upanishad has hinted that the root-meaning of these two words must not be neglected. To emphasise it has been his aim.

2

The Isha Upanishad introduces to us the integral spiritual realisation and the principle of the integral yoga; within a short space it resolves many difficult problems. It is a "Sruti" replete with sublime, profound and fathomless significances. This Upanishad, concluded in eighteen Slokas, explains in these small mantras many capital truths of the world. Such "infinite riches in a little room" can be found only in this "Sruti".

Synthesis of knowledge, synthesis of dharma, reconciliation and harmony of the opposites form the very soul of this Upanishad. In Western philosophy there is a law called the law of contradiction, according to which opposites mutually exclude each other. Two opposite propositions cannot hold good at the same time, they cannot integrate; two opposite qualities cannot be simultaneously true at the same place and in the same instrument. According to this law, opposites cannot be reconciled or harmonised. If the Divine is one, then, however omnipotent He might be, He cannot be many. The infinite cannot be finite. It is impossible for the formless to assume form; if it assumes form, then it abrogates its formlessness. The formula that the Brahman is at the same time with and without attributes, which is exactly what the Upanishad also says about God who is "nirguno guni" with and without attributes, is not admitted by this logic. If formlessness, oneness, infinity of the Brahman are true, then attributes, forms, multiplicity and finiteness of the Brahman are false; "brahma satyam jagan mithya", "the Brahman is the sole reality, the world is an illusion"—Such a totally ruinous deduction is the final outcome of that philosophic dictum. The Seer-Rishi of the Upanishad at each step tramples on that law and in each Sloka announces its invalidity; he finds in the secret heart of the opposites the place for the reconciliation and harmony of their contradiction. The oneness of the universe in motion and the immobile Purusha, enjoyment of all by renunciation of all, eternal liberation by full action, perpetual stability of the Brahman in movement, unbound and inconceivable motion in the eternal immobility, the oneness of the Brahman with-

out attributes and the Lord of the universe with attributes, the inadequacy of Knowledge alone or of Ignorance alone for attaining Immortality, Immortality obtained by simultaneous worship of Knowledge and Ignorance, the supreme liberation—and realisation gained not by the constant cycle of birth, not by the dissolution of birth but by simultaneous accomplishment of Birth and Non-Birth,—these are the sublime principles loudly proclaimed by the Upanishad.

Unfortunately there has been a great deal of unnecessary confusion regarding the meaning of this Upanishad. Shankaracharya is generally recognised as the most important commentator on the Isha Upanishad, but if all these conclusions are accepted then Mayavada, the Illusionism of Shankara, sinks in the bottomless ocean. The founder of Mayavada is incomparable and immensely powerful among the philosophers. Just as thirsty Balarama brought to his feet the Yamuna unwilling to alter her course, by dragging and pulling her with a plough, so also Shankara, finding this Upanishad destroyer of Mayavada and standing across the path toward his destination, dragged and pulled the meaning till it agreed with his own opinion. One or two examples will suffice to show the miserable condition to which this Upanishad has been reduced by such treatment.

It is said in the Upanishad, “Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the knowledge alone.” Shankara says, “I am not willing to give to the words “vidya” (“knowledge”) and “avidya” (“ignorance”) their ordinary sense; “vidya” signifies here “devavidya”, “the science of propitiating the gods.” The Upanishad declares, “vinashena mrityum tirtwa sambhutyamamritam-asnute”, “by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys Immortality.” Shankara says it has to be read as “asambhutyamamritam”, “by Non-Birth enjoys Immortality;” and “vinash” (“dissolution”) as signifying here “birth”. In the same way a commentator of the Dualistic School, when he came across the word, “tattwamasi”, “Thou art That”, indicated that it should be read as “atat twamasi”, “Thou art that other one.” A prominent teacher of the Mayavada who came after Shankara adopted a different means; he satisfied himself by expelling the Isha Upanishad from the list of the principal authoritative Upanishads and promoting the Nrisimhottaratapanya in its place. In fact, it is quite unnecessary to impose one’s opinion by such physical force. The Upanishad illustrates infinite aspects of the infinite Brahman and, because it does not uphold any particular philosophic view, a thousand philosophic views have sprouted from this single seed. Each philosophy takes up a side of the infinite truth and presents it to the intellect in a systematic way. The infinite Brahman manifests itself in infinite ways; paths leading to the infinite Brahman are also numberless.

THE MESSAGE OF SRI AUROBINDO

(The closing paragraphs of A. B. Patel's speech on August 17, 1958, at the Sri Aurobindo Study Circle, Madras, at the celebration of August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday.)

To understand the most important aspect of Sri Aurobindo's message we must examine and understand his theory of evolution on this planet. The Divine consciousness was involved in Matter and is slowly evolving. To illustrate it one may imagine a swimmer diving from a height into water several feet deep and then slowly coming up. Imagine this process of the coming up of the swimmer to take a long time and it will give some idea of the process of evolution of the Divine Consciousness involved in Matter. It is consciousness that evolves and not only forms, which evolve according to change or growth of consciousness. Every object which appears to us inanimate has also a hidden consciousness. In the process of evolution it took lakhs of years for stone or mineral to evolve into plant; it took lakhs of years for plant to evolve into animal; and it took lakhs of years for animal to evolve into man with a mind. Evolution has not ceased after the appearance of man on this planet. If man in his egoism thinks that he is the last summit and creation of evolution he is sadly mistaken. According to Sri Aurobindo evolution still proceeds and in course of time a being will appear on this planet who will be as ahead of present man as man is ahead of the ape, of course not a very flattering statement for man's ego. Man with a mind will evolve into a being with a supramental or Truth Consciousness. Mind is not the last principle. Mind is an instrument of ignorance and learns by trial and error. It argues and comes to conclusions on a partial view and its conclusions may or may not be right. It is unable to take an integral view of things, events, problems or circumstances. A new being who will appear hereafter with the Supramental or Spiritual consciousness will see truth and will rise from knowledge to knowledge and will possess an integral view of life as a whole which will resolve all problems, conflicts, and disharmonies confronting men to-day.

Up to now evolution has proceeded by a slow process provided by Nature. But man has now reached a stage when he can take evolution into his own hands and compress centuries into years. Sri Aurobindo has put forward the practice of Integral Yoga for accelerating evolution and for mind to exceed

itself to evolve into Supermind. Sri Aurobindo once wrote to a disciple, "I suppose a matter-of-fact observer, if there had been one at the time of the unrelieved reign of inanimate Matter in the earth's beginning, would have criticised any promise of the emergence of life in a world of dead earth and rock and mineral as an absurdity and a chimera; so too, afterwards he would have repeated this mistake and regarded the emergence of thought and reason in an animal world as an absurdity and a chimera. It is the same now with the appearance of Supermind in the stumbling mentality of this world of human consciousness and its reasoning ignorance".

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga has in it elements of old Yogas and yet it is distinct in its object and aim. It is not satisfied with individual salvation. It aims at spiritualising the collective life and thus divinising it. It has a process of ascent to Divine Consciousness and then of descent with all the gains for the benefit of this earth. The individual who rises to the Divine Consciousness and contacts the Spirit or God aims in this Yoga to descend with all the gains to become a centre for manifestation of the Divine Will on earth and to help in transformation of the life on this planet. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga does not reject life and refuses to consider life as an illusion and Maya. If the Divine is involved in Matter and is slowly evolving, this creation cannot be an illusion. The Integral Yoga is based on life and stands for transformation of Matter, Life and Mind. The important elements for practice of this Yoga is a sincere and intense aspiration for the Divine, surrender of the being of an individual in all its parts and in every way to the Divine and constant, continuous and vigilant rejection of all movements within the being of the lower human nature. This will progressively purify the being, eliminating all impurities of human nature, create conditions of light and truth within him replacing conditions of ignorance and falsehood, result in the individual silencing his mind and exceeding himself by transformation of his nature and ultimately lead him to union or identity with the Divine. Then the individual becomes ready for manifestation of the Divine Will on earth. The Master once wrote to a disciple, "My yoga is new compared with the old yogas : (1) Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence...(2) Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of Divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement... (3) Because a method has been precognized for achieving this purpose which is as total and integral as the aim set before it..."

"Asceticism for its own sake is not the ideal of this Yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are a very important part of it—

and even an ascetic discipline is better for our purpose than a loose absence of true control”.

“By this Yoga we not only seek the Infinite, but we call upon the Infinite, to unfold himself in human life”.

In the present recurrent world tensions and constant danger of clash and conflicts every true thinker wishes to safeguard peace and to strengthen the United Nations Organization in a way which will make its functioning just, effective and in the highest interests of humanity without its being influenced by selfish interests of its members and by power politics which are so prevalent to-day. Even before the formation of the League of Nations as a result of the first world war Sri Aurobindo had envisaged an urgent need for human unity in diversity and had pointed out and analysed the various forces of Nature which were at work and which would compel a movement of the human race towards the goal of unity in some form or other. Soon after the commencement of the publication of “Arya” in 1914 he wrote articles emphasising the need for some effective form of world organization for the future of humanity and for maintenance of peaceful progress. Later on he pointed out defects which were inherent in the constitution of the League of Nations and the vital need to remedy them. These articles have been published as a book known as “The Ideal of Human Unity” which together with “The Human Cycle” will be profitable reading to all those who are placed in positions of leadership in the political field. In a postscript to “The Ideal of Human Unity” Sri Aurobindo referred to the defects of the U.N.O. and the necessity for their removal by a voluntary action of the various Member States. Unless that happens a new cataclysm or a series of cataclysms small or large may overtake the human race. Nature in reaching its aim of human unity which will serve well the interests of mankind will not stop by the creation of an imperfect instrument like the U.N.O. Nature will not stop without achieving its aim of bringing into existence a suitable and serviceable instrument of world organization, even if necessary by breaking the U.N.O. as it did with the League of Nations, and compelling the creation of a better world union in some form. Sri Aurobindo said, “It (*i.e.*, the U.N.O.) is only an imperfect beginning useful and necessary as a primary nucleus of that larger institution in which all peoples of the earth can meet each other in a single international unity : the creation of a World-State is, in a movement of this kind, the one logical and inevitable ultimate outcome”. “If man is intended to survive and carry forward the evolution of which he is at present the head and, to some extent, a half conscious leader of its march, he must come out of his present chaotic international life and arrive at a beginning of organized united action; some kind of World-State, unitary or federal, or a confederacy or a coalition he must arrive at in

the end; no smaller or looser experiment would adequately serve the purpose". "The ideal of human unity would be no longer an unfulfilled ideal but an accomplished fact and its preservation given into the charge of the united human peoples".

I think that in order to understand the influence of Sri Aurobindo on various events of great importance it will be an advantage if I refer to what Sri Aurobindo envisaged during his life and what success he saw achieved. For this purpose I shall take the liberty, Your Excellency, of giving a few extracts from his message of 14th August, 1947 on the eve of independence of India : "August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance (of free India). I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began my life, the beginning of its fruition...in all these movements free India may well play a large part and take a leading position....

"Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my life time, though then they looked like impractical dreams, arriving at a fruition or on the way to achievement.

"The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India. India is to-day free but she has not achieved unity....Unity must and will be achieved for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

"Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilization.

"The third dream was a world union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organized but struggling against tremendous difficulties.

"Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world, has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure....

"The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society".

The final dream of Sri Aurobindo for a next step in evolution by descent of the Supramental Consciousness on earth was also fulfilled in the first quarter of 1956. The Mother in the Ashram, who became the collaborator of Sri Aurobindo in his great and vast spiritual work in the year 1920, who has organized and developed Sri Aurobindo Ashram since 1926 and whose

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consciousness and that of Sri Aurobindo are the same, as Sri Aurobindo assured the disciples, declaring on 29th February, 1956,

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

The Mother gave a message on 24th April, 1956 which read “The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

“It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it”.

As the principle of mind began its work some lakhs of years back and changed life on this planet by bringing into existence man and by creation of what we see to-day, the principle of Supermind which has contacted earth consciousness will necessarily transform the present life of humanity. The conduct, the behaviour, the inner attitude to all problems of life and motives of action will slowly undergo change in man and an increasingly higher consciousness will govern him giving new ideals, new inner attitudes and new motives of action. The power of Supermind will begin to transform things on earth in proportion to the receptivity of the human race but in the end it will overcome all resistance and obstruction inherent in human nature and the evolution will proceed more swiftly than it ever did in the past.

The spiritual work done by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at Pondicherry under great difficulties, misunderstandings, obstructions and hostility has truly laid the foundation for a future world civilization. The future human life will be increasingly governed by the Supramental Consciousness, a Force which will increasingly remove all resistance and obstruction in human nature and will ultimately create a Divine Life on earth. Then the opposition between Matter and Spirit will cease. It will be union of Earth and Heaven. The present generation of humanity is hardly aware of the great and glorious work which has been achieved by these two mighty beings, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

One comes across people who question the work done by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother because they ask : what have they done in the service of humanity ? They say that they have remained confined in the Pondicherry Ashram and that Sri Aurobindo lived in one room from 1926 to 1950 while they ought to have rendered service to humanity by active work. There is no doubt that such critics make their observations either recklessly or without proper study

and thought. One can understand if they overlook the political lead given by Sri Aurobindo for a brief period in the first decade of this century when he enunciated very important principles for the movement of India to complete independence and for the methods to achieve it. They may overlook this for after 1910 Sri Aurobindo ceased to take part in active politics. But one fails to understand how even a schoolboy can overlook the vast and varied literature of a very high order presented by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to the world. The spiritual writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother represent the Synthesis of the spiritual efforts of man in the past both in the East and in the West and point to an important step forward. I cannot understand how these critics can overlook the creative work of a very high order done by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, Pondicherry, which are institutions of great spiritual and cultural values giving a new and dynamic direction to education and to spiritual aim and discipline. But the greatest contribution of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to the real progress of the human race is their opening the way and speeding up the evolution for an advent of a new race with a Supramental or spiritual consciousness. Moreover as earlier mentioned, whenever it was necessary Sri Aurobindo and the Mother intervened in the affairs of India and the world by their spiritual force and action the result of which was not on the surface to be known and seen by an ordinary human eye. But those who are connected with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram know fully well how this spiritual force and action work with a greater intensity and effectivity in the moulding of events than any work proceeding from the restless ordinary human consciousness. Once a friend questioned me about the contribution of Sri Aurobindo to human welfare and, during the course of an explanation I gave, I attempted to make myself clearer by an illustration. Let us imagine a world in which all transport is done by animal power in a small and slow way. Somebody then decided to invent a mechanical transport to carry goods and passengers swiftly and in larger quantity and sets up a laboratory with the aim of discovering and introducing a mechanical system of transport. That person sits in his laboratory year after year for a number of years and succeeds at last in introducing a mechanical system of transport which brings about a revolution not only in transport system but in human and international relations and in economic activities also. When that person was making his research and experiment in his laboratory, the drivers and users of bullock-carts and horse-carriages were obviously saying that the person in the laboratory was wasting his time instead of serving the society by helping in management of animal transport. This illustration does not quite aptly apply but it explains how there are people who are unable to appreciate the spiritual research and experiment at the spiritual laboratory at Pondicherry done by the

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Master and the Mother for the descent of the Supramental or Truth Consciousness which will completely revolutionise the life on earth and bring into existence a new race as advanced in comparison to the present human race as the human race is advanced in comparison to the animal world. If these critics will endeavour to assess the real work and greatness of the spiritual work done by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother they will, without doubt, perceive its immensity and its vast possibilities for the future of humanity.

I am sure that slowly but steadily the vanguard-thinkers of the world will be increasingly drawn towards the writings of the Master and the Mother and slowly but steadily it will dawn on humanity what work they have done and continue to do. We are, friends, living in an exciting time full of adventurous possibilities. We are living in the twilight of the Old Age and the dawn of a New Age. We see all around us a deadly combat between the forces at work which are giving shape to the New Age, and the forces at work which persist in their desire to continue the past. Fortunate are we who live now. But doubly fortunate are those who live conscious of the onward march of the New Age and collaborate with it. Sri Aurobindo has been the architect and the prophet of this New Age manifesting itself in spite of tremendous obstructions and oppositions.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the previous issue)

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SAVED FROM MURDER

I HAVE been in touch with the Ashram since 1926-27. I first came across Sri Aurobindo's *Thoughts and Glimpses*. I liked his description of God, "An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden." Many of the questions which used to arise in my mind got automatically solved just by pondering over this aphorism. My parents had died when I was still young and such a number of calamities fell upon me in my early life that I wondered how a benevolent and compassionate God could create a world full of evil and misery. Sri Aurobindo's writings, most of which I later read, satisfied me immensely. I believed in divine help and on many occasions the help of the Mother came to me : my faith in her and in the Master grew greater and deeper day by day. I had a firm belief that Sri Aurobindo knew about the Divine more than anybody else and that his was the one solution for the world's problems.

A most decisive incident occurred in 1950. A partisan labour movement was in terrific swing in the area and the organisers were inducing Harijans and other peasants to violence. They were trying to grab or rob whatever lands and cattle and riches they could lay their hands upon. The life and property of Mirasdars who were few in number in comparison to workers and labourers were in danger. The ratio can be put as something like 5:95. Threats of use of force and murder were being issued, so much so that many of the Mirasdars fled from their villages out of panic.

I had gone to South Arcot with my family for some ceremony. When I returned alone to my native place, I heard talk of an attack upon my house. The threat was duly notified. Already many Mirasdars had been harrassed and attacked by the said organisers.

* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor.

As I was informed about it I did not take the matter very seriously. There was no arrangement of police there as the police station was at least five miles from the village. Mirasdars and other villagers grouped themselves together in an organised defence so that some measures might be taken in the event of any sudden danger. Village guards were posted to prevent small incidents of violence. They used to patrol at night.

There was an epidemic of cholera in that area and unexpectedly most of the guards took leave just one day before the day of the incident which follows. They had been patrolling the area in my absence for three days and nights consecutively, so they wanted to go home to have their bath and to rest.

It was a full-moon night. At the dead of it, a few words as of a harsh command broke my sleep only to make me wonder whether what I was seeing was a reality or a dream. For the whole scene did resemble a dream. Four fully armed and disguised men stood on one side of my bed and four on the other, one before my feet and one behind my head. One of these was tapping me and asking me to get up. My first reaction was complete astonishment. I could not believe my eyes.

The main gate was locked, but the back door was open. They had entered by the back door and with quiet feet climbed the stairs and stood in formation by my bed.

I had not yet come out of my dreamy surprise when a fellow gave me a soft slap on the face which made me conscious of the reality of the situation. The shock was over in a few seconds and courage took its place. Peace prevailed in my limbs and the remembrance of the Mother in my heart.

One of the party spoke through clenched teeth : "You wretch, troubling the peasants, depriving them of their rights and drinking their blood, not giving them livelihood ! Get up ! We have today come to settle the matter !"

"You have been crushing the labourers all along ! Where is your treasure?" hissed another.

"Can you prove what you are saying ? Where is the evidence that I have been oppressive ?" I asked.

"Don't talk too much ! Open your safe !"

I did not really attach much importance to my valuables. I opened the lock of my safe and they gathered out all the silver utensils in a gunny-bag, including a silver ornament of Kali with a red cloth. They removed the few gold ornaments, notes and pronotes and coins of a few thousand rupees that were there, for most of the gold ornaments were taken by the female members of my family who had gone with me to South Arcot and were still there.

The servants were in the backyard and there was only my land supervisor

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in the next house. They asked me to open the front door of the house which was still bolted from inside. I obeyed. They were all surrounding me.

I was confident that they could not do any harm to me without the sanction of the Divine, so I kept myself peaceful all along in the way I was trained during the past few years of my sadhana.

They asked me to lead them to the next house and there they ordered me to open the iron safe. I told them that there was nothing in it except the Lord's silver ornaments and that I had no key with me, for it was with my wife who was away. "You can break it open if you like, but I have not got the key with me!" I replied.

One of them put a heavy hand on my shoulder and removed the towel from off it. This gave me the suspicion for the first time that they had evil intentions on my life also. It was a warning signal to me. When they again brought me in front of my house, there were about 25 armed men and even on the surrounding road about 500 well-trained Malaya-returned soldiers stood on the alert. They talked in a language which I did not understand. It was not, in any case, an Indian language.

As I reached near my house, they bade me march towards the threshing-ground of my field which was about $1 \frac{1}{4}$ furlongs from the house. They started irritating me in various ways. "You did not open the safe." "You did not hand over the keys to us." "You started arguing when we asked you to share your field-proceeds with labourers" etc., etc.

Now I understood that my end was approaching. But I had somehow still a very deep faith in the Divine. I lifted my head and called for the help of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Then a miracle happened far sooner and far more tangibly than I could ever expect. I heard a few sounds which got translated in my mind into some such words as: "They are taking you southwards. They will give you a push and as soon as the push comes, run..."

It was a five minutes' walk from my house to the threshing-ground. Before starting, they made me give them ten gunny-bags of paddy seed and a tin full of kerosene oil. They emptied three-fourths of the tin on the bags and, keeping some wax-candles by the side of the bags, lit them so that by the time they reached the threshing-ground—that is to say, within five minutes—the whole house would be on fire and if people came on the spot they would run towards the house rather than towards the threshing-ground or towards the escaping murderers. This diversion would help them to carry out their designs.

As soon as we reached the spot, most of the men withdrew ready to escape. There were only two men behind me ready to kill. All along the way they

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kept me in their vigilant hold. As they reached the intended place, they left me free and gave me a heavy push so that as soon as I lay flat on the ground they would slash me from behind.

The push was near my neck. Immediately on getting it, I shot forward at full speed. And as soon as I ran, the bell of the temple which was about 1 1/4 furlongs from that place rang. The bell was the signal of danger. When my people had known that I was being taken to the threshing-ground they had run towards the temple to ring the bell. The coincidence of the ringing of the temple-bell and my running was the most important factor on which hung the question of my life or death. Had the bell rung before most of them had left me and I had been pushed, they would have killed me then and there on the way because I was still in their grip. But as I was made free to be pushed down I could escape. The ringing of the temple-bell, and most strangely, just at that very time, the great bellowing of about fifty cattle who were grazing in the field, made people run from miles towards the spot shouting "Coming, coming", "Run, run", "Danger, danger". The absence of the guards who had gone on leave was another strong point for my safety. Had they been there, they would have run to save or would have been running about shouting of danger. That also would have been another incitement to my captors to hurry up their work instead of choosing such a ceremonious plan of killing me on the threshing-ground.

As soon as I ran, the would-be murderers also ran behind me and, with their long spears, tried to pierce my body. I got a few jabs on my arms and shoulders and even on the back of my neck although I ran all along with my head bent low to avoid any deep wound.

When the shouting of the villagers increased, the two men ran back and disappeared.

When I returned later to my house, I found that the kerosene-sprinkled gunny-bags of paddy seed remained unburnt, for the candles consumed themselves to the end without touching the bags. This saved the house too from being gutted.

The whole incident had such a transforming effect on the entire structure of my life that even now my being remains full of utter gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who gave me new life from within as well as from without.

Compiled and reported by
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(POEMS TO THE MOTHER)

(Continued from the last issue)

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IV. THE NIGHT OF SOUL AND SELF-OBLIVION

(Continued)

26. FATALITY

ON what a waste my plane is forced descent,
In what marshland my boat has anchor cast,
The Force of the typhoon has broken my mast,
The energies of my being's crew are spent,
Heart-broken and exhausted pilots pant,
Fears gather as if a total holocaust
Would mar all in its fatal flare, a blast
Blow up the plane, the boat, life's all intent.

As if an unseen stroke has clipped my wings,
My echoless cries to wildernesses go,
As if all gives way, nature's conspiracy
Shall rest not till my limbs' freak-flutterings
Have distant chance to urge my journey fro.
Against all hope a hope that has a glow
Is a miracle thunderbolt from mystery.

(To be Continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE SPIRIT WITHIN

Joy bursts out in children's mirth,
Filling older eyes with gladness.
Yet is the joy beyond their yielding forms,
Where it rests but a moment in its endless play.

Joy cannot be contained,
For it is the essence of freedom.
It asks only that we yield,
As, trembling, its mirth engulfs us.
And more we should know is this :
Joy and the Spirit of Life are One.
Life rests not in the heavy elements,
But in the lighter airs which caress them.

Briefly the ethers dance through our hair ;
And we laugh—or we weep.
Then we are gone—to mingle again
With the infinite winds,
And seek, if we will, a fresher flower,
A new playmate, and a different game.

IRWIN L. ARLT

METEORS AND FIRE-FLIES

MODESTY is not necessarily or exclusively a 'feminine' virtue. Nor does it have anything to do with shyness, or coyness, or shrinking or saccharine sweetness. It is in reality a form of selflessness, an abandonment of self-love.

When a person is no longer conscious of his own 'merits', no longer justifies himself by his capacities or gifts, he is modest.

Modesty is a quality that comes by the realisation that the only thing that is wonderful, adorable and worthy of worship is the Divine, and as a consequence there is an entire absence of each and every form of the love of self...

Modesty and humility are inseparable twins, for where you find one you will inevitably discover the other.

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To acquire a reputation, even for sanctity itself, is to acquire another shackle, another label.

And we are wont to love our labels...

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Status is not stature. Our badges of rank, caste or accomplishment we can wear with safety only after they have ceased to fascinate us by their empty glitter.

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"Follow Me" says the Master, and points towards the Mother.

"Follow Me" says the Mother and points towards the Master.

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Austerity is that power of restraint with which we oppose the infiltrating and debilitating forces of laxity and indulgence.

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Our progress in anything, especially our progress towards the Divine, depends on how we handle ourselves when things go wrong.

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It is easy to be discouraged, empty of faith, disheartened and despondent. But can our strength grow if we have nothing to oppose? Can we become 'fighters' if we have nothing to fight?

We, the children of the Mother, are born to assert a positive Influence in the world, not to be negatively influenced by it. And there are combats and struggles too valuable to our spiritual life for the Divine to deprive us of them.

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It is usually with those of whose affection we feel most assured that we take the liberty of making a scapegoat for our irritations.

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Shame and pride, self-depreciation and self-aggrandisement, inferiority and superiority are the alternating tamasic and rajasic twins who between them often lead the soul in a compelling and hellish dance.

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Generous is the lady Renunciation, who in exchange for all my worthless offerings pours into my emptied hands treasures beyond all price.

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In the degree of our reservations in self-giving is the inhibition of our progress.

In the divine reciprocity, a fullness of love demands a fullness of action, without which a fullness of knowledge and power is impossible.

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It might be plausible that our first glad duty should be toward our fellow-man were it not for the fact that it is not through him that we have our existence and being, but through God.

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The most perilous form of egoism is to use the divine power for our own ends. Dynamic we must be, but instrumentally dynamic and dynamically instrumental. Blessed indeed is the humble of heart who never finds himself exposed to needless dangers, unlike the misled and credit-taking egoist whose

METEORS AND FIRE-FLIES

asuric-whipped fancy impels him to the belief that he has originated something that was always God's.

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The protracted study of profound complexities often results in the neglect of equally profound simplicities.

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A spiritual team-work, as any other kind of team-work, is always repugnant to the egotist who above all is concerned with the self-glorifying titillations of his own esteemed 'individuality'.

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The world is full of spiritual ideas wistfully looking for people to embody them.

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It may not be at first apparent but always are we emotionally involved in whatever seems to us important, so that our objective seeing is often clouded by our subjective feeling.

Things, events, ideas, people, have an emotional 'charge' for us or hold upon us because of their significance. It is only when God alone becomes important that we are heart-whole, dispassionate, uninvolved, free to offer in this serene liberty the unimpaired dynamism of our emotional being.

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We may admire the qualities of another with the wish that we may be 'like him'. Yet seldom do we wish to 'be he'. And why? Because we know, even if dimly, that there is something that is precious within us, something that constitutes our own wealth, something perfectly authentic, real, unique, truly original, of which the surface ego is but a broken and dim prefigurement, something that we alone can express and in our own inimitable way : the Divine.

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How often do we project onto another our own foibles and failings, so that what we thereafter see is not the person in himself but something that we, to our own satisfaction, have made of him.

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Moreover, when he suddenly flies from the pigeonhole we have thus presumptuously fashioned for him, we react with a surprised and bewildered dismay.

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When we are too old for the painted toys of the world then are we grown young enough to be the children of God.

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The humble are immediately lovable. They don't give you difficult intellectual examinations to pass before you can come close to them.

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In the spiritual life there can be no such thing as boredom. There is too much to do, to achieve, to become. Life is too full, too inwardly adventurous and spirit-thrilling for that benumbed state of partial death that we call boredom.

GODFREY

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(Continued from the last issue)

(C) AN AUROBINDONIAN CONTEMPLATES PHILOSOPHY¹

XXX. INTUITION THE SECRET GODHEAD²

“Far are those realms from our labour and yearning and call,
Perfection’s reign and hallowed sanctuary
Closed to the uncertain thoughts of human mind,
Remote from the turbid tread of mortal life.
But since our secret selves are next of kin,
A breath of unattained divinity
Visits the imperfect earth on which we toil;
Across a gleaming ether’s golden laugh
A light falls on our vexed unsatisfied lives,
A thought comes down from the ideal worlds
And moves us to new-model even here
Some image of their greatness and appeal
And wonder beyond the ken of mortal hope.”³

WHEN the self-awareness in the mind applied, both to continent and content, to own-self and other-self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity, the reason also converts itself into the form of the self-luminous intuitional knowledge.

But even before this highest possible state of our knowledge is attained, even in the normally uncertain and imperfect movements of the mind, Intuition is secretly at work. In fact, if we examine carefully, we shall find that Intuition is always our first teacher. Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operations. Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from

¹ Except for some connecting sentences, this section is for the most part a compilation from Sri Aurobindo’s own writings drawn from three of his major works, *The Life Divine*, *The Human Cycle* and *Savitri*.

² *The Life Divine* (Am. Ed.), pp. 64, 65, 549, 550.

³ *Savitri*, B. II, C. II, p. 297.

the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest. Intuition gives us that idea of something behind and beyond all that we know and seem to be which pursues man always in contradiction of his lower reason and all his normal experience and impels him to formulate that formless perception in the more positive ideas of God, Immortality, Heaven and the rest by which we strive to express it to the mind.

But Intuition by the very nature of its action in man, working as it does from behind the veil, active principally in his more unenlightened, less articulate parts, served in front of the veil, in the narrow light which is our waking consciousness, only by instruments that are unable fully to assimilate its messages, —Intuition is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which our nature demands. Before it could effect any such completeness of direct knowledge in us, it would have to organise itself in our surface being and take possession there of the leading part. But in our surface being it is not the Intuition, it is the Reason which is organised and helps us to order our perceptions, thoughts and actions. Therefore the age of intuitive knowledge in India, represented by the early Vedantic thinking of the Upanishads, had to give place to the age of rational knowledge; inspired Scriptures made room for metaphysical philosophy, even as afterwards metaphysical philosophy had to give place to experimental Science. Intuitive thought which is a messenger from the superconscious and therefore our highest faculty, was supplanted by the pure reason which is only a sort of deputy and belongs to the middle heights of our being; pure reason in its turn was supplanted for a time by the mixed action of the reason which lives on our plains and lower elevations and does not in its view exceed the horizon of the experience that the physical mind and senses or such aids as we can invent for them can bring to us.

But this intrusion of reason, whether in its mixed or pure form, deforms and distorts the intuitional core of knowledge. In fact, Error is a necessary accompaniment, almost a necessary condition and instrumentation, an indispensable step or stage in the slow evolution towards knowledge in a consciousness that begins from nescience and works in the stuff of a general nescience. The evolving consciousness has to acquire knowledge by an indirect means which does not give even a fragmentary certitude.

As a matter of fact, consciousness in its acquisition of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown; it builds a structure of acquired experience, memories, impressions, judgments, a composite mental plan of things which is of the nature of a shifting and even modifiable fixity. In the reception of new knowledge, what comes in to be received is judged in the light of past knowledge and fitted into the structure; if it cannot properly fit, it is either dove-

tailed in anyhow or rejected : but the existing knowledge and its structures or standards may not be applicable to the new object or new field of knowledge, the fitting may be a misfitting or the rejection may be an erroneous response. To misprision and wrong interpretation of facts, there is added misapplication of knowledge, miscombination, misconstruction, misrepresentation, a complicated machinery of mental error.

In all this enlightened obscurity of our mental parts a secret intuition is at work, a truth-urge that corrects or pushes the intelligence to correct what is erroneous, to labour towards a true picture of things and a true interpretative knowledge. But intuition itself is limited in the human mind by mental misprision of its intimations and is unable to act in its own right; for whether it be physical, vital or mental intuition, it has to present itself in order to be received, not nude and pure, but garbed with a mental coating or entirely enveloped in an ample mental vesture; so disguised, its true nature cannot be recognised and its relation to mind and its office are not understood, its way of working is ignored by the hasty and half-aware human intelligence. There are intuitions of actuality, of possibility, of the determining truth behind things, but all are mistaken by the mind for each other. A great confusion of half-grasped material and an experimental building with it, a representation or mental structure of the figure of self and things rigid and yet chaotic, half formed and arranged half jumbled, half true half erroneous, but always imperfect, is the character of human knowledge.

Error by itself, however, would not amount to falsehood; it would only be an imperfection of truth, a trying, an essay of possibilities : for when we do not know, untried and uncertain possibilities have to be admitted and, even if as a result an imperfect and inapt structure of thought is built, yet it may justify itself by opening to fresh knowledge in unexpected directions and either its dissolution and rebuilding or the discovery of some truth it concealed might increase our cognition or our experience. In spite of the mixture created the growth of consciousness, intelligence and reason could arrive through this mixed truth to a clearer and truer figure of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. The obstruction of the original and enveloping inconscience would diminish, and an increasing mental consciousness would reach a clarity and wholeness which would enable the concealed powers of direct knowledge and intuitive process to emerge, utilise the prepared and enlightened instruments and make mind-intelligence their true agent and truth-builder on the evolutionary surface.

But here the second condition or factor of the evolution intervenes bringing in its wake a falsification of knowledge.

XXXI. FIRST SOURCE OF ERROR

LIMITATION BY PERSONALITY¹

“The world thinks that it moves by the light of reason, but it is really impelled by its faiths and instincts.

Reason adapts itself to the faith or argues out a justification of the instincts; but it receives the impulse subconsciously, therefore men think that they act rationally.”²

Ordinarily, the seeking for knowledge is not an impersonal mental process hampered only by the general limitations of mind-intelligence : the ego is there, the physical ego, the life ego bent, not on self-knowledge and the discovery of the truth of things and the truth of life, but on vital self-affirmation; a mental ego is there also bent on its own personal self-affirmation and largely directed and used by the vital urge for its life-desire and life-purpose. For as mind develops, there develops also a mental individuality with a personal drive of mind-tendency, a mental temperament, a mind formation of its own. This surface mental individuality is ego-centric; it looks at the world and things and happenings from its own stand-point and sees them not as they are but as they affect itself : in observing things it gives them the turn suitable to its own tendency and temperament, selects or rejects, arranges truth according to its own mental preference and convenience; observation, judgment, reason are all determined or affected by this mind-personality and assimilated to the needs of the individuality and the ego. Even when the mind aims most at a pure impersonality of truth and reason, a sheer impersonality is impossible to it; even the most trained, severe and vigilant intellect fails to observe the twists and turns it gives to truth in the reception of fact and idea and the construction of its mental knowledge. Here we have an almost inexhaustible source of distortion of truth, a cause of falsification, an unconscious or half-conscious will to error, an acceptance of ideas or facts not by a clear perception of the true and the false, but by preference, personal suitability, temperamental choice, prejudgement. Here is a fruitful seed-plot for the growth of falsehood or gate or many gates through which it can enter by stealth or by an usurping but acceptable violence. Truth too can enter in and take up its dwelling, not by its own right, but at the mind’s pleasure.

This limitation of mind-consciousness by personality and of truth by mental temperament and preference must be the rule of our nature so long as the indi-

¹ *The Life Drive*, pp. 550-551; *The Human Cycle*, pp. 129-131.

² Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, p. 43.

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

vidual has not reached universality, is not yet preparing for mind-transcendence. But it is evident that this condition is inevitably a source of error and can at any moment be the cause of a falsification of knowledge, an unconscious or half-wilful self-deception, a refusal to admit true knowledge, a readiness to assert acceptable wrong knowledge as true knowledge.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

VIVEKANANDA

VIVEKANANDA is the embodiment of the newly awakened, heroic and eternal soul of India. India forgot herself, forgot what she was, what was her mission in the world. With the true nature of her psychic being gone out of her consciousness, India was sunk in slumber. India had lost her spirit, virility, wisdom and, in the process of evolution, was about to be swamped by the deluge of an utter destruction. Vivekananda lifted India up as did the Lord when he had incarnated himself as a white boar and lifted the earth from the ocean-bed with his pointed teeth. Thus with his indomitable power Vivekananda upheld India before the world and awakened her to establish herself in the assembly of nations. Or he is, as it were, the Indra of the Vedas. Panis had removed the Sun and concealed him in a cave. Indra cleaved through the rocks and rescued him from the robbers and raised him from the darkness to the heavens above. So runs the mythological story. In the same way, Vivekananda brought India, the knowledge-sun of humanity, out of the tenebrous abyss of degradation and established her in her original glory and her pristine Light.

Many had preceded him with the message of the awakening of India and many a man of action had come down to clear the path and create the field. But Vivekananda was a Seer. He saw and revealed the mystic word, by the force of which the godhead of India took form and stood vibrant with life. The seer is he whose vision and creative power go together. His creative genius is the fruit of his vision. The seer-vision of Vivekananda cast aside all veils and non-essentials and penetrated straight into the soul of India and, like Bhagirath, inundated the world with her glory. With the force and fire of his dynamic vital he gave her a living and mighty reality.

Hosts of seers and saints had invoked the awakening dawn, but no sooner did Vivekananda utter, "Awake, Mother, awake," than India's power in its fullness manifested. Vivekananda's gift was the mantra of strength, of self-reliance, of self-power and self-control. Just a few words constitute his whole philosophy, all his magic—"No fear, Brahman am I. Fear not ! Infinite is your courage, limitless your capacity. You are the very Brahman. Awake in the Being of the Brahman within you. Know who you are and what you are. You will blow off the illusion of attachment to the small and the petty, the sense

of inferiority and incapability. Man's entire sadhana consists in kindling this fire of the Brahman, the flaming tongues of which will purify him by consuming all impurities in order to manifest the blazing forms of the Vast in whatever he does and creates. How shall this fire be kindled ? By *śraddhā*, by the power of faith alone. A man becomes as is his faith. A man becomes whoever or whatever he has faith in."

It was all due to Vivekananda that on the life-plane of India, in her mundane occupation, there entered faith in the self. And thus the fire of the Brahman lighted up.

Vivekananda's was the creation that was instinct with the impulsion of life and it flowed in currents of power. It was not his mission to give an actual form to the creation of a well-built and lovely external image. Vivekananda diffused his inspiration and illumination over the firmament and set the country's heart-strings vibrating. That is why we do not find anything static in his creation. He has sketched many forms and has pointed out many a line of multiple beauty. But these were merely constructive hints and suggestions. If we adhere to any one of them *in toto* we shall be cramping and limiting the the real Vivekananda. Even his philosophical truths and the conclusions he arrived at and the spiritual secrets he revealed should not be regarded as something final and irrefutable, for Vivekananda's advent was not meant for formulating a new scripture. He did not take upon himself the burden of constructing the body, the outer shape. The first vibration of the descent of the soul into life which is the source of all external creation, the awakening of the individual soul in its real nature which is divine—this constitutes the real Vivekananda. The first requisite is to be awakened in one's own self, to be able to feel an altogether new flow-tide in vital power. The thing next to be done, the power that will organise and regulate this awakened life and its activities, is a matter for the future. All problems will have their infallible solutions as the inevitable result of the powerful awakening of the soul when achieved. These problems can be solved in various ways and Vivekananda has given countless instances of them. He did not consider it at all necessary for his work to evaluate, harmonise and organise his solutions. In the midst of various contradictory and disorganised conclusions Vivekananda had only one word to say : "This self is not to be attained by the weakling."

Vivekananda was not a householder, yet he was not a sannyasin. He was a highly spiritual aspirant; nevertheless his patriotism had no parallel. Vivekananda told the youths of India to set aside the Gita and play football. Again it is he who gave them the call to wear the loin cloth and lift high the ochre-coloured banner. He has accepted all these as the symbol of a profounder truth. Whether you become a sannyasin or a philanthropist or a patriot, first you

must become a man. Vivekananda welcomed the manifestation of the Brahman in any form, be it in the strength of the sannyasin or in the power of the leader of men, in self-abnegation or in self-reliance.

He was a worshipper of the Upanishads, not because he could acquire from the Upanishads the knowledge of deeper and subtler spiritual truths, not because of the light they shed but because of the fire they emit, the lightning that strikes and awakens in man the presence of the Brahman, and because only the Upanishads have the hardihood to declare, "Thou art That."

Vivekananda was largely an upholder of the doctrine of Maya, but in reality Karmayoga was the motto of his life. According to him, the true Mayavada is freedom from the bondage of limitation, the backward pull of attachment—a sense of infinity which sunders the knots of the heart and before which the entire world appears to be quite insignificant, a mere toy in one's palm to play with. Therefore Vivekananda's conception of the Brahman is totally different from the static, immobile and the infinite Void of Shankara. He looked upon the Brahman as the most solid dynamism. The Brahman signifies the full glory and magnificence of the soul of man. He has viewed the static Brahman too with an eye of appreciation, because its immobility comprises perfected power self-absorbed. He aspired for the Infinite Void as well. For the individual soul feels a unique and powerful urge to identify itself with the Infinite Void. Vivekananda has sung the glory of renunciation as a source of strength. But as a matter of fact, his nature was that of a man poised in meditation and yet not averse to action. He wanted action founded on the Brahman—practical Vedanta. Vivekananda sought to establish India's life on the Brahman. He has awakened and dynamised the eternal soul and spiritual being of India and stimulated her life.

The eternal power of the Brahman residing in the soul of India has been activated by this lion of a man. But how to give it a practical form in life in all its minute detail and to make a subtle and apt appreciation of it he has not indicated; and to approach him for this is to take him amiss.

It is thus that Vivekananda has placed India's mission also before the world. Life is to be built up with the power of the Brahman. He has laid stress on the Brahman even in Europe which is moved and guided by the Vital Force. India has to be poised in the Brahman, to attain to the power of the Brahman. Herein lies India's distinction, a distinction that belongs to her soul. The true function of India consists in preserving, cherishing and keeping it up for the entire world. And this lies at the root of the message of human unity and of synthesis of religions that Vivekananda carried over the world. The ceremonials, the outer forms of religions vary in different climes and different ages. The repose in the Brahman with all its power is the truth by which humanity can be inspired

VIVEKANANDA

with the idea of unity and it is here that all religious practices are one. This alone is the quintessence of all true religious practices.

India's Shakti is the soul of the world. And this Shakti is replete with the fire of the Brahman—that ensures man's attainment of ultimate godhood by the awakening of the Self, the infinite Power, Freedom, Tranquillity, the spirit of Askesis. Vivekananda is the divine dynamism descended into the life-atmosphere of the world. He appears at the meeting-point of the past bidding it adieu and entering a new age, a new life.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali in "Banglar Pran.")

THE NEW LEAD IN PHILOSOPHY

I

THE Indian mind has a special seeking for philosophical truth and its sensitivity to philosophical ideas is keen. The Indians themselves are less likely to observe and know this, but when others notice and mention it, they easily recognise it. And foreigners with different cultural backgrounds perceive the fact in quite original ways. One with a religious predisposition observes that "India has sought God as no other country has done" and feels impressed by the reasoning of even young boys about truth, soul, immortality, unity of life and Supreme Existence. Another with a general cultural interest finds that "the perception of wholeness is the most joyous of all experiences to the Hindu mind." A third with a philosophical background notes that "for the Hindu, the spiritual is regarded as a fundamental fact and it is for him more real than the physical." We are pleasantly surprised by these remarks and easily find ourselves in an assenting mood. We feel that we have undoubtedly found delight in seeking God, that "Adwaita" or oneness or wholeness has been a profound joy to us and that the spiritual is a fairly common fact. But we know too well that, for some considerable time, it has not been anything more than a mere tradition. The sense of creativity has been reawakening only of late, making us feel all the more acutely the bondage of the traditional habit which had ruled over us for such a long time. From our present reawakened state we are inclined to look back on our entire past to see and recognise the vicissitudes, the great ups and downs we have passed through and to consider with longing and curiosity the possible lines of our future development.

As we look back we naturally find the Upanishads to be the first great landmark in our philosophical history. They stand out to us as the evidence of a spirit, sincere, bold and persevering in its search of the truth of ultimate reality, the Atman and the Brahman. There we find a large variety of perceptions and visions of Reality and a great courage of conviction and the sincerity of faith to live them out and experience the complete truth of those views. Both *neti, neti*, "not this, not this" and *sarvam khalvidam Brahman*, "verily all this is Brahman", are there. *Annam*, matter, *prāṇa*, life, and *manas*, mind, too are Brahman. The world is termed *samsāra* and *māyā*, transient and unreal, and yet all is *Ananda*, pure bliss. And besides these many more glimpses and views of the truth of life and existence, are expressed. They are all charged with a sense of life and reality and possess a remarkable power of inspiration. They strike the reader as facts of realisation, of living experience. They draw upon the previous realisations of the Vedas and have, with a remarkable power,

inspired subsequent thought and life. The six great systems and the Buddhist philosophy have all sprung from them and they are a continuing influence like a perennial spring of life and knowledge.

The Upanishads give us essentially the basic intuitions and realisations of truth, the facts of spiritual experience. They do not undertake to make them understandable to reason. It appears that the age was in general so intuitive in character that what mattered to them were the facts of spiritual experience, the essential truths of life and existence. The curiosity for intellectual explanations was not born and the seers of the age did not find it necessary to advance elaborate arguments to prove their affirmations of truth. But the native vitality and force of those affirmations was such that they commanded acceptance and, when the age needed intellectual evidence and proof, systems-builders and later on commentators appeared, who gave them the necessary intellectual form. These men had great intellectual curiosity and they sought to satisfy the reason. But it is interesting that the intellect of Indian philosophy recognised the basic and the essential character of the spiritual experiences of the Upanishads and was, therefore, able to hold itself in proper relation to intuition, the proper instrument for the cognition of absolute reality. It was, thus, able to convey to an intellectual age the spiritual truth of ultimate reality in a convincing manner with all the necessary wealth of logical argument.

However, immediately after the age of the Upanishads, which is truly the the age of the spirit, a long period ensued, which sought to build up a strong social order and evolve the appropriate standards of conduct for it. This was the age of the Dharma. During this time the great Manu and his laws came to the fore, other law-givers came in his wake and Buddhism spread in the land. All sought to evolve the right social order and conduct. During this age the spiritual intuitions of the Upanishads, which remained the constant inspiration all through, sought a social and ethical application and enrichment.

The Sutra age marked the beginning of the intellectual age and the times of Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhava the highest fruition of it, when the great vedantic systems of Indian philosophy were created. But after the Twelfth Century, though many new standpoints continued to be represented, nothing great was produced. Not that the situation did not demand new synthesis. In fact, it badly did. But the response was a forceful Bhakti movement, which does indeed, appear to have given solace to the troubled soul of the times. And with that went a variety of philosophical outlooks. Yet that was essentially a solution of religion, and philosophy made no conscious and deliberate attempt to present to the times the synthesis needed. The logical school of Nadia in Bengal, which flourished in the Seventeenth Century, is the last creation in philosophy after the time of the great Acharyas.

MOTHER INDIA

The last century, however, witnessed a strong Indian renaissance and leaders of thought and life have repeatedly affirmed new standards, aiming at a conscious reorientation and reconstruction of life as a whole. This process has assumed a complete national character since Independence and there is now a general tendency to recover the conscious continuity of our cultural history and recreate life in a competent and effective manner. Evidently this calls for a proper philosophical synthesis as the basis of the cultural life that is sought to be created. Without a right philosophical basis the cultural life will lack the integrality of a proper view of existence and hence will suffer from inner conflicts. This is the great challenge of the times to the philosophical mind of contemporary India. And fortunately enough the country has not lacked the lead it needed. In Sri Aurobindo the Vedantic tradition reasserts itself, new-born, confident to meet the challenge of the times. It accepts life and world, modern science and the contemporary mentality, and effectuates a conciliation of them all to the supreme reality of the Brahman. The world is, in fact, affirmed as the proper stage for the realisation and manifestation of the Supreme Brahman. Matter is not unreal, nor is it a denial of the spirit, but a thick veil which the spirit has put upon itself as a self-hiding and which is, in fact, the condition and incentive to self-discovery. Matter is, therefore, a form of concealment meant to reveal the spirit. All life, individual and social, national and international, is such a process, full of the joy of the self-discovery of the spirit. Pain and suffering too are not illusory, but they are the conditions of the narrower and limited consciousness of egoistic living, which the unfolding spirit seeks progressively to transform. Sri Aurobindo's new synthesis thus evokes a spirit of evolutionary progress and calls upon the individual as well as the society to seek the higher consciousness of the spirit.

According to Sri Aurobindo, Nature in her normal way too is doing it. Matter, life and mind are cumulatively in travail to bring forth the spirit. But man, at his level, can become a conscious participant in this cosmic work and that will aid and expedite the process a great deal. Religion too is here reborn in a new form, which is a refreshing and invigorating message to the present-day world. Religion is essentially a science of the Infinite, and its various positive forms are so many popular methods to help mankind to approach the Divine. The Spirit and the Spirit's riches are the true objectives and the different religions are the practical ways of realising and enjoying them. Thus a religion of spiritual life appears on the horizon, which gives a relative value to the ceremonials and makes the spirit and its different experiences the essential value to be sought, realised and ever enriched by further realisations through all approaches and methods.

Such is the new lead which comes to nascent India, when her need

for a basic philosophical synthesis to reconstruct her cultural life is really keen and pressing. And it being a synthesis, which arises out of the country's own philosophical soil and which shows a complete confidence to meet the problems of the present situation, it naturally moves us deeply and challenges us to think and ponder and rebuild. But philosophy is essentially universal. It builds on human experience as a whole and on all existence. And the experience and life of humanity is today one as perhaps it has never been before. Sri Aurobindo's philosophical synthesis is therefore, properly speaking, a synthesis proceeding no doubt from the cultural premises of India but in fact one that offers an interpretation of our general contemporary experience and proposes a solution for the essential cultural problem that faces mankind as a whole. In truth, it primarily addresses itself to the general problem that faces mankind, that of the cultural crisis precipitated by science, and offers a view of life and existence, which might give us clarity in the situation. It is, therefore, a philosophical synthesis for our world situation today and is India's contribution to our common problem.

II

In our survey of the long past of our philosophical life we have noticed a number of periods and their varied tendencies. But we have, in this connection, also to recognise that our recent past, about a century, since the introduction of western learning, has been a short period with a character of its own. And its practical significance is very great, since, while we seek to recover the inspiration of the great creative periods of our earlier history, the working force of this last period under whose influence we have grown up is practically the greatest. It has given us new standards of philosophical life and they, in course of a hundred years, have almost acquired the force of habit with us. These standards belong to the European tradition, learning and culture and are substantially different from those of our country. During this period Indian life and learning were very inadequately represented in our education and, therefore, this period on the whole constitutes an interruption in our cultural history. In order that it may not continue to exist in our mentality as such and that its positive good may be properly assimilated, it is necessary that we should critically evaluate it and become clearly conscious of its nature and character as also of its premises of thought and life.

The Greek life, which is the fount and source of European civilisation, was a system of life and culture devoted to truth, beauty and goodness as the highest ideals. The dedication of Greek life to these ideals was sincere and whole-hearted and it succeeded in creating an almost perfect model of mental

culture. But a concrete and abiding sense and appreciation of the spirit and spiritual life it did not happen to acquire or develop. The Renaissance in Europe aimed at a revival of the Greek spirit through a return to Greek learning and its essential effect was the affirmation of reason and intellect as an absolute instrument of inquiry and knowledge. This has been the basic premise of the entire modern science and learning. For the exploration of physical nature it was undoubtedly the right instrument. Its analytical character and outward-directedness (*bhedātmaktā* and *bahurmukhtā*), its adaptedness to a consideration of the outer forms of individual things and their mutual relationships, makes it eminently suited to that task. But where the inner essences of things and where wholenesses are concerned it has no better alternative than to venture constructs of them. Modern philosophy in Europe came under the influence of the Renaissance motive as much as science did, and the result has been a complete commitment to reason as the proper instrument of philosophical knowledge. In consequence, philosophy became a "thinking consideration of things", "an adventure of ideas" in place of being a seeking and discovery of ultimate reality. It avowedly became a discipline of knowledge, which attempted constructs of Reality. Recently Bergson has rightly recognised intellect to be the function evolved for purposes of action and adapted to deal with the edges and surfaces, the shapes and forms of things. But this has not succeeded in giving a new turn to European philosophy. It has not enabled it to discover its true relation with reason and, therefore, the general stream of European thought flows on as before. Latterly, it has reached a sort of culmination in a system of thought, which affirms that all metaphysical judgments are meaningless, and thereby places questions of Reality outside the purview of philosophy.

With the introduction of western learning in Indian philosophical education which was given essentially through western literature, the afore-mentioned premise of modern European philosophy became the general basis of philosophical thought and life here. In consequence philosophy here too tended to become more and more an adventure of ideas, a theoretical pursuit, a pure joy of the intellect. In doing so, it naturally tended to be imitative and derivative, because it sought to build upon Western thought and tradition. Even when it sought to understand and interpret Indian philosophy, it looked upon the latter as a purely intellectual activity and gave it the best intellectual form. This, however, involved a failure to recognise that the Indian philosophical motive had been one of life as a whole, not purely intellectual, and that its primary instrument for the cognition of Reality had been spiritual intuition and not intellectual apprehension and ratiocination. Indian philosophy thus conceived and pursued was naturally bereft of its proper life and could not be revived into creative activity.

Along with this basic premise of Western philosophy a new scale of philosophical values have also tended to become current. Humanism and moral values have tended to become supreme and displace the proper spiritual values. The emphasis has shifted from Reality to man and, therefore, the significance of the contact of Reality to man grown less.

However, the intellectual premise of life and learning and the humanistic and moral scale of values are the essentials of the present European epoch of human history and culture and they naturally tend to become universal. With them has come a great stirring of life which has awakened peoples to self-consciousness and urged them to activity. Intellectual and moral culture is surely a high human attainment. But, of late, because of the developments of recent history and the cultural difficulties brought to the fore by it, it has been under much critical examination. And it has been more and more felt that the present culture needs a revaluation, that science must be inspired by a higher purpose, that the different disciplines of knowledge running into grooves of specialisation must rediscover their unity, that philosophy must be related to life and so on. Sri Aurobindo recognises the present scientific age as the culmination of a period, during which the powers of reason and intellect have been fully experienced and their positive values well appreciated. The present sense of limitation and frustration is, to him, an indication of the fact that mankind must rise to a higher power of consciousness than the mental i.e. spiritual. However, the spiritual power to be attempted now should not be the one experienced in isolation of the world as before, but the one which must wield and guide the world and all its rich activity.

Under these circumstances, the Asian nations that seem to set out on a fresh period of independent and conscious life will naturally tend to be critical in rebuilding their life of thought and culture. And it is well that they should be so. If they are able to revive the essential spiritual value of their old culture and synthesise it with the present-day conditions of life, it will be a new qualitative contribution to the contemporary world culture.

India, evidently, has a special responsibility in this respect. Her past experiments and experiences in spiritual life give her the necessary endowment of disposition to attempt the cultural synthesis and creation urgently called for by the present age. And in this regard a clear and sure lead has gone forth from her in the message and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, which is 'evoking quite a satisfying response from many quarters of the world.

(To be continued)

INDRASEN

BUDDHISM *VIS-A-VIS* HINDUISM

BUDDHISM is returning home to India after a long exile of a thousand years and, like the proverbial prodigal son, is being received with open arms. Religious tolerance of the average Hindu and unfortunately for a long time also his religious indifference partly explain the warm reception. But a very important reason is also the fact that Buddha and Buddhism form an intimate part of the Hindu consciousness. Buddha was a Hindu. Buddhism is Hindu in its origin, development, culmination, in its art and architecture, iconography, language, beliefs, and psychology, names and nomenclature, religious vows and spiritual discipline. Though living in distant lands for so long, it remains essentially Hindu, at least, at the highest level, in the expression of its religious ideals and spiritual experience. Hinduism is not all Buddhism, but Buddhism forms part of the ethos which is essentially Hindu.

Though that is the general reaction of an average Hindu who carries within him the memories of a distant India, academic scholarship dealing in views and schools of thought as self-sufficient entities, discussing religious systems of thought divorced from the living tradition of religion, has reached quite a different conclusion. According to these scholars and translators, Buddhism was a revolt against Hinduism, not only against the prevailing caste-system and sacrificial cults, but also against the whole spiritual tradition and premises of the age.

In fact certain powerful politicians of marxist-secularist persuasion are extending a warm welcome to Buddhism because in it they see a timely corrective to the super-natural prejudices of Hinduism regarding God and soul, superstitions which weaken a nation. According to them, Buddha was rather a clever student of logical positivism, a thorough-going rationalist and empiricist.¹ Endowed with healthy scepticism, he saw through the so-called established truths of religion, but being discreet also he refrained from expressing his *real* opinions on religious questions too fully and openly. Thus observing tactical silence over religious questions he taught people a *rational morality* called his three

¹ Even Dr. Radhakrishnan, no foreigner to religious thought, has made statements which strengthen this positivistic interpretation of Buddhism. He says of Buddha that "he is a rationalist, since he wished to study reality or experience without any reference to supernatural revelation ..He wished to lead men by mere force of logic to his views ..He wanted to establish a religion within the bounds of pure reason...He is a dialectician, arguing with his opponents to lead them to liberation."

śīlas, in this way lopping off by means of an Occam's razor the whole mystical superstructure.

Thus Buddhism is being recommended as a school of rationality and social morality without the superfluous adjunct of religion; morality without God or soul.

We reject these evaluations of Buddhism. True, Buddha was a great mind whose eyes pierced through the shows of things to their core, but he was no rationalist in the modern sense of the term. Instead, he had a healthy contempt for all the intellectual systems and theories so popular with rationalists of all ages. He called their labour at theorising "a jungle, a wilderness, a puppet show, a writhing and a fetter...coupled with misery, ruin, despair and agony". For arriving at truth, he did not adopt the method of classification, comparison, verification, deduction, experimentation which is what a rational approach means, but the method of meditation, intuition, passive aspiration resulting in a sudden transcendental illumination—the method of going beyond mind for the light of the Truth.

Nor do we agree with the other view which equates Buddhism with a moral discipline alone. Buddha himself rejected such admirers of his, unceremoniously. He called them "witlings" or "dunces" and affirmed that his teachings on moral conduct were "not significant" and were only of "secondary importance". He declared that his teachings regarding meditation (samadhi) and transcendental knowledge (prajna) were the most important.¹

Not only the spiritual base above, of Buddhist morality and rationality is being denied and disregarded, but even its certain basic transcendental concepts are being secularised. Speaking in Tokyo, on October 6, 1957, Mr. Nehru said that "Japan, China and India had one bond in common, and that is the Buddhist message of compassion, *not meaning it in the religious sense*".

There may be a compassion without religion which India and China may have in common, but that is certainly not of the great Buddha. Buddha's compassion was the deep and living concern of the "enlightened" one for his fellow creatures caught in the web of existence, birth, disease, decay and death, caught on the wheel of repeated births. The secular compassion on the other hand possibly means—one can only guess the meaning—the concern of an oligarchic state managing the economic affairs and the mental and spiritual life of the masses of people it controls.

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¹ We have refrained from mentioning here a third rendering of Buddhism which is existentialist. "being trapped", "nothingness", "emptiness", "meaninglessness", the usual Sartrean fare, constitute, according to this rendering, the basic motifs of Buddhism.

BUDDHA'S SILENCE

After this brief digression, we come back to the point from which we started, namely the relationship of Buddhism with its parent religion, Hinduism.

The nature of this relationship is clouded and misunderstood and its intimacy minimized for two reasons. One reason is Buddha's silence over such fundamental questions as Brahma, God and soul, questions which occupy the centre of interest in the Upanishadic literature. The other reason is Buddha's individual nuances and emphases which, though not lacking in the Upanishads yet forming only a part of the whole, do not create in those scriptures the same overwhelming impression of one-sidedness.

First we shall discuss Buddha's silence. The reasons why he refrained from discussions relating to God and soul are two. He refused to answer all questions that did not lead to an individual's practical spiritual benefit. Spirituality tends to be very practical. In Moses, it took the form of bare commandments. It avoids all idle preoccupation with intellectual systems.

Its practicality was eminently necessary in the days of Buddha. From the Buddhist accounts of those days one finds that the country was reeking with innumerable soul-losing systems of thought, a bewildering maze of opinions in which the mind was irretrievably lost. There prevailed 62 systems of philosophy, 18 theories regarding the origin of the world, 44 theories regarding its end. There were 22 methods of penance in food, 13 in clothing. There were interminable discussions regarding the state of the soul after death. There were akriyavadis, daivavadis, jarvadis, akritatavadis, anishchitvadis, dialecticians and intellectuals of all varieties. There were big halls in every city where intellectuals foregathered and discussed theories regarding God, soul, time and space. No wonder the soul got lost in these intellectual exercises. Mentation became a perfect substitute for God-seeking. For a spiritual being, this atmosphere is truly distasteful. Right effort is more important than idle cerebration. No wonder Buddha refused to entertain these questions. Clever people would come to him and put the same question in many forms, but Buddha responded to them with silence.

That the interests of Buddha were fully practical is very well brought out by a dialogue the Blessed One had with a monk named Venerable Malunkya-putta. The monk said to himself: These theories which the Blessed One has left unelucidated, has set aside and rejected,—that the world is eternal, that the world is not eternal, that the world is finite, that the world is infinite, that the soul and the body are identical, that the soul is one thing and the body another, that the saint exists after death, that the saint does not exist after death, that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, that the saint neither exists nor

does not exist after death,—these The Blessed One does not elucidate to me. He therefore decided that if The Blessed One did not do that he would abandon religious training.

The Blessed One answered his doubts with the help of an inimitable illustration. He began by saying: "It is as if, Malunkyaputta, a man had been wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and companions, his relatives and kinsfold, were to procure for him a physician or surgeon; and the sick man were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me belonged to the warrior caste, or to the Brahmin caste, or to the agricultural caste, or to the menial caste; his name and the clan he belonged to; learnt whether he was tall, short, or of the middle height; was black, dusky or of a yellow skin; was from this or that village or town or city; whether the bow which wounded me was a capa or a kodanda; whether the bowstring was made from swallow-wort or bamboo or sinew or marava or from milk-weed; whether the shaft was a kaccha or a repima; whether it was feathered from the wings of a vulture, a heron, a falcon, a peacock, or a sithilahanu; whether it was wound round with the sinews of an ox, a buffalo, a ruru deer or of a monkey; whether it was an ordinary arrow, or a claw-headed arrow, or a vekanda, or an iron arrow, or a calf-tooth arrow, or a karavira-patta'. That man would die, Malunkyaputta, without ever having learnt this."

"In exactly the same way", Buddha added, "Malunkyaputta, any one who should say, 'I will not lead the religious life under the Blessed One until the Blessed One shall elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal—or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death;'—that person would die, Malunkyaputta, before the Tathagata had ever elucidated anything to him."

Buddha further concluded, "The religious life, Malunkyaputta, does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal or not eternal, infinite or finite, that the soul and the body are identical or different, or the dogma that the saint exists or does not exist after death." The elucidation of these points is bootless. It "profits not, nor has it to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana."

INEFFABILITY OF TRANSCENDENTAL EXPERIENCE

There was another reason why Buddha refused to discuss metaphysical questions. It was not only the futility of these questions, but the impossibility of answering them in a language intelligible to the mind. The Kena Upanishad says: "There the eye goes not; speech goes not, nor the mind. We

know not, we understand not, how one would teach it." Buddha found himself in the same predicament. Things which according to all spiritual literature lie beyond mind cannot be rendered into mental concepts. Any answer made to these questions therefore "does not fit the case", as Buddha emphasized repeatedly.

Buddha illustrated his point with the help of a very apt analogy which, incidentally, also indicated his view on the question of the real status of a liberated soul. If a fire were to burn in front of you, you would be aware of this fact. You would also be aware of the fact that the fire depended on fuel of grass and wood for its burning. Further, if this fire were to become extinct, you would also be aware of this fact. "But, Vaccha, if some one were to ask you, 'In which direction has that fire gone,—east, or west, or south?' what would you say, O Vaccha?"

"The question would not fit the case, Gautama. For the fire which depended on fuel of grass and wood, when that fuel has all gone, and it can get no other, being thus without nutriment, is said to be extinct," Vaccha replied.

Buddha concluded: "In exactly the same way, Vaccha, all forms, all consciousness by which one could predicate the existence of the saint, when that form and consciousness have been abandoned, uprooted, pulled out of the ground like a palmyra-tree, become non-existent and not liable to spring up again in the future. The saint, O Vaccha, who has been released from what is styled consciousness, is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable, like the mighty ocean. To say that he is reborn would not fit the case. To say that he is not reborn would not fit the case. To say that he is both reborn and not reborn would not fit the case. To say that he is neither reborn nor yet reborn would not fit the case."

The Vedanta has not given a different answer. True, its language has been more positive, but the answer has not been dissimilar. According to the Mandukya Upanishad the transcendental reality is a-drasta (unseen), a-graha (ungraspable), a-cintya (non-thinkable) a-laksana (non-distinctional), a-vyapadesya (undesignable).

When the soul or self is enthralled in matter, in the relativity of things, in names and forms, what "one" knows (or rather what is known) is change, flux, pain, bondage, a cluster of sensation-groups which one regards as one's self. But when the knot of existence has been loosened, when the world of forms and names dissolves, vanishes, the saint or the freed soul enters into a state which is "deep, immeasurable, unfathomable like a mighty ocean" and which is, as we shall see, characterized by the attributes of freedom, peace, bliss and consciousness.

(To be continued)

RAM SWARUP

IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT ?

SOME CRITICISMS AND SUGGESTIONS

(*Continued from the July issue*)

23

A STORM of protest is likely to burst here : “You forget that the *Rājatarangini* (III, 125-129) makes a Pratāpaśīla, also named Śīlāditya, the successor of Vikramāditya of Mālava and that the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who travelled in India from about 630 to 645 A.D. speaks of a Śīlāditya of Mālava who reigned sixty years before his time and who must therefore have died in about 570 A.D., a time suggesting the beginning of his reign to be near enough to 532 A.D. which we get for Yasodharman’s inscription on equating the Mālava Era to the Vikrama Era of 57 B.C. Hiuen Tsang’s Śīlāditya is thus a successor of Yasodharman just as Kalhana’s is of Vikramāditya. Further, Bāṇa, who like Hiuen Tsang was a contemporary of Harshavardhana of Thaneshwar and Kanouj, records in his *Harshacharita*¹ that Harsha’s father Prabhākaravardhana won the name Pratapaśīla by his conquests. So we have a further link between the circumstances just before the time of Hiuen Tsang and Bāṇa and those mentioned in the *Rājatarangini*. As we cannot change the date of Hiuen Tsang and Bāṇa, Yasodharman must be kept in 532 A.D. and called Vikramāditya as done by Hoernle², and the phrase Vikrama Era must be considered chronologically a spurious one for what is really the Mālava Era. Another very cogent argument against transposing Yasodharman to 74 B.C. is our knowledge that the Ephthalite Huns started moving east from the Oxus valley in about the middle of the fifth century A.D. and first entered India in the time which on Fleet’s Gupta Era would be the reign of Skandagupta who himself in an inscription refers to his victory over them. Do you propose to put Hiuen Tsang in the first century A.D., a little after the traditional Vikramaditya’s time, and to carry the Hun invasion to the pre-Christian age ?”

Quite a good answer can be given. There is no evidence that the Hūna-invaders of India during the reign of Skandagupta were the Ephthalite Huns

¹ Mookerji, *Harsha*, p. ; *The Classical Age*, p. 96.

² *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1909, p. 446f.

whose campaigns our historians date in the middle of the fifth century A.D.—unless we take it for granted that Skandagupta lived where Fleet would place him. Nor are the Hunas of Yasodharman's inscription distinguished by anything to render them identifiable with the Ephthalites. Indian chronology has nothing to make the Hunas (Chinese "Hüng-nu" or "Hsung-nu") impossible in India in the pre-Christian period. The Puranas put them no less than the Sakas and Tusharas in just this period. And we know that the Huns were active on the borders of China for over three hundred years before Christ. We may cast a glance at their activities.¹ In 318 B.C. they were troubling the Chinese empire. In 215 they were again engaged in war and suffered a defeat. Round about 212 the Emperor Shu Huang-ti was completing the Great Wall to keep them out. Foiled by the Great Wall they might easily have sought other fields of adventure to the south-east. And indeed it was while the Great Wall was being completed that they formed for the first time a nation united and strong, capable of just such an excursion. On our computation Skandagupta's reign in Gupta Era 135-147 falls in 189-177 B.C., precisely the time when the Huns, on a south-eastern war-path, could have struck at India in the way we might imagine from the Bhitari Seal Inscription. No *a priori* ground exists against a Huna invasion in the 2nd century B.C. Whether it actually occurred or not can be judged only according as we date Skandagupta and Yasodharman.

With regard to Hiuen Tsang we do not propose to shift him backward in time. We shall keep him a contemporary of Harshavardhana of Kanouj. But his Siladitya of Malava who reigned sixty years before his time is nowhere linked up by him with Yasodharman whom he does not mention at all. And indeed this Siladitya cannot be linked up with Yasodharman. The reason is what we have already stressed—namely, that Mihirakula whom Yasodharman defeated is spoken of by Hiuen Tsang² thus: "Some centuries previously a king named Mi-hi-lo-kulo who had his seat of government at this city (Sākala) ruled over the Indians." Assuming the Malava Era to be the Vikrama, we would have to date Yasodharman's victory over Mihirakula a little before 589-57=532 A.D., a few years over a century before Hiuen Tsang's arrival in India—a flat contradiction of the pilgrim's testimony.

When we come to the argument from the two Siladityas and the two Pratapasilas, we find a capital confusion. The *Rājatarangini* has really this to say about the double-named figure who succeeded Vikramaditya: ". . .the son of Vikramāditya, Pratapaśīla, whose other name was Śīlāditya."³ How can

¹ M. Grenet, *La Civilisation Chinoise*, pp. 51, 112, 118, 119, 122, 128, 132, 145, 156.

² Sen, *India Through Chinese Eyes*, p. 165.

³ Translation by R S Pandit (1931).

this Pratapasila who is the son of Vikramaditya of Malava be Prabhakaravardhana, *alias* Pratapasila, who is the father of Harshavardhana of Thaneshwar and Kanouj and who has no relation to Vikramaditya's family and is described by Bana¹ as Malava's enemy, "an axe to the creeper which is the goddess of fortune (or sovereignty) of Mālava" ? Besides, Prabhakaravardhana is never called Siladitya by anyone. Nor is there any connection between Kalhana's Siladitya and Hiuen Tsang's: the latter² is the son of Dharasena II of Valabhi and is known as Dharmaditya and never as Pratapasila : the mere fact that Hiuen Tsang makes him a king of Malava cannot identify him with the figure in the *Rājataranginī*. There are no circumstances justifying the idea that Yasodharman was the immediate predecessor of Hiuen Tsang's Siladitya of Malava.

This whole discussion apropos of Hiuen Tsang throws a side-light on the problem of Wang-Hiuen T'se's synchronism of Meghavarna with Samudragupta. We have remarked that the Chinese writer gives no date. Now we may remark that Hiuen Tsang³ relates the same story as does Wang Hiuen-T'se, though there is some difference in details and he mentions the name of neither the Ceylonese king nor the Indian, the latter of whom he simply calls Maha Sri Raja. But from Hiuen Tsang's work we have seen that for him the Guptas started before Christ. So, if a general clue from Chinese sources may be drawn, we may hold the usual identification of the post-Christian San-meou-to-lo-kiuto with the great Samudragupta to be contradicted by these sources.

We may now sum up that there were two Gupta Eras, one begun in 320 A.D. from the end of the Guptas by the non-Guptas as stated by Alberuni, the other begun by the Guptas themselves in *c.* 324 B.C. as can be inferred from the Puranas and the Classical writers of the West.

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What the reinterpretation of Fleet's epoch of 320 A.D. does not meet is the second difficulty that was mentioned by us as lying in the path of putting the other epoch in *c.* 324 B.C.—the difficulty deriving from the use by the Imperial Guptas of a coin named the *dināra*. We are told that the *dināra* is based on the Roman denarius and that the latter could not have been known in India earlier than about the last quarter of the first century before Christ

¹ *The Classical Age*, p. 97.

² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³ *The Indian Antiquary*, 1912, p. 195.

because the earliest denarii found by archaeologists in India are of Augustus whose reign started in 31 B.C.

But is it quite certain that the Indian dinara comes from the Roman denarius? Dr. Spiegel¹ tried to derive from the Greek form "dênarion" of the Roman coin the term "danare" found in the Avesta (Vendidad XVI, 7) for a dry measure or a weight. But most probably "danare" is older than the dênarion. We may suggest that the Indian dinara comes not from the Roman denarius but from the Avestan danare. From danare we can derive a modified form daenara,² then the Indian dînāra, as well as the Old Persian dīnnār and the Modern Persian dīnār. The only objection could be that "danare" was a dry measure or weight (of unknown quantity) while the dinara was a coin. But we must remember that the foreign name "dīnara" is coupled with the Hindu name "suvarna" in one Gupta inscription³ and that the two were taken in India as interchangeable and that the suvarna, besides being a coin, was a denomination of weight equal to 80 *gunjas* or about 146 grains.⁴ Thus the cleavage between coin and weight is not very sharp and the objection is hardly telling.

Even if we grant the derivation of the dinara from the denarius we cannot say that the latter reached India only as late as the reign of Augustus. The denarius is a fairly old coin. Originally it was minted of silver in 268 B.C. and the later gold denarius was of the same weight as the silver.⁵ No doubt, the earliest denarii we have so far found in India are of Augustus, but it is not true that no Roman coins earlier than those of Imperial Rome have been found here. As M.S.C. Vidyabhūšana⁶ admits, "several Roman coins of the Consulate period have been discovered in the Manikjāla stūpas and in the Hazara district of the Punjab." These coins are said to have been "very probably brought to India by traders several years after they had been prepared in Rome, for it is almost certain that Rome did not attempt to spread eastwards till the later years of the Consulate. It was in the reign of Augustus that the conquest of Asia by Rome began." But there is no reason to think that only Roman traders could have brought the coins to India or that stray Roman traders could not have done so before the reign of Augustus. Through such agents or those non-Romans who were at the same time in contact with Rome and with India, the Consulate coins could very well have come. No convincing

¹ *Commemoration Volume I*, p. 363.

² Geiger, *Civilisation of the Eastern Iranians in Ancient Times*, Vol. II, p. 137 (translated by Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana).

³ No. 64 in Fleet's *Gupta Inscriptions*.

⁴ Mookerji, *The Gupta Empire*, p. 21; B. J. Puri, *India in the Time of Patanjali*, p. 132, quoting the *Arthaśāstra*, p. 90, Shamasastri's translation.

⁵ *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* (1956), p. 697, col. 2.

⁶ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906, p. 1.

evidence exists against the possible influx of pre-Augustan denarii before the first century B.C.

What is significant in this connection is that the earliest Gupta mention of the *ḍinara* is in two Copper-plates of Kumaragupta I, dated respectively Gupta Years 124 and 128.¹ According to our Gupta Era of c. 324 B.C. the dates resolve into 200 and 196 B.C. Since the earliest Roman denarii go back to 269 B.C., these dates easily allow the advent of those coins into India. And again it is significant that the possibility of sporadic trade contact between Rome and India from 264 B.C. onward, for it is in 264 B.C. that the first Punic War took the Romans to Africa and it is at about the same time that Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt is known to have sent an ambassador to India and to have had cultural communication with this country through Indian books in the Alexandrian Library.² We know,³ further, that Indian processions used to go through Ptolemy's streets and Ptolemy's successors too were in touch with things Indian. A few denarii therefore may have got into India through various channels and been imitated by the Guptas.

Now we come to the last of the three difficulties we set before us—the absence in Megasthenes of not only the Sakas whom our chronology places in Western India in his day but also of several tribes named by Samudragupta who, according to this time-scheme, became king immediately after the period of Megasthenes and was his contemporary as a prince. But, since we have noted that certain tribes—*e.g.* the Yaudheyas and the Madras—of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription were just those that existed in the day of Alexander, we may legitimately ask : why is no capital made of the omission of them by Megasthenes who came on the heels of Alexander ? If Megasthenes could omit them without our historians refusing to place them in the fourth century B.C., his omission of some other tribes need not go against the date we have given to Samudragupta. Besides, if we take this omission to be significant, an argument can be pressed also against the current chronology on the ground that Megasthenes is unaware of several tribes which Asoka mentions and which were well-established by Asoka's day and therefore should have been within Megasthenes's purview : the Yavanas, Kambojas, Nabhakas, Nabhapamtis, Bhojas, Pulindas. The difficulty with tribe-names is throughout doubled and consequently not serious for us. The lack of mention of the Sakas is defensible on the same basis as well as explicable on the knowledge we have that Megasthenes lists only the names of the various states or peoples in India,

¹ Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 342.

² Bhadarkar, *Asoka* p. 163.

³ *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 616.

MOTHER INDIA

and does not concern himself about the Indianness or foreignness of their rulers. Thus, if the Sakas were ruling in Saurashtra in his day, they would come under the category "Horatae" which is his term for the Saurashtrians. Moreover, the Sakas are known to have got very much Indianised and to have freely intermarried with the natives, so that in c.300 which would be nearly two hundred years after their advent by our time-scheme they might not strike a Greek as foreigners.

(To be concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

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Students' Section

INDIA OF YORE

DURING the time of the invasion of India by Alexander the Great the following incident of immense interest took place.

A king named Ambhi was the ruler of a territory in the Punjab. He did not offer any resistance to the Greek army but accepted defeat. He had wanted to wage a Brahmanic war, a battle of wisdom bereft of blood-shed. He respectfully welcomed the victor, escorted him to the royal palace and offered a breakfast of fruits, all made of gold. The honoured guest admired the workmanship of the articles and remarked smilingly : "But these can neither appease hunger nor quench thirst." The vanquished king replied, "To be sure, there was no want of food and drink in your country; the attraction for gold must have brought you here. So it is worthwhile to ascertain the proper value of this bewitching metal. The noble conqueror confessed his greed for gold and said, "I have not come only in quest of gold, I want to know of the culture of this ancient land and the nature of the people as well."

"If that be your purpose," said the king, "then stay here for some time and observe the day-to-day work of the administration of justice carried on in the royal court." The Greek king found the suggestion reasonable and began to study the work of the administration with great interest and attention.

One day a very peculiar case came up before the court for decision. The plaintiff's charge against the defendant was that the latter persistently refused to accept a considerable quantity of gold, which had been unearthed from a field of which he was the original owner. The plaintiff was the present owner of the field, but as he had bought only the land and not the gold, which was unearthed during the process of ploughing the field, he thought he had no right to appropriate the find, which should belong to the original owner of the land.

The defendant's reply was that he had no knowledge of the gold hidden underneath the ground, so he could not claim to be its owner ; again, as he had sold the whole field, the entire produce of the land must belong to its owner.

The king devised a unique solution. He made detailed enquiries about

the household matters of both the parties and discovered that the plaintiff had a daughter approaching adolescence; while the accused had also a grown-up son, quite a suitable match for the girl. So the king's verdict was that the pair should be married and the girl was to carry the gold in question to her husband as dowry. The decision was hailed and the parties departed, singing the praise of the king's matchless justice.

Now, the king turned round to Alexander and wanted to know how a case like this would have been disposed of in his kingdom. The proud victor's candid and prompt reply was that the gold would have gone to the exchequer and the parties would have been summarily dismissed and left to suffer the consequence of their unparalleled height of folly.

The pious king was shocked to the extreme, but he controlled himself and asked with a gentle smile and in a soft voice, "Does the sun rise in your country?"

"Why not? It rises there just as it does here and everywhere."

"Do the clouds pour rain there?"

"Certainly, they do."

"Does soft green grass grow on your lawns and do herds of cattle merrily graze?"

"Surely, have you any doubt about such things, common almost universal?"

The king heaved a deep sigh and spoke out: "Oh, now I understand; it is in the interest of these dumb innocent animals that the free bounties of God are so lavishly bestowed even on a country like yours." Silence held back the colossal pride of Greece. Downcast was Alexander's proud head. He was overpowered by wonder and admiration for the sense of justice uniquely peculiar to the culture of India.

BHUMANANDA

REJECTION SLIP—JAPANESE STYLE

“WE have read your work with inexpressible pleasure. We swear to you on the sacred memory of our ancestors that we have never before had occasion to read such an admirable masterpiece. If we publish it His Majesty the Emperor will insist on its being a model for us and will not permit us to publish any work inferior to yours. This would make it impossible for us to continue in business until at least 10,000 years have passed. We are therefore constrained to refuse your divine work and to deposit it at your feet, trembling meanwhile at the thought of the severe judgment we shall receive from all future generations for having given way to such a criminal action.”

ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

AN EXPOSITION AND AN INTERPRETATION

E. PLOT

ARISTOTLE gives precedence to Plot over Character. Plot is related to Character. There can be no Plot without Character, and no Character without Plot. Plot is the action of all the Characters of the play. Plot can exist without good characterisation; there can be no characterisation without Plot. Hence preference is given to Plot. The antithesis between Plot and Character is not drawn by Aristotle. Aristotle is discussing the merits of Plot and Character. In his view they form a unity. In the general perspective, Plot is assigned a higher place.

Plot must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning must not be abrupt. A Prologue may introduce the beginning in which the past historical connections are set out in order. Thus in the opening scene of the *Watchman* in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, the fall of Troy is described. This is a hint of the coming of Agamemnon to his home from which emerges eventually the murder of the husband by Clytemnestra. The beginning may not recite the past, but may conceal it as in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles. The tale of the murder of Laius by Oedipus is deliberately sealed. The story of the murder and the marriage with Jocasta gradually unfolds. No general rules for the beginning of a play are given except that the beginning must not be sudden, unnatural, obscure, or confused.

The beginning of the Plot must be connected with the middle of the Plot. The middle of the play is related both to the beginning and the end. The beginning must flow into the middle, and the middle must lead to the conclusion. A break in sequence in the beginning or the middle means weakness of artistic construction. Thus in *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, the beginning is the murder by Oedipus concealed by his ignorance of his past. His attempt to discover the murderer is the middle of the play which naturally follows from the beginning. The discovery of the murderer—that is the discovery of himself—is the end.

The end must follow from the beginning and the middle. The close must be quiet and natural. An abrupt close like an abrupt beginning will destroy dramatic unity. The beginning, the middle and the end form a coherent unity. They are the laws of true dramatic action.

The unity of Time and Place are incidentally mentioned by Aristotle. These do not strictly form the canon of dramatic action. Aristotle merely

mentions them as a practice of the Greek stage that the action of the drama is performed in the single circuit of the sun. This distinguishes Drama from the Epic. Also Aristotle incidentally states that on the Greek stage action cannot be put in different times and places. His commentators have constructed upon these stray remarks the rules of Unity of Time and Place. In practice these rules of Time and Place are observed in Greek plays. But they are not specifically crystallised by Aristotle.

Aristotle lays down the broad principle of the Drama that the beginning, the middle, and the end of the play must form a coherent unity. No part of the play can be withdrawn or transposed without destruction of dramatic effect. In his view, the Plot is the action of the whole. Incidents which lead up to the whole must be connected with the whole. Unrelated incidents must be excised. Frequently in Euripides unrelated incidents are introduced for tragic effect or emotional display. These are condemned by Aristotle.

The principle of dramatic coherence is the central principle of all drama. It is a universal principle not confined to the Greek stage.

The law of Complication and Dénouement follows the law of Coherent Unity. Complications are the series of situations in which characters are involved leading to the crisis. Dénouements are the events which happen after the crisis. Complication and Dénouement are interconnected. A skilful Complication with a weak Dénouement both result in dramatic defects. Aristotle's view of the play is always of the whole. Complication and Dénouement must also form a coherent unity. Parts of Complication must lead up to the Dénouement, and the Dénouement must follow from the Complications. Thus Oedipus is involved in the murder of Laius and the incest with Jocasta. This is the secret Complication. The discovery of the murderer is the crisis. The fall of Oedipus is the Peripeteia. The Dénouement is from the fall of Oedipus to the blinding at the end. The beginning, the middle, the end, the Complication and the Dénouement are all interrelated sections of the whole.

From the law of coherent unity ensues the Law of Magnitude. The Epic has length, the Drama, proportion and magnitude. In an Epic the incidents may be broadened into considerable length. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* contain a chain of events of almost indefinite variety and complexity. The proportions of the Epic are not the proportions of the Drama. A drama too long or too short is not a proper drama. Dramatic coherence demands a reasonable movement of events within a certain compass. Length must depend upon the play, but according to Aristotle the general rule should be such time as may be taken or may be necessary for characters to fall from happiness to misery. This rule, however, applies to the Greek stage. In the modern play where

there is no necessary fall but a series of crises, suspenses and complicated situations, no rule can be prescribed except the rule of normal length depending upon the structure of the individual play.

The law of Probability is a universal principle of the drama. The law of coherent unity requires that the various steps of the play occur in probable and necessary sequence. Failure to observe the rule of Probability leads to unrealism. Drama deals with the universal, History with the singular. The universal rule of Probability cannot be ignored. Aristotle's view of History is not easy to accept for the modern mind which sees in History the movements of universal principles. Modern scholarship of History which deals with universal causation, universal growth and decay, and cyclic and ever-during motions of life and Society can hardly draw a partition between the universals of Drama and of History. Both deal with universals from different points of view. The law of Probability cannot be too rigidly applied either to History or to Drama. The improbable sometimes occurs and the probable does not happen. Yet as a general rule the law of Probability applies. The Probable in the sense of the natural and inevitable outflowing of action is the necessary incident of drama.

Plots are of two kinds according to Aristotle—the simple and the complex. The simple plot has no Peripeteia or Discovery, that is, no fall of character, like the *Troades* of Euripides. It is in the nature of lyrical drama. The complex plot has Peripeteia and Discovery, Complication and Dénouement, and the other concomitants of the drama. A plot is said to be episodic when the several incidents which compose it are broken and there is a loss of sequence in the disclosure of the events. Aristotle further states the practice of the Greek stage which confines the subject-matter of plots to the stories of famous houses such as those of Oedipus and Agamemnon. He does not take into account the evolving view of the Greek drama. The subject-matter of the plays of Aeschylus concerns the movements of Cosmic Forces. The stories of famous houses are incidental. In Sophocles the subject-matter arises from the stories of famous houses. In Euripides there is a break with the subject-matter of Greek Tragedy. His plots are historical, political, social, mythical, domestic or romantic.

Aristotle's view of the kind of subject suited to Drama is limited by the practice of the Greek stage. The age of Tragedy had just passed and he was too close to the great dramatists to assess the evolutionary steps of the Greek Drama.

(To be continued)

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