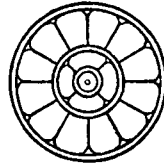


MOTHER INDIA

APRIL 1958

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



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. X

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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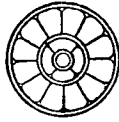
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March 29, 1958

*Quand on a besoin de changements extérieurs,
c'est qu'on ne progresse pas intérieurement;
car celui qui progresse intérieurement peut vivre
toujours dans les mêmes conditions extérieures;
elles lui révèlent constamment des vérités
nouvelles.*

When you are in need of an external change, it means that you do not progress internally. For he who progresses internally can live always under the same external conditions; these constantly reveal to him new truths.

THE MOTHER

4.4.58



The descending triangle represents Sat. Chit. Ananda.

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

The junction of both - the central square - is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Dvāda of the Supreme - the lotus.

The water - inside the square - represents the multiplicity, the creation.

THE TRUE WAY WITH ANIMALS

(A Letter by the Mother)

I HAVE watched the thing from the roof, and saw with the inner sight also. There is absolutely no doubt about what is happening and once more I shall try to make you understand it.

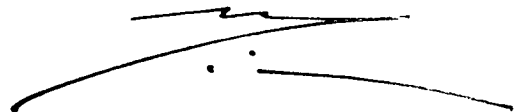
The bullocks are not mischievous. On the contrary, they are very good and peaceful creatures, but very sensitive—unusually sensitive perhaps. (Of this I am not sure, as I have not followed other bullocks closely.) The truth is that they dislike and distrust the present driver, and *not without reason.* When they were working under the previous one they were happy and cheerful and worked well. Since this one is driving them, they are sad and dejected and work reluctantly. I see no solution but to change the man and to find a better one.

The proposal to frighten them in order to master them is unacceptable. Some kind of submission can thus be obtained perhaps, but of the worst kind. The beasts lose more and more confidence and joy and peace and finally their strength and even their health goes.

What is the use of being a Sadhak, if, as soon as we act, we act like the ignorant ordinary man? I can tell you this to finish with the subject, that from the roof I concentrated the power on the bullocks ordering them to yield and obey and I found them *quite receptive.* To use a *quiet, steady, unwavering conscious will,* that is the way, the only true way *really* effective and worthy of an aspirant for Divine Life.

I hope that this time I have made myself clear.

14-9-1932



AIDS TO THE ASPIRANT

(*Letters of Sri Aurobindo*)

THE power of experience is not gone—but what is most important now is to develop the psychic condition of surrender, devotion, love and cheerful confidence in the Mother, an unshaken faith and a constant inner closeness, and also to bring down from above the peace, wideness, purity, etc. of the higher Self which is that of the Mother's consciousness. It is these things that are the basis of the siddhi in this Yoga—other experiences are only a help, not the basis.

(January 17, 1934)

...The higher experiences descend, but it is difficult to keep and utilise them, if the psychic being is not there in command over the mind, vital and body. As for হতাশ¹ it is the impatient vital that brings that and it is itself the greatest possible obstacle to the return of the experiences. There should be no হতাশ in the sadhak, but equanimity, faith and confidence.

(January 19, 1934)

You are mixing up different things altogether—that is why you cannot understand. I was simply explaining the difference between the ordinary waking consciousness and the ordinary sleep consciousness, as they work in men whether sadhaks or not sadhaks—and it has nothing to do with the true self or psychic being. Sleep and waking are determined not by the true self or psychic being, but by the mind's waking condition or activity or its cessation—when it ceases for a time, then it is the subconscious that is there on the surface and there is sleep.

That is a different matter—it is in the Yogic consciousness that one feels the seat of the subconscious below the feet, but the influence of the subconscious is not confined there—it is spread in the body. In the waking state it is overpowered by the conscious thinking mind and vital and conscious physical mind, but in the sleep state it comes on the surface.

(January 17th, 1934)

¹ *hatāshā* : despair

MOTHER INDIA

It is not a पदार्थ¹ at all—it is a state of obscure consciousness and wherever there is consciousness there is an energy—but this subconscious energy is obscure and unenlightened and works in a mechanical and ignorant way.

It is the body that needs rest and the body's way of resting is to go back from consciousness to subconsciousness—for it is out of the subconscious matter that it is formed.

(January 18th, 1934)

To get rid of the subconscious in sleep, the proper way is not to diminish sleep, for that only overstrains the body and helps the lower forces to trouble it. The right way is to change gradually (it cannot be done all of a sudden) the character of the sleep.

(January 19th, 1934)

It is neither the vital nor the body that contains these illnesses—it is a force from outside that creates these, and the nervous being (physical vital) and the body respond from habit or inability to throw it away. It is always better not to say "I will have no more illness" : it attracts the attention of these malevolent powers and they immediately want to prove that they can still disturb the body. Simply when they come, reject them.

If the nervous illness is due to certain physical causes, then the medicine may have a good effect. No doubt the most effective cure is the peace and strength descending into the nerves and the physical cells. But the body is not easily open to that alone, and if the attacks are strong they come in the way of the receptivity. We have therefore had recourse to the Doctor's medicine with good effect in several cases.

(January 22, 1934)



¹ padārtha : physical object

PHILOSOPHY, ART, SCIENCE

(An Excerpt from Sri Aurobindo)

“...PHILOSOPHY ought not to be merely a lofty intellectual pastime or a play of dialectical subtlety or even a pursuit of metaphysical truth for its own sake, but a discovery by all right means of the basic truths of all-existence which ought then to become the guiding principles of our own existence.”

“Philosophy not only purifies the reason and predisposes it to the contact of the universal and the infinite, but tends to stabilise the nature and create the tranquillity of the sage ; and tranquillity is a sign of increasing self-mastery and purity. The preoccupation with universal beauty even in its aesthetic forms has an intense power for refining and subtilising the nature, and at its highest it is a great force for purification. Even the scientific habit of mind and the disinterested preoccupation with cosmic law and truth not only refine the reasoning and observing faculty, but have, when not counter-acted by other tendencies, a steadying, elevating and purifying influence on the mind and moral nature which has not been sufficiently noticed.”

THE RIGVEDA

(Translated from the original Bengali of Sri Aurobindo in
"Vividha Rachana")

INTRODUCTION

A NEW view of the Rigveda is being published in the 'Arya' under the caption of "The Secret of the Veda". The translations here have been done according to that view which maintains that the real meaning of the Veda is spiritual and, being extremely profound and secret, is wrapped in symbolic words, various images, and expressions used in the performance of sacrifice. Though impenetrable to the ordinary person, this covering was, to the initiate in the Veda, only a transparent object which revealed all the limbs of the Truth. We have to look for the spiritual significance behind the images. If we can discover the 'secret name' of the gods and their respective functions, the sense of the code words, 'go', 'asva' and somarasa' etc., the works of the 'daityas', the demons, and their inner meaning, the import of the Vedic metaphors and legends, then the significance of the Veda will become more or less clear. Of course, the true and subtle comprehension of its meaning comes only by a special knowledge and as the result of sadhana, and not by mere study of the Veda without any sadhana.

I wish to present these Vedic truths to the Bengali readers. For the present, I shall talk only about the subject matter of the Veda. It is the eternal theme. This world exists in the Brahman but the truth of the Brahman cannot be seized by the intellect. The Rishi Agastya speaks of It as *tat adbhutam*, above all, beyond all time. Has anyone ever known It, now or in the past? It vibrates in the consciousness of everyone, yet, the moment the intellect tries to examine It from near, That disappears. The image of the Kena Upanishad has also the same significance: Indra rushes towards the Brahman but when he is quite close, the Brahman vanishes. Yet That is knowable, as a divine Being.

The Divine is also *adbhuta*, mysterious, but he manifests himself in three fundamentals, that is to say, God is pure Existence, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. It is possible to realise God in the principle of Bliss. Under various different names and forms, God pervades and upholds the universe. These names and forms are the Vedic gods.

THE RIGVEDA

The Veda speaks about two seas, one above and the other below the manifested world ; below, it is the *apraketa hr̥dya* or *hr̥d-samudra*, the concealed sea which is known in English as the Subconscient and, above, it is the sea of pure Existence which is called in English the Superconscient. These two are known as caves or hidden truths. Brahmanaspati brings out the manifestation from the Subconscient by the Word. Rudra enters the life-principle and illumines it with his mighty power, pulls it upward by force and drives it violently along the path towards its destination ; Vishnu by his pervading power upholds the constantly flowing sea of pure Existence or the seven rivers of life and guides them towards the goal. All the other gods are co-workers in this movement, helpers and agents.

Surya, the Sun, is the god of the Truth-Light, he is "Savita" when he creates or manifests, "Pushan" when he nourishes, "Surya" when he destroys the night of falsehood and gives birth to the light of truth and knowledge. Agni is the *Tapas*, the energising power of the Consciousness-Force ; he builds the universe and dwells in all its objects. He is fire in the material principle ; desire and impulses to enjoy in the life-principle, he devours everything he gets ; in the mind-principle, he is the mental inspiration and the will-power ; in the principle beyond mind, he is the lord of the conscious force of action.

MANDALA I, SUKTA I

The Text and Its Explanation

Agnimīde purohitam yajnasya devam ṛtvijam; hotāram ratnadhātāmam. 1
"I adore the flame who is the vicar, the divine Ritwik of the Sacrifice, the summoner who founds the ecstasy."

ire—bhajam, prarthaye, kamaye: I adore.

purohitam—one who sits in front of the sacrifice; representative of the sacrificer and performer of the sacrifice.

ṛtvijan—one who performs the sacrifice according to the time, the place and the occasion.

hotāram—one who by invoking the gods accomplishes the sacrifice.

ratnadhā—Sayana gives the meaning of 'beautiful riches' to the word 'ratna'; it would be more correct to say 'delightful wealth'.

dhā—one who wears, directs or firmly establishes.

Agni pūrvebhir ṛsibhir idyo nūtanairuta; sa deva eha vakṣati. 2

"The Flame adorable by the ancient sages is adorable too by the new. He brings here the Gods."

MOTHER INDIA

The word, 'sa' gives the hint why they are adorable.

eha vakṣati—iha āvahati : Agni brings the Gods in his own chariot.

Agninā rayim aśnavat poṣameva divedive; yaśasam vīravattamam. 3

“By the flame one enjoys a treasure that verily increases day by day, most full of hero-power.”

rayim-rayih, rādhaḥ, rāyah etc. have the same meaning as the word 'ratna'. But in the word 'ratna' the sense of delight is more prominent.

aśnavat-aśnuyāt, obtains or enjoys.

poṣam etc. are adjectives of 'rayih'; 'poṣam' means that which grows, increases. 5

yaśasam—Sayana translates it sometimes as 'fame' and sometimes as 'food'. Probably its real meaning is success, attainment of goal etc.

The meaning 'radiance' is also quite just but it does not apply here.

Agne yam yaṅnam adhvaram viśvataḥ paribhūras; sa id deveṣu gacchati. 4

“O Flame ! the pilgrim sacrifice on every side of which thou art with the envisioning being, that truly goes among the Gods.”

adhvaram—the root 'dhvri' means to kill. Sayana translates it as 'ahimsita yajna', a sacrifice with no killings. But the word 'adhvara' itself has come to denote sacrifice; such a development is impossible for the word. The word 'adhvan' means the path, so 'adhvar' must signify the voyager or one having the form of the path. The sacrifice was the path that led to the abode of the gods; at the same time, the sacrifice was well-known everywhere as the pilgrim in the abode of the gods. This meaning is right. The word 'adhvar' like the word 'adhvan' derives from the root 'adh'; as proof, we find that both the words 'adhva' and 'adhvar' were used in the sense of sky.

paribhūh-parito jātaḥ

deveṣu—the locative case indicates the destination.

it-eva, truly.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Universal Sacrifice

The universal life is like an immense sacrifice. God himself is the lord of the sacrifice. God is Shiva, and Nature is Uma. Though she carries the

image of Shiva in her heart, still she misses his visible form; she yearns for his tangible body. This yearning is the deep significance of the universal life.

But by what means can her intention be fulfilled ? By which appointed path can Nature attain the Supreme ? How can she recover her own true form and that of the Supreme ? Her eyes are tied with the bandage of ignorance and her feet are bound with a thousand chains of matter; as if the physical Nature has imprisoned the infinite existence within the finite and herself become the prisoner, no longer able to find the lost key of the self-made prison; as if the inert vibrations of the life-energy in matter have overpowered the free and unlimited Consciousness-Force and made her dumb, self-oblivious and unconscious; as if the infinite Bliss wandering about in the disguise of an inferior consciousness subject to trivial happiness and sorrow, has forgotten its real nature and unable to remember sinks lower and lower in the bottomless mire of suffering; as if the truth has been drowned under the uncertain waves of falsehood. The Supramental principle beyond intellect is the foundation of the infinite Truth. The action of Supermind is either prohibited in the earth-consciousness or very rare like the momentary glimmer of the lightning from behind the veil. The timid, lame and dull mind is again and again looking for it and by its titanic efforts may even catch a glimpse of it but the authentic, infinite and luminous form of the integral Truth escapes its grasp. The knowledge as well as the action of mind are afflicted with the same strife, indigence and failure. Instead of the smiling and effortless divine dance of the Truth-action, there is the shackled attempt of the will-power of the inferior Nature struggling in agony with the inextricable bonds of truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, poison and nectar, action, inaction and wrong action. The free, unhesitating, desireless, triumphant, blissful and passionate divine power of action intoxicated with the wine of oneness remains as yet unrealised. Its natural and easy universal movements are impossible for the will-power of the inferior Nature. Can the terrestrial Nature ensnared in the noose of the finite and untrue ever hope to obtain that limitless Existence, that boundless Consciousness-Force and that immeasurable Bliss-Consciousness, and if so, by what means ?

The sacrifice is the means. The sacrifice implies surrender, and self-immolation. What you are, what you have, what you become in future by your own effort or by the divine grace, what you can earn or save in the course of your action, pour all like clarified butter, into the fire of divine energy, as offering to the All-Blissful. By giving a tiny whole you will receive the infinite whole. The Yoga is implicit in the sacrifice. The infinity, the immortality and the divine felicity are legitimate results of the practice of Yoga. To follow this path is the means of Nature's salvation.

MOTHER INDIA

The Universal Nature knows this secret. So with this immense hope, night and day, year in year out, age after age, sleepless and restless, she performs the sacrifice. All her actions, all her endeavours are part of this cosmic ritual. She immolates everything she produces. She knows that the divine Player who is present in all, tastes the delight without reserve and accepts all effort and askesis as sacrifice. He is the one who is ever slowly leading the cosmic sacrifice on the ordained path towards the ordained goal by detours and zigzags, through rise and fall, across knowledge, ignorance and death. His assurance has made her fearless, unwavering and indiscriminate. Moved by the unceasing and ubiquitous divine impulsion, she consciously throws all that she can lay her hand on, creation and killing, production and destruction, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and suffering, the ripe and the unripe, the beautiful and the ugly, the pure and the impure, into that huge eternal conflagration of sacrifice. The subtle and material objects constitute the clarified butter used in the sacrifice, the Jiva, the being, is the bound animal. The Nature is constantly immolating the Jiva, fastened to the slaying-post with the triple bond of mind, life and body. The bond of mind is ignorance; the bond of life is suffering, desire and conflict; the bond of body is death.

The Nature is shown the path of her salvation; by what means can the Jiva in fetters be delivered? By means of sacrifice, self-surrender and self-immolation. Instead of being under the domination of the Nature and being offered by her, the Jiva has to rise, become the sacrificer and offer all that it possesses. This indeed is the profound secret of the universe that the Purusha is not only the god of the sacrifice but the object sacrificed as well. The Purusha has surrendered into the hands of the Prakriti his own mind, life and body as offering, as principal means of performing the sacrifice. There is this hidden motive behind his self-surrender that one day becoming conscious he will take the Prakriti by the hand, make her his consort and companion in the sacrifice and himself perform the ritual. Man has been created to fulfil this secret longing of the Purusha who wants to play the Lila in a human body. Selfhood, immortality, the multiple infinite bliss, unlimited knowledge, boundless force and immeasurable love must be enjoyed in a human body, in a human consciousness. All these forms of delight exist within the Purusha himself and as the Eternal he enjoys them eternally. But creating man, he is actively engaged in relishing the opposite taste of oneness in the multiplicity, the infinite in the finite, the inward in the outward, the supra-sensible in the senses and the immortal existence in the terrestrial life. Seated at the same time above our mind, beyond our intellect in the hidden Supramental principle of the Truth and in the secret plane of consciousness behind the heart within us, in the cavern of the heart, in the concealed ocean of submerged

THE RIGVEDĀ

consciousness where heart, mind, life, body and intellect are only little ripples, the Purusha experiences the delightful taste of the blind effort and search of the Prakriti and her endeavour to establish unity by the shock of duality. Above, he enjoys in knowledge; below, he enjoys in ignorance; he carries on these two actions simultaneously. But if he is for ever immersed in this condition, then the deep intention, his supreme purpose cannot be fulfilled. That is why the day of awakening is fixed for each human being. The inner godhead will one day give up this mechanical, meritless, lower self-immolation and begin in knowledge, by chanting his own mantra, the performance of the sacrifice. To perform the sacrifice consciously and with the right mantra is the 'Karma', the work, mentioned in the Veda. It has a double objective; a completeness in the universal plurality, what is known in the Veda as the universal godhead and the universal manhood, and the realisation of immortality in the one self-being of the supreme Divine. The gods mentioned in the Veda under the names Indra, Agni, Varuna are not the inferior small godheads of later days disdained by the common people; they are different forms of the Divine, powerful and luminous. And this immortality is not the puerile heaven described in the Puranas, but the 'svar', the world of Divine Truth desired by the Vedic Rishis, the establishment of the Infinite Existence; the immortality mentioned in the Veda is the infinite Being and Consciousness of the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

MANDALA I, SUKTA 17

1. O Indra, O Varuna, you indeed are emperors; we welcome you as our protectors; you two, rise in us in that state.
2. Because you come to protect the sacrifice of the wise who can uphold the power; you indeed are supporters of all action.
3. Enjoy, as you desire, the abundance of delight in the instrument. O Indra, O Varuna, we want to live very close to you.
4. May we remain established under the strong domination of the powers and the helpful thoughts which increase our inner wealth.
5. O Indra, become the desired lord of all that brings power; and you, Varuna, of all that is vast and great.
6. Under the protection of you two, may we live happily and peacefully and become capable of deep meditation. May our purification be complete.
7. O Indra, O Varuna, we perform sacrifice with the hope to obtain many-hued felicity from you. Make us always victorious.
8. O Indra, O Varuna, may all the faculties of the intellect submit to you; by establishing yourselves in these faculties, give us peace.

MOTHER INDIA

9. O Indra, O Varuna, may you enjoy the beautiful hymn which we offer you as sacrifice; you indeed nourish and fulfil these words of prayer.

COMMENTARY

Whenever the ancient Rishis prayed for help of the gods in the spiritual battle against the formidable attack of the inner enemies for the establishment of fulness, the durable and compact state of force in the mind as they became aware of their own incompleteness after going a little way on the path of sadhana, or else when they invoked the gods to found, increase and protect the plenitude of inner illumination and delight, we find that, to express their feelings, they often addressed the gods in pairs, in the same hymn and in identical words. The two Ashwins, Indra and Vayu, Mitra and Varuna are typical examples of this combination. In this hymn by combining, not Indra and Vayu, or Mitra and Varuna, but Indra and Varuna, Medhatithi of the Line of Kanva is praying for delight, high accomplishment and peace. His mood is now lofty, vast and tranquil. He wants a free and elevated action; he wants a mighty fiery spirit but a might which will be founded on a pure, deep and permanent knowledge, and an ardour which shall fly in the sky of action, borne by the two immense wings of peace; even while floating on the infinite ocean of Ananda and being tossed about in the colourful waves of delight, he wants the experience of that tranquillity, greatness and stability. He is unwilling to dive and lose his consciousness in that ocean, unwilling to sink and rise alternately, buffeted by its waves. Indra and Varuna are worthy gods who can help him to realise this sublime aspiration. Indra is the king and Varuna is the emperor. The mental ardour and energy from which proceed all the functions of mind, its existence and effectiveness are given by Indra who also protects them from the attacks of the Vritras, the demons. All the noble and generous moods of mind and character, for want of which, arrogance, narrowness, weakness or indolence inevitably result in thought and action, are established and guarded by Varuna. That is why right in the beginning of this Sukta, Rishi Medhatithi welcomes their help and friendship; *indravarunayohamava avrime*, "O Indra, O Varuna, we welcome you as our protectors", as our '*samrājyoh*', emperors, because they indeed are emperors. So '*idriṣe*', in this condition or on this occasion (the state of mind which I have just described), he invokes the delight of the gods for others and for himself,—'*ta no mṛdāta idriṣe*'.

When all the faculties and efforts of body, life, mind and the supramental part are poised in equality and self-contained in their respective places; when no one has domination over the being, and there is no revolt or anarchy;

when each one accepts the sovereignty of its respective godhead, of the Higher Nature and is accustomed to execute its special work with joy at the time and in the measure fixed by the Divine ; when the being is Lord of its own dominion, real emperor over the inner kingdom of its instrument ; when there is deep peace along with a mighty luminous and boundless power of action ; when all its faculties listen to its order and accomplish the work perfectly with mutual co-operation for the joy of the being ; or when it tastes fathomless peace and ineffable delight by plunging into a deep, shadowless inaction at will, such a state of being was called by the Vedantists of the earliest times the kingdom (dominion over self) or the empire (dominion over others). Indra and Varuna particularly are masters of this state ; they are emperors. Indra when he becomes emperor sets in motion all the faculties, and Varuna when he becomes emperor governs the faculties and exalts them.

But all are not qualified to receive the help of these two sublime immortals. Only when one has knowledge and is established in tranquillity, can he claim their help. One has to be '*vipra*', a '*māvān*'. The word '*vipra*' does not mean a brahmin ; the root '*vi*' signifies to manifest, to illumine and the root '*vip*' means the play or vibration or full flooding of manifestation, illumination ; one in whose mind the knowledge has dawned, the door of whose mind is open for the mighty play of knowledge, he is verily the '*vipra*'. The root '*mā*' signifies 'to hold'. The mother holds the child in her womb, that is why she is known as '*mātā*'. The founder and life of all action, the god Vayu, is known as Matarisvan, "he who extends himself in the Mother or the container, the sky"—the sky which holds in its womb the birth, the play and the death of all creatures and beings and yet remains forever serene and unperturbed. One who is patient like the sky that has the power to contain and endure the wild play and remain silently plunged in its happiness even when the violent cyclone cleaves the horizon with lightnings and roaring madly smites down trees, animals and houses in a furious and destructive dance of divine rapture, one who can turn his own body into an open space for the play of unbearable physical and vital pain and yet remain impassive, full of self-delight, capable of withstanding it like a witness, he, indeed, is a '*māvān*'. When such a '*māvān*' is '*vipra*' (illuminated) when such a serene knower offers his body as the altar of sacrifice and calls on the gods, then Indra and Varuna move freely in it, sometimes they come even of their own accord, protect the oblation, become the support and foundation, '*dhartārā charṣaṇmām*' ('You are indeed the upholders of all action'), of all his desired actions, and bestow upon him great felicity, power and illumination of knowledge.

MOTHER INDIA

MANDALA I, SUKTA 75

1. O Flame, what I am expressing is very wide and vast, an object of enjoyment for the gods; devour it with love; take all these offerings in your mouth.

2. O Divine Energy ! you are the most powerful of all the powers and the highest divinity, may the sacred hymn of my heart which I am uttering become thy favourite, and the triumphant enjoyer of what I desire.

3. O divine Energy ! O Flame ! who is thy comrade, who is thy brother in the world ? Who is able to extend that friendship which leads to the Divine ? Who art Thou ? In whose heart has Agni found shelter ?

4. O Agni, thou indeed art brother of all living beings, beloved friend of the world, thou indeed art the comrade, thou art desired by thy comrades.

5. Sacrifice for us to Mitra and Varuna, sacrifice to the gods, to the vast Truth ; O Agni, that Truth is thy own home. Establish the sacrifice in that goal.

MANDALA 3, SUKTA 46

1. Very noble are the heroic deeds of mighty Indra, the thunderer, the hearer of the Word, warrior and powerful emperor, the ever young god resplendent, imperishable and possessor of tranquil strength.

2. O Great, O Puissant, thou art great ; by the action of thy expansive power forcefully wrest from others the wealth we desire. Thou art one, king of all that is visible in the whole universe ; inspire man in the battle ; establish him in the abode of peace, worthy of conquest.

3. Indra manifesting himself as radiance crosses all measures of the universe surpassing even the gods in every way and infinitely he becomes inaccessible to them. This power that drives straight, by his strength in the mental world, surpasses the wide material universe and the great vital world.

4. Into this wide and deep, violent and powerful from his very birth, all-manifesting ocean-like Indra, the ordamer of all thoughts, enter the intoxicating universal currents of delight like fast-flowing rivers issuing from the mouth of the mental world.

5. O puissant Indra, for the satisfaction of thy desire, the mental world and the material universe hold this wine of felicity as a mother holds the unborn child. The priest who accomplishes the sacrifice is for thy sake only, O Bull ; he drives the flow of delight so that thou mayest drink it ; he refines that delight for thy sake only.

MANDALA 9, SUKTA I

1. O Soma, flow in most delicious, most intoxicating and pure currents ; thou hast been distilled so that Indra may drink thee.

NIRANJAN

THE MOTHER*

SHE whom Sri Aurobindo has declared as the Supreme Mother incarnate is here amongst us on this Earth ! To all devotees of Sri Aurobindo, 21st February is a great day, because 80 years ago to-day,—the Mother 'put on an appearance of humanity' and, in her infinite Grace and Love, descended on the Earth. In Sri Aurobindo's words—"The Mother comes in order to bring down the Supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation here possible."

"A flame of radiant happiness she was born
And surely will that flame set earth alight..."

This celebration is a joyous expression of our gratitude for her advent in our midst, and it is my proud privilege to welcome you all to participate in it.

Even as a child she used to have wonderful experiences and visions, as revealed in her *Prayers and Meditations*. They served as constant reminders of the purpose for which she had come and the task ahead. The weeping child, to the surprise of her parents, used to say in reply to her mother's rebuke that it was not for herself but for the woes and miseries of this earth that she was shedding her tears ! To attain spiritual life and knowledge, one has, generally, to go through certain Yogic practices, but with her they started spontaneously. She herself writes : "When I was a child—about the age of thirteen and for about a year—every night as soon as I was in bed, it seemed to me that I came out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the town, very high. I saw myself then clad in a magnificent golden robe, longer than myself; and as I rose, the robe lengthened, spreading in a circle around me to form, as it were, an immense roof over the town. Then I would see coming out from all sides men, women, children, old men, sick men, unhappy men; they gathered under the outspread robe, imploring help, recounting their miseries, their sufferings, their pains. In reply, the robe, supple and living, stretched out to them individually, and as soon as they touched it, they were consoled or healed, and entered back into their body happier and stronger than they had ever been before coming out of it. Nothing appeared to me more beautiful, nothing made me more happy; and all the activities of the day seemed to me dull and colourless, without real life, in comparison with

* An Address delivered at the All-India Seminar held at Calcutta to celebrate the Mother's birthday on February 21, 1958.

this activity of the night which was for me the true life. Often as I thus rose, I would see on my left an old man, silent and immobile, who looked at me with a benevolent affection and encouraged me by his presence. This old man dressed in a long robe of sombre violet was the personification—I knew later—of him who is called the Man of Sorrows.

“Now the profound experience, the almost ineffable reality is translated in my brain by other notions which I can define thus :

“Many a time during the day and in the night it seems to me that I,—that is to say, my consciousness is wholly concentrated in my heart, which is no longer an organ, not even a feeling, but the divine Love, impersonal, eternal; being this Love, I feel myself living in the centre of everything upon the whole earth, and at the same time it seems to me that I am stretching out immense, infinite arms and enveloping with a limitless tenderness all beings clasped, grouped, nestled upon my breast vaster than the universe...”

When and how she became conscious of the Mission she was to fulfil on earth and how she met Sri Aurobindo and why India was chosen as the centre of her activity, is clearly stated in her letter to a disciple written some time in 1920 :

“For the knowledge of the mission it is difficult to say when it came to me. It was as though I was born with it and, following the growth of the mind and brain, the precision and completeness of this consciousness grew also.

“Between 11 and 13 a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to me not only the existence of God, but man’s possibility of uniting with Him, of revealing Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a Life Divine. This, along with a practical discipline for its fulfilment, was given to me, during my body’s sleep, by several teachers, some of whom I met afterwards on the physical plane. Later on, as the interior and exterior development proceeded, the spiritual and psychic relation with one of these Beings became more and more clear and pregnant; and though I knew little of Indian philosophies and religions at that time, I was led to call him Krishna, and henceforth I was aware that it was with him (whom I knew I should meet on earth one day) that the divine work had to be done. I strongly wished to come to India—the country which I always cherished as my true Mother-country—and in 1914 this joy was granted to me.”

She landed in Pondicherry on the 29th of March 1914, and it is revealing to read from her diary about the experience she had of her first meeting with Sri Aurobindo : “It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth. His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth.”

THE MOTHER

Her early years in Pondicherry were full of unending realisations and experimentations of bringing down the Supreme Truth to the material plane. The work of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo reached a culminating point on the 24th of November 1926, when Sri Aurobindo retired into complete seclusion, leaving entire charge of the Ashram and its inmates in the hands of the Mother. The sadhaks, on their part, more ardently turned towards her for necessary help and guidance on the Path. And why not ? Has not Sri Aurobindo categorically stated—"The Mother's consciousness and mine are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness—if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers."

It is practically from then that the Ashram began to grow and is still growing. This Ashram is not an organised institution. It is an organic growth, an organism. Neither planned nor built, it is a natural and living expression of the personality of Sri Aurobindo. The Ashram is a complete unit, so to say,—it has its own laundry, bakery, farming, weaving, paper-making, workshop, printing press, cottage industry, school and library, tailoring, dispensary, dentistry, massage clinic, clinical laboratory, gardening, fully equipped gymnasium, and a big sports ground with all facilities for games, acrobatics and gymnastic drills. So much emphasis is laid on the perfection of the body, because, as the Master says, "if our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use. *Sariram khalu dharmasadhanam*, says the old Sanskrit adage,—the body is the means of fulfilment of dharma, and dharma means every ideal which we can propose to ourselves and the law of its working out and its action. A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us, for our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth....A divine life in a material world implies necessarily a union of the two ends of existence, the spiritual summit and the material base." Fine Arts also are not neglected. Due encouragement and facility is offered for Painting, Music (vocal and instrumental), Dance and Theatricals. According to Sri Aurobindo "Art stills the emotions and teaches them the delight of a restrained and limited satisfaction—....Music deepens the emotions and harmonises them with each other. Between them music, art and poetry are a perfect education for the soul; they make and keep its movements purified, self-controlled, deep and harmonious. These, therefore, are agents which cannot profitably be neglected by humanity on its onward march or degraded to the mere satisfaction of sensuous pleasure which will disintegrate rather than build the character.

They are, when properly used, great educating, edifying and civilising forces.”

The present inmates of the Ashram number about twelve hundred heads, assembled from different parts of the country as also outside. Each one has to devote at least one-third of his time to some useful work, according to his choice. But the work must be done in the true spirit of the Mother's prayer — “Let us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine.” The Mother is there to guide and help each according to his nature and need and, where necessary, herself intervenes with her Power enabling the sadhak to withstand the rigours and demands of the path. She has placed herself—with all the Love, Power, Knowledge and Consciousness that She is—at the disposal of every aspiring soul that looks to her for help.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching states that consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the method by which it liberates itself: consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient, and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental. Out of rock and mineral came the plant, out of the plant the animal, out of the mere animal man has come and out of man the Superman will come inevitably. In Sri Aurobindo's own words—“The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable...”

It is for the release of the involved supramental, under the pressure of the Supermind's descent from above, that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo came upon the earth; only the future race of supramentalised beings will perhaps be able to assess the magnitude of labour and toil put behind, and what insurmountable barriers had to be crossed—what rugged paths had to be levelled, to throw open this new gate for man to march onward.

On December 5th, 1950, at 1-26 A.M. Sri Aurobindo surrendered his body and took a plunge in the abyss. The decision was taken a year ago—it was the demand of his work, Sri Aurobindo could brook no delay. But for us he has left the assurance: “I shall return in the first supramental body made in the supramental way.” Wonder of wonders, Sri Aurobindo is more apparent, more concrete to all devotees, now, than ever before!

Immediately after the passing of Sri Aurobindo an International University Centre was founded in Pondicherry. Education, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, to be complete must cover all the four aspects—mental, vital, physical and psychic. The aims and objects of this University are very high. Not only will all spheres of human knowledge be covered but education here will be imparted in the mother tongue of the student who

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will also be housed in his national way. "The International University Centre will be international not because students from all countries will be admitted here, not because education will be given in their own mother tongue, but particularly because the cultures of the different regions of the earth will be represented here in such a way as to be accessible to all, not merely intellectually, in ideas, theories, principles and languages, but also vitally, in habits and customs, in art under all forms...and physically too, through natural scenery, dress, games, sports, industries and food". "The general aim to be attained," as enunciated by the Mother, "is the advent of a progressive universal harmony. The means for attaining this aim, in regard to the earth, is the realisation of human unity through the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is One." Sri Aurobindo also has emphasised that the individual man cannot be "limited by his nationality; he is not merely the Englishman or the Frenchman, the Japanese or the Indian; if by a part of himself he belongs to the nation, by another he exceeds it and belongs to humanity. And even there is a part of him, the greatest, which is not limited by humanity; he belongs by it to God and to the world of all beings and to the godheads of the future."

Man has made great progress in material science. He is about to invade Space, and it may be his destiny to conquer Time. Inventions have, undoubtedly, shortened space and time but people remain apart as ever, and live in constant suspicion of one another. Let us not put over-emphasis on these achievements, which are the products of mind. Mind is not the only medium of knowledge, nor can it offer a solution to all human problems—there are other means and methods of knowledge; moreover, new knowledge can even dawn upon one. If our aim is total transformation, our goal Life Divine on earth, the surer path is to open ourselves to the Mother—the embodiment of the Divine *Shakti*.

In March 1956, the Mother came out with the announcement :

"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 New Light is there. What is needed now is a robust faith, a kindled aspiration in a devoted sincere heart, and to remember with confidence :

"All here shall be one day her sweetness's home,

All contraries prepare her harmony;

Towards her our knowledge climbs, our passion gropes,

In her miraculous rapture we shall dwell,

Her clasp will turn to ecstasy our pain."

HIMANSU K. NRYOGI

SRI AUROBINDO'S WRITINGS*

SRI Aurobindo's writings, literary and non-literary, planned and incidental, prose and poetry—all put together, constitute indeed a contribution to knowledge and culture seldom paralleled in history in vastness of scope or in sheer amount, in variety of modes or forms attempted.

But his fecundity, the ceaseless flow of his pen during certain periods, the calm deliberate planning behind all his works and the thoroughness and completeness which characterise his achievements—all this would usually mark off a strong contestant for high literary renown. But Sri Aurobindo's supreme unconcern for reputation or publicity, his ability to wait and to depend on time to do its work reveal the Seer, the Visionary, the high interpreter of truth revealed, who wrote because he had to, who had nothing to gain, no claim to make for himself, but who could just leave it to the world to do what it will with this stupendous, challenging, often tough, almost forbidding mass of wisdom and invention.

Evidence is fast accumulating to show that the world, in spite of contrary currents in its present mental climate, is more and more getting into the mood of grateful acceptance towards this hitherto unrecognised treasure. This has been wholly due to the devoted and systematic efforts of the Pondicherry Ashram to bring out the Master's writings, duly classified, arranged and edited in books which for their excellent printing and distinctive get-up are bound to please even the most fastidious among book-lovers. We have gratefully received many and hope to receive more of these publications from the Ashram with equal gratitude and pleasure.

The chief preoccupation in Sri Aurobindo's prose writings is of course his system of yoga and its manifold exposition either in planned essays or in letters, marginal notes, conversations just as the occasion demanded. Closely allied to this central interest are his studies or visions relating to the destinies of India, of the world and of the human civilisation which seems today to be inextricably entangled in a mesh of its own making. In whichever field of enquiry his mind may work, history of civilisations, appreciation of poetry and art or analysis of philosophical systems, Sri Aurobindo looks at his subject

* A paper read at the All-India Seminar held at Calcutta to celebrate the Mother's Birthday on February 21, 1958.

from all conceivable angles, carefully sets out the main points on each side, gives each approach its due value and in what might have been, and with most other writers always is, a battlefield of warring systems and mental dispositions, constructs a harmonious all-embracing pattern. His poise is unshakable, the thoroughness and justness of his appraisal always disarming. Such an endeavour as his might very well land even a great writer in a mess of verbal contradictions, loose dangling ends of the yarn of thought, obstinate obscurities, insufferably tortuous and laborious advancement of the theme; or if nothing else, in depressing over-weighted terminology and inescapable feeling of pressure, awkwardness and heaviness. But Sri Aurobindo's prose in spite of the heavy responsibilities thrown on its shoulders retains clarity of purpose and an ease of movement all through. It does not only perform its work of lucid, precise exposition well, it reveals an elasticity of self-adjustment, a flexibility of mood and manner in keeping with the task in hand, a subtle sensitive awareness of worlds of values behind and around the bare commissioned march of ideas, an occasional happy mood of expansion and relaxation and personal utterance, of humour and tenderness and endlessly gentle and hence wholly irresistible satire which very decisively raise it to the level of art. It not only satisfies the intellect and its demand for justice, it pleases the heart and the imagination and even the inner person in the reader whose demand is not merely to be convinced but to be converted. A high pre-eminence among the world's great masters of prose seems to be assured to Sri Aurobindo, the author of *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Future Poetry*, the critical appreciation of Kalidasa, and of numerous letters and notes which are now being compiled in a series of volumes.

Much can and should be written on Sri Aurobindo's role in the present-day world as a philosophical thinker, or rather a creative synthesiser of systems, a bold path-finder in the wilderness of belligerent creeds and inconsequential though high-sounding intellectual adventures; also as a literary and art critic. The philosophical crusade which he carries on with unabated vigour and masterfulness in every field of thought, detecting and disarming even the smallest opposition, the flimsiest doubt, the weakest denial, always ends in the triumphant re-assertion of the one triumphant solution: This world is real; man has the divine spark cushioned and hidden away in the inner recesses of his heart; man must rise above and beyond humanity and the Divine must come down and transform man and this world and fulfil creation. The immediate target of aspiration therefore is the plane of the Supermind which is a preserver and promoter of the myriad variations of forms and modes and yet a never-failing unifier, a weaver of harmonies.

According to Sri Aurobindo poetry and the arts must also rise to heights

not yet scaled, dive into depths yet unplumbed, expand and grow in power so as to create a new world of aesthetic enjoyment. Anticipations and even significant capturing of intermediate fields pointing the way to the final conquest Sri Aurobindo discovers among poets like Whitman, A. E. and mostly in Tagore. Considering that *The Future Poetry* was composed in years closely following the publication of the English *Gitanjali*, and that at that time Sri Aurobindo could not possibly take into account the rich and amazingly varied harvest of Tagore's genius which came later, Sri Aurobindo's tribute to him may very well be looked upon not only as adequate and penetrating but as revealing some of the essential principles and characteristics of Tagore's poetical achievement which critics of Tagore literature will be ill-advised to ignore.

Literature was Sri Aurobindo's first passion, and it remained with him till the end of his long life in spite of his two other all-too-engrossing preoccupations: politics and Yoga. His first book of poems was published in England while he was just a young student and his efforts to complete and round off the stupendous undertaking, the epic poem *Savitri*, continued almost till the last day of his life—which indeed would remind one of Tagore's unexampled span of ceaseless literary activity. In Sri Aurobindo's case, however, there were long gaps in his literary career, periods of silence showing the temporary sacrifice or putting aside of the creative urge for what seemed to him to be more imperative. But the interest never flagged.

Sri Aurobindo has written one or two short stories which draw their distinctive turn of thought from his Yogic insight into the mystery of life and death. But his genius finds its most spontaneous expression in poetry and drama. His verse translations of poems and dramas of Kalidasa, for example, the *Kumar Sambhavam* and the *Vikramorvasie*, may serve to the western reader as the best possible introduction to the poetic greatness of Kalidasa. His own poetry includes love lyrics, elegiac and contemplative verses, several dramatic narratives like *Baji Prabhau*, *Love and Death*, *Urvasie*, the fragment *Chitrangada*, which deserve and some day are sure to find a pre-eminent position in their own *genre* not only in English but also in world literature. We are here concerned to consider chiefly three of his books which we have received : *The Last Poems* and *Savitri* which represent the later poetical output of the Master and *Perseus the Deliverer*, the one complete original drama in five acts written by him in the first years of this century.

The plot of the drama is a very free and undaunted adaptation of the ancient legend of the liberation of Andromeda by Perseus, the favoured hero of the goddess Athene, the renowned vanquisher of the Gorgon Medusa. The theme, it can easily be seen, puts every opportunity in the hands of the writer to bring out and spotlight his own favourite message : the descent of the

divine into this woe-begone world and its redemption through the flowering of the principle of love in the answering heart of humanity. One would naturally look for a strong influence of the Greek dramatic tradition in one who won high distinction as a profound classical scholar. But except for the plot, the writer seems to owe very little else to the Greeks. There is neither the rigid structure, nor the processional troop-march-like movement of thought and action. Nor again is there the sense of an over-hanging down-pressing destiny and a world of contending human passions. Only perhaps in the delineation of the character of the diabolic priest is there a harking back to Greek achievements like Clytemnestra.

Shakespeare, the latter-day master who lived in a more aesthetically refined age, and who may be looked upon as the chief literary model followed by our author, would have shrunk from the task of presenting such an unmitigated figure of stark badness, or putting into tearing verse the rhapsody of untrammelled evil passion as we find in Sri Aurobindo's Polydaon. Shakespeare humanised even an Iago, poetised the witches in *Macbeth* and made them tolerable; kept Caliban subdued under a higher power and prevented him from growing into an obnoxious nuisance. Sri Aurobindo's Polydaon is, on the other hand, a relentless portrayal, made intelligible and acceptable in the domain of art not by the flickering light of an uncertain destiny which Greek art sheds over such figures, but by a light of higher wisdom, an over-all view of things which appreciates the roles of goodness and badness in the drama of evolving values.

In its basic poetic temper, in the flow and nuances of its blank-verse, in its ordering of the conversations among friends or among the crowds, in its sudden expansions of mood and outbursts of ample generous expression, *Perseus* certainly recalls Shakespeare. Some of the characters also may be said to have been patterned on Shakespearean models. And the entire drama with its romantic theme, its spirit of high adventure and expanding triumphing genial emotions bears a very strong resemblance to *The Tempest*. Perseus and Andromeda would easily remind one of Ferdinand and Miranda. But all this is merely to indicate the tradition that our author utilises, the ground he builds on. Shakespeare's art and techniques have been emulated by quite a number of later English writers.

It may be claimed that Sri Aurobindo has been able to recapture Shakespeare's graces and rehabilitate his felicities in a new setting to a greater degree than any of the English writers has been able to do. But the worth of the drama certainly does not depend only on this. The distinctive Aurobindoan contribution unmistakably overtops and suffuses everything else. It consists in an exalted god-like vision which sees the world from end to end at a glance and sees it clearly, which seizes at once the truth and inner essence of a cha-

acter, be it Pallas Athene, or Poseidon, Perseus, Andromeda or even the butcher Perissus. It also consists in the power of firmly recapturing the great and sublime emotions of the heart and making them last through all the vicissitudes of long eventful scenes. In Tagore's dramas one finds all that is sensitive, refined, ethereal, vast. In Sri Aurobindo one finds all that is luminous, vigorous, calm and strong, everything that has in it a suggestion of divine poise and potency, grace and gladness. The vigorous, yet rhythmic movement of the action, the variety of characters luminously drawn, the gripping interest of all the episodes presented, the powerful, even-handed treatment of both good and evil and through it all a sense of high heaven-kissing adventure and fulfilment make *Perseus the Deliverer* a lasting contribution to world literature. This is not the place to compare it with the famous dramas and epics which deal with a similar cosmic theme, for example, the Prometheus plays by Aeschylus and Shelley, *Faust*, *Tempest*, *Paradise Lost*, *Hyperion*, Tagore's *Rakta-Karabi* etc. But it will certainly take its rank among them and occupy, one may venture to observe, quite a high place.

Another full-fledged drama in five acts we have just received for review is *Vasavadutta*, which was finally put into its present shape by the author some time in 1916. The theme is an adaptation of the Udayana fable in *Kathasaritsagara*. Udayana is an enigmatic character like Antony in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. His contradictory moods and actions are very convincingly presented and the beauty and brilliance of the dæmon that guides him allowed to shine forth through the confusions of ordinary life and its intrigues. The background of the drama is ruthless opposition of power, intrigue and insurrection. But extraordinarily fortunate traits in the characters of the chief persons in the drama, the breaking in at moments of tension and suspense of a happier mental climate, raise the drama to a nobler level of human experience than Shakespeare or any other western dramatist ever presented. But Shakespeare's unparalleled instinct for these happy turns of genius, favourable formations of traits and movements of impulse, affords examples which anticipate the unwise yet attractive friendship among the rival princes, the combination of practical sagacity and seer-like wisdom in the minister Yougundharayan (Prospero), the pride and lust for power and capricious majesty of the King of Avunthie. The love scenes also possibly may recall the charm and poignancy of some of Shakespeare's famous love scenes. But these are all on the surface. The moment the reader enters into the inner atmosphere of the drama and meets the inner persons of the characters presented, he is apt to feel himself to be irresistibly raised to a higher plane where live and move spirits purer and nobler than we know here on earth. *Vasavadutta* is not an escape to this plane, but a triumph of realisation of its

possibilities in this world. The recognition of Sri Aurobindo as one of the greatest dramatists now is only a matter of time.

The time to talk about *Savitri* is perhaps not yet. This, one can see, is going to remain an enigma or challenge to readers of poetry for many years to come. Western poetry has in recent years become more and more difficult and exclusive and often sought to engage attention by offering verbal riddles to be deciphered. Occasionally lone poets have insisted on talking about entirely private experiences in a very non-communicative way. The poet of *Savitri* is not at all reticent, nor is he niggardly in his expression. He seems, on the contrary, to believe in complete exhaustive statement which he makes in a lucid, precise language wholly free from obscurities or irregularities of construction. He does not claim his experiences to be just his own private affair. On the contrary, he looks upon himself as a poet of things universal and eternal which, sooner or later, must open and be accessible to all men. This raises the interesting issue : is poetical communication at all possible between different levels and planes of experience ? The answer, of course, lies in Sri Aurobindo's own theory of involution and evolution of powers and potentialities. Experiences yet to be are already germinally, potentially present in man. If this be so, there is no reason why Sri Aurobindo's poetry should not knock at the closed gates and awaken the sleeping princess to light of day and love. There are indeed passages in *Savitri*, in spite of its theme of yogic adventure into different worlds and planes of existence, which may not appeal to many and yet have a power of exaltation, a sense of *dénouement* and wide unwonted release, or a compelling grandeur of vision not found in any previous poet. Poetry need not always be recollected in tranquillity, but poetry, at least great poetry, must always be in its movement and effect an achievement of poise and tranquillity. There is a power in peace which is to be found in nothing else. *Savitri* breathes and moves through that power, its *rasa* is that *śānta rasa* which Kalidasa understood. The ordinary reader would discover his poetic power more readily in the descriptions of man's world as it is today, the cycle of the seasons and such other things of common experience. Sri Aurobindo's treatment of Nature and the seasons as compared with Tagore's may be broadly characterised by the same observations as we made earlier in this article regarding Tagore and Sri Aurobindo's dramatic genius. There is also a striking resemblance between the sublime utterances of the Raja in Tagore's *Arup Ratan* and God's parlance with Savitri. But this analogy, of course, is only valid up to a point. Sri Aurobindo's God speaks as nothing at all spoke before in poetry, dramatic or epic. People who are capable of being thrilled by the dialogues between Raja and Sudarsana, or Raja and Nandini (*Rakta-Karabi*) should have no difficulty in

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having a sense of Sri Aurobindo's poetic stature from the dialogues between Yama and Savitri and God and Savitri.

Sri Aurobindo's poetic genius finds its most characteristic expression in his dramatic and narrative poetry, but his lyrical gift also is of a high order, though less frequently used. Here his art mainly acts through melodic and tonic arrangement of the elements of sound and sense, the realisation of the uniquely expressive in *dhvam* which lays bare the heart and mood and elevation of the particular poem. This indeed is a manner which came to be completely overshadowed in the closing decade of the 19th century by the growing demand for subtlety of thought and sentiment and quickly changing or artfully concentrated imagery, so much so that even very sensitive and generous minds these days have lost the power of appreciating the type of poetic achievement which could only be communicated through something like the organ voice of Milton, the musical cadences of a Virgil, the mellifluous yet grand sound-movements of Kalidasa. Sri Aurobindo also has got the power of vividly presenting images and even whole panoramas in a few decisive luminous phrases. But his poetic inspiration almost wholly depends for its transmission on harmonic and rhythmic arrangements of sound-values, from which our Vedic and Upanishadic verses derive their power of appeal.

SUNIL CHANDRA SARKAR

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the last issue)

THE SUPREME MOTHER

ONCE I went to hear a musical performance in the Ashram. When the song was being sung, I saw in a vision Sri Aurobindo sitting on a sofa against the wall opposite me. He had a big symbolical ball-like thing in his hand as if he was holding and revolving the whole earth between his fingers. I could see that all the goddesses were standing around him with folded hands.

It at once came to my mind, "What is the use of worshipping and invoking the Mother when all the goddesses and powers of the Mother pay their homage to the Divine? Why not adore only Sri Aurobindo?"

Next morning I went to the Mother, but she received me with the same affection which I had always got from her.

I wrote to Sri Aurobindo about my vision and my reactions to it. He replied in some such words: "What you saw is not the Supreme Mother. They are the aspects of the Mother. You should quiet your confused mind and take shelter in the Mother."

I told the Mother all that had happened. She patted me and gave me her blessings' warm and gracious touch and told me with a smile: "Never mind, I will do all for you."

A TOUCH OF SOFT FINGERS

It was in 1945. I had fever and a severe headache so much so that it was extremely painful to move my head one side or the other. I had only to lie down in bed in one position.

Someone told me that the Mother did not like people to lie in bed when they were not well: it was always better to move about usefully and then one was more easily cured. Because of the acute headache there was nothing for me but to rest till I would meet the Mother at about 6-30 p.m., when she used to see a group of young boys apart from other sadhaks.

At the right time I managed to leave my bed and went to the Mother. The staircase door was closed and we waited outside. Surprisingly enough

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for a boy of such young age who knew little of the Mother's action, I already felt a bit relieved.

After some time, when she opened the door, I told her about my condition. As she blessed me with a touch of her soft fingers on my head, I found that not only was I cured instantaneously and completely but was full of joy and peace, as if nothing had ever happened.

THE MOTHER'S PRASAD

Some visitors from Calcutta, whenever they came, used to present to the Mother their devoted offerings and bring some other dry eatables (biscuits etc.) to get her Blessings' touch on them and then distribute them as her *prasad* when they returned home.

In 1949, they bought a few packets of biscuits of a costlier quality which they themselves had never tasted and, while buying them, they had spoken to one another casually about it.

When they went to the Mother with their packets—some as offerings for her and some for her Blessings' touch—she not only blessed the latter packets for *prasad*, but also returned their offering-gifts with her affectionate blessings. And the whole thing happened in such a natural way that they realised the return of those packets only when they had left the Mother. They had hardly had the time to say to her that they had meant those for the Mother and not to be returned as *prasad*.

Thus even in small and trivial matters Her Grace could act.

A TALE OF TELEGRAMS

My father came to the Ashram in August 1956 for Darshan on Sri Aurobindo's birthday. He intended to stay here for a couple of months after the 15th August. But only four days had passed after the Darshan when a telegram came to him informing him of his sister's death and wanting his immediate return.

During those days, we used to have daily Distribution in the Playground. My father followed the queue to get *prasad* from the Mother. As soon as he reached her, he handed over the telegram and told her that his sister had died and that he prayed the Mother for peace to her soul.

The telegram in her hands, the Mother went on looking at my father as if she had not understood anything of what he had told her.

Next morning, I approached the Secretary in connection with my father's talk with the Mother and told him that my father was leaving the town that very evening and would like to get a reply from the Mother. The Secretary

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

told me that the Mother had said she could not understand anything of what my father had tried to explain to her.

I informed my father accordingly and I asked him what exactly he had told the Mother. " 'Mother, my sister has died; I pray for peace to her soul,' this is exactly what I told her in clear words," was my father's reply.

In the evening, he left for the station at 7-30 p.m. and I left for my work. As I was going, someone told me that there was a telegram for my father on the Ashram Message-Delivery Board.

I took a friend's cycle and went straight to the Ashram to get the telegram which read, "Previous news wrong. Sister not dead. Details follow."

I cycled to the railway station and gave the telegram to my father and requested him to come back.

I explained the whole thing to the Secretary the next day. He replied, "The Mother could not understand because she could see that your aunt was not dead."

GRACE ABOUNDING

This was in the early thirties. Once a thought entered my mind that without the Divine Grace nothing substantial could be achieved in life and that in spite of my best efforts this Grace was not felt by me as consciously and distinctly as by others.

So, when I had a chance to have an interview with the Mother (in the Darshan Room upstairs in the Ashram), I sought an opportunity to express my feelings. I spoke with great anxiety on my face.

The Mother who was always compassionate and affectionate to us and had an ever-smiling face became immediately serious.

Observing the unusual attitude I began to go inward.

She said : "You ask for the Divine Grace ? It is as if a man sitting on the bank of a river were crying, 'Mother, Mother, I am dying without water, I am dying without water !'" And she made a gesture with her arms to show how large was the measure of Divine Grace available in the Ashram. Then her smile returned and her face beamed.

I felt at once that mine was a cry of sheer ignorance when the Divine Grace was incarnate amidst us.

Soon the Mother's physical form began to disappear and a light began to manifest. It was so impressive that not only was I free from any doubt about the Divine Grace but there was concretely within and around me its beatific Presence.

(To be continued)

Compiled and reported by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

BALCONY DARSHAN

EVERY custom, even a ritual, grows stale by repetition. But the Balcony Darshan is an ever-new, ever-revealing phenomenon. For all is perennial freshness at Spirit level. The physical dawn that unrolls the broad canvas of the light of common day for the creature-kind is followed, at the Ashram, by a spiritual sunrise for the creators—big and small—of a new world out of the old.

At the chosen hour—6.15—the glorious Mother Herself appears on the scene : and lo ! from some blazing spectrum of Beauty in the subtle world, the grandeur of White Light above is pouring out, into the vessels below, iridescent warm colours, unearthly hues with which to delineate vistas and panoramas that never were on sea or land.

It is an hour at once of visitation and invitation, of rejuvenation and thanksgiving. The magnetic pull of a centripetal Force is at work ; the fragrance of an ever-fresh bloom is wafted all over ; a call goes forth—and in a fervent response animated feet are carrying to the common pool—the Balcony Street—hearts heaving with exultation at the expected, and beating in suspense at the unexpected, for the Divine is nothing if not a delightful shock of surprise at each moment. The spirit of adoration is abroad and all ears and eyes become a breathless instant of waiting for the ethereal Foot-fall, for the Sight immaculate, for Love overflowing. A hush absolute has fallen ; the winds have dropped ; the planets are at a standstill—nothing moves or stirs.

In the twinkling of an eye She bursts on the vision of the crowd ; there She stands—the radiant image of a mystery in the Balcony-Shrine, Her palms resting squarely on the railings, a nodding smile sharply registering recognition of faces. The rest is from the Eyes to the eyes. And as is the bosom of yonder sea a-throb with the impact of the beaming red glory on the rim of the sky, so is the heart of this cross-section of humanity in that street a-thrill with the first flush of the Grace effulgent on the Balcony.

Through each pair of eyes that open windows on the interior, She steps into the depths. Is it for a fresh stock-taking ? Is She setting aright the instruments by a mere touch of her creative glance ? Is it communion between Spirit and spirit ? Or a knocking call to a sojourner who has slept too long ? Is it a replenishing and recharging, or a nameless word of good cheer and great

hope ? Is it the snapping or imprinting of an image on the retina of the eye or the tablet of the soul ? Or after all, is it simply enravishment with charm supernal ? Perhaps all this, and much more than this probing of the unfathomable by the human yardstick of conjecture. Oh ! the miracle of those penetrating Eyes that can, through the narrow arch of a fleeting moment, scan whole eternities, and make Infinity play on the crest of exalted feeling as one lays bare the innermost spaces of the heart before Her gaze ! For a blessed while the flux and ferment of life have ceased, the objective world has vanished ; the senses are a-swoon ; the mind is mute ; the ego has retired. Only the ineffable Presence exists ; the Mother alone is, and She is all eyes, and all eyes are in tune with Her. One phase of the Darshan is over. She has given, made whole, assured.

Now She lifts Her glance ; lifts it to the horizontal ; withdraws from the immediate to the remote ; also from the individual to the universal. The aspirants farther afield are equally dear and distance affects not Her giving. But who else must swim into Her ken now co-extensive with the universal ? Is it the cosmic powers and Her smaller emanations that come to pay obeisance and take assignment ? Is it the shape of things looming large in the future ? Weird figures of phantasy to our imaginings—maybe—but, to the empyrean seeing, forms more real than solid things. Is the Mother meditating and therefore necessarily dropping for the moment the passionate clinging of Her children from her attention ? Rather She is lifting on to the higher plane the concentrated stratum of their aspiration and tranced prayers and wide-hearted offerings of devotion, to weave them all into the texture of her cosmic pattern. The individuals must find their synthesis in the universal. The ultimate destiny forged is that of humanity at large. But She does not stop there either.

While hands are still joined in utter surrender, eyes still feast on the sublime, hearts still swell with meditative rapture down below, Her gaze takes gradually an upward slant. The eyelids close ; She has passed on into Her native trance state. For quite a few minutes She stands completely lost to the gaping multitude, lost to Herself too—shall we hazard ? Serenely poised, but with sternly severe posture of neck and face, She is rooted to the spot—a veritable statue hewn from the rock of the Eternal. It is not the too familiar Mother of the play-ground or even of the Balcony. That irised splashing bloom of smiles has closed its petals upon itself and the divine spell rises to the full vertical stature of its White Severity—so awful, stark, austere ! That too is Her form. The curtain is rung down on the Lakshmi and Saraswati aspects ; is it now Mahakali or Maheshwari at work and in view ? She has transported Herself to the peak of the transcendental.

But is the lone land of abiding bliss and silence any lure against the sphere of our tumult and sorrow ? Would she tarry there for Her own sake ? Not the Mother. It is in context with the lower that the higher scene has to be viewed. It is evidently a sequel to Earth's aspiration and prayer to the skies. The divine Mother in Her human form is playing the paracelete and lifting to Her own transcendent form, the Absolute above, Her children's supplication. The Supreme's sanction is Her own highest Self's renewed and ever-invigorating daily blessing to what is aspired for and planned below. The individual is thus linked up to the universal and the transcendent, and this dynamic integral unity—at once horizontal and vertical—alone paves the way for supramental transformation. The ascent is complete now. But the climax of the Darshan is reached in the descent and takes two more facets to round off this 5-Scene or 5-Act drama of the Grace in action on the Balcony.

The trance over, the boon granted, from the Pinnacle She hails back to the base. Ah ! marvellous is the last lap of give and take between the All-bringer now and the All-seeking. In a brief rewarding spell, Paradise seems transplanted on Earth—the Divine and the human, the Balcony and the street all fuse and melt and blend into a delirious sea of Beatitude, of Vision and Love and Compassion and Grace, of dream and wonder. Only ecstasy pulsates from end to end. All is enchantment, bliss-shower, Heaven-deluge !

At last the tension breaks; the symphony that had swept the deep-strung hearts is now ebbing away. The transfiguring smile—that goes scintillating through all the strata of the being and settles down as a permanent possession, as a treasured experience of a life-time perennially to be drawn upon—and the fluid gaze begin to withdraw. She recedes, as She came, facing the congregation. Her feet recoil backward as they had a few minutes before stepped forward; but Her whole posture—eyes and smile and gait—breathes constant assurance that Her children shall always be in front of Her as they literally are at the moment; that She would never turn her back upon them lest some insatiate eye might be deprived of yet one more sip at the grace abounding. But withdraw She must, physically, to make them fall back on their own inner strength, the Presence installed by Her in their innermost chamber, the vibrations that She has instilled into the very fibres of their being.

Now Her withdrawal is complete. Savitri—the goddess, the human—had played the Epiphany. Ten minutes unveiled the sequence that stretches back to eternity. She had promised, She appeared, She prepared, She secured the boon, and also granted it to the Aswapathy-hearted aspiration of the multitude; and now She withdraws for the day only to reappear morning after morning till the momentum generated works out the grand finale, the consummation of the vision splendid, of the blue-print ethereal into the shape and

BALCONY DARSHAN

hue and proportion of Matter, into a magnificent splendour on earth—for which She stays.

The congregation has now to disperse. But how ? They find themselves on their feet in broad sunshine, but their minds are still lingering in a twilight of vision and reality—the Dream that is haunting, and the Work that is calling. But should not the one fuse into the other, to become a dynamic, integral whole ? Dream and Work—dream working itself out, work dreaming of the Divine all the time. In the waveless tranquillity of the heart, the mind must have perpetual darshan of the living dream that is the Mother, of the constant sunrise that is Her divinity. It is in the image of that Perfection and Delight that each sadhak has to fill in the portion of the canvas assigned to him. The drama in space that was the Balcony Darshan has only lengthened out into a drama of time—the day-long swing of activity, of offering, in the Divine's beehive. The outer space has shifted into the inner—and from the balcony of each sadhak's being the Mother's eyes are indeed always upon what he does. They pursue him like the hound of heaven and pull him back to the bar of Her Compassion and Blessing the next morning.

The spiral of advance in collective sadhana has already gone far ahead, it seems. Has it swung round to the penultimate rung of achievement ? The Mother's making the Balcony Darshan now a many-faceted phenomenon is a clear index to that. She did not meditate and go into trance until recently.

Salutations to the Mother ! All gratitude and self-giving to the All-giver, All-fulfiller from the Balcony !

NARESH BAHADUR

(From *Pioneer of the Supramental Age*, published by the Delhi Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.)

METEORS AND FIRE-FLIES

THE greatest simplicities are fraught with a mysterious beauty, as when the tendrils of a rose adorn a doric column, or as fading firelight plays on the face of a sleeping child.

*

Humility is the first condition of love as it is of learning. How quickly do little children love and learn unhampered by the blind weight of an adult vanity ! And in this freedom they possess for us an eternal charm. They speak to us from across the lost years and, as we clasp their hands in ours, we recapture in a wordless moment the fragrance of a forgotten felicity.

Their treasure is in their knowing innocence, their natural wisdom.

*

Poets and saints are the troubadours of God. They come from a far country bearing their gifts of colour and of song. Strangers who are dear, we know them, yet we know them not.

And as they pass we gaze with wistful longing as if our eyes would wrest from them their secret...

Or, perhaps, they are but made of the stuff of rainbows and moonbeams, and so it is we must wonder whether they it is who dream an eternal dream, or is it we ?

*

When we grow roses in our own garden, we shall have eyes for the lilies in another's.

*

He who made tempests made tenderness. Behind the screaming of the gale and the whirlwind is a secret exultation of Joy.

*

METEORS AND FIRE-FLIES

The Giver's greatest gift is when the taker takes to giving.
He needs must take from others who knows not his own wealth.

*

When a flower is worth an anna, the rain becomes the tears of God.

*

The mind can never hold what the heart does not cherish.

*

Those who beat their heads in Ideas' cages oft rant against those who would set them free.

*

Criticism is the deliberate opposition of value to value, part to part. True judgement is the compassionate relating of the part to the Whole.

*

Familiarity is the eye grown blind because it looks too close.

*

The meaning of life is Love. Krishna's flute lies useless until he puts it to his lips.

*

When one seeks to justify himself against another, each measures his shadow against the blind wall of Ignorance.

*

Whatever seems real to us beckons and captivates the soul, yet paradoxically it is the soul that gives to the fiction its reality. Objects of desire are ever enhanced by our desiring them, for we cast around them something of ourselves, and then seek to be united with something that is our own.

*

MOTHER INDIA

Sobriety means to take God seriously, not focuss solemn sentiments on our self.

*

Indignation is the outraged 'sanctity' of Pride.

*

The stains of separation can sometimes only be cleansed by tears.

*

Those who see, know; those who can't see, think.

*

Sincerity and humility are the folded hands of prayer.

*

When we wait upon God it is often to discover that He has been waiting on us and, like a patient servant, relieves us of the burden of ourself.

*

When the singer loses himself in his song, God stops to listen.

*

He who loves seeks no reasons and finds them everywhere.

*

Guile is the wall of protection we throw around our pettiness.

*

The stones are reconciled to muteness when they learn they cannot hurt with words.

GODFREY

NEW ROADS

BOOK VII

THE TRAVELLER OUTSIDE THE GATES OF THE CITY

THE Dawn awoke — but Night had fallen round
The Traveller standing at the City gates.
He thought at last the journey at an end
When there he saw the City of his dreams
Loom up before him dazzling the very sight :
The shining turrets massed against the blue
Of sovereign skies, hope seemed at last fulfilled —
But no, to him the City was denied;
The guards demanded now the Secret Word
Which all must know who here would enter in.

He turned away; a wild outlandish flood
Of sorrow spread across the seeking heart;
A prayer of anguished aspiration rose
Upon the crest of half-forgotten fears,
Until within the bosom's deep there stirred
A psychic memory of long ago.

Ah yes, dear God ! he knew this day would come —
Had he not tried to steal from Time itself
When once he trod a secret hidden road,
An ancient "short-cut" to eternity ?

Yes, then the heart had silently opposed
But mind the reasoner found a brave excuse :
"All, all experience leads to the Divine."
Now face to face with mere reflection's goal
He saw where he had by-passed his true self,
Denied the law and purpose of his being —
The cosmic dharma of a life in Time.

To reach the Goal without fulfilling God ?
No ! that would but deny one's very soul !

He turned away and mingled with the crowd,

MOTHER INDIA

A crowd one might have found in ancient days
Down through the ages of historic time
Outside the city gate beyond the walls.

His gaze encompassed all these passers-by
And saw the human types assembled here;
And though each one was lost in himself alone
He looked on the others with a wistful eye
As if some miracle might come to pass,
Some chance might yet reveal the Secret Word
To take him through the Gateway of the Dawn.
None of these lingerers knew the mystic Sound
Yet each knew where he'd erred along the Way,
For on his brow a furrowed sadness ploughed
Across the striving dignity of hope.

All wore the outer vestments of the soul :
The hopes and failings of unconscious lives
That struggle with the need and circumstance
Of petty ways. The impulse and desire
Of heart and blood undisciplined by mind.
In some an ancient aristocracy
Still held in fee the progress of the soul
While others squandered their simplicity
On passionate yearnings for the mind of sense.
A purple will flecked with an ermined eye
Was striving to acquire nobility.
One lone predatory mind of eagle mien
Puffed himself with academic pride...
While yet another, holding a legal lamp,
Was seeking proof of immortality.
Proud princes, beggars with a book of gold,
Merchants, vendors showing off their wares
Mingled with lost maidens from the Lake—
Nymphs from the rushes where the pipes of Pan
Filter the music on the magic air.

In all this human motley of the earth
One lonely figure stood—a world apart.
Grey as a monk and silent as the night
His heart, a pale soft purple mystic flame
Rising on wings of bliss and gratitude.

He stood alone and in his hand a bell

Clanged a warning to the passing crowd :
 "Unclean ! unclean !" —the ancient leper cry
 Rang down the galleries of historic time.
 A compelling insight held the Traveller's gaze,
 Aroused a long forgotten gratitude.
 "Unclean ! unclean !" the leper cried again—
 "Who is there here to ease my burning thirst ?
 Unclean ! unclean !—pure water or I die!"
 The Traveller went to him and made him drink
 From his own gourd—embraced him in his arms
 And said : "My brother, I am more unclean
 To have forgotten love and gratitude."
 The leper looked into his eyes and smiled;
 "Your heart remembers now, so hear these words :
 See yonder Flower-seller by the Lake
 Of True Remembrance—go to her and ask—
 'Where do the White Swans hover o'er the Shrine
 Of Peace, where are the golden Peaks divine?'"

He sat beside her underneath the shade
 Of willow trees, on the margin of the shore;
 Breathed in the peace which from her presence flowed,
 Sweet like the perfume of a briar-rose
 When Spring broadcasts her fragrance on the air.

In silence she spoke the language of the flowers.
 Their secret message mounting to the sun,
 Their pristine aspiration for the light,
 Their brave persistent energy to grow
 Into such pure perfection as the rose,
 A star-lit daisy—pink lotuses at dawn;
 Spring daffodils that quench the thirst of sight
 And ring heraldic memories in the heart.
 And mauve-mist grasses of humility
 That measure sweet simplicity with God.
 Images of long-forgotten fields
 Of meadow-sweet and golden buttercups,
 Eglantine and hawthorn in the May;
 Blue-bell woods that echo with the sound
 Of elfin laughter and the nightingale.
 Time had no place in such a reverie,
 Only a living peace and beauty reigned

MOTHER INDIA

Across the silent waters of the bay.
Then to his soul she spoke in accents clear,—
Words to inspire new hope for the Grand Ascent :
“Here in the bay an island-vessel waits
To bear you on a pilgrimage in Time;
Beyond the waters of the Great Alone,
Above the summits of mortality,
Across this Lake of Consciousness and Bliss
To that lone mountain where White Birds of Light
Call the Traveller to the Spirit’s Self.
There and there alone the Sacred Word
Is safe enthroned upon its summit shrine;
There too the City Gates will open wide
To the spartan Traveller on these Roads of Truth.”

He gazed into the waters of the Lake
And saw—what he had thought were solid walls
Were battlements erected in the mind;
The guarded gate—the figment of a dream
Which others shared—for they indeed were there,
Each in his own created world apart.
Now cleared, his sight beheld the distant shore,
The Golden Mountain haloed in the Dawn
Rising beyond the summits of the world,
Beyond mere mind and our mortality.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Continued from the last issue)

II. THE EARTH-CRY AND THE ADVENT OF THE MOTHER

(Continued)

8. EARTH CRY

O MOTHER, our world thirsts for Thy measureless Love.
Man calls Thee, torn by untold agony,
Discontent is the only fruit his labours earn,
Helpless he drifts in puffs and winds of life,
Goalless he moves on in the rounds of doom.
All calm and dumb, earth bends in a prayerful mood,
Unable to bear the load of ignorance;
Unheard by the clouds, unanswered by the sky,
She weeps mute faith in some Omnipotence.
Ocean Love, lean down to our entreating clay,
With Thy God-wine gloomed cosmos overflow
Flush world with the Dawn-light of Thy Golden Aeon.

9. THE LIFE-PLAY

O MOTHER, we each moment find
Our powers given the lie they merit,
Our towers of ego tumbling down,
Crumbling our falsehood-forts unspined.

Our mightiest forces faint and fall,
Proving our effort's worthlessness;
Moving to extinction swift we see
Ideals that our life enthrall.

MOTHER INDIA

Joyous or woeful we may dwell,
Or work out vigorous Thy will,
Or shirk Thy most congenial sign :
All is Thy play ineffable.

That power alone can claim this world,
Which bears the stamp of Thy command,
Which dares the grip of Thy Love's Hand.
What's life ? Thy Love mysterious furlled.

10. THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE SACRED OFFERING

MOTHER, the stage is set for the sacred offering,
The place is washed of its impurities,
The atmosphere is cleansed with solemn chants.
Now burn holy the fire with Thy secret touch
And raise the flame of sacrifice to our Home;
Let the blaze of aspiration kiss Thy Feet
And return to earth with Their transfiguring Halo.
Let Thy sky-fissured blaze-packed fall of power
And cataract of keen light from stone-peace
Rush to the altar with Thy magic Grace
To realise Thy Will in dust and men;
Turn the human mud into a sculptured soul
And win the world Thy permanent Abode.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(Continued from the last issue)

XIV. THE VISION AT THE CORE

THE basic trait of philosophy is 'a ceaseless pursuit after truth, truth undeformed and unsullied by the idiosyncracies and personal prejudices of the individual'. But what is the essential nature of this truth that constitutes the *sine qua non* of all philosophy? The philosophers themselves find it difficult to come to any agreed conclusion about the definition of it. But we can show that in all phases of philosophical deliberation, in the comprehension of "truth-" ideas, in the process of elaborating them, in communicating them to others as well as in attempting to demonstrate their validity, the philosophers are overtly or covertly guided by a sense of visualisation.

What the philosophers seek after are supposed to be *objecta*, self-existent beyond the mutilating grasp of the immature thinker—does not the term *objectum* already suggest an exigence for vision-entity, a phenomenon aptly designated by the French neologism, *chosification* of the image?—and these *objecta* can only be reached through a process of ever-etherealizing abstraction. In this field of abstracting operation, the seeker is never checked by the inhibiting injunction, *Non plus ultra*—go no farther; *plus ultra*—more beyond—is the command-word at every step. But, what is remarkable, this abstraction on an ever-ascending scale does never atrophy the power of vision, nor does it necessarily denude the truth of all forms. Rather this process liberates the intellect from its preoccupation with the superficial view of things, awakens it to an acute sense of vision in a new dimension so much so that one feels for certain that one has known a thing only when one has *seen* it in its essence. Thus vision is the hall-mark of guarantee of one's knowledge.

As a matter of fact, every conscientious student of philosophy, in setting out upon his quest after knowledge, is confronted with the problem: "How to know that my knowledge is knowledge?" And, as Spinoza recommended in his *De Intellectus Emendatione* ("On the Improvement of the Intellect"), before all things means must be devised for clarifying the intellect. One has to distinguish carefully the various forms of knowledge, and trust only the best. The first kind of knowledge is hearsay knowledge; the second sort comes from

vague experience; the third type is that gained by a process of reasoning; but the fourth and highest form of knowledge is, according to Spinoza, that received in direct perception. He believes that men versed in mathematics know most of Euclid in this intuitive way; but he admits ruefully: "The things which I have been able to know by this knowledge so far have been very few." This intuitive knowledge, this *Scientia intuitiva*, is a perception of things *sub specie eternitatis*—in their eternal aspects and relations, and incidentally, this offers us in a phrase a definition of philosophy. (We may note in this connection that the Indian term for philosophy is *darśan*, Vision).

This, then, is the first basic visualisation in the realm of philosophy constituting the diamond core of all philosophical thinking and invariably sustaining every philosopher worth the name in his effort to rear the structure of his thought.

XV. THE PAINTER'S BRUSH AND THE POET'S QUILL

It hardly needs pointing out that this basic central vision is by no means a superficial physical vision, it is rather a vision of the pure intellect and, for those who can ascend still higher up, it is the vision of the spirit. But in philosophical discourses there is always involved a great risk of misrepresentation not altogether avoidable in all situations. Those who have not drilled themselves in the iron discipline of pure intellection are ever apt to fall back unwittingly upon the stratum of ordinary vision of the ever-evident concrete, natural and normal to our sense-bound mind, and thus distort and disfigure the pristine purity of the primal vision.

For, experience shows that in philosophical communication the immediate clarity of the language of discourse may be measured by the facility with which the reader can respond to the situation envisaged. And who does not know that the visual response is the most direct of all sense responses? Thus the comprehension of a particular philosophical text is commensurate with the facility of representation. To one who is not wide-awake, that text appears to be clearmost which sends one's attention directly and immediately to objects and actions visualised. In proportion to the complexity of the act evoked, that is to say, in the measure of the effort and time called for to represent it to one's mental vision, the idea too becomes less and less clear and fined. And this is true in relation to all types of word-expressions: those signifying sentiments and feelings as well as those signifying concepts and constructs. In every case, as soon as the word-expression is uttered, our first almost instinctive impulse is to paint on our mind's canvas the appropriate scene or situation

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

in which the pronouncement acquires its supposed relevance. And, in this subtle manoeuvre towards the domain of the concrete, one is supported by all sorts of unexpected aids : the etymology of the word, the syntactical relation of the word-expression in the integrated structure of the sentence type used, the history of one's subconscious association and acquaintance with the term, and so on and so forth. This, then, is the second form of visualisation we encounter in the field of philosophy.

Wittingly or unwittingly, some philosophers have utilised this propensity to visualise on the part of their readers, to drive home forcefully the truths they have glimpsed. In their philosophical demonstration, they use a wealth of well-chosen images that invariably sway the reader's attention on to the field of the visual concrete. Master tacticians, they wield in philosophy the painter's brush or the poet's quill and strive thus to induce in their readers a sense of the demonstrative veracity of the ideas put forward. Let us taste, *en passant*, two well-known passages that bring out in bold relief this practice :

First, the prophetic lyricism of Nietzsche :

"Dead are all Gods; now we will that superman live...

I teach you superman. Man is something that shall be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass him ?...

What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal : What can be loved in man is that he is a *transition* and a *destruction*.

I love those who do not know how to live except in perishing, for they are those going beyond.

I love the great despisers because they are the great adorers, they are arrows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not seek beyond the stars for a reason to perish and be sacrificed, but who sacrifice themselves to earth in order that earth may some day become superman's...

It is time for man to mark his goal. It is time for man to plant the germ of his highest hope....

Tell me, my children, if the goal be lacking to humanity, is not humanity itself lacking ?...

Love unto the most remote man is higher than love unto your neighbour."¹
Or this other colourful cry of Nietzsche :

"Have you not heard anything of my children ? Speak to me of my garden, my Happy Isles, my new beautiful race. For their sake I am rich, for their sake I became poor....What have I not surrendered? What would I not surren-

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

der that I might have one thing : those children, that living plantation, those life-trees of my highest will and my highest hope ?”¹

Now let us listen to Bergson, a philosopher on whom Will Durant has the following comments to offer : “If Bergson is occasionally obscure it is by the squandered wealth of his imagery, his analogies, and his illustrations; he has an almost semitic passion for metaphor, and is apt at times to substitute an ingenious simile for patient proof. We have to be on guard against this image-maker, as one beware of a jeweller, or a real-estate poet—while recognizing gratefully, in *Creative Evolution*, our century’s first philosophic masterpiece.”²

“A very small element of a curve is very near to being a straight line. And the smaller it is, the nearer. In the limit it may be termed a part of the straight line, as you please, for in each of its points a curve coincides with its tangent. So, likewise, ‘vitality’ is tangent, at any and every point, to physical and chemical forces; but such points are, in fact, only views taken by a mind which imagines stops at various moments of the movement that generates the curve. In reality, life is no more made-up of physico-chemical elements than a curve is composed of straight lines.”³

Let us now pass on to the consideration of a third form of *Chosification* which, although very subtle, is by no means any less potent than the other forms.

XVI. THE CHARM OF THE ‘DESIGNATUM’

“If you wish to converse with me,” said Voltaire, “define your terms.” Indeed, as someone has rightly remarked, how many a debate in philosophy would have been deflated into a paragraph if the disputants had dared to define their terms ! But instead of offering precise and unequivocal definitions, many thinkers throw in some picturesque names and labels and build their word-webs around these self-justifying entities. And these names, in their turn, become gradually ossified, gather some unsubstantial substance around them, and generally end in acquiring an ill-got ‘things-ness’ through constant usage. One is very soon apt to forget that these are nothing but *nomina* (‘names’) and by no means *res* (‘things’).

We should bear in mind that to designate is not the same thing as to name. ‘To name’ in ordinary language means to label something which, consequently, must be said to *exist*, in the usual sense of this word. But we may introduce by

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*.

² Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p. 463.

³ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 31.

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a rule of designation terms which do not refer to a thing or event in reality but may very well refer to fictitious entities. Thus we may say that 'unicorn' designates a horse-like animal with a single horn on its forehead. But this does not commit us to the belief that unicorns do exist in the same sense as chairs and tables. To say that a certain term refers to an entity or situation (physical, abstract, or fictitious), or to give a rule of designation, does not presuppose any ontological assumption. But we are quite often misled by an unwarranted analogy from the thing-language of every-day life. This attribution of thingness, *choséité*, and, for that matter, of real existence to the designatum typifies the third mood of visualisation frequently prevalent in the domain of philosophy.

In fact, here in this realm of abstraction, nothing is easier than believing that one has understood a point of thought when one has not really understood it. For the philosopher forges a host of terms and these become in the sequel so many starting-points for chains of philosophical argumentation. The reader feels no longer the necessity of going back directly to the world of the concrete for his comprehension of the idea encountered. Instead he comes back again and again to the starting term which, because of its vicarious thingness, imparts a false clarity and solidity to the demonstration offered.

Thus it is that, in the domain of philosophy and psychology, so many ill-elucidated terms suffice to offer a pretended explanation. Instinct, Attention, Judgement are only a few amongst the simplest instances in this category. This third type of visualisation by proxy offers, to quote Yvon Belaval, a clarity made to order, *Clarté par décret*, and this leads us to the study of another form of visualisation that has got something of a tragi-comic element in its manifestation.

XVII. THE PHENOMENON OF SELECTIVE BLINDNESS

We have once before referred to the curious phenomenon that the philosophers are not always mutually convincing. In fact they differ amongst themselves in their methods of comprehension of the ideas set forth, and also in their approach to how they should be elaborated. And the inevitable offshoot of all this diversity is that what appears as abundantly convincing and almost self-evident to one turns out to be nothing more than the fire-works of verbiage and an absolute *trompe-l'œil* to others.

But the essential point to note is this that every single philosopher aims to be precise and clear in his thought and seeks in all earnestness to demonstrate the truth of his personal vision. Thus we see that to philosophize *more geometrico* became the aspiration of many philosophers. Spinoza wanted to

adopt this method for the elaboration of his philosophy and went so far as to name his principal work *Ethica More Geometrico Demonstrata* ("Ethics Geometrically Demonstrated"); but the result was none too happy for others; it only led for them to what has been uncharitably christened 'Hegelian obfuscation'. Leibniz wanted to devise some universal *calculemus* by means of which he would be able to give absolute, mathematical demonstrations for all the truths propounded. But too much of symbolic logic incites doubt in others' mind and to them the logical demonstration of 'liberty' does justice neither to liberty nor to logic itself, for it is so good that it seems good for nothing!—*Tanto buon che val niente!*

But for that reason the sincerity of the disputing philosophers need not be doubted. The basic cause of all this disagreement is not far to seek. In fact, as Yvon Belaval has pointed out, every true philosopher possesses his own "privileged perception". Thus it is that Descartes is endowed with a clear and distinct intuition of the 'soul', which his disciple Malebranche misses altogether. Leibniz, Hume, Maine de Biran differ in their experience of the Self. In the red of an arm-chair Husserl grasps the very essence of red, but the nominalists can only shrug at this Husserlian venture. And what to say of the Kantian "in-itself" which for many other philosophers is nothing but predilection for the mysterious? Thus it is, again, that being exasperated by others' inability to comprehend what they have put forth, some philosophers have accused their detractors of "intellectual blindness" (*cecité intellectuelle*).

The proper diagnosis of this strange situation is that every philosopher has got his world of vision which is often closed to his fellow-comrades. Here, then, is the fourth form of visualisation one comes up against in the proper appreciation of philosophers' ideas, for each one of them has got his own individual way of looking at things, and this endows a particular philosophical term ("transcendence" or "absolute", for example) with an ever-varying halo proper to the individual thinker. This "scintillation", to use the picturesque expression of M. Jean Wahl, often creates an insuperable obstacle in the way of agreement with a philosophical text.

We now proceed to the study at close quarters of the individual vision or, to put it negatively, the selective blindness, as manifest in some of the most well-known philosophers.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

KATHA UPANISHAD

A COMMENTARY

(Continued from the last issue)

स्वर्गे लोके न भयं किञ्चनास्ति न तत्र त्वं न जरया बिभेति ।
उभे तीत्वांश्चनायापिपासे शोकातिगो मोदते स्वर्गलोके ॥

I.i.12*

NACHIKETAS has asked as his first boon the liberation of himself and his father on the evolutionary planes of manifestation. Now he goes on to ask the second of the three boons granted to him by Yama. Just as the first boon pertained to the visible worlds of matter and life and mind in this evolutionary movement out of the Inconscience, so does the second boon refer to the invisible occult worlds which are created in the involutory descent of the Spirit into the Inconscience. So Nachiketas begins to tell Yama about it by first of all describing the condition that obtains in those involutory worlds. He says, 'In heaven fear is not at all, in heaven, O Death, thou art not, nor old age has any terrors. Crossing over hunger and thirst, leaving sorrow behind and going beyond it one rejoices in the heavenly worlds.'

Fear, death, decay, hunger and thirst are the five characteristics of the evolutionary worlds of Matter, but the involutory worlds of heavens are marked by their absence. In the worlds of manifestation created by the evolutionary movement out of the Inconscience we find a difficult outflowing of consciousness and energy and bliss. It is therefore Nature's first preoccupation to see that the psychic element manifesting in Matter is able to build up its individuality in the vague and unconscious universality of existence. She has to effect a practical, though not an essential, isolation or separation of the individual from the universal and to maintain the same throughout the evolutionary movement. To develop more and more perfectly individualised entities is her labour. But this is only one part of it, for she has to see that the individual so created does not become utterly cut off from the universe, for in such an eventuality her whole purpose of evolution would be frustrated. On the other side, therefore, she sees that the individual always remains in contact with the world in which it has come into being. A fully developed and conscious individuality is the first step and a fully developed and conscious universalisation of that individuality without breaking up its individual mould is the second and apparently contradictory step which Nature wants to take.

* *svarge loke na bhyam kunchana asti, na tatra tvam na jaraya bibheti ;
ubhe tirtva 'shanāyā-pīpāse, śokātigo modate svarga-loke.*

This difficult thing she brings about by various methods and devices. The first of them is fear. If we analyse psychologically the feeling of fear, we shall find that it is an instinct that is coextensive with life. Wherever there is manifestation of life, there is always the initial formation of individuality which has to be protected from the blind universal forces which try to swallow every such individual entity that pushes up its head above the formless waters of universal existence, apraketam salilam. The incipient consciousness of the individual has therefore from the very first instant of its manifestation to protect itself from the invasion of dark and blind cosmic forces. This protective instinct assumes the form of fear, the fear of losing one's individuality, the fear of losing one's possessions and the fear of getting engulfed in the unformulated wideesses of the universal Inconscience. The fragmentation or the division, dwaita, has thus begun. This separation is the first step Nature takes in order to create a conscious individuality. And this individuality is always accompanied by the instinct of fear. It is for this reason that an Upanishadic seer says, *yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati tatra bhayam bhavati*, wherever there is isolation or division there is always a feeling of fear. This is the psychology of fear and its purpose and reason of existence ; without fear the individual cannot maintain his hard-won individuality in the apparently hostile play of titanic world-energies. This fear is an absolute necessity in the earlier stages of evolution, because it is this fear that alone can sustain the individual in the face of invading universal forces. This fear is only the obverse side of the instinct of self-protection, jugupsā. This is the first characteristic of an evolutionary world which distinguishes it from the typical worlds created by the divine Force in its involutory descent. No feeling of fear is to be found in the worlds of heaven, for there is no need to be afraid of anything. The need of fear is only to be found in an evolutionary world such as ours.

The second characteristic of evolution is the appearance of Death. Nature after having built up the individual tries to see that that individual does not become too much isolated from the world, that the walls of protection and security, consisting of the physical, vital and mental formation built around the individual, do not become the walls of a perpetual prison to keep him hermetically sealed and cut off from all growth ; for in that case the ultimate goal of the whole movement of Nature would remain unfulfilled. Death is therefore the second device created by Nature in order to further the evolutionary process. Fear is the element that conserves, whereas death is the element that brings about a change in the individual towards progression. Without death life would stagnate and the individual would be confined to a set form of physical, vital and mental substance. As a matter of fact, death is only a

process of life, and not its contradiction. It is the process whereby life revivifies itself.

But in order that death may have its play another element is necessary. If death is a sudden change in life, a leap from one steady poise to another, decay is the process which prepares that sudden leap. Suddenness is only an apparent phenomenon, it is only an inability on our part to comprehend the subtle graded steps or processes put forth by Nature. Decay or ageing is thus only a preliminary step leading to the ultimate disintegration of the manifested form. This is the third device of Nature.

But this process of decay leading to the ultimate disintegration is a negative process ; so long as life continues, that is to say, so long as a radical change is not called for, the other process of hunger and thirst, which is the representative and miniature form of death itself, has got its sway over the individual. The purpose behind both these, *viz.* death and hunger, is the same. Without them there would be no progression and the individual would become utterly isolated within himself. Hunger leads him into contact with the world, and this contact is the first step towards the ultimate oneness with it which he has progressively to realise. So long as the consciousness of the individual is not sufficiently developed to enable him to universalise himself and consciously know his oneness with all, right up to the level of his physicality, the process of hunger will be necessary. It is Nature's way, however unconscious it may be, of bringing the individual nearer and nearer to his unity with the world. We may note here in passing that hunger is not a phenomenon pertaining to the body alone but has also many other subtler forms through which it pervades the whole of the individual's being and nature, his life-part and mentality. It is only another name for his need to grow.

But, as we have already noted in the case of fear, all these other elements too—death, decay and hunger—cannot have any place in the other worlds, for the beings manifesting there have no need to grow : they are only fixed to their respective types. It is only in this world of evolutionary Matter that those elements can have their existence and utility.

In the worlds of manifestation created by the evolutionary movement out of the Inconscience we find a difficult outflowering of consciousness and energy and bliss. The evolving soul on the stage of Matter is under the sway of death and all the other attendant circumstances that arise out of the pervasion of death—hunger and thirst and decay. The soul in its earlier stages is unable to keep his physical habitation to himself for a sufficiently long time, for the psychic element has not yet established itself with any firmness in the material principle. That is why he has to undergo the various vicissitudes provided by the evolutionary Nature. Thus death is the condition imposed

upon the soul evolving in Matter. Hunger and thirst are only the symptoms which indicate that the soul has not yet become vast enough and has yet to grow out of its limitation in Matter. We feel hungry and thirsty because we have not yet attained to the ultimate satisfaction that comes out of our identity with the Universal and Transcendent towards which we are evolving. The individual has the need of expanding himself into the universal and getting beyond the egoistic limitation to the physical and the mental frame. Hunger and thirst are thus the instruments provided by Nature for the soul in order that the individual may not remain limited within its narrow imprisonment in Matter. He has to universalise himself even on the level of Matter. Old age or decay is also indicative of the same limitation, *viz.*, the soul's inability to keep the physical body and the physical mind's faculties in their normal condition all the time. These three, therefore, hunger and thirst and decay, are the characteristics of the evolutionary worlds and their presence is limited only to them.

But there can be no evolution out of the Inconscience unless the elements which have to evolve have already become submerged in the Inconscience. This movement of getting submerged is known as Involution. The other worlds are created not in the process of evolution but in the course of this other process, and therefore their constitution is not like that of the evolutionary world. They are eternal worlds and the beings that dwell in them are immortal beings and even the objects or things belonging to them are cast in an unchanging and perpetual mould. Just as there are three levels or worlds in evolution, so also and corresponding to them there are three types of worlds in involution.

These three types are : first the subtle physical, second the vital and third the mental worlds. These correspond to the physical, the vital and the mental principles which have evolved out of the Inconscience. These worlds are what are called typical worlds where everything remains as it is created throughout eternity. There is no change, there is no evolution, but all the beings there have got an eternal unchanging existence. This is what Nachiketas means when he says that neither death nor old age nor hunger nor thirst are there in the worlds of heaven. They remain true to their type, do not deviate from it nor assume any other material than that which is characteristic of that particular world. The subtle physical worlds remain subtle physical but do not become and do not manifest the vital or the mental elements in them; the vital too remain faithful to the life-element and do not manifest any other form of substance in them; so too the mental. It is only the physical evolutionary Matter that is subject to various changes, known as *bhāva-vikāras* in the later Vedantic terminology; birth and growth and decay and death are

the characteristics of only the evolutionary physical world and of creatures belonging to it.

Whatever pertains to this evolutionary physical world is known in ancient terminology as ādhibhautika; whatever pertains to the other worlds is called ādhidaivika, for the word deva or god is a general term applied to all the unevolving beings who are denizens of those worlds. They are energies or beings created by the Divine before the manifestation commenced out of the Inconscience. Nachiketas has, by the first boon, asked Yama the knowledge of the working of the universal Law on the evolutionary planes and its purpose and the soul's final overleaping of that Law. Now by the second boon he asks about Yama's function in the other worlds, those occult levels of Nature which are not normally accessible to the consciousness of the evolving soul, but the knowledge of which is essential for an integral understanding of the workings of the Divine in the universe. Yama as the keeper of the universal Law is to be found not only in the evolutionary but also in the typical worlds, for the whole of the universe is an ordered rhythmic movement and not a chaotically manifesting play of unconnected or incoherent events. But still Yama's or the Law's working on earth cannot be the same as that in the other worlds; it is, so to say, a different Yama that dwells in the latter. That is why Nachiketas says, 'There, in the world of Svarga, thou art not'. He does not mean that Yama is not at all there in those worlds, for in the very next stanza he says, 'You, thus characterised, are there (*i.e.*, in those worlds) approaching the heavenly Fire, etc. etc.' What he wants to say is that Yama's characteristic working in this world, which assumes the form of death, is not to be found in those other worlds. There the working of the Law takes a different form.

Thus the present stanza is only an introduction to the second boon he is going to mention in the next. After having attained liberation on the level of kṣara ātman or kṣara brahman, he wants to know about the manifestation of the akṣara aspect; the physical worlds are the creation of the kṣara or the Mutable, but the other worlds are the creation of the akṣara or the Immutable; the former are adhibhaura, but the latter are adhidaiva; for the devas or gods are the manifestations out of the Immutable and that is why they are immortal and permanent.

The evolutionary soul, however, is not confined only to the physical worlds, but as the evolutionary beings have got all the elements which go to constitute the universe simultaneously present in them, he has access to those other worlds also in certain states of his consciousness such as sleep and after death, when he is freed from his preoccupations with the physical world. During these states he has access to the supraphysical, where a different law prevails and not the one of hunger and thirst and pain and decay and death as here.

(To be continued)

BABHRU

IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT?

Some Criticisms and Suggestions

17

THE only evidence seemingly worth considering is the second supposed confirmation of Fleet's Gupta Era, the statement of Wang Hiu-en-tse. But before we consider it we may remark *en passant* on certain minor "evidences", drawn from the Chinese writers, about Gupta chronology. First, there is the assertion invariably made that Fa-Hien (400-411 A.D.) visited India when the Imperial Guptas were at the height of their power, with Chandragupta II on the throne. There is not a shred of proof that Fa-Hien's visit was during the reign of Chandragupta II. All historians have to admit, as does Sen¹: "He does not mention the contemporary king even by name." Rawlinson², Mookerji³ and Basham⁴ note the same glaring omission. Secondly, I-tsing,⁵ at the close of the seventh century A.D., refers to a king named Srigupta who flourished 500 years prior to his day. This takes us to the end of the second century A.D., a time obviously too late for our chronology of Chandragupta I's grandfather whose name was Gupta, but also a time too early for the grandfather of Chandragupta I on Fleet's epoch, for it wants Chandragupta's two ancestors to cover more than a century and a half by their reigns. Yet historians have not been lacking to take I-tsing's 500 years as a rather rough estimate and to identify Srigupta with Gupta. But Raychaudhuri⁶ who accepts Fleet's epoch sees yet no cogent reason for the identification. Sircar⁷ writes on Chandragupta's grandfather: "The name of this prince is Gupta and not Sri Gupta. It is therefore unreasonable to identify him with Srigupta mentioned by I-tsing as having lived about 175 A.D."

We may add that I-tsing's Srigupta may be one of the Imperial Guptas who, according to our chronology, continued up to 320 A.D. after the famous members had ceased. He cannot be made a means of upsetting this chronology. The fact that his is the only name that rings out to us from over three cen-

¹ *India through Chinese Eyes* (1957)

² *Indian Historical Studies*, p. 64.

³ *The Gupta Empire*, p. 58.

⁴ *The Wonder that was India*, p. 65.

⁵ Sen, *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁶ *The Political History of Ancient India*, p. 360.

⁷ *Select Inscriptions*, p. 492 giving note to l.9 of p. 256.

turies before 320 A.D. can be explained by the insufficiency of historical information noted by all writers on that period. Majumdar¹ mentions the total darkness shrouding the whole century before Fleet's epoch. And even the more than two hundred years prior to Srigupta's day are empty of helpful inscriptions and coins. Some evidences we have of foreign rulers—Indo-Bactrian and Kushana—but hardly anything about native kings.

Now for the synchronism between Sri Meghavarna of Ceylon and Samudragupta. The Chinese writer gives no chronological indication. Our historians have made the chronology depend on the Ceylonese records. But these records date everything by putting Buddha's death in the sixth or fifth century B.C. So everything hangs on the accuracy of their idea about Buddha's death.

While discussing the contemporaneity of Asoka with the Ceylonese Devanampriya Tissa we mentioned the numerous dates extant about Buddha's Nirvana and pointed out that, unless we assumed the identity of Chandragupta Maurya with Sandrocottus and the contemporaneity of Asoka with the post-Alexandrine Greek kings of Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia and Epirus, any date in the sixth or fifth century B.C. would be purely hypothetical. Besides, as E.J. Thomas² has remarked, the Ceylonese chronicles have also a trace of the tradition of the Sarvastivadins which, if with our historians we accept Asoka to have started reigning a little before 260 B.C., would put the death of Buddha a little before 360 B.C. So, in the Ceylonese tradition itself there is a rift. But, even were there no rift, let us not forget what Max Muller³ said long ago in comparing the chronologies of the Southern Buddhists and the Northern. "The Northern Buddhists founded their chronology on a reported prophecy of Buddha that 'a thousand years after his death his doctrines would reach the northern countries'. Buddhism was definitely introduced into China in the year 61 A.D.; hence the Chinese fix the date of Buddha's death about one thousand years anterior to the Christian era. If... the starting-point of the Northern Buddhist chronology turns out to be merely hypothetical, based as it is on a prophecy of Buddha, it will be difficult to avoid the same conclusion with regard to the date assigned to Buddha's death by the Buddhists of Ceylon and of Burma and other countries which received their canonical books from Ceylon.... According to Professor Lassen we ought to suppose that the Ceylonese, by some means or other, were in possession of the right date of Buddha's death; and as there was a prophecy of Buddha that Vijaya should land in Ceylon on the same day on which Buddha

¹ *The Classical Age*, p. 1.

² *B. C. Law Volume*, II, pp. 18-22.

³ *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (Ed. 1912) pp. 136-7.

entered the Nirvana, we are further asked to believe that the Ceylonese historians placed the founder of the Vijayan dynasty of Ceylon in the year 543, in accordance with their sacred chronology. We are not told, however, through what channel the Ceylonese could have received their information as to the exact date of Buddha's death, and although Professor Lassen's hypothesis would be extremely convenient, and has been acquiesced in by most Sanskrit scholars, it would not be honest were we to conceal from ourselves or from others that the first and most important link in the Ceylonese as well as in the Chinese chronology is extremely weak."

Out of the many pointers to a far earlier date for Buddha than the sixth or the fifth century B.C., we may pick the one given by Alberuni¹ as of special interest when we have been discussing the Gupta Era apropos Alberuni. This Muslim traveller has written : "In former time Khurāsān, Persis, Irāk, Mosul, the country up to the frontier of Syria, was Buddhistic, but then Zarathustra went forth from Ādarbajān and preached Magism in Balkh (Baktra). His doctrines came into favour with King Gushtasp, and his son Isfandiyad spread the new faith both in East and West, both by force and by treaties. He founded fire-temples through his whole Empire, from the frontiers of China to those of the Greek Empire. The succeeding kings made their religion (*i.e.*, Zoroastrianism) the obligatory state-religion for Persis and Irāk. In consequence, the Buddhists were banished from these countries and had to emigrate to the countries east of Balkh.... Then came Islam."

Evidently, with his reference to the frontiers of China and the Greek Empire, Alberuni is following the tradition which identifies King Gushtasp with the Hystaspes associated with Darius the Great in the sixth century B.C. So Buddha, for Alberuni, must antedate Hystaspes and, if by the time of Zarathustra and of Hystaspes, Buddhism had spread from India to "Khurāsān, Persis, Irāk, Mosul, the country up to the frontier of Syria", there must be a sufficient period between Zarathustra and Buddha to accomodate so much missionary activity. The first missionary activity we know of as having taken place on a considerable scale after Buddha was in the reign of Asoka. Thus Asoka must precede in the chronology *à la* Alberuni the sixth century B.C. ; in which case Buddha must go quite a number of centuries upwards from the reign of Darius the great—at least to the Chinese date mentioned by Max Muller as being equally credible or incredible as the Ceylonese.

Max Muller,² however, says in accord with Turnour : "The Ceylonese possess a trustworthy and intelligible chronology beginning with the year 161 B.C. Before that time, their chronology is traditional and full of absurdities." By this the professor appears to mean that what the Ceylonese

¹ Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I. p 21

² *Op cit.*

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chronicles record about the kings of Ceylon from 161 B.C. has a historical ring and is free from traditional or absurd associations. Surely we may grant sobriety and realism to the tales about the later kings; but how are we to let the dating pass unchallenged? The dating depends entirely on the number of years said to have elapsed after Buddha's Nirvana. The king who is considered to have reigned in 161 B.C. is calculated to have done it because the Chronicles place a certain number of years between Buddha's Nirvana and his reign. If the Nirvana date is purely hypothetical, the reign-date is no less so.

Moreover, scepticism about the Ceylonese chronology can arise on other grounds. The *Mahāvamsa* and other Ceylonese books would have us believe that when Prince Vijaya landed on the island he found there only aboriginal semi-naked Veddas, worshipping snakes, trees, the dead etc. But K.V.S.Vas,¹ an authority on Ceylonese history, tells us: "Samgham Literature of the first, second and third Tamil Samgham periods, corroborated indirectly by internal evidences available in the Pali chronicles themselves, would go to show beyond reasonable doubt that Hinduism and Hindu civilisation were at their peak in Ceylon centuries before Buddha was born." If Vijaya represented the impact of the first wave of Aryan civilisation on the Veddas, he must be put far beyond the sixth century B.C. to which he is allotted by the Ceylonese chronicles and Sri Meghavarna who is said to come nearly nine centuries after him must be much more ancient than 352-379 A.D. If Vijaya was not the pioneer of Aryan civilisation, we have no certainty that the story of the immigration led by him and taken by the chronicles to be the first from India does not mix up several immigrations and that the kings reported to have come after him may not have descended from an earlier band of immigrants and consequently may not belong to Vijaya's line but may have preceded him. The very controversy among scholars on the location of the country called Lāla from which Vijaya is said to have hailed makes us think of more than one band of immigrants. The Ceylonese books call Vijaya a man from Vanga, but Raychaudhuri² sees no necessary authenticity in this description. He writes: "The identification of Lāla...is open to controversy, some placing it in Gujerāt, others identifying it with Rāḍha or Western Bengal. Barnett may be right in his assumption that the tradition of two different streams of immigration was knit together in the story of Vijaya." A general scepticism about Ceylonese chronology cannot be helped.

It is further deepened by what Miss Karunaka Gupta³ has noted: "From the Buddhist traditions of Ceylon and Siam we...know that there was a Nāga

¹ "Buddhism in Ceylon", *The Hindu*, 12-5-1957.

² *The Political History of Ancient India*, p. 225, footnote 2.

³ "Nagas and the Naga Cult" in the *Indian History Congress* (1939), p. 230.

country called Majerikā near the Diamond Sands, *i.e.* Kanchi, from whose king permission was obtained to transfer a relic to Ceylon from Dantapura in the Andhradeśa. The difficulty is that while the Ceylonese tradition gives the date as 157 B.C., the Siamese Chronicles definitely put it as A.D. 300-313." Miss Gupta's logical conclusion is that this vitiates the independent evidence of these traditions.

One further point has to be urged against the cocksure support given to Fleet's epoch from the currently accepted reign-period of Sri Meghavarna. Shamasastri has argued that the Sri Meghavarna who is said to have reigned between 352 and 379 A.D. is not the only Meghavarna in Ceylonese history and that really speaking he cannot be Chi-mi-kia-po-mo because he is always known as not Sri Meghavarna but Kittisri Meghavarna : the word "Kitti" is an indispensable part of his name. To Shamasastri's argument it has been replied that the earlier Meghavarna with whom he would identify Chi-mi-kia-po-mo is Sri Meghavarnābhaya (known otherwise as Gothābhaya) of 309-322 A.D. (according to Geiger¹), that if we hold "Kitti" to be an indispensable part of the name there is all the more reason for taking the syllables "ābhaya" to be the same. The reply is valid in rendering Shamasastri's argument indecisive; but it is far from rendering the current synchronism decisive. The two synchronisms are really on a par. We can come to no conclusion within the limits of the specific historical context involved and jubilation by Fleet's followers is absolutely out of place.

But whether we take the one Meghavarna or the other, we have no reason for dating Buddha according to the Ceylonese chronology in preference to the Puranic which is indigenous, and so no reason for not putting one or the other Meghavarna in the third century B.C. where the Puranic chronology puts Samudragupta.

Else if we take the Ceylonese date of Buddha's death to be imaginary but Ceylonese history to be, as Turnour believed, accurate in the main after 161 B.C., we may take the earlier Meghavarna to be contemporaneous with some Samudragupta other than the great one of that name. Among the Imperial Guptas several names repeat : there were two Chandraguptas and three Kumaraguptas. It is quite on the cards that, if the Imperial Guptas continued up to 320 A.D., a second Samudragupta lived at the time where the Ceylonese chronicles place the earlier Meghavarna. In any case, the synchronism in Wang Hiuen-T'se does not really confirm Fleet's interpretation of 320 A.D.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Mahāvamsa*, English translation, p. 263, and *Chūlavamsa*, English translation, Part II, p. ix.

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

(On Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, Book II, Part 2, Chapter XXIII, "Man and the Evolution", paragraph 5)

EACH paragraph represents a theory. Naturally, if we read one single paragraph, the exposition of Sri Aurobindo's thought is incomplete, and if we do not bear in mind what we have read before and what we continue to read, we can be astonished at the apparently contradictory enunciations. We should remember not only the read matter but also the fact that it is a sort of exposition of the different possibilities; we should be able to keep before us all these points of view like a panorama in order to understand the subtlety and the totality of the exposition and so that the conclusion would appear as inevitable, as the logical consequence of the expounded ideas.

Thus, if you take one phrase and try to understand it in isolation, it may seem the negation of something which has been said in the preceding paragraphs. To understand all this, it is necessary to have a sort of speculative vision, to be capable of placing the different theories and the different arguments like a fan before one, in such a way as to follow the logic of the demonstration and understand the conclusion. If you wish to profit truly by what I say to you in a lesson, you should on the same day, some time before attending the lesson, re-read at least what we have read before in the chapter, that is to say, on the special subject; thus one would not lose *en route* what one has learned earlier, the ideas would follow each other logically and one would understand what Sri Aurobindo wants to prove. At the end of the chapter one should read the whole chapter again.

Fundamentally, you should make a little preparatory work and note the new idea of each new paragraph while joining it to the preceding ideas in order to have, at the end of the chapter, the complete picture. If you put me now a question on what we are going to read, this question would necessitate a reply

almost contradictory at times to that which we have seen in the previous paragraph. This is owing to the manner in which Sri Aurobindo works out his demonstration, it is as if he put himself at the centre of a sphere, a wheel whose spokes end at the periphery. He always gets back to his point of departure and goes out to the surface, and thus as a result it happens that he seems to repeat the same thing several times, but it is simply the demonstration of the thought so that one may be able to follow it. We should then have a very clear memory of the ideas in order truly to understand what he says. I insist on that because unless you proceed systematically you will get no profit from the reading, it will seem to you a kind of meander in which it is difficult to guide oneself. The ideas go in directions altogether different, but they all rejoin at the centre and at the periphery.

Have you any questions this time? No?

I read and I see very well that it is hard to put a question, because except at the end of the demonstration one knows neither where Sri Aurobindo is leading nor what he wishes to teach, and at the same time, if one reads the demonstration from end to end, it is impossible to remember all the points, without having a particularly faithful memory. Before even reaching the end, you will have forgotten what is written at the beginning. It would then be enough interesting to take notes, brief notes, to work at summing up each paragraph, with one or two master ideas, in a way that would enable a comparison of them.

What Sri Aurobindo says here is that each species is satisfied with the qualities special to that species, the principles of its construction, and does not attempt to transform itself or to change into a new species. The dog remains content to be a dog, the horse to be a horse, and never tries, for example, to become an elephant. Starting from there, Sri Aurobindo poses the question of knowing whether man will remain satisfied with being man or will awake to the necessity of being other than man, that is to say, of being superman. This is the resumé of the paragraph.

But when one is accustomed to Sri Aurobindo's expositions, and has read them, one finds there is something in the being which is not self-satisfied. The question dealt with here is that of the outermost form only, the bark of the being, if I may say so, but one feels, within oneself, something which on the contrary has a sort of imperious tendency to surpass this form, and it is that which Sri Aurobindo wants to make us touch with the finger by expressing himself as he does.

I have seen familiar animals that had truly a kind of inner need to be something else than what they were. I have known dogs that were like that, cats that were such, horses that were so, and even birds. The outer form was in-

THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

evitably what it was, but there was in them something living and perceptible which made an evident effort to reach another expression, another form. And every man who has exceeded the stage of the animal-man and becomes the human-man, has truly the need—the need which I could call incorrigible—of being another thing than this altogether unsatisfactory semi-animal, unsatisfactory in its expression and its means of life. Then the problem is to know whether this imperious need will be sufficiently effective in his aspiration even for the form, even for the species, to develop and transform itself, or whether it is only the imperishable consciousness within the being that will go out of the form when the latter perishes, in order to enter a higher form which, moreover, does not yet exist.

The problem that is posed is to know how this higher form will be created. Is it by a process we can or should imagine that the present form will little by little transform itself in order to create from it a new one, or is it by another means, a means unknown to us as yet, that the new form will appear in the world ?

That is to say, will there be a continuity or will there be a brusque appearance of something new ? Will there be a progressive passage between what we now are and what our inner spirit aspires to become, or will there be a rupture—in other words, shall we be obliged to let the present human form fall away in order to await the appearance of a new one which will have no relation with what we now are ? Can we hope that this body, which is now our means of earthly manifestation, will have the possibility of transforming itself progressively into something which can express a superior life, or is it that we shall have to abandon this form totally to enter into another which is non-existent so far on the earth ?

Such is the problem. If you reflect on it, it may bring you a little more light.

December 4, 1957

(K. D. S.)

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

GUSHES of Light, currents of Force
Shot the material centre with fire-rains;
Hunters from the two extremes of the being
Clasped the earth-prey in heaven's chains.

Lotuses bloomed, suns shone in the dust :
The music of ecstasy thrilled the rose;
Vibrations of Shakti, pulsings of gold
Transformed it, fire-hue arose.

Supreme Force sat on the Brahmandhra,
Watched the Lila with clear insight;
Wisdom and Power entered the will.
There sprang the notes of divine delight.

In the temple of the heart Love reigns,
Fills the being with splendour sublime,
Raises the voice beyond heaven's height,
Calls the Sun from eternity to time.

“ASPIRATION”

ALL-CONQUEST BY ALL-SACRIFICE

THE king Shikhidhwaj was proud of the piety of his queen, Chudala. The queen used to do all her duties and still found ample time to devote herself to discrimination and self-enquiry. Quite unaided she had attained self-realisation and was able to pass more and more time in self-absorption. The king would not disturb her. Once he had expressed his wonder at and admiration for her ever-increasing beauty and inquired if she were partaking of the ambrosia of heaven. She simply smiled and kept quiet. The queen came to possess supernatural powers of various kinds ; she frequented different worlds and acquired vast knowledge. By her occult power she learnt that she was destined to impart spiritual initiation to her husband and awaited the destined hour.

Now, the king got fed up with his kingship and withdrew into a deep forest. There he was toiling hard for self-realisation. Queen Chudala disguised herself as a young man, met the king and impressed him with her superior knowledge. The king sought her help and requested her to initiate him. Then Chudala said that the fruit of self-realisation was all-conquest, which could only be effected by all-sacrifice.

She said, "Oh king, you must give up all, sacrifice all in order to possess all ; are you prepared to do that ?"

"Yes, by all means," replied the king.

"Then do it," bade Chudala.

The king kindled a fire, brought out each and every article, all his possessions, from his hut and threw them one by one into the fire.

When everything was burnt he said, "Now I have sacrificed all."

"No, not yet", replied Chudala.

The king paused a little, then brought out his stick and water-pot and threw them into the fire and looked at his Guru, the young man, the disguised wife Chudala. "Not yet, not yet have you sacrificed all"—was the remark.

Again paused the king to think and he muttered, "Here is my sacred thread and my underwear, 'kaupin'." He took them off and threw them into the fire.

"Still you have not given up all," said the young man.

MOTHER INDIA

Then said the king, "I have this physical body, let me offer it to the sacrificial fire."

"Even that will not do"—came the reply.

"Then what am I to do? Oh my revered Guru, I implore you, do tell me, teach me how to sacrifice all; I am at a loss to know what you mean."

"Oh, king, you have to give up your 'I', the ego; then and then alone will you have sacrificed your all, what you are and what you have."

Thereupon the king sat down on the ground, closed his eyes and plunged into deep contemplation. Under the strict discipline of the Guru, the king carried on his practice for days, weeks and months. By the Guru's grace and guidance he was able to attain self-realisation, with which dawned on him the true nature of the ego and he realised his own self as the self of all. He thus became established in his knowledge, and went from light to light, knowledge to knowledge. The Guru put him to some tests to show him his own level of consciousness. Ultimately Chudala and the king came back to the kingdom which they ruled many more years.

BHUMANANDA

MOONLIGHT

Let me become the light of Thy Moon.
Nothing my heart needs save this boon.
 Hold me most firm,
 So that no harm
May now obscure my earthly life.
My silver hope shall know not strife,
And, high above, my gaze shall fly.
Mother, I feel, no death have I.

JYOTI KUMARI