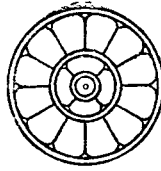


MOTHER INDIA

MAY 1958

Price : Re. 1.



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. 4

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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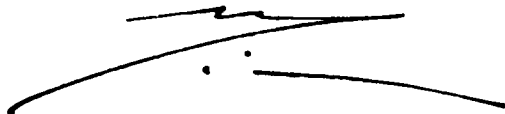
THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE OF APRIL 24, 1958

There are two complementary aspects of the liberating action of the Divine Grace upon earth among men. These two aspects are equally indispensable, but are not equally appreciated.

The sovereign immutable peace that liberates from anxiety, tension and suffering.

The dynamic all-powerful progress that liberates from fetters, bondages and inertia.

The peace is universally appreciated and recognised as divine, but the progress is welcomed only by those whose aspiration is intense and courageous.



THE DIVINE DISCOVERY

(A Comment by the Mother)

“Ah! since India is the cradle of religion and since so many gods preside over her destiny, who among them will accomplish the miracle of resuscitating the city ?...”

A. CHOUMEL (in an article on Pondicherry in 1922)

BLINDED by false appearances, deceived by calumnies, held back by fear and prejudice, he has passed by the side of the god whose intervention he implores and saw him not; he has walked near to the forces which will accomplish the miracle he demands and had no will to recognise them. Thus has he lost the greatest opportunity of his life—a unique opportunity of entering into contact with the mysteries and marvels whose existence his brain has divined and to which his heart obscurely aspires.

In all times the aspirant, before receiving initiation, had to pass through tests. In the schools of antiquity these tests were artificial and by that they lost the greater part of their value. But it is no longer so now. The test hides behind some very ordinary every-day circumstance and wears an innocent air of coincidence and chance which makes it still more difficult and dangerous.

It is only to those who can conquer the mind's preferences and the prejudices of race and education that India reveals the mystery of her treasures. Others depart disappointed, failing to find what they seek; for they have sought it in the wrong way and would not agree to pay the price of the Divine Discovery.

Pondicherry, September 11, 1922



THE MOTHER'S RECENT REMARK ON HER COMMENT:

“It is still true.”

IN THE ASHRAM

(Two Letters of the Mother)

NOTHING is personal, all belongs to the Divine and is meant for collective use if necessary.

16-4-1958

Apart from the fact that the Ashram is not meant for those who seek the satisfaction of their vital or sentimental desires, but for those who aspire to perfect their consecration to the Divine, I have to warn you that here you must do only what can be done publicly because nothing can remain hidden.

25-4-1958



DEPENDENCE ON THE MOTHER

(Letters of Sri Aurobindo translated from the Bengali original, addressed to some lady disciples and published in "Patravali")

THE Purusha does not do anything, Prakriti or Shakti does everything. But nothing can be done without the will of the Purusha.

The Mother is certainly within the body, in the inner consciousness. But so long as the stamp of ignorance remains in the outer consciousness, the results of ignorance cannot be obliterated in an instant.

The Mother wants you, and you want the Mother. You are getting the Mother, and will get her still more. But there may be now and then a desire in your physical consciousness to have an intimate outer relation with the Mother, to be physically close to her. "The Mother is not giving these things to me because probably she does not want me." But this is not possible at this stage of life and sadhana ; it might happen that if these were granted, the sadhak would feel happy and lose himself in them and there would be no true inward sadhana or transformation. What is needed is an intimate *inner* relation, a closeness to the Mother and transformation—the external mind, life and body must fully experience it and get transformed. Remember it as you go forward.

If there is pure love and devotion for the Mother and dependence on her, then one can find her. In their absence, it is not possible to find her even by intense effort.

These [obscurities] come from the external Nature and move around the sadhak in order to enter into him. When the mind, life and body are controlled by the external Nature, then such a veil is created. But if you rely on the Mother, if you are in union with her, then her force will remove the veil and transform mind, life and the physical consciousness into her instruments.

At present the Force is working on the physical consciousness, that is why the difficulties of the physical consciousness rose powerfully in many. The reason of your unrest is that you identified yourself with this external

DEPENDENCE ON THE MOTHER

consciousness—as if you were that consciousness. But the real being is inside, always in union with the Mother. That is why ignorance, obscurity and misunderstanding etc. of the physical consciousness must not be accepted as one's own, but must be looked upon as if belonging to the outer instrument. You should keep the knowledge that the Mother's Force will cure all the defects and shortcomings of the instrument, and as the witness remain undisturbed and watch with full faith and trust in her.

One who has complete faith and trust in the Mother remains always within and on the lap of the Mother. He might have difficulties but even a thousand difficulties cannot shake him. To keep this faith and confidence intact at all times, in all states and under all circumstances, is the fundamental principle of the yoga ; this is the main thing, the rest is unimportant.

All this bewailing and indignation is a sign of the tamasic ego. "I cannot do it, I want to die, I shall go away" etc.—these things can bring more difficulties and increase the tamasic ego. This attitude is not at all helpful to progress in the sadhana. I have already written to you many times on this subject and let me tell you the truth once more. Your sadhana is not spoilt, what you have received is not lost but has only gone behind the veil. In sadhana, a time comes when the consciousness descends fully to the physical plane. During that period a veil of indifference and obscurity covers up the inner being and its experiences ; it then appears as if there is no sadhana, no aspiration, no experience or closeness to the Mother, as if one has become like an ordinary person. This condition is not anything particular to you ; everyone passes through it or will do so, even the best of the sadhaks. However, the truth is that in the path of sadhana this is only a passage, though quite a long one. Unless one comes down to this state, complete transformation is out of the question. When you descend to this level you should remain quiet and call down the play of the Mother's force to do its work of transformation; then gradually everything will be cleared away; instead of obscurity, there will be the divine light, and in place of indifference the divine play and experience, not only in the inner being but in the external being as well, not only on the higher plane but on the lower plane, in the physical, even in the subconscious, and the experiences which were covered up will again come out and occupy all these levels. But this does not happen so easily and quickly but is gradually effected. For that, patience, faith in the Mother and endurance over a long period are necessary. He who wants the Divine has to accept suffering for His sake. He who wants to do sadhana has to endure pain, difficulties and contrary conditions on the way. It will not do to ask for pleasure and comfort during the sadhana.

MOTHER INDIA

To weep and nourish despair just because there are obstacles and contrary conditions does not help matters. It only lengthens the way. Faith and confidence in the Mother and complete dependence on her are indispensable.

The fact is that you have to find the Mother first from within and not from without. If one only makes contact with the Mother outwardly, it might happen that his inner being remains unilluminated in spite of his being physically close to her. When one realises the Mother fully in the inner being, then whatever is necessary for the external being can be realised. Apart from one or two people, nobody has clearly understood this truth even to this day.

Once the inner relation with the Mother is established there is nothing to fear. The Mother's full force will bring about the necessary changes. These changes take time but there is nothing to be worried about. Only remain united with the Mother in complete surrender. The rest will surely be done for you.

When the empty state comes, make your mind very quiet and call on the Mother's force and light to descend into the external nature.

This attitude is good; whenever there is any obstacle, any veil on the consciousness, then instead of getting upset you should call the Mother till the veil is removed. Though covered up, everything is still there behind the veil.

Remember that the Mother does not move away from you. She is always near and within. Whenever there is any restlessness in the external nature, like a wave it covers up the inner truth. That is why one feels like this. Remain within, see and do everything from within.

One has to remain united to the Mother within and from there see the obstacles, mistakes and defects of the outer nature without getting perturbed, depressed or losing hope. These have to be quietly rejected and rectified by the pressure of the light and the force of the Mother.

Everything is inside and the Mother's work is going on inside. But if you identify yourself with the external mind, it is not possible to be aware of that until this mind becomes fully illumined and one with the inner mind.

The Mother's love and help are always there and they can never be exhausted.

If anyone consciously facing a difficulty depends on the Mother and with the pressure of her Force quietly pushes it away whenever it comes, then at the end he will most certainly become free from that difficulty.

(To be continued)

NIRANJAN

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US *

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the last issue)

(4)

SRI KRISHNA AND RADHA

WE used to have regular *satsang* in our house, on every Tuesday, with devotional songs, *kirtan* and *japa* of Gayatri mantra.

One Tuesday, a policeman, passing that way, heard our programme from outside. He stopped there. He came inside the house and sat on the threshold of our meditation room, so that he could look at the photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Throughout the programme, he sat quietly and continued staring at the photographs. After the Gayatri *japa*, devotional songs and meditation were over, we invited questions and enquiries. After the *prasad* the gathering dispersed.

But the 25-year old enraptured policeman had something quite wonderful to tell us. Although he had not known whose photographs were there, he had seen Sri Krishna in Sri Aurobindo's photograph and Radha in the Mother's. In the two pedestalled and decorated photograph-frames, sometimes Sri Aurobindo had appeared and sometimes Sri Krishna, and, on the other side, sometimes the Mother and sometimes Radha. This process had gone on till the function was over.

After telling this, the policeman asked us whose were the photos. We explained to him about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother according to our lights.

This made him turn towards their Yoga.

FORE-VISION OF HER GRACE

I had my first inner experience in 1951 after I had come to the Ashram and stayed here for about ten days.

* Readers are invited to send their experiences (Editor).

MOTHER INDIA

I saw a dream, in which I was lying in my bed and my relatives had gathered near the foot of my bed. They were calling me and trying to pull me towards themselves with the intention to keep me with them so that I might not turn decisively towards the spiritual life.

Then I looked up beside my bed. There I saw the Mother in a white dress and smiling. I could feel it to be a smile of Protection and I felt as if she was saying, "Come here, don't be tempted."

A week later I wrote to the Mother that I wanted to join the Ashram. She permitted me.

HER OCCULT GESTURE OF CALL

My wife died in April 1957. I was very much disturbed and could not decide how I should arrange the bringing up of my three children who were yet of the school-going age. Being in service, I found it extremely difficult to look after them, without the help of a lady member in the house, and I could not think of anybody who would treat them in a motherly way. But I was not personally in favour of a second marriage, though vigorous persuasion was brought to bear upon me.

I contacted the sadhak-in-charge of the Sri Aurobindo Centre in the city, who often visits the Ashram, and sought his advice. He was kind enough to write to the Mother, giving details and praying for her blessings and advice for my peace of mind and the solution of my vexing problem.

The Mother sent me her blessing-petals and for a few days all was peaceful, but no solution to my problem was in sight. I could very well feel that it was not for me to look after the children myself.

Again I wrote to the Mother, asking her permission to leave my children in the Ashram. She replied that unless she saw the children she could not decide.

Sitting on the fence as I was, my relatives worried me all the more by their various pieces of advice, coupled with their fearful vision of my children's uncertain future.

One day (it was 27th June of last year), I returned from my office in a state of utter distress. I fell, a bundle of fatigue and worries, on my bed. A photograph of the Mother hung opposite me on the wall. I looked at it and prayed in a supplicating muteness, "I am now *kartavya vimudha*. I can't decide what to do. I don't know whether I should take my children all the way to Pondicherry with the hope of their being accepted. I can't see my way ahead. I leave myself entirely to you. Now you only guide me."

Then I saw as if the Mother were stretching out her hand from the photograph and half-curving the palm inwards in a gesture of calling me.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

I heaved a sigh of relief. All pressure on my mind and nerves vanished. I told my daughter to note down the date, with the promise to disclose to her its meaning later.

I came over to Pondicherry with my children and, after the Mother had seen them, they were allowed to stay and study as students of the University Centre.

CONVERSION AND PILGRIMAGE

I became interested in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, yet month after month passed in fruitless search because I wanted to eliminate the Mother altogether and invented various explanations to myself every day in support of my foolish theory that the Mother was nothing but an ordinary educated lady.

Somehow this continual mental strife in connection with the Mother became some sort of concentration on her. My whole obstinate nature gradually softened and melted and, without even knowing exactly how it happened, I found myself gazing at the one and only shining star on the horizon that was the Mother—the Divine Mother.

Then came the burning desire to have a Darshan, but, though I had some money, I needed much more, and there was also the question of a long leave respecting which the Head of our organisation was unyielding. I used my only weapon—a few days' intense prayer to the Mother.

Things began to move in a marvellous way. Our Head went on a continental tour; the departmental In-charge, without even being asked, said that if I wished I might avail myself of my accumulated leave; a friend informed me that some old leave was still in balance in our Head Office where I had worked for a time, in lieu of which cash payment (of which I had no knowledge) might be obtained; the telephone rang from the Head Office calling me to go and sign a voucher for Rs. 325/-; a railway booking office opened on the same date in my building; and the Southern Railway, usually over-crowded, offered me a most comfortable compartment as if reserved by some unknown All-Powerful Personality for my entire family to cover one thousand three hundred and sixty-five miles' "pilgrimage" to Pondicherry !

(To be continued)

Compiled and reported by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

METEORS AND FIREFLIES

When the hands are empty with giving, the heart is full with receiving.

*

We need not despair for our weaknesses if we disclaim our strengths as our own.

*

Despise not the dust of Mother Earth who supports us at every step.

*

Respect is the currency of exchange which you can receive only if you give it.

*

Love is always the swiftest worker : it goes to the 'heart' of the matter.

*

The best insurance against losing one's mind lies in giving it to God.

*

To reserve the right to laugh at oneself is as sure a safeguard as any against the inflation of the Ego. To 'hold nothing in esteem except the Truth' means that it is only the Divine about whom we can afford to be utterly serious, never ourselves—or, for that matter, other selves.

*

Human relations never stand still. They are a folk-dance where partner faces partner one moment only to turn his back on him the next, and then

METEORS AND FIREFLIES

back again; and on the dance goes—while in a corner, like an uninvited guest, stands the forgotten Host.

*

The bitter-sweet fruit of Life bears within it the seeds of Death. It is not given us to eat, but to offer. For in that offering we savour instead the nectar of Immortality.

*

It is surely wiser to quietly and trustfully invite God to us, than with anguished stress and strain push ourselves to Him.

*

When we try to make an impression, our trying to do so is the impression we make.

*

There is a way of 'being nice' to others which is nothing less than a projected self-love—Narcissism. True sympathy, psychic sympathy, needs neither the artifice of 'charm' nor the cackle of empty words.

*

So long as we are satisfied with an egoistic 'oneness', with its weak dependences, its vital clings and fragile supports, we can never realise psychic or divine oneness.

*

Love is never dismayed at the differentiation among people. Differentiation merely adds to its original Ananda a further delight.

*

Excitability is either the result of bad nerves or an intensity run amok.

*

MOTHER INDIA

We tread on dangerous ground when in our lack of humility we can no longer listen to the advice of another, be it pertinent or no. Forbearance is as much a necessity as a virtue.

*

Surely God smiles an ironic smile when we turn our work into an effective support for the Ego, and justify ourself by it.

When we assert 'I am a teacher, a painter, a writer,' we are no longer the child of God but the victim of our desire for effectivity.

Great nations, great civilisations have come and gone, and all their great works are now one with the dust of God's earth. Is it then so hard to believe that when we use work as an outer expression of inner prayer, the prayer is more significant than the work ?

*

The value of his work to the poet or writer, lies not so much in his 'enlightening others' as in its instrumentality for unfolding from within him the untold latencies of his own soul.

*

Misdirected zeal is a waste of energy wearing a guise of profundity. Sincerity by itself is not enough. The world is full of movingly sincere cranks who have a power of persuasion because of that sincerity.

But where there is some comprehension and humility as well as the heart's longing, it is a different matter.

*

Taking a continuous and avid interest in people and their affairs on the pretext that 'the Divine is everywhere' is but another method of employing Divine reasoning to justify human folly.

If we must fuse the relative with the absolute viewpoint let us be careful not to neglect Discrimination.

*

METEORS AND FIREFLIES

He who claims even a little to himself proclaims to God :
"I made this air I breathe !"

*

When we feel "Thou art with me, O God," let us be careful not to add :
"Such a pity for the others."

*

Lady Tenderness never envies the frills of her gaudy sister, Sentimentality.

*

Only in a self-giving love can we truly possess. What we clasp we crush,
what we seize we bruise. But when our hands are open in self-offering they
become filled with the gems of devotion.

*

What travels fastest makes least noise : that which arrives is silent.

*

An anna's worth of anger buys a basketful of blindness.

*

Poetry should first beguile our hearts before instructing our minds. What
we hear with the heart becomes truly our own.

*

The song of the earth is heard when we tire of the harping of self.

*

One should belong to a group or number only when that number is content
to be one.

*

MOTHER INDIA

To over-instruct is as bad as to under-instruct. It prohibits the joys of self-discovery.

The teacher's first consideration is not what is to be taught so much as who is to be taught. For even the most wonderful subjects, and with all the best intentions, can be rendered dull and insipid if there is no rapport, no sympathy, no love between teacher and pupil.

*

Sanctimoniousness is Sentimentality's church-going brother.

GODFREY

THE FLAME FROM BELOW AND THE FIRE FROM ABOVE

OUT of the large insuperable beyond,
Out of the timeless zones of eternity,
Status and rest and tranquillity of God,
Comes down a fire omnipotent and vast—
A sea of sun with waves of sapphire power—
A cliff of blaze with outstretched arms of calm—
A nude entity of the Incommunicable.
From below in answer leaps upward a flame
Of primal energy and hidden strength
That lay dormant within the womb of earth,
A seed of force buried in the waste of night.
They meet here in the mortal life and mind,
With double tongues embracing the human soul.
A strange and nameless might awakes in the limbs;
A prayer and call is heard within the flesh;
The nerves anthem a dumb delight and bliss
And the blood echoes a fragment of those powers.
Deeper becomes the interfusion sublime;
More subtle the union of the two-fold flames.
They free all matter from the clutch of sleep,
Until at last each barrier of time recedes
And space is flung aside a raiment disused
And spirit and clay unarmed stand bare alone
Losing their identities, their names, their shapes.
And in that immersion supreme and immaculate
Is revealed the grand epiphany of the Sun.

ROMEN

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Continued from the last issue)

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

(Continued)

II. THE BIRTH OF THE ETERNAL MOTHER

(See *Mother India* of February, 1956)

12. SUPRAMENTAL MANIFESTATION

(See *Mother India* of March, 1957)

III. THE HUMAN CALL AND ASPIRATION

13. HEarken TO THE VOICE OF MY INNOCENT CALL

O MOTHER, hearken to the voice of my innocent call;
Listen to the silent echoes of my heart.
I have waited long in my own dust-vision's shade,
Lived long in the lightless caves of my thoughts
And sported with the surface fret and foam,
Tossed in the whirls and winds of myriad desires,
Struggled in vanity and pride and self-conceit
Ambitious of magnanimity, importance shallow and false,
Charmed by the apparent scenes and spells,
Lured by groundward ugly pulls
To take me away from Thy shadowless love
And drive me down to a bottomless chasm
Of low and mean and trivial life.
Enough of that existence I have seen and felt—
Enough the animalities deformed and crude;
Enough the devilish coils and turns;
Enough the rebellions of stunted urge;
Enough the life-being's dual allegiances.
O Mother of Love, O Purifier Divine,
Unfold Thy secret of a greater life;

THUS SANG MY SOUL

Open Thy treasure of supernal Grace;
Cast off my sheaths of murky ignorance;
Wash from my eyes the mist of time
And strip off the veils and curtains self-made.
Let my soul openly communicate with Thy Soul;
Let my mind unhorizoned think with Thy Mind;
And my heart feel in Thy Heart, body vibrate in Thy limbs.
Let the ceaseless traffic of a natural flow
Join the lower goal of my being to Thy End Supreme.
Let me be a portion of Thy Whole,
The whole of me a portion of Thy Body and Self;
Let the totality in me become Thy babe put forth,
A light-child of the Mother of Light.

14. THEE ALONE MY ASPIRATIONS SEEK

O Thee my aspirations seek.
To Thee alone doth rise my prayer's call,
My surrendered work is a movement meek
To invoke Thy Love ineffable.

O, for thy peace and presence long
In unison my body and soul,
My being sings Thy advent's song,
Appear, O Mother, my source and goal !

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE CRITIC'S DEVELOPMENT

A TRUE critic of poetry passes through three stages of development. He begins by a conscious exercise of the analytic mind upon his experience of a poem. He takes his impression to pieces, classifies his reactions, studies the structure from the outside and considers both the matter and the form inasmuch as they are communicated to him across a gulf of strangeness : his criticism is the result of his mind's evaluation, as regards both significance and technique, of the relation established between two separate ends, the poem and himself.

By constant practice he discovers a few points of contact with the poem, through which he visions the founts of the poet's inspiration and now and then a sudden sense of the living waters themselves awakes in him. It is not only an impression, a vivid response to a communicated experience : it is rather an entry into the poet's own creative act, a self-identification, so to speak, with the poem. The analytic mind has led somehow into the very life-throb of the work.

At this stage the critic becomes more and more absorbed into the poem as a self-sufficient entity, an entity which says what it alone can say and therefore rules out anything else to be said about it. The critic loses his own voice and stops being a critic : a load of the inexpressible bears him down. All that is worth saying in respect of the poem is felt to be the poem's own words. The critic is, as it were, no longer the critic but, through the poem, the poet whose say is the work he has created.

This state of incapable dumbness is most necessary if the critic is to hope for an interpretation of the poem not as a communicated thing but in its own posture of being. When this state is no longer a wonderful novelty but becomes a settled delight, the intellect which was in abeyance at the start reappears on the scene and co-exists with the joy of identity : it is now not an enemy of that identity, a foreign power excluded by it : it is now something with which that identity can have relations, something which it can illumine, something which it can use as a mode of expressing itself in suggestive and interpretative terms. Of course, the poem, *qua* poem, cannot be any other expression than itself; yet, while its existence is unique, its essence can be caught in the language of a different plane provided this language is sufficiently plastic to that uniqueness and moulds its own terms in living answer to those of poetry.

THE CRITIC'S DEVELOPMENT

Once the plasticity and the moulding are there, the intellect can deploy itself in analytic study without any outsideness spoiling or even limiting it. Now the critic's analysis never lays the knife to the living tissue of vision, never wounds what it dissects. The intellect now does not bring its own piercing gleam to lay bare the composition of the poet's work, the meanings and the rhythms within it. Rather, the poem gives the intellect its own light and, infused with that light, the intellect acquires in-sight. The critic turns upon the work not a knife but a flood of X-rays. The structure, both psychological and technical, of the poem stands revealed without being hurt by the analytic process. This is the climax of criticism.

It rarely is sustained without some sinking here and there. But when the sinking is very little we have a disclosure of the poem in a manner native to the intellect yet without any intellectual intrusion upon the mystery and the magic. The mystery and the magic are not translated so much as transposed into intellect.

But this kind of criticism is to be distinguished from what goes by the name of "creative criticism". In the latter the writer builds up from his own inspiration a response to the inspiration of the poem : it is a subjective splendour which tells us more about the critic than about the poem. The criticism we have in mind builds from the inspiration of the poem itself : it is objective in the sense that the critic is busy with the splendour not of his own feeling and vision but with that of the feeling and vision put by the poet in his work. He is not "faithful to thee, Cynara, in my fashion" : the fashion of his faithfulness is caught from the commanding beauty of Cynara : he is faithful as she would want him to be, as the line and quiver and lustre of her being would hold him in their living net of loveliness.

K. D. SETHNA

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(Continued from the last issue)

XVIII. BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

IN the section just preceding, we have brought in the term 'selective blindness' to designate the phenomenon of reciprocal miscomprehension and mutually destructive battle of ideas so much prevalent amongst the philosophers; but in so doing we have had absolutely no temerity to run down Philosophy as such nor to cast any pejorative reflection on this noble pursuit of the human mind. Nothing can be farther than this.

But in pursuing our principal theme—"the seeing soul" *vis-à-vis* 'the seeking mind'—it is necessary for us to take due cognizance of the actual state of affairs obtaining in the philosophical realm, however unpleasant or disconcerting this may appear at first view. As a matter of fact, we now propose to take up the analysis of this curious phenomenon in a search after the root-cause responsible for it; and at the end of our quest we purport to derive certain conclusions which would, in effect, offer full credit and glory to all acts of true philosophization, but at the same time point out certain intrinsic limitations plaguing and circumscribing all philosophical thought,—philosophical thought, we hasten to add, as it is understood in the West, relying solely on the autonomy of reason. For reason left to itself, without a flaming intuitional background to support it, can never be creative. It may indeed aid us in organising or in clarifying to the intellect what we have experienced in revelation, but, in the absence of this central liberating vision, reason remains impotent and sterile.

To anticipate our findings, reason in itself is almost a neutral instrument. "It can in its nature be used and has always been used to justify any idea, theory of life, system of society or government, ideal of individual and collective action to which the will of man attaches itself for the moment or through the centuries. In philosophy it gives equally good reasons for monism and pluralism or for any halting-place between them, for the belief in Being or for the belief in Becoming, for optimism and pessimism, for activism and quietism. It can justify the most mystic religionism and the most positive atheism, get rid of God or see nothing else."¹ And this is bound to be so, for it is an error to assert that unaided and unillumined reason can arrive at any final truth: "it can

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, p. 146.

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neither get to the root of things nor embrace the totality of their secrets; it deals with the finite, the separate, the limited aggregate, and has no measure for the all and the infinite."¹

In reality, if we examine the matter carefully, we shall find that Intuition is our first teacher. "Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operations. Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have of the shining harvest."²

In the absence of any guidance from this intuitional core, reason is apt to proceed by analysis and division and assemble its facts to form a whole; "but in the assemblage so formed there are opposites, anomalies, logical incompatibilities, and the natural tendency of Reason is to affirm some and to negate others which conflict with its chosen conclusions so that it may form a flawlessly logical system"³

But, as we shall see in the course of our study, all conflicts in the realm of philosophy are in the last analysis apparent and unsubstantial; for they centre round a misconstruing confusion about the respective roles played by the underlying 'vision' and the elaborating 'Reason'. Let us explain our point.

XIX. THE 'ANARCHY OF SYSTEMS'

Any one wishing to undertake a study of philosophy is at once struck by an almost unbelievable plurality of systems claiming allegiance in this particular domain of human venture. And these systems are more often than not mutually exclusive. Their incompatibility, at least on the surface, is so much pronounced that to assure their co-existence in one unifying system appears almost an impossible task.

And this is by no means a recent phenomenon to cope with. Even in the far-off past Agrippa and Sextus Empiricus⁴ made use of the phenomenon of the "anarchy of systems", *tropos apo tes diaphomas*, to support their denial of the possibility of knowledge. This sort of skepticism is not at all surprising; for, "in view of the enormous variety of opinions, the question should repeatedly arise as to whether in all this welter of names and philosophemes there is any hard truth or whether all is pure error."⁵

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, p. 149.

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Am Ed), p. 64.

³ Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Am. Ed), pp. 66-67.

⁴ Pyrrh Hipot, I, 164

⁵ Adolfo P. Carpio, *The Anarchy of Systems and the Theory of Truth*.

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In fact, for some time now there has existed a strong trend towards the conversion of philosophy into the history of philosophy; even in courses and works of an avowedly systematic kind, there is an almost inevitable tendency towards the historical-systematic approach. Philosophy thus appears to us as the history of philosophy. It would almost seem that "philosophy means to us to day not the *Philosophy*, the uniquely authentic and true reflector of reality, but the *philosophies* which, as actual facts, are available to us in the history of philosophy."¹

But this historicism almost inevitably tends towards "relativism" for which there are no truths other than those which exist in connection with a given particular historical situation. And it is only a step from this position to the skepticism formulated by Agrippa. The past shows us three possible ways of combating that kind of skepticism. One of these, the most drastic, is the sort of "cartesianism" which virtually sweeps away all the past—or, more accurately, all the minutiae of the past—in order to make way for the present. The second attitude, the dogmatic one, does the opposite. It ascribes a definitive validity to a particular traditional system and reduces itself to "commentarism" that proceeds in the name of *magister* by invoking sacrosanct truths. In essence, it "considers the *philosophia perennis* as a definitive accomplishment, an inviolably static thought-structure. Everything would be found in Aristotle commented upon by Saint Thomas,—or, if you wish it—in Marx and his official commentators. Whoever ventures not to accept this codified truth must be taken to be an adversary and refuted with all possible zeal. But your refutation fails to touch him for the simple reason that you have never cared to understand *his* point of view."²

In reality, both these attitudes attempt the impossible: both try to stop history, and "cartesianism" tries to forget history. However, the indisputable fact remains that in spite of all "definitive" systems, in spite of all methods which attempt to bring philosophy to a state of completion—whether they are called dialectical, transcendental, cartesian analysis, "philosophical analysis", *Phanomenologische Destruktion*, etc.—the history of philosophy continues.

The third way, prompted more by well-meaning sympathy than by discrimination, ends in taking a patch-work of all or most of the existing systems of thought in a vain bid to create a synthetic whole. In this endeavour it is secretly actuated by the classical slogan: "To adopt a process of judicious sorting out, to shift the grains of gold from the dust, to extract the diamond from out of its mine, and to separate the light from the environing gloom."

¹ Adolfo P. Carpio, *The Anarchy of Systems and the Theory of Truth*

² André Hayen, *L'Isolément des Philosophes et L'Unité de la Philosophie.*

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But in this venture what one does, in general, is to snatch out of their context certain sentences from amidst the works of different thinkers thus isolating and divorcing these particular themes from the *intentio auctoris*—and then to piece these together in an attempt to demonstrate the supposed affinity, nay, identity between different viewpoints.

But this "reductionism" is indeed a vain pastime, for it succeeds in annulling all anomalies and in dissolving mutual incompatibilities only by distorting beyond all recognition the thought-structures of individual thinkers. Thus, to take an example, "one slaughters Thomism in claiming to reconcile it with Duns Scot who himself knew that he did not understand Saint Thomas."¹

Thus all these historical attempts, negative as well as positive, have failed to offer an adequate explanation of the possibility of a plurality of philosophical systems. But, as Professor Adolfo Carpio pertinently remarks, does this mean that we must be bound by "historicism", whatever the difficulties it presents and in spite of its tendency towards relativism? Does this mean that the philosophies of the past represent nothing more than different ways of reacting towards things and the world at large, which are appropriate merely to the men of the past, and which inform us only of their particular characteristics?

But historicism has got a most grave weakness. In fact, the most appropriate attitude to adopt towards a particular philosophy is that of asking ourselves what truths it contains. An extreme historicism, however, ignores the problem and regards each philosophy as merely one of the many changing ways in which man has regarded the world and himself. Historical explanations of the origin of a doctrine, based on social, geographical, economic reasons, etc.—all genetic explanations, in short—leave unsolved the problem of the truth of the doctrine, the problem of its value as knowledge. But, "is it reasonable to expect a solution for this problem of the history of philosophy? Or must we always be faced with the contradictions, the anarchy of philosophical systems? But is this anarchy an ultimate, irreducible fact, and is all effort expended upon philosophy therefore sterile? Why, in short, has philosophy not been brought to a final state of completion?"²

XX. THE PUZZLE OF PHILOSOPHICAL DEMONSTRATION

And on a closer scrutiny we find that what is disconcerting is not so much the multiplicity of systems as the diversity of startling visions that are at the origin of these different systems. And what is still more intriguing is the fact

¹ André Hayen, *L'Isolément des Philosophes et l'Unité de la Philosophie*.

² Adolfo P. Carpio, *Op cit.*

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that the creator of a system does rarely, if ever, take the trouble of explaining expressly these basic 'points of view' or how he arrived at these for the first time. But it is precisely upon this that everything else hinges; for once one admits the truth-validity of these basic presuppositions, one is slowly but surely led to the very same conclusions derived by the philosopher in question. In fact, as Professor J.P.A. Mekkes has pointed out, whether one examines the doctrines of the scholastic philosophy or those of modern idealism, whether one approaches the different phenomenological schools or the diverse schools of existentialism, everywhere one encounters a semblance of self-evidence that leaves the reader in a state of utter confusion. In course of the study of a particular philosophical text, the reader is likely to find that at every step the author suggests that the new system of thought he has now propounded is marching victoriously with definitive strides towards the conquest of Truth. Without any shadow of doubt the whole course of reasoning is fashioned and sharpened to demonstrate the unique merit of the dominant vision of our author. And, as a matter of fact,—and this most puzzles the tyro,—it is well-nigh impossible to detect any *lacuna*, the absence of even a single link in the chain of argumentation that leads us from the central vision of the system up to its periphery. But there hangs the ticklish question : "How is it that there exists an almost unbridgeable chasm separating these different starting visions ? Why is it that the only possible contact between them happens to degenerate into fierce polemics, but at the end of all this fury and logical battle one finds that the 'points of view' initially adopted remain intact in their mutual isolation ?"¹

We have raised a number of questions, and now we proceed to show how all these problems can find an adequate solution in the framework of Sri Aurobindo's thought .

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ J P. A. Mekkes, *Critique Transcendentale de la Pensée Théorique*

KATHA UPANISHAD

I.i.13

स त्वमग्निं स्वर्त्यमध्येषि मृत्यो प्रब्रूहि त्व श्रद्धानाय मह्यम् ।
स्वर्गलोका अमृतत्वं भजन्ते एतद् द्वितीयेन वृणे वरेण ॥*

WHAT is this Law, what the divine Will, that operates on these other subtler worlds invisible to us and not believed by the sceptic to be existing ? Nachiketas tells Yama, "Thou thus characterised, O Death, movest up towards the heavenly Fire; expound that to me who have faith in thee; the heavenly worlds have immortality (as their essential characteristic). This for the second boon I choose." Yama's characteristic action in this world of evolutionary matter, life and mind is change and death; whatever comes into this world is subject to them, for that is the law prevailing here. The words '*sa tvam*' refer to this special characteristic of the operation of the universal Law here. 'Thou who art such in the lower triple evolutionary worlds hast a different function, a different form in the other worlds.'

For, as we have already noted, the other worlds are typical, having no need of change or death. And still these other worlds too are part of a single harmonious system known as the universe. Even these other worlds are governed by some law although it is not the same as the one prevailing here. There too the Divine Will functions, for they too are the creations of the Divine; it is the Will of the Divine, Agni, as it functions there, in those heavenly worlds, *svargya* (*lit.* belonging or pertaining to the heavens), that Yama has first to know or study and then to administer. The law of Death and Change is to be left aside and another kind of approach is to be taken up. Yama has to move up towards, *adhyeṣi*, an altogether new form of the Divine Will, not known anywhere here in the evolutionary manifestation.

But this form is new only to the soul evolving in Nature, for he has become oblivious of his own earlier involutory descent; it is not something that is new; on the contrary, in point of time the operation of the Divine Will in those other worlds is prior to that in the physical world. But from Nachiketas' viewpoint it was something new and worth studying.... (*adhyayana-adhyeṣi*). This

* *sa tvam agnim svargyam adhyeṣi mṛtyo, prabrūhi tvam śraddadhūnīṣya mahyam; svarga-lokā amṛtatvam bhajante, x etad dvitīyena vṛṇe vareṇa.*

sense of the word *adhyeṣi* is inapplicable to Yama, who already knows what the Divine Will in those other worlds is, for it is he himself who administers that Will there. What, then, is the significance of this word *adhyeṣi*? The word is really a combination of two parts, *adhi* and *eṣi*, the first having the meaning of above or over and the second having the sense of going; *adhyeṣi* would then mean going above or over to that higher form of heavenly Fire. It is only when we take it in this sense that we can understand the immense meaning contained in the other two words *sa* and *mṛtyo*. We must not forget that Nachiketas is familiar with the working of Yama in this world only, *viz.* death. That is why he addresses him as Death, *mṛtyo*, although there is no death there where he wants to go. And that is why he says *sa tvam*, thou, in the form in which thou art here, that is, in the form of death. But when Yama operates in other worlds it is not in the form of death, he goes beyond or above that form, *adhi-eṣi*, and takes up quite a different mode of working.

Nachiketas, in effect, wants to know what that other form of working of the Divine Will is. We must not forget that Yama is not the terrible personage he is imagined to be, he is a luminous and benevolent overmental godhead carrying out the Will of the Divine on the various planes of existence, helping everyone according to their need. If such is Yama, then Nachiketas is justified in asking him about the way in which the Divine Will works on those other planes. That is why he deliberately says '*sa tvam*'. 'Although thou workest here in the form of death, still the same thou art working in a different way in the heavens, by going above (*adhi-eṣi*) the lower or lesser type of thy working here.' Nachiketas knows that the condition or situation in the other worlds is not the same as here. He knows, for he is no longer a soul dwelling in Ignorance, he has already attained liberation on the physical plane, *ādhibhautika mukti*, which Yama has granted him as his first boon. But still this other field, or rather these other fields, for there are many, are new and quite unfamiliar to him. He wants to know more about them and Yama is the right person to give him that knowledge.

But how is the condition different there from here? Here, as Nachiketas himself has pointed out in the preceding stanza, it is the field of death, and there there is Immortality; here there is hunger and thirst and fear and decay, while there there is freedom from all these and consequently from sorrow. Here mortality is the natural condition, but there the heavenly worlds enjoy the bliss of Immortality as their natural and legitimate share or portion, *svargalokā amṛtatvam bhajante*. Immortality is inherent on those levels, just as mortality is inherent here.

Nachiketas wants to know the working of the Divine Will there and therefore asks Yama to tell him all about it, for he was full of faith, *prabrūhi tvam*

śraddadhānaya mahyam. Just as faith was needed at the very commencement of Nachiketas' sadhana, so also now it was equally necessary. But this time it is a somewhat different kind of faith that is wanted. The first kind of faith was able to carry him from the external physical world into planes of consciousness located within himself, the three subliminal levels of the subtle physical, inner vital and inner mental, so now this other kind of faith would carry him from these subliminal levels into the subtle worlds which are extended in the whole universe but are not normally sensible to the human consciousness. The case of Nachiketas, however, was different; by his sadhana and his entry into the subliminal he had qualified himself for getting an access to these other worlds. It was through the subliminal that he was going to enter into the universal worlds, for in the subliminal there are two parts, of which the first known as the intra-conscious opens the gates of the second known as the circumconscious. It is this circumconscious element into which he now must enter and this is a much deeper state of samadhi than the former. He wants to know the method and the means whereby he can achieve this objective. And to take this second plunge into worlds not at all known to him he must have a still greater faith than that which he had mustered up for taking the first plunge into the subliminal. For the first plunge was within the depths of his individual being, but now by the second one he is to enter into the utterly unfamiliar worlds situated outside his own personal self.

But Nachiketas was not a weakling to be frightened by this; he had already gathered this vaster kind of faith necessary for entering into those worlds. But he must know the way of doing it. So he asks Yama to instruct him in the method which can take him into those worlds. This he chooses as the second of the three boons.

There are two important points which this stanza casually suggests to us. The first one is suggested by the plural number of the term *svarga-lokāḥ*. There is a plurality of the heavenly worlds and not only one such world, but all of them are occult and invisible to the normal human level of consciousness. It is a fact well known to all those who have already, or who have developed, the inner faculty of seeing or projecting oneself in other worlds, that there is not one but many levels of heavens. The most commonly accepted number over the whole world is seven; the Puranas, the Islamic scriptures and the Christian and the Semitic traditions bear witness to this. When viewed with an occult sight they look like an 'immense high-curved world-pile', rising up in an ascending order. But they appear to be in an ascending order only when seen by a soul who rises up from below. Actually they are the creations of the Spirit in its plunge into the Inconscience during its involutory descent. The heavens are sometimes given as seven, sometimes as three,

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sometimes as thirty-three, according to the viewpoint taken by the seer. But this we shall consider when we take up the next stanza of the Upanishad. For the present it is enough to note that there are many heavenly worlds and not one, *svarga-lokāḥ*.

The other important thing suggested is that all these heavens have as their share or portion, *bhajante*, the characteristic of Immortality, *amṛtatvam*. This last word is deliberately used by Nachiketas after addressing Yama as *Mṛtyo* in the first line of this very stanza, in order to bring out in relief the contrast between this evolutionary world of ours on one side and those heavenly worlds on the other. *Mṛtyu* and *amṛta*, as the Gita tells us, are both equally the forms of the Divine, *amṛtam chavva mṛtyuscha sadasachchām arjuna* ; but still these two contrary elements have got their apparent dominion in different regions of the universe. To death and hunger and thirst are given as their share the evolutionary world and to Immortality are apportioned the involuntary or typical worlds.¹ The root *bhaj*, as used by the seer, has got a double sense here, the first being that of apportioning or assigning, and the second of enjoying or experiencing or attaining or resorting to. From the first sense we get the words *bhāga*, *bhājaka*, etc. and from the second are derived such idioms as *mḍrām bhaj*, *devam* or *īśvaram bhaj*, and also words like *bhajana*, *bhakta*, etc. In the first sense the root also takes its nasalised form of *bhanj*, whereas in the second it takes the form of *bhuj*. Thus the words *amṛtam bhajante* mean two things simultaneously, *viz.* that they have immortality for their share and also that they enjoy or experience immortality. The transition from the first sense to the second is a very natural one and is psychological. Whatever one has one enjoys or experiences ; possession and enjoyment, *parigraha* and *bhoga*, are always associated together.

Nachiketas requests Yama to tell him everything about the heavenly worlds, their formation, their need and purpose in the universal scheme, the prevailing condition in each of them, the method by which one can enter into them and also the work that Yama and the Divine Will do on those levels.

(To be continued)

BABHRU

¹ Vide Aitareya Upanishad I. 11. 5 for the apportioning of hunger and thirst, where too the same root *bhaj* is used. *Jan aśanā-ṛpāse abṛūtām āvābhyām abhṛṣajāmiḥ iti Te abravīd etāsu eva vām devatāsu abhājām, etāsu bhāgīnyau karom iti.*

BABHRU'S ANSWERS TO READERS' QUESTIONS

SYMBOLISM BEHIND THE AHALYA LEGEND

Ahalya literally means land which cannot be ploughed or tilled (from *a-halya*), *hala* being the ploughshare. It means the Inconscience as it is before the evolutionary movement has begun. It is the opposite of Sita which means arable land, furrowed land. Sita is thus symbolically the evolutionary Force, the divine Shakti which manifests Matter and Life out of the Inconscience. Ahalya is the daughter of Brahma, the creative principle. She is the wife of Gautama; she and Gautama are the two poles of existence, Inconscience and Superconscience.

Indra is the energy of the Illumined Mind known for its impetuous action when it is under the intoxication of divine Delight. Even Indra's birth is impetuous; he does not like, says the R̥g Veda, to be born in the ordinary way; he forces his way through the Inconscience in an oblique manner, *nāham ato nirayā durgahaitat tiraśchatā pārśvāt nirgamaṇi*. (IV. 18.2)

In the involutory movement this Illumined Mind descends into the Inconscience, poetically and symbolically expressed in the form of Indra's overtures to Ahalya. This descent and the breaking through of the apparent resistance of the Inconscience is necessary for the evolutionary cycle to commence. Gautama's curse is, really speaking, his consent, for he curses her to become a stone or rock—which symbolises the manifestation of Matter out of Inconscience. Compare the Vedic image of the Hill or Rock of Being, *adri* or *parvata*, which the same Indra tears asunder in order that the evolutionary 'waters' may flow.

Rama is the avatara of the sattvic mind in evolution. His touch makes this Ahalya human, symbolising the evolutionary manifestation of mental human consciousness in and out of Matter.

'Ahalya' is alternatively explained as that which merges or dissolves into the Day, *ahani līyate iti*, which amounts to the same thing as the other sense; it would mean the Night of the Inconscience on the verge of dissolving its darkness into the first evolutionary day or dawn (compare, *ahanā*), viz., that of the manifestation of Matter.

VEDIC STUDY : RIGVEDA 4. 50

BRĪHASPATI : POWER OF THE SOUL

It is a belief of Science that all life on earth follows an evolutionary process, the knowledge of which changes and expands with new discoveries. Broadly speaking, there have been two theories of evolution, one the materialistic and the other the spiritual. In between, as a combination or compromise, there may be other theories. The materialistic theory holds that "Force on Matter is the unconscious Goddess" who has been the guide of the evolutionary process, and that by this process man, the mental being, the topmost living being on earth, has come into existence, and that with him evolution may stop. The spiritual theory of evolution holds that it is conscious Force on Matter with a will and a purpose that is guiding the process; this conscious Force is called Supermind by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. From and through this Supermind, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have been acting on life on earth. In the matter of man's development, the Veda has played a great and important part in the past and is still playing it. Sri Aurobindo has written and commented much upon this role of the Veda.

It has been the belief of the Hindus that there is a Supreme Being, transcendent of the cosmos, and that by him the cosmos, the material universe and the individual being have come into existence and that all this is being done as a play or Lila. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother hold that it is not merely for a Lila that the Unmanifest has manifested; it is with a will and a purpose that the manifestation has been going on. The Hindus further hold that for this Divine Lila, the Supreme Being has used as his instruments the gods, the Rishis, the Manus and that He Himself has descended in the form of an avatar as many times as there was the need for working out terrestrial evolution. The Veda is the work of the Rishis with the help of the Gods, composed in certain universal rhythmic forms, called *chandamsi* by them. Science has begun to accept the evolutionary process of life on earth as working out not in a straight line but in cycles and now a theory of cycles of human civilisation has been put forth by modern Thought and is slowly being accepted by all. The Hindu theory of Kalpa and Manvantara advances "a theory of cycles of human evolution" and, as Sri Aurobindo says, "we may yet arrive at it" perhaps through Science or through some Intuitionary knowledge or through both.

The Hindu theory of the Veda is that the Veda is eternal and at the beginning of each Manvantara, one cycle of human evolution, the Saptarshis take their birth or come into existence on earth and guide the human evolution on a spiritual basis. Originally the Veda was one, or perhaps the three, Rik, Yajur and Saman, all in one; later the three developed each into a sakha or branch by itself, and still later, the Veda became four with the addition of the Atharvaveda. These four Vedas that we have now are accepted as historical documents and of these the Rigveda is accepted as the earliest. But it is not yet known whether this Rigveda came into existence at the beginning of the cycle of the present Hindu civilisation or it has continued from the beginning of the cycle of the present human evolution. There are references by the Rishis of the present Rigveda to past achievements by Rishis more ancient than themselves. Since we have not yet arrived at any clear idea of the cycles of human evolution, whether with the help of Science or with the help of Hindu scriptures, it is difficult to say when the present Rigveda came into existence.

But then what is the Veda ? The word Veda comes from the root *vid*, to know, and so Veda means knowledge. The word science also comes from a Latin word which means to know and so Veda may also mean science. The scientist who makes discoveries confronts the Unconscious Force that acts upon Matter, finds out the physical phenomena of the discoverable thing, creates a new machinery by which the discovered phenomena can be mechanised and made practicable and useful for others. On the other hand the Rishi identifies himself with the Conscious Force that acts upon Matter, Life and Mind, mechanises that Conscious Force into the form of *Sabda* (sound), the Creative Voice, the Word, the Mantra. Alongside of the Mantra he devises a method of sacrifice, the performance of which together with the Mantra enabled one to come into contact with the Conscious Force represented by the Conscious Powers called Gods and produces effective results not only on the inner planes but also on the physical plane. Thus the difference between the Veda and Science is that the former uses the Conscious Force represented by the various psychological and spiritual powers called Gods to act directly on Matter, Life and Mind, while the latter uses the Unconscious Force to act directly on Matter alone and then through Matter indirectly by its results on Life and Mind. The content of the Veda can be said to be spiritual, psychological and physical; it is physical in the sense that it directly acts upon Matter. A whole system of ritualism with its method was devised around it by the Rishis in their own days. After their time different systems of ritualism with the use of these very Mantras have arisen and without the Veda and its Mantra or at least without it as the final authority there is no Hinduism.

But the Veda is not only religion : besides its spiritual, psychological and

ritual content which was called Aryan religion at the beginning and Hinduism at a later period, there is the literary content of it. And it is out of the literary content and literary potentialities of the Veda that the whole of Sanskrit literature along with all its vocabulary, grammar, etymology, prosody and idiom have arisen. Further, the Veda contains the whole clue to the origin of Aryan Speech; what is called Sanskrit now is only a later modification of it. Sri Aurobindo in his study of Aryan Speech from the Veda has been able to find a clue to the origin of human speech itself. In his article on this subject in *On The Veda*, he promised to write more about it. The more is not yet published and it is not known whether he wrote it at all. But it may be possible, for someone who pursues the subject with the help of the ideas given by Sri Aurobindo, to develop this science of origins of human speech more elaborately. Thus the Veda has its religio-spiritual content and its literary content both of which have to be unveiled. Nowadays to become a littérateur in any language one has to study it with all its vocabulary, grammar and idiom. But in the far-off antiquity, when it is said that there was no script, no scholar to teach, and perhaps nobody to learn, a few Rishis composed these Suktas. Not with intellectual learning but with intuition they composed them. Later, out of this work, grammar arose by intellectual analysis. Similarly, vocabulary and idiom was contained in the Veda. Later, intellectualism was able only to retain part of it and could not develop in full the potentialities it contained of new word-formations.

To this Veda, there have been applied broadly two systems of interpretation, one by the Indian, mainly for its religio-spiritual content, and the other by the European for its historical, literary and thought-cum-belief content. As regards the Indian system, while the Upanishads gave a clue to the psychological, philosophical and spiritual ideas and experiences, Sayana and Yaska supplied the ritualistic interpretation; to these may be added the recent approach by Swami Dayananda which lays stress on the pantheistic nature of the Veda and on its doctrine of the One Being with numerous Devas expressing the names and forms of the various aspects of His Unity. Though all these interpretations are there, it is the ritualistic interpretation that reigns in the Indian mind. The true thought of India has not yet turned towards the spiritual and psychological content of the Veda. The European system of interpretation followed, in the beginning of the 19th century, the traditional method of Sayana's ritualistic interpretation and is represented by the translation of H. H. Wilson begun in 1850. Very soon European scholarship developed a new method and "Roth, the founder of Vedic philology, substituted the critical method (for the traditional method) of interpreting the difficult parts of the Rigveda from internal evidence by the minute comparison of all words parallel in form and matter, while taking into consideration grammar, etymology and context, without

ignoring either the help supplied by the historical study of the Vedic language in its connection with Sanskrit or the outside evidence derived from the Avesta and from Comparative Philology.”¹ While taking advantage of the Indian method and its symbols Roth brought into the field of interpretation the comparative and historical methods of research. The fine result of all this is Macdonell’s *Vedic Grammar* and *Vedic Reader*, which are at present being introduced as textbooks in Indian universities.

To these two methods may be added a third, the Integral-Intuitive method initiated by Sri Aurobindo in the year 1914 in the *Arya*, four years after he had come to Pondicherry for the Supramental Yoga. Before that he had not directly come into contact with the Veda; he writes on himself : “like the majority of educated Indians I had passively accepted without examination, before myself reading the Veda, the conclusions of European scholarship both as to the religious and as to the historical and ethnical sense of the ancient hymns. In consequence, following again the ordinary line taken by modernised Hindu opinion, I regarded the Upanishads as the most ancient source of Indian thought and religion, the true Veda, the first book of Knowledge. The Rigveda in the modern translations which were all I knew of this profound Scripture, represented for me an important document of our national history, but seemed of small value or importance for the history of thought or for a living spiritual experience.”² His own experiences in yoga during his four years’ stay in Pondicherry revealed to him the “ancient and now unfrequented paths followed by our forefathers”, the Rishis of the Rigveda. This method did not at all deny the ritualistic content of it nor did it deny the naturalistic and historical content of it brought out by European scholarship. It harmonised them both with its own hypothesis of the Rigveda that it is mainly spiritual and psychological and that it contained only casually the other two contents. The religio-spiritual content and the literary content of the Veda found its complete amplification in this method of Sri Aurobindo.

Let us take for example a Sukta from the Rigveda, say the 50th Sukta of the fourth Mandala, the Rishi of which is Vama Deva and the Gods of which are Brihaspati for the first 9 Mantras and Brihaspati and Indra for the last 2 Mantras. We print side by side the Pada Patha of each Mantra along with the three translations of Sri Aurobindo, Macdonell and Wilson, the last of whom has adopted Sayana’s as the basis. We shall see how far they stand the test of literary translation, coherence of meaning and continuity of thought from sentence to sentence and verse to verse, from the point of view of a Vedic student who sincerely wants to study the Veda in its integral aspects.

¹ Macdonell, *Vedic Reader*.

² *On the Veda*, p. 42.

Now the Rishi Vamadeva is the son or descendant of Gotama, one of the Saptarshis in the present document of the Rigveda. This Gotama is said to be the son or descendant of Rahugana who in turn is a descendant of Angiras. Angiras himself is not a Rishi of the present Rigveda, but is an ancestor of about one third of its Rishis. The Hindu scriptures say that he is one of the Saptarshis at the beginning of the present cycle of human evolution, that is the Manvantara. It is not known how many cycles of human civilisation have passed in the course of the cycle of human evolution, it is also not known if the Rishi Angiras appeared or only his descendants appeared at the beginning of every cycle of human civilisation. In the present Rigveda three Saptarshis are the descendants of Angiras. They are Gotama, Jamadagni and Bharadvaj. One whole Mandala is attributed to Vamadeva. On page 192 of *On The Veda*, Sri Aurobindo, while describing the part played by the Angirasa Rishis, the Ancient Fathers, in achieving man's first great victory over the dark forces, mentions that the *Pratnasaḥ ṛṣayaḥ*, the ancient Rishis, of the first Mantra of this Sukta are a group of Rishis of this Angirasa clan. Vamadeva, the Rishi of this Sukta, belongs also to this Angirasa clan.

Brihaspati is the god of this Sukta. The word Brihaspati signifies the Pati or Lord of the *Bṛhataḥ Vacāḥ*, the Great Word, the Creative Word, the Word arising from the Power of the Soul. This Word in the Veda is also otherwise called Brahman and the Pati or Lord of Brahman is Brahmanaspati. "Brihaspati Brahmanaspati, Brahma are the three names of the god to whom the Rishi Vamadeva addresses this mystic hymn of praise. In the later Puranic theogonies, Brihaspati and Brahma have long become separate deities. Brahma is the Creator, one of the Three who form the great Puranic Trinity; Brihaspati is a figure of no great importance, spiritual teacher of gods and incidentally guardian of the planet Jupiter; Brahmanaspati, the middle term which once linked the two, has disappeared. To restore the physiognomy of the Vedic deity we have to reunite what has been disjoined and correct the values of the two separated terms in the light of the original conceptions."¹

Pada Patha

Macdonell's Translation.

4-50-1;—*Yaḥ, tastambha, sahasā, vi, jmaḥ, antān, Bṛhaspatiḥ, tri-sadhas-thaḥ, ravena, tam, pratnāsaḥ, ṛṣayaḥ, didhyānāḥ, puraḥ, viprāḥ, dadhire, mandra-jihvam.*

4-50-2;—*Dhuna-itayaḥ, su-praketam,*

4-50-1;—Bṛhaspati who occupying three seats with roar has propped asunder with might the ends of the earth, him, the charming-tongued, the ancient seers, the wise, pondering, placed at their head.

4-50-2;—Who with resounding gait,

¹ *On the Veda*, p. 361.

madantaḥ, Bṛhaspate, abhi, ye, naḥ, tatasre, pṛṣantam, sṛpṛam, adabdham, ūrvam, bṛhaspate, rakṣatāt, asya, yonim.

4-50-3;—*Bṛhaspate, yā, paramā, parā-vat; ataḥ, ā, te, ṛtasṛśaḥ, ni, seduḥ, tubhyam, khātāḥ, avatāḥ, adri-dugdhāḥ; madhvaḥ, scotanti, abhitaḥ, vi-rapṣam.*

4-50-4;—*Bṛhaspatih, prathamam, jāya-mānaḥ; mahāḥ, jyotiśaḥ, parame, vi-oman; sapta-āsyāḥ, tuvi-jātaḥ, ravena; vi, sapta-raśmih, adhamat, tamāmsi.*

4-50-5;—*sah; su-stubhā, sah, ṛkvatā, gaṇena; valam, ruroja, phaligam, ravena; Bṛhaspatih, usriyāḥ, havya-sūdaḥ; kamkradat, vāvaṣatih, ut, ājat.*

4-50-6;—*Eva, pitre, viśva-devāya, vṛṣṇe; yajnaih, vidhema, namasā, haviḥ-bhiḥ; Bṛhaspate, su-prajāḥ, vīra-vantaḥ; vayam, syāma, patayaḥ, rayinām.*

4-50-7;—*Sah, it, rājā, prati-janyāni viśva; śuśmeṇa tasthau, abhi, vīryeṇa; Bṛhaspatim, yaḥ, su-bhṛtam, bi-bharti; valgu-yati, vandate, pūrva-bhājam.*

4-50-8;—*Sah, it kṣeti, si-dhitaḥ, okasi, sve; tasmai, Ilā, pinvate, viśva-dānīm; asmai, viśaḥ, svayam, eva, namante; yasmin, brahmā, rājani, pūvaḥ, eti.*

4-50-9;—*Aprati-itaḥ, jayati, sam, dhanāmi, prati-janyāni, uta, yā, sa-*

rejoicing, O Bṛhaspati, for us have attacked the conspicuous, variegated, extensive, uninjured herd; O Bṛhaspati, protect its dwelling.

4-50-3;—O Bṛhaspati, that which is the farthest distance, from thence (coming) those that cherish the rite have seated themselves for thee. For thee springs that have been dug, pressed out with stones, drip super-abundance of mead on all sides.

4-50-4;—Bṛhaspati when first being born from the great light in the highest heaven, seven-mouthed, high-born, with his roar, seven-rayed, blew asunder the darkness.

4-50-5;—He with the well-praising jubilant throng burst open with roar the enclosing cave; Bṛhaspati bellowing drove out the lowing ruddy kine that sweeten the oblation.

4-50-6;—Then to the father that belongs to all the gods, the bull, we would offer worship with sacrifices; obeisance, and oblations. O Bṛhaspati, with good offspring and heroes we would be lords of wealth.

4-50-7;—That king with his impulse and his heroism, overcomes all hostile forces, who keeps Bṛhaspati well-nourished, honors him, and praises him as receiving the first (portion of the offering).

4-50-8;—That king dwells well-established in his own abode, to him the consecrated food always yields abundance; to him his subjects bow down of their own accord, with whom the priest has precedence.

4-50-9;—Unresisted he wins wealth both belonging to his adversaries and to

*janyā, avasyave, yah, varivah, kṛṇo-
ti; brahmane, rājā, tam, avanti,
devāh.*

4-50-10;—*Indrah, ca, somam, piba-
tam, bṛhaspate; asmin, yajne, manda-
sānā, vṛṣaṇvasū; ā, vām, viśantu,
indavah, su-ābhuvah; asme, rayim,
sarva-vīram, ni, yachatam.*

4-50-11;—*Bṛhaspate, Indra, vardha-
tam, nah; sacā, sā, vām, su-matih,
bhūtu, asme; aviṣtam, dhīyah, jig-
ṛtam, puram-dhīh; jajastam, aryah,
vanuṣām, arātih.*

Sri Aurobindo's Translation

4-50-1;—He who established in his might the extremities of the earth, Brihaspati, in the triple world of our fulfilment, by his cry, on him the pristine sages meditated and, illumined, set him in their front with his tongue of ecstasy.

4-50-2;—They, O Brihaspati, vibrating with the impulse of their movement, rejoicing in perfect consciousness wove for us abundant, rapid, invincible, wide, the world from which this being was born, That do thou protect, O Brihaspati.

4-50-3;—O Brihaspati, that which is the highest supreme of existence, thither from this world they attain and take their seat who touch the Truth. For thee are dug the wells of honey which drain this hill and their sweetnesses stream out on every side and break into overflowing.

4-50-4;—Brihaspati first in his birth from the vast light, in the highest

his people. The king who for the priest desiring (his) help procures prosperity, him the gods help.

4-50-10;—O Indra and Bṛhaspati, drink the Soma, rejoicing at the sacrifice, O ye of mighty wealth; let the invigorating drops enter you two; bestow on us riches accompanied altogether with sons.

4-50-11;—O Bṛhaspati and Indra, cause us to prosper; let that benevolence of yours be with us. Favour (our) prayers; arouse rewards; weaken the hostilities of foe and rivals.

Mysore Editor's Translation

The ancient sages, illustrious, intelligent have placed before (them) the pleasing-tongued Brihaspati, who propped up by (his) strength the ends of the earth and who abides with noise in the three regions.

Brihaspati protect the fruit-yielding, progressive, uninjured, ample sacrifice of this (your worshipper, at which) they who are the terrifiers (of foes), the deliverers of you who are possessed of great wisdom, glorify (you) in our behalf.

Those (steeds) Brihaspati, which had come from that distant (region), the best (of all), have sat down in connection with the ceremony and to you the Soma-juices expressed by the stones flow copiously (accompanied) by the sounds of praise, like deep wells that supply water.

Brihaspati, when first being born in the highest heaven of supreme light

heavenly space, with his seven fronts, with his seven rays, with his many births, drives utterly away the darkneses that encompass us with his cry.

4-50-5;—He with his cohort of the rhythm that affirms, of the chant that illumines, has broken Vala into pieces with his cry. Brihaspati drives upward the Bright Ones who speed our offerings; he shouts aloud as he leads them, lowing they reply.

4-50-6;—Thus to the Father, the universal Godhead, the Bull of the herds, may we dispose our sacrifices and submission and oblations; O Brihaspati, full of energy and rich in offspring, may we become masters of the felicities.

4-50-7;—Verily is he King and conquers by his energy, by his heroic force all that is in the worlds that confront him, who bears Brihaspati in him well-contained and has the exultant dance and adores and gives him the first fruits of his enjoyment.

4-50-8;—Yea, he dwells firmly seated in his proper home and for him Ila at all times grows in richness. To him all creatures of themselves submit, the king, he in whom the Soul-Power goes in front.

4-50-9;—None can assail him, he conquers utterly all the riches of the worlds which confront him and the world in which he dwells; he who for the Soul-Power that seeks its manifestation creates in himself that highest good is cherished by the Gods.

seven-mouthed, multi-formed (combined) with sound, and seven-rayed has subdued the darkness.

(Aided) by the praised and brilliant troop (of the Angirasas), he destroyed with sound the mischievous Vala; Brihaspati shouting aloud, set free the boon-bestowing, oblations-supplying cows.

Thus may we offer worship with sacrifices, with oblations, with praise, to the paternal universal deity, the showerer (of benefits); and may we, Brihaspati, become possessed of riches and be blessed with excellent progeny and valiant descendants.

That prince overcomes by his strength and prowess all hostile people, who cherishes liberally Brihaspati, and glorifies and honors him as the first sharer (of the offering.)

Verily he abides prosperous in his own abode, for him the earth bears fruit at all seasons; to him (his) subjects willingly pay homage, the Brahmana first (duly revered), repairs.

Unopposed he is the master of the riches of hostile people, and of his own subjects; the Raja who bestows riches upon the Brahman seeking his protection, him the gods protect.

4-50-10;—Thou, O Brihaspati, and Indra, drink the Soma-wine rejoicing in this sacrifice, lavishing substance. Let the powers of its delight enter into you and take perfect form, control in us a felicity full of every energy.

4-50-11;—O Brihaspati, O Indra, increase in us together and may that your perfection of mind be created in us; foster the thoughts, bring out the mind's multiple powers; destroy all poverties that they bring who seek to conquer the Aryan.

Brihaspati, you and Indra both exulting and showering riches, drink the Soma at this sacrifice; may the all-pervading drops enter you; bestow upon us riches comprising all male descendants.

Brihaspati, Indra, elevate us, may the favourable disposition of you both be combined for us; protect our rites; be awake to our laudations, confound the arrogant (foes) of us who are the donors (of oblations.)

In the 1st verse, the word *raveṇa* which means "by the cry", should not be understood to mean the cry of an earthly cowherd; it is the cry of a Divine Cowherd, the Master of the rays of Light, the Lord of Inspiration, the Lord of the great Word, the Universal rhythm that creates the world. The triple world, *Trisadhastha*, of this verse is that of the physical, vital and mental. Macdonell gives its meaning as "the three seats" as if the word were *trisadastha* and not *Trisadhastha* with the idea that it must be the three seats of Agni, the God-Will, in the Vedic sacrificial house.

In the 2nd verse, in the phrase *dhuna-itayah* the 1st member comes from the root *dhu*, to shake; Sri Aurobindo's meaning to it is a vibrating with the impulse of their movement"; Macdonell's is "who with resounding gait" and Wilson's is "who are the terrifiers (of foes)". We see here how Sri Aurobindo's fits in the context and corresponds with the root-meaning. The word *tatarse* comes from the root, *tams*, which means "to shake, to pour out, to decorate." Even here the meaning "wove" given by Sri Aurobindo corresponds with the root-meaning and fits far better in the context than those given by the two translators, "attacked" and "glorify". For the word *ūrvam* Macdonell gives "herd" and in the other two translations "wide" and "ample" are given. It is not known whether anywhere else in the Veda this word means "herd". Just to ride over a difficulty it seems he has given that meaning; still one can verify it. For the word *madantah* Wilson gives "deliverers", whereas the other two translators give "rejoicing". For the word "Yoni" Wilson gives "sacrifice", whereas the others give to it meanings corresponding to the meaning of the root "yu" from which the word "yoni" comes. Thus we see how both Wilson and Macdonell, by unscientific methods, have somehow given meanings to words to suit their own idea of what this verse must mean. Macdonell plainly admits in his notes that it is a very obscure stanza, the allusions of which can only

be conjectured. But his conjectures fail to make it coherent. One can see that Wilson has fared much worse. He has failed to bring out the meaning of *dhuna-itayah* and *madantah* which refer to the ancient Rishis of the 1st verse and if at all the meanings of these words in his translation refer to the Ancient Rishis, it is yet not known how these delivered Brihaspati.

In the 3rd verse *rta-sprsaḥ* as translated by Sri Aurobindo gives the psychological and spiritual meaning while the other two making the word to mean "rite" and "ceremony" make it ritualistic ; all the other words in it are translated by each to suit his own interpretation. In the 4th there is not much difference in the different translations. In the 5th *usriya* in the Veda means both Cows and rays of Light. The first significance suits the ritualistic and the naturalistic interpretation and the second suits the psychological and spiritual. This is a key-word in the verse and the meanings of other words determine themselves in accordance with the different meanings of this word.

In the 6th verse *vr̥ṣṇe* means "bull", which has its psychological and spiritual meaning also ; similarly *rayīnam* which means "wealth" has its spiritual and psychological meaning. In the 7th the word *su-bhṛtam* is translated "well-contained" by Sri Aurobindo, "well-nourished" by Macdonell and "who cherishes liberally" by Wilson. For the word *valguyati* Sri Aurobindo gives the natural meaning, to dance, whereas the other two give far-fetched meanings "glorify" and "praise". It is not known if the word lends itself to such a meaning.

In the 8th verse the word *Ilā* is consecrated "food" for Macdonell, "earth" for Wilson, and the goddess of inspiration for Sri Aurobindo. The word *Brahma* means "priest" to Macdonell, "Brahmana" to Wilson and "Soul-Power" to Sri Aurobindo. In his commentary Sri Aurobindo has identified Brahma with Brihaspati and Brahmanaspati. In the 9th verse the word *Brahma* occurs again with the same difference of meanings in the different translations. In the 10th, except for the word *rayim* which means "wealth" and has the double meaning of "physical riches" and "psychological and spiritual riches", there is not any difference. In the 11th the words *su-matīḥ*, *dhiyah* and *puram-dhīḥ* are all given psychological meanings by Sri Aurobindo whereas the others have given purely ritualistic ones.

In considering the above three translations, it may be asked if there is a thing like Vedic grammar applying to the Veda and if in each of the above translations the rules of the Vedic grammar have been observed. It has already been said that the Rishi did not compose the hymns after learning grammar. The Veda was revealed to them. Yet it contained all grammar. Long after they had composed it and many centuries ago from now, when Panini wrote the first grammar of Sanskrit called *Ashtadhyayi*, he had to write one

set of rules of grammar for classical Sanskrit and another set of rules for the Vedas or Chandamsi as he called them. The Vedic Sanskrit contains more tenses and moods and every tense has all the moods and every mood has also all the tenses. All the tenses of each mood or *vice versa* may not have been used in the case of every verb. All the eight cases with their terminations, as in Classical Sanskrit, and the three numbers are contained in the Veda. As time elapsed, from the Vedas to the Brahmanas, then to the Sutras and then to Classical literature, some of the moods were not used and some terminations both of the verbs and of the nouns were not used. As time passed on, some changes in word-formations also, specially in compound words, took place. Thus the rules of grammar as they were already contained in the Vedic language were collected and such of those rules from the Vedas that were in use in Classical Sanskrit and some new rules by the time Panini wrote became the grammar of Classical Sanskrit and the other rules which were only in the Veda became the special rules of Vedic grammar. On this grammar, both of Vedic Sanskrit and of Classical Sanskrit, that was first brought out in the form of aphorisms by Panini, after some time Katyayana by way of explanation wrote his *Vartika*. Then, later, Patanjali wrote his *Mahabhasya* on the Sutras. Later still Bhattoji Dikshit wrote his *Siddhanta Kaumudi* on all these three. Some centuries ago, in his translation of the Rigveda, Sayana tried to explain the grammatical position of every word of the 1st Mandala on the basis of Panini's Sutras. Apart from the above four Grammars there seems to be no great work of grammar on the Veda by Indians. Macdonell, perhaps basing himself on all the earlier writings of Grammar by Indians, has written two books of grammar on the Veda, one a bigger edition which is complete and the other a smaller edition for beginners of Vedic study. He seems to have been able to give the grammatical position of each and every word in the whole of the Veda. But then the knowledge of grammar possessed either by Sayana or by Macdonell has not helped them to give a coherent translation to the Veda. Just as the Veda was a revelation to the Rishis, so too it revealed itself to Sri Aurobindo at the first touch and his translation of the Veda satisfies all the rules of the true science of philology and also all the rules of grammar which Macdonell has written.

For a student of the Veda who has not yet reached the capacity for intuitive translation, the study of Sri Aurobindo's Vedic translations and other Vedic writings and getting into the spirit of them and then a study of grammar either from Macdonell or Bhattoji Dikshit will certainly help him to translate all those hymns of the Rigveda which Sri Aurobindo has not translated.

NARAYANA C. REDDI

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 6)

Q. How did the first man appear?

Sri Aurobindo precisely says here that if one puts oneself at the scientific point of view the theories succeed each other with a great instability and look like works of imagination more than like things that can be proved. One believes, because it is a material viewpoint, that it is the easiest to prove but by all evidence it is the most difficult. If one places oneself at the occult point of view, one finds traditions which are based perhaps on memories, but all that is quite beyond any material proof, it is a knowledge which is considered as still more problematic than the scientific imaginations and deductions. To the inner logic it is easier to understand and admit, but on the occult side as on the scientific no material proofs exist that there was one single first man or many first men or something which was not yet a man and nearly a man. These are nothing except speculations.

The traditions, which naturally are only oral and which from the scientific standpoint are altogether doubtful but which are based on individual memories, say that the first man or the first human pair or the first human individuals were materialised according to an occult method; they must have appeared somewhat according to the process announced by Sri Aurobindo for the future supramental world : that is to say, the beings belonging to the higher worlds built or formed for themselves a body of physical matter by a process of concentration and materialisation. It would not be the lower species that progressively produced a body which was the first human body.

According to spiritual and occult knowledge it is the consciousness that precedes the form, the consciousness that by concentrating itself produces its form, while according to the materialistic conception it is the form that precedes the consciousness and permits the consciousness to manifest. For those who have a knowledge of invisible worlds and the direct perception of the play of forces, there is no doubt possible, it is necessarily the consciousness that creates

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for itself a form in order to manifest. As things are established on the earth, it is certainly a consciousness of a higher order that has entered into a form and has helped it to evolve so that this form may become capable of manifesting it, whether immediately or at the end of some generations. For those who have the inner vision and knowledge this leaves no doubt, it is impossible that it should be otherwise. Those who take hold of things from the other end, from below, do not admit this, but it is all the same not ignorance that should dictate knowledge to wisdom. It is, however, this that very well happens in reality. When it is easier to doubt than to know, the human mind is in the habit of doubting everything, it is its first movement, and naturally it thus knows nothing.

The conception precedes the manifestation and the expression, that is quite sure. And all those who have had direct contact with the past have had the memory of a sort of human prototype, much superior to actual humanity, who came on the earth as an example and a promise of what would be humanity when it would attain its apogee.

There is in life a certain tendency to imitate, a kind of effort to copy things. One finds very striking examples of it in animal life, it starts even with vegetable life. Thus one can very well conceive that there has been a sort of effort by animal life to imitate, to create a semblance of an ideal type which would be manifested by occult means on the earth, and it was by successive attempts, by an endeavour more and more successful, that the first human types must have been produced.

11 December 1957

(K. D. S.)

SRI AUROBINDO

THE MASTER GUIDE OF TODAY

We live in a period of great change. So vast and rapid is this change that we are lost in its immensity and bewildered by its impetus unless we can orientate ourselves to the Sun of its solar system and for this the ordinary mind of man is today not enough, for that Sun is as yet to man the Great Unknown.

The unknown has ever been a call to the élite of humanity, the choice souls, for they are the true seekers, the pioneers of the race, the explorers of new roads, the climbers in quest for new powers, the hunters after Joy, the seekers after Knowledge. There are those who throw their energies into exploring new lands, new continents where man has never been, others in scaling new heights where the feet of man has never trod, and still others, like the naturalist, who seek in a world of wonder all their own where few humans have ever ventured. For example : "There are two sights on this earth that are so unusual that they do not seem credible. One of these is the Flamingos...thousands of them, line after line of incredible beauty across a tropical lake...their gorgeous colour made them stand out above everything else. Pure pink of the most delicate hue, the colour changed with the light. While I watched the sun faded behind a cloud and the pink suddenly altered to scarlet, to vermilion and finally to a seething line of bloody red against a background of pale blue sky and green water...then the flock went screaming into the sky. It was the most breathtaking sight I have ever witnessed...as in a colourful deluge they poured over the horizon. The other sight is as a diver sees the fantastic and exquisite world of the undersea barrier reef, viewed from the point where the ocean bottom falls away into the great depths, off the coast of Inagua...where the great combers break on the coral reef, one looks up and sees...a molten silver wall breaking into a chaos of colour...in an underwater fairyland...coral trees of fantastic design, a host of fishes all colours of the rainbow. Brilliant yellows and azures, vermilions and emerald greens, burnished silvers, purples and lavenders, iridescent pinks and mauves...a mêlée of unbelievable colour. It was as though some artist, gone mad, had prodigally spattered a picture of some wonderful fairyland with his most intense pigments and then suddenly endowed that picture with life. There is something indescribably soft and untouchable about these coral reef hues, a shimmering pearly quality which

is so evanescent and intangible that it baffles accurate description...yet leaving one always with a feeling of great awe.”

Both of these splendid sights of nature were experienced on and below the island of Inagua¹ in the Bahamas group.

The naturalist is a pioneer in his own world, the scientist pursues usually an individual search for knowledge and truth. But man is ever in search for the meaning and truth of his own being; his labour and striving, his sorrow and sacrifice are offered constantly on the altar of life aspiring for a wider existence, a greater knowing, a higher and purer love. All seem to follow different paths, to travel along various roads of trial and error; but life moves ever faster towards the achievement of its ultimate aim, the impetus quickens, the pace increases and unless man can keep up with its march he falls by the wayside, dismayed, disillusioned and alone.

Man's one hope is to know himself in relation to the rhythm of the Time Spirit which moves his world, or to anchor himself to the Sun of his Solar System—the Teacher of the Age, the Master Guide who has already trod the Paths of the future Great Unknown.

The élite of the world is becoming increasingly aware of Sri Aurobindo as a world figure and as his vast range of writings becomes more and more known he will stand out clearly as the World Teacher of our Age.

In appreciating Sri Aurobindo's works we are not confined to a single subject or national opinion but a multiple universe of world upon world of manifold knowledge leading one, more often than not, to actual experience by the very Truth-Force of the language.

There are the magnificent cathedral tones of *The Life Divine* leading one on to plateaux of mental wideness and peaks of splendour reaching beyond mere mind. There is the diamond brilliance of esoteric knowledge carved from the rock of yogic experience to be found opening new worlds in the *Synthesis of Yoga*. In his *Essays on the Gita* there is the inner contemplative identity with the long-past teachings of ancient times brought to the light of modern understanding. Then there is the projected vision and foreknowledge which keeps one constantly amazed when reading *The Human Cycle* or *The Ideal of Human Unity*; two works which every statesman and politician who has the least aspiration to attain Truth and to work for humanity should not only read but keep with him as his Shastra or Bible. Then for sheer beauty of language alone it is at once a blessing and a delight to read that jewel of a book *The Mother*; it is a book one can read over and over again without its failing to kindle anew that soft warmth in the heart which soon flames into a blaze

¹ *Inagua*, by Gilbert G. Klingel.

of aspiring love. So many of his works have this magic of bringing into action the inner experience which they set out in words.

In the huge collection of Sri Aurobindo's letters, now published in six or seven volumes with yet more to come, one sees at a glance the vast range of questions and problems he has encompassed over years of answering the eager enquiries of his disciples. These letters scintillate with the brilliant wit and humour, satire and irony of a Voltaire or a Shaw and yet they always treat the subject in question with the sincerity and directness of insight rare to our human standards, for he lifts everything up to a plane beyond the ordinary, penetrating its origin, bringing out its essential truth and position in the cosmic order of manifestation—a manifestation which moves towards the expanding universe of a Divine Perfection.

These are only a few of the major works out of such a prodigious mass of literature that one wonders how one man found time to produce it. The average standard output of human endeavour in the field of letters is shown up as paltry and lazy beside it. His poetry alone would suffice most men for a life-time without taking into account his epic *Savitri*, a mystic masterpiece of vision and poetic grandeur which perhaps only the future mind of man will be able to appreciate fully.

However, all his works are not so far above our human strivings as to exclude him from our immediate problems of life; there was published recently a small volume of essays entitled *War and Self-determination*. These essays were all written between the years 1916—1922, but the vision which shines through the body of their substance is so vividly insistent in penetrating the problem of the future that it is only today that one can fully appreciate the momentous truth that persistently calls to the soul of humanity to do something more than just talk about those high ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which have echoed down the corridors of Time from their first magnificent cry in the streets of Paris nearly two centuries ago.

In these poignant essays one is immediately aware of a completely new style of writing which the Master has employed. It seems as if he has identified himself with the spirit of a future age, projected himself into our "today" and taken upon himself the language of the thought-rhythm of the present. It is a language powerful, direct and to the point; simple, though full of an idiomatic richness and versatility of satire and irony which at the same time does not waste time or words. There is no ebullience of platitudes so dear to politicians of even today and no latinised phrases so prevalent in the writers of the time when he first took up his pen.

In *War and Self-determination* Sri Aurobindo brings us face to face with that essential problem which confronts man in his search for the true meaning

and purpose of his life on this planet. He points to the seemingly insoluble problem of the liberty of the individual and his place in a freely growing collectivity—liberty of humanity and of nations moving towards a human unity which is the true destiny of mankind. The key to the working out of such a world unity is not, however, to be found in any of the mechanised expedients or organised methods of outward circumstances, but on first seeking and finding the ideal unity and liberty within ourselves, for he says in the chapter on “Self-determination”: “Liberty in one shape or another ranks among the most ancient and certainly among the most difficult aspirations of our race: it arises from a radical instinct of our being and is yet opposed to all our circumstances; it is our eternal good and our condition of perfection, but our temporal being has failed to find its key.”

In the world of ideas, on the plane of ideals, upon the summits of our being, liberty is always a possible fact, for it is a state of consciousness, but this very fact also makes it a future possibility in our temporal life. Every scientist in search of new knowledge must have started with an intuitive prevision of the existence of that knowledge, every naturalist in search of new wonders of life must have first believed that such wonders existed, because, as the Mother has told us, we cannot think of anything that does not exist somewhere in the universe of being.

It is more often than not a matter of coming upon the right Path which makes it possible in a particular time or age. In *War and Self-Determination*, Sri Aurobindo takes us to such a path, shows us the sign-posts which lead away from it, which man followed after the war, brings us back again and describes the Road he will follow and the point to which it will eventually carry him. He compares the ancient idea of liberty and democracy of Greece with the cant and tyranny of more recent times. The exploitation of subject peoples by emancipated nations,—the complete subjection of one half of mankind, the woman half, to the physically stronger male,—are the sign-posts he points out on the way which show where man has gone astray and that the real meaning of liberty has not been understood.

Yet Sri Aurobindo points to the other sign-post which may bring man again on to the Road which leads to his Goal, the sign-post of *Self-determination*, and he says: “A right idea of the rule of self-determination may help to set us on the way to the discovery of this higher law... (the law of our being which shall discover a means of reconciliation, free reciprocity and unity). For we may note that this phrase self-determination reconciles and brings together in one complex notion the *idea of liberty* and the *idea of law*.”¹

¹ The italics are mine.

SRI AUROBINDO

He reminds us that “ ‘Self-determination’ viewed from the subjective standpoint carries us back to the old spiritual idea of the Being within, whose action once known and self-revealed is not an obedience to external and mechanical impulses, but proceeds in each from the powers of the soul, an action self-determined by the essential quality and principle of which all our becoming is the apparent movement....It is in the philosophical language the recognition of the one self in all who fulfils himself variously in each; it is the finding of the law of the divine being in each, unifying itself with the law of the divine being in all. At once the key of the problem is shifted from without to within, from the visible externalities of social and political adjustment to the spiritual life and truth which can alone provide the key.”

In reading this surprisingly up-to-date book of Sri Aurobindo, one is made more easily aware of the further ‘sign-posts’ which have sprung up around us today as indications to that which Sri Aurobindo envisaged as far back as 1922. For example, the Geophysical Year shows the universal trend and aspirations of modern science. The New Feeling in the West, which one French writer describes as a *reversal of idleness*, is significant. In Asia there is the enormous impetus towards education and an all-round interest in cultural pursuits. In India a new swing away from the vulgarities of ‘modern life’ towards an interest in more spiritual truths is apparent among the élite. The tenor of World Politics is now not so intolerant of others, for recently there have been several knocks to the various national egos.

The field has been made ready for a new sowing, the seed has been sown and the first tender shoot has revealed itself to the expectant dawn of a New Day.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THE AIM OF LIFE

SURELY our life has an aim. We are conscious beings and we persistently seek things. Some of these things satisfy us more, some less. And through all these seekings and satisfactions we work and hope for greater and greater satisfactions and in fact the greatest possible. What this greatest satisfaction is and how it is possible, is the real quest of man. And one who achieves it fulfils his life. He realises the aim of his life.

Man is more conscious than the animals and he can plan and organise his life. But surely his consciousness is yet very limited. His knowledge is imperfect, his will is divided and weak and he is subject to fear and anxiety. To grow in his consciousness so as progressively to overcome these limitations seems to be the aim, which the process of evolution sets to human life. From imperfect knowledge to perfect knowledge, from divided and weak will to integrated and united will and from fear and anxiety to joy and Ananda seem to be the course and way of our life.

Ordinarily we look upon becoming a teacher, an engineer, a craftsman as the aim of life. For a young boy, no doubt, they are aims. But these turn out to be means, since they are, in fact, ways of earning a livelihood. Through them we are able to earn and live, but what we live for, knowingly or unknowingly, and what will fulfil our life, give us a complete sense of satisfaction, joy and success as a human being is really the aim of life.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother tell us that man in truth is the Psychic Being, which is the ever joyous soul within. To discover that and consciously be that is the true aim of life. And, when man discovers that and becomes that, he begins to live the life that enjoys the full satisfaction of living. His life becomes a fulfilment and the world a stage for the exercise of this fulfilment. Ordinarily in ignorance of and in separation from this true self of ours we live in and exercise those parts of our personality, which are composed of wants, appetites and hungers and in consequence remain involved in an anxious pursuit of temporary satisfaction of the same. A real satisfaction even of these comes to us when we discover the joyous soul within us. Therefore, according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to become consciously that which we secretly even now are is the aim of life. Nature herself through her attempt to manifest progressively a higher and higher consciousness is tending to realise the joyous and integral consciousness of the Psychic Being and man

THE AIM OF LIFE

at his present stage of evolution is capable of realising the same more quickly through a sincere and persistent seeking for it.

The discovery of the joyous soul within enables us to discover the joyous Soul of the universe, which is the true sense and meaning of the world we live in. In fact the sense and feeling for the Soul in the universe and that of the soul within us grow more or less simultaneously, mutually aiding their distinct emergence in our experience. Then we learn to know our world and our self truly, as also the sense and purpose that govern them. Life and existence then become clear perceptions of truth and delight and such fulfilment is the true aim of our life.

INDRA SEN

THE SEA

How vast is the heart of the sea!
The blue sky does she honour.
So is the vast heart in me,
Holding high up my banner.

She distributes to all her love
With pure foam above.
Her caress is for all
Without any call.

My heart knows not her birth.
Her end too it fails to say.
But I know her ceaseless mirth
Is the guide of my night and day.

JYOTI KUMARI

BAGHA JATIN

JATINDRA Nath Mukherjee was born in December, 1879, in a noble well-to-do Brahmin family of Jessore. His father, Umesh Chandra, was a great scholar, renowned for his strength of character. His mother, Sarat-Shasi Devi, was a poet of considerable merit. She is said to have typified the ideal of Hindu womanhood. Jatindra lost his father at the age of five; from then he was brought up, along with his elder sister Vinodebala, in his maternal uncles' house in Krishnanagar. At an early age he showed a marked development in his physique and his intellect. As a boy he acquired mastery over swimming, wrestling, shooting, riding, lathi, sword, dagger, athletics and many other similar activities. In studies too he was so brilliant that his teachers and fellow-students both loved and respected him. As a school-boy one day he stopped a mad horse that was creating panic in the street, and tamed it. After two years of college, Jatindra had to give up studies under inevitable circumstances and, an expert in typewriting and shorthand, he joined the Bengal Secretariat. During this period he lost his mother. He had to spend then one half of his year in Darjeeling, the other half in Calcutta. While at Darjeeling, he used to hold regular classes on the Gita and other inspiring works, where young men used to gather and where they came to understand the importance of liberating the Motherland from Her bondage. At about the age of 20, Jatindra happened to meet Swami Vivekananda who was much impressed by the idealism of this rare youth; they had several confidential talks. At the opening of this century, Jatindra killed a Royal Bengal Tiger with a Darjeeling knife, after a hand-to-hand fight with it. This made him immediately known as "Bāghā Jatin"—Slayer of Tiger. He was awarded a special medal by the Government, on which the scene of his fighting the tiger was engraved.

In course of time, Jatindra met Sri Aurobindo when Sri Aurobindo returned from Baroda; he is recorded to have had some important conversations with "The Friend of the Nation" when Sri Aurobindo resided for some time in the house of Yogendra Vidyabhusan, one of Jatindra's relatives. From then, till Sri Aurobindo's coming to Pondicherry in 1910, Jatindra was his "right-hand man". And from 1910 the leadership of the entire revolution was passed on unanimously to Jatindra he who kept alive the Flame kindled by Sri Aurobindo in 1902. It was Jatindra who for the first time organised an international body of revolutionists for the cause of India's freedom. His

men went to Germany, to America, to France, to China, to Japan, Siam, Turkestan, Afghanistan and to every part of the world where there was real sympathy for India. It may be remembered that Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen was specially interested in Jatindra Nath's activities and sent large amounts of money, arms and ammunitions to encourage this movement. Germany too sent sufficient materials and trainers to carry on an open revolution in India. Jatindra's plan was such that a single day would suffice to paralyse the entire Foreign Government in India, and arrangements were ready to run the Independent Indian Government. On this basis he took four of his associates to Balasore—the coast of Orissa—to receive the German ships. But the ships did not arrive on the day fixed and, informed by a betrayer, a huge force of the combined Governments of Bengal-Bihar-Orissa surrounded Jatindra on the 9th September, 1915, in the Forest of Balasore. Jatindra's young associates requested him over and over again to run away for the sake of the Motherland; this he easily could have done but straight off refused to do, stating it to be an inglorious example for the coming generations. After fighting for hours together against the huge army, after fighting with the most modern strategems, Jatindra and his associates had to give up hope since they ran short of bullets. Jatindra is said to have fired constantly with both hands—an attribute which had been till then reserved to Arjuna, the Sabyasachi. It is said that Jatindra breathed his last in the Balasore Hospital on the 10th September, 1915, owing to the bleedings he had on the battle-field. Charles Teggart, the bitterest enemy of India's Freedom, leader of the force to fight against him, took off his hat in admiration and remarked that had Jatindra been born in one of the free Western countries, the World would have seen another great general ranking with Caesar and Napoleon. In this connection we recall Sri Aurobindo's comment on Jatindra Nath :

“You have heard of Jatin Mukherjee ? A wonderful man ! He was a man who would belong to the front rank of humanity. Such beauty and strength combined together I have not seen and his stature was like that of a warrior.”

P.

WHAT IS POETRY?

THIS is the sort of unfair, uncanny, insidious, shiver-down-the spine query that gets left around after the grown-ups have said huffily, "We require notice of that question," and stalked away. So then the children are asked. *This* means that somebody intends to give an answer, when the class has broken down on it. On this occasion the visiting professor is Sir Herbert Read; but before he comes in let us prepare ourselves by cheating a little and handing round a large, enticing, decorated verse-book by Miss Eleanor Farjeon called *The Children's Bells*. We shall look at it later as a Christmas present; for the moment we are using it as a crib. Miss Farjeon, if anyone, will be able to tell the young what poetry is. Try her "School-Child's Alphabet," and look under P.—We are in luck, for P stands for Poetry.

What is Poetry? Who knows?
Not the rose, but the scent of the rose;
Not the sky, but the light in the sky;
Not the fly, but the gleam of the fly;
Not the sea, but the sound of the sea;
Not myself, but what makes me
See, hear, and feel something that prose
Cannot; and what it is, who knows?

A conundrum, if you like, on the logical level; but on the poetic plane, an
Close the book warily, for here comes Sir Herbert, who, after giving us *This Way Delight*—a selection of poems for quite young children by ancient or living authors—is going to talk to us for a few minutes on "What is Poetry?"

"You must not think of it as a school subject..." He is on the right side of the fence. Poetry should be delightful as a day in spring, and there are music and magic in it. Good. But since he is talking in prose we should like an explanation of the *how* of it. Here is where Sir Herbert takes us out of the schoolroom, only to lead us up the garden. The poet, he says, finds his words "like flowers in his path: he does not look for them." Now this may be an attempt to translate Miss Farjeon's untranslatable. But prose assertions mean the thing they say; and Sir Herbert continues by encouraging the young to be as free with making poems as paintings—to pick up words and phrases as they go along and fit them

WHAT IS POETRY ?

into rhymes. He implies that it is all as easy as learning to swim, and that every child, given the confidence, could do it. Who, then, are the poets ? One day these aspirants will have to learn that poetry needs discipline and application. They have only to look at a poet's corrected drafts to see that second or even third thoughts have achieved felicity.

However, this "do it yourself" campaign is launched only when the orderly reader has been through five progressive groups of other men's flowers, labelled respectively as Charms, Songs, Enchantments, Escapes, and Stories. The first section may well tempt him to try something in the manner of William Carlos Williams's "Spring and All" :

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens

but by the time he has reached "The Listeners," "The Solitary Reaper" and "Kubla Khan" he may have forgotten self-assertion in the pleasure of finding some living answers,...

He can then go on—for greater variety, more complex mood, and perhaps a deeper pain with the delight—to *Rhyme and Reason*, an anthology, the selectors state, for those of fifteen upwards. Its reader is not encouraged to write verses. He is shown in a careful and scholarly fashion that even to absorb them requires effort, because each poem, as a new creation, makes its own idiom. The notes appended give exactly the right degree of explanation, frequently leaving the final move to the reader. If the compilers include no trick-bits such as Sir Herbert's specimens from E. E. Cummings ("and bettyandisbel come dancing"), they indicate how poets from Dryden to Betjeman may write on town and machinery no less than on the age-old countryside. They invite meditation on Time and Mortality, present the simplicity or ardour of religious poems, and suggest how war itself may be a topic for fun and irony.

Since there is no upper age limit to this audience, we must keep from wandering out of childhood's playground by returning to Miss Farjeon and her musical medley. It is not for nothing that she takes the stage alone in a variety act that is far from containing her whole repertory. Her songs and rhythms, tales and fancies are the very magic of childhood, glistening with newness, grace and wonder. Their colours are bright, their melodies clear; the expected leaps off

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into sudden surprises, and friendships are made between incompatibles. Such infinite variety never stales. It may be the delicious humour of her "Songs of Kings and Heroes" :

Attila rode with his Huns !
Under the blazing suns,
Under the night's black courses,
Sounded the gallop of Attila's horses—

or the autumnal pallor of Sussex water-meadows :

Now on the Arun mists rise up like sleep,
And turn the hosts
Of trees and bushes, hayricks, cows, and sheep,
To unsubstantial ghosts...

In these, and a hundred varieties, Miss Farjeon has the answer to "What is Poetry ?"—the answer the children need.

ELEANOR FARJEON : *The Children's Bells*. Illustrated by Peggy Fortnum. Oxford University Press. 15s.

HERBERT READ (Compiler) : *This Way Delight*. Illustrated by Charles Stewart. Faber and Faber. 15s.

RAYMOND O'MALLEY and DENYS THOMPSON (Compilers) : *Rhyme and Reason*. Chatto and Windus. 9s. 6d.

(*With acknowledgements to "The Times Literary Supplement",
November 15, 1957*)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Munshi : His Art and Work, Volume I. Publishers : Shri Munshi. Seventieth Birthday Citizens' Celebrations Committee, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay - 7. Pages 258; price Rs. 2/- only.

We have before us the First Volume of *Munshi, His Art and Work*, commemorating Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi's 70th Birthday, celebrated on December 30, 1956. The book, which is the first of a series of four volumes on various aspects of his life, is divided into three parts : (i) early life, (ii) as a lawyer, (iii) Munshi's life and literature, and seeks to portray in "a small compass his amazing career" from small beginnings up to his exalted position in the country.

Mr. K. M. Munshi who has filled various high offices in public service of the country as an Agent-General of the Government of India at Hyderabad, as the Food Minister of the Government of India and as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, is one of those stubborn souls who are the makers of their destiny and the hewers of their own independent path towards a determined goal. Mr. Munshi rose from a position of poverty and unfavourable circumstances to that of power and prosperity and above all of a significant cultural influence which is irresistible because of its oriented dynamism and modernised outlook and penetrating inlook into the truths visioned by the ancient rishis.

Mr. Munshi is a writer of great eminence and popularity in Gujarati and wields a lively pen in English. His *Kulapati's Letters* which have been appearing serially in the *Bhavan's Journal*, the official organ of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, month after month, and also in other leading papers of India, are an informal yet very charming and enlightening feature because they are a means for direct contact with the masses on a cultural level in an effort to awaken them to their proud and glorious past.

The present book, written by a Board of five Editors, is indeed a fascinating one. It reads throughout like a novel and his early life is no less absorbing than a fiction. The language and style are at once so dignified, simple and gripping that nowhere does the reader find his interest flagging and he wishes to finish the book at a sitting.

Munshi's early life provides us with the story at once of a patient idealistic and adventurous son and of his old-type orthodox yet remarkably generous

and accommodating mother; of a persevering husband with a literary, artistic, romantic, sensitive and noble mind and of his orthodox, uneducated, unambitious but faithful wife; of a charitable, kind, emotional, daring friend and of a remarkable, educated, unconventional, responsive, strong, determined and noble-hearted partner in literature, in public and later in home life, as the other half of their "Undivided Soul" or the dream-mate of his early life, Mrs. Lilavati Munshi.

Munshi's early career at the bar and his later achievements as a flourishing lawyer which gave him influence, popularity and prosperity, were the strong foundations on which he could build his political and cultural work.

Thus we have in this biographical survey not only the interesting and eventful story of a sincere and enthusiastic youth scaling the heights of glory and success in life and law, but also the inspiring account of a man destined for a greater role in India's struggle for freedom and in the re-shaping of the country on its ancient cultural lines in the conditions of the modern world.

We have a mention of Sri Aurobindo who has exercised a strong influence on Munshi, not only as early as the beginning of this century, when he was the former's student in the Baroda College, but even later in life when he was drawn to the philosophy and spiritual *śadhana* of the Master Yogi through his powerful and inspiring writings and through the rare privilege of an interview with him on a first visit to the Pondicherry Ashram.

The printing of this book published in a popular edition is admirable. We have also a fine frontispiece photographic picture of "Munshi at Seventy".

We look forward with keen interest to the other three volumes on the maturer and more magnificent part of his public career in the life of the nation.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Guru Nanak : Ambassador of Light and Love, by *Har Krishan Singh*.
Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Yog-Mandir, Una (Punjab). Pages 20; price 40 np.

Among the saints of medieval India Guru Nanak stands out as one of the most shining figures. More than four centuries have rolled away but Guru Nanak with his simple, sweet, Godward life is a living memory in our national soul. His life is an object-lesson in independence of spirit.

The few facts and events presented by the author and some of the memorable words of the saint cited by him are sufficient to give us an inner picture of the great life.

A life like Guru Nanak's is, in itself, a sublime epic. No wonder that it

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should inspire the author to give us glimpses of it through verses interspersing the prose and culminating in a noble paean to this leader

“...who first sowed the seed of unity and oneness,
Who spread the message of spiritual peace from end to end,
Who sprinkled supernal love on the high and the low,
...the lover of God, the lover of man,
Who, sprung from the soil, yet belonged to the sky,
Who trod on the earth but was Heaven-born,
Who worked and lived for man, but owed allegiance only to Him,
...the Prophet of Unity and Love.”

This booklet is very timely, commemorating as it does the 489th Birthday of the Saint which fell on the 7th November, 1957. We have already had another commendable booklet by the author, published some time back in the “Yog-Mandir Series” and entitled *Slokas of Guru Teg Bahadur*. The bringing out of such booklets is a welcome feature and we hope they will help to kindle in the readers an affinity with the Messengers of the Divine Name.

SISIRKUMAR MITRA