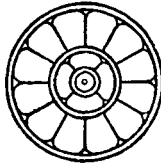


# MOTHER INDIA

September 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. 8

---

*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

---

### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE MOTHER'S TALKS ...	... 1
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO ...	... 5
GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO (Letters) ...	... 7
THE UPANISHADS (Translated by Niranjan from the Bengali) ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 8
THE PURANAS (Translated by Niranjan from the Bengali) ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 10
THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER ... <i>Pranjiwan Pathak</i>	... 12
HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US Reminiscences of Various People in Contact with the Mother : <i>Reported by</i> ... <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	... 15
SUBMISSION AND DEPENDENCE ... <i>Godfrey</i>	... 17
THE AWAKENING OF INDIAN WOMEN (Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali) <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	... 20
SRI AUROBINDO AND A FAMOUS WORDSWORTH LYRIC ... <i>K.D. Sethna</i>	... 23

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
TO MY SOUL (Poem) ... <i>Beverley Siegerman</i>	... 24
TRANCE (Poem) ... <i>Romen</i>	... 25
A GREATER GLORY (Poem) ... <i>Norman Dowsett</i>	... 25
THUS SANG MY SOUL (Poems to the Mother) ... <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	... 26
WELL MET IN MALGUDI (An Appraisal of R. K. Narayan's Work) ...	... 27
JOY (Poem) ... <i>Irwin L. Arlt</i>	... 29
THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND "THE SEEKING MIND" ... <i>Jugal Kishore Mukherjee</i>	... 33
VEDIC STUDY —THE ORIGINS OF ARYAN SPEECH ... <i>Narayana C. Reddy</i>	... 37
BOOK IN THE BALANCE THE MOTHER OF THE GOLDEN ALL by Chinmoy: <i>reviewed by</i> ... <i>K. P.</i>	... 41

## Students' Section

THE BIRTHDAY OF SRI AUROBINDO ... <i>Bishnuram Medhi</i>	... 43
REVERIE ... <i>Chinmoy</i>	... 45
THE SACRED SECRETS ... <i>Devaki Nandan</i>	... 46
OUR DEBT TO GREECE ... <i>Pravin</i>	... 47
ARISTOTLE'S <i>Poetics</i> ... <i>Syed Mehdi Imam</i>	... 50

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

*Q. When you tell us to meditate on some subject, like opening ourselves to the spiritual force, for example, we imagine all sorts of odd things, a door which opens or something of the kind, but that always takes mental forms.*

This depends on individuals. Each has his special process. Some may have imagery to help them, others on the contrary have a more abstract bent and see only ideas, still others who live more by sensations or feelings have psychological movements instead, movements of inner feeling or of sensation. Those who have an active and particularly form-making physical mind are the ones who see images, but everybody does not experience the same thing. Ask, for instance, your neighbour. When I give a subject for meditation, does she also see images ?....Generally, it is more often a sensation, a feeling, than an image. Images come always to those who have a formative mental power, a physical mind that is active. It is a sign that one is active in one's mental consciousness.

*Q. But is that the correct thing ?*

Well, everything is correct if it has a result ! Whatever the means, it is good. Why? The images of which you speak are not necessarily ridiculous, they are mental images and if they produce in you an effect they are quite appropriate ; if they give you an experience, they are suitable.

For example, when I ask you to go deep down within yourselves, there are some who will concentrate in a sensation, but there are others who will have the impression of descending into a pit, and they have fully the image of steps going down into a dark and deep pit, and they descend more and more, more and more, and sometimes they end right at a door ; they settle in front of the door with a will to enter and the door opens at times, then they enter and see something like a hall, or a room, or a grotto, and there, if they continue, they may arrive at another door and again stop, and with an effort this door opens also and they go farther and, if they do it with enough persistence and can continue the experience, there is a moment when they find themselves before a door which has a special character of solidity, or of solemnity, and with a great effort of concentration the door opens and they

## MOTHER INDIA

penetrate suddenly into a hall of light. Then one has the experience of contact with one's soul....I do not see that it is bad to have images !

*Q. Yes, but they are merely imagination, are they not ?*

Imagination ? What is merely imagination ? You cannot imagine anything that does not exist in the universe. It is impossible to imagine something which does not somewhere exist. The sole thing is that you do not put your imagined object in its place ; or you give it properties and qualities which it has not, or you give an explanation of it other than the right one, but all that you imagine exists somewhere, all that is needed is to know where and to put it in its right place.

Naturally if after having imagined that you are before a door which opens, you thought that it was really a material door which is within your body, it would be an error, but if you take into account that it is the mental form which your effort of concentration takes, you will be quite exact. If you take a stroll in the mental world, you will see it full of forms like that, all sorts of forms which have no material reality but which exist perfectly well in the mental world.

You cannot think strongly of anything without your thought taking form. The imagination is a power of formation. In fact, those who do not have imagination are people who are not *formateurs* on the mental plane, who cannot give a concrete power to their thought. The imagination is a very powerful means of action. For example, if you have a pain somewhere and if you can imagine yourself making it disappear or removing it or destroying it, by making use of certain images, oh well, you will succeed perfectly.

We have heard the story of a person who lost his hair in a fantastic way and who was threatened with becoming bald in a few weeks. Somebody said to him then: "Now imagine, when you dress your hair that it keeps growing, that it is going to grow very fast." And always while dressing it the person said : "Oh my hair keeps growing, oh it is going to grow very fast !" And in fact, that is what happened ! But what people generally do is to say : "Ah, there's all my hair falling again and I am going bald—that's sure, that's going to happen." And evidently this is what does happen !

*Q. You often say in our Friday classes a sentence to us and ask us to meditate on it. How is one to meditate on a sentence ? Should one think of it, meditate on its idea or what should one do ?*

Evidently, meditate on what it means.

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

*Q. This means that we should think...*

Yes. And then ?

*Q. But won't that be a mental activity ?*

The sentence which I give you is already a mental formation, it is an expressed mental formation. When you meditate on it, there are two means. One that is outer, active, ordinary, is to reflect and try to understand what the words mean, understand intellectually what exactly the sentence signifies—this is active meditation. You concentrate on some words, you take the expressed thought and attempt by reasoning, by deduction, by analysis to understand the sense.

There is another means, which is more direct, more profound : it is to take all the words together, this mental formation, with the thought that it represents, and then to collect all the force of attention there, compelling oneself to concentrate one's whole energy on this formation. Instead, for example, of concentrating all one's energy on a thing one physically sees, one takes this thought and gathers all one's force on it—in the mind of course.

And if one comes to concentrate the thought sufficiently and keep it from vacillating, one passes very naturally from the thought expressed by the words to the idea that is behind and that can express itself in other words, other forms. The characteristic of the idea is the power to clothe itself in many different thoughts. When you have reached to it, you have already penetrated much more deeply than by the simple understanding of words. Naturally, if you continue to concentrate and know how to do it, you can pass from the idea to the luminous force which is behind, and there you enter a domain still deeper and vaster ; but this calls for a training. It is this that is the very truth of meditation.

If you happen to go deep enough, you find the truth and the force that are behind the idea and these are what give you the power of realisation. Thus, those who take their meditation as a means of spiritual development come to join the truth which is behind things and to obtain the power of acting on things from high above.

But without going so far, since it needs a sufficiently strong discipline, a great deal of habit, you can very well pass from the thought to the idea and this gives you a light and an understanding in the mind which allows you in its turn to express the idea in no matter what form. An idea can express itself under a lot of different forms, under many different thoughts, just as if you descend to a more material level a thought can express itself through many

## MOTHER INDIA

different words; when you come towards the bottom, towards expression, spoken or written, there are many words, diverse formulas, which can serve to express the thought, but this thought is only one of the forms of thought which can express the idea, and this idea itself, if you follow it deeply, has behind it a truth of spiritual knowledge and power which then can spread itself and act upon the manifestation. It is like a great hierarchy : there is a truth which is on high, which itself is not unique because one can climb still higher, but this truth can express itself in ideas and these ideas can express themselves in a great number of thoughts, and this great number of thoughts can make use of a great number of languages and a yet greater number of words.

When I give you a thought it is simply to help you concentrate. Certain schools place an object somewhere before you, a flower or a stone or some other thing; you sit down and concentrate there, until you become the object; this is also a means of concentration. By force of looking without moving, you pass into the thing which you look at. But you must not set yourself to look at all sorts of things, only fix on the object without squinting.

These are the means of learning concentration, that's all.

Sometimes, one of these sentences expresses a very profound truth, it is one of the happy phrases that are very expressive, and it is there to help you find the truth that is behind.

August 27, 1958

*(Translated by K.D.S.)*



## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRĪ AUROBINDO

### BRAHMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

18.7.1937

MYSELF : Some people have looked down upon the sadhaks here, saying that they would count for nothing in the world outside.

SRI AUROBINDO : The quality of the sadhaks is so low ? I should say there is a considerable amount of ability and capacity in the Ashram. Only the standard demanded is higher than outside even in spiritual matters. There are half a dozen people here perhaps who live in the Brahman consciousness—outside they would make a big noise and be considered as great Yogis—here their condition is not known and in the Yoga it is regarded not as *siddhi* but only as a beginning.

MYSELF : Is the Brahman consciousness an ideal condition for receiving the supramental descent ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is a necessary condition.

MYSELF : I don't suppose it is the same as the realisation of the Self everywhere in everything. Is that realisation the height achieved here ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course not, the realisation of the Self as all and the Divine as all is only the first step.

The next step is to get into contact with the higher planes above spiritual mind—for as soon as one gets into the spiritual Mind or Higher Mind, this realisation is possible.

MYSELF : Is the realisation of the Self a state of perpetual peace, joy, bliss, etc. ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If it is thoroughly established it is one of *internal* peace, freedom, wideness in the inner being.

MYSELF : Is it a state surpassing all struggles, dualities, depressions, etc. ?

SRI AUROBINDO : All these things you mention become incidents in the external being, on the surface, but the inner being remains untouched by them.

MYSELF : Are all troubles of the lower nature conquered—especially sex ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No, sir, but the inner being is not touched.

MYSELF : Is there any danger of a fall from this state ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It may be covered up in a way—so long as it is not established in all parts of the being. The old Yogas did not consider that necessary, because they wanted to walk off, not to change the being.

## MOTHER INDIA

MYSELF : Why do you call it a beginning only ? What more do you want to do except physical transformation ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I want to effect the transformation of the whole nature (not only of the physical) that is why.

MYSELF : Could you whisper to me the names of a few of those lucky fellows who are enjoying the Brahman consciousness here, so that I may have a practical knowledge of what the blessed thing is like ?

SRI AUROBINDO : NO, SIR.

How can you have a practical knowledge of it by knowing who has it ? You might just as well expect to have a practical knowledge of high mathematics by knowing that Einstein is a great mathematician. Queer ideas you have !

MYSELF : Will you make it clear to me what exactly the Brahman consciousness is ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Eternal Jehovah ! You don't even know what Brahman is ! You will next be asking me what Yoga is or what life is or what body is or what mind is or what sadhana is ! No, sir, I am not prepared to teach an infant class the A.B.C. of the elementary conceptions which are the basis of Yoga. There is Amal who doesn't know what consciousness is, even !

Brahman, sir, is the name given by Indian philosophy since the beginning of Time to the one Reality, eternal and infinite which is the Self, the Divine, the All, the more than All, which would remain even if you and everybody and everything else in existence or imagining itself to be in existence vanished into blazes—even if the whole universe disappeared, Brahman would be safely there and nothing whatever lost. In fact, sir, you are Brahman and you are pretending to be Nirod; when Nishikanta is translating Amal's poetry into Bengali, it is really Brahman translating Brahman's Brahman into Brahman. When Amal asks me what consciousness is, it is really Brahman asking Brahman what Brahman is. There, sir, I hope you are satisfied now.

To be less drastic and refrain from making your head reel till it goes off your shoulders I may say that realisation of the Self is the beginning of Brahman realisation—the Brahman consciousness—the Self in all and all in the Self etc. It is the basis of the spiritual realisation and therefore of the spiritual transformation; but one has to see it in all sorts of aspects and applications first and that I refuse to grant.<sup>1</sup> If you want to know you have to read the Arya.

*From NIRODBARAN*

<sup>1</sup> Last three words tentative reading (Ed.).

## GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

*Q. Would you permit one to remain busy with the higher consciousness for the present and to let the Mother's Force work out the things below?*

SRI AUROBINDO : No objection—it is a very good thing to keep working in the higher consciousness. It is more effective than struggling all the time down below with the lower forces. (2-2-1935)

*Q. Rising to the higher levels one busies oneself with spiritual development. But the ordinary forces below pull down the mind in a tricky way. They catch it by some attractive thoughts and prevent the being from spreading out into the full universality of the higher planes.*

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the thing that happens in the earlier stages. It can be got rid of by perseverance, the length of the higher condition progressively increasing to the requisite degree. (28-2-1935)

*Q. When a sadhak leaves the limits of body and mind, can difficulties trouble him any more? Do the lower or hostile forces touch the higher planes?*

SRI AUROBINDO : From the higher mind upwards, all is free from the action of the hostile forces. For they all belong to the spiritual consciousness though with varying degrees of light and power and completeness. (18-4-1935)

*Q. I suppose that sadhaks can rise to the higher planes even when their ego is not quite gone, but they will have to linger there long—at the highest in the Overmind—and fail to reach the Supermind.*

SRI AUROBINDO : They cannot get beyond unless they lose it. Even in these planes it prevents them from getting the full consciousness and knowledge. For in the Overmind cosmic consciousness the ego is absent, though the true Person may be there. (27-4-1935)

*Q. How is one to understand those who say that progressing higher and higher they encounter a greater or superior ego? What is the use of such progress?*

SRI AUROBINDO : It is because they go higher and higher in the same plane of consciousness as before and do not rise beyond—e.g., higher and higher in the realm of vital or mental formations, not higher beyond mind into the planes that lead to the full supramental. (28-4-1935)

From NAGIN DOSHI

## THE UPANISHADS

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Translated by Niranjan from the original Bengali in "Dharma O Jatiyata")*

OUR dharma is like a giant tree adorned with innumerable branches and twigs. Its roots plunge down into the deepest knowledge; its branches spread out far into the field of action. Like the Ashwattha tree mentioned in the Gita, which has its roots above and its branches below, this dharma is based on knowledge and exhorts one to action. Freedom from attachment is the foundation of this vast tree-mansion, dynamism is its walls and roof, and liberation its tower and summit. The whole life of humanity is sheltered by this immense tree-mansion of the Hindu dharma.

Everyone says that the Veda is the basis of the Hindu dharma, but very few know the real form and the fundamental truth of that basis. Often, seated among the topmost branches, we remain lost in ecstasy over the taste of one or more of the savoury and transient fruits, never caring to find out anything about the roots. True, we have heard that the Veda is divided into two sections : the one part dealing with action and the other dealing with knowledge. We may have read the commentaries of the Rigveda by Max Muller or its Bengali translation by Romesh Dutt but we have no acquaintance with the Rigveda itself. We have received the knowledge from Max Muller and Romesh Dutt that the Rishis of the Rigveda worshipped external objects and beings; the incantations and hymns to the Sun, the Moon, the Winds and the Fire constituted the ancient Hindu dharma's eternal fundamental knowledge above the human. By assuming their view to be true and thus belittling the Veda, the Rishis and the Hindu dharma, we consider ourselves highly learned and 'enlightened'. We make no effort to find out what is truly there in the authentic Veda or why the sages and great souls like Shankaracharya and others revered these eternal invocations and hymns as the complete and infallible Knowledge.

Few people are acquainted with even the Upanishads. When we speak of the Upanishads, we are reminded of the Monism of Shankaracharya, the Qualified Dualism of Ramanuja, the Dualism of Madhwa and similar philosophical expositions. We do not even dream of studying the Upanishads in the original, or finding out their true significance, or asking ourselves how six schools of contradictory philosophies could have grown from the same root, —or whether any hidden meaning surpassing those six philosophies could be

obtained from this treasure-house of knowledge. For a thousand years we have accepted the meaning given by Shankara; the commentary of Shankara has become our Veda, our Upanishad. Why should we take the trouble of studying the Upanishads in the original ? Even when we do so, if ever we come across any commentary which contradicts Shankara, we immediately reject it as false. Yet not only the knowledge gained by Shankara but the spiritual knowledge or truth which has been acquired in the past or will be in the present and the future has been concealed in these profound and significant *slokas* by the Aryan Rishis and the great Yogis.

What are the Upanishads ? They are the treasure-house of the deepest eternal Knowledge without beginning or end which is the root and foundation of the eternal dharma. We find the same knowledge in the Suktas of the four Vedas but covered over with metaphors which give an exoteric meaning to the hymns like that of the descriptive image of the ideal man. The Upanishads unveil for us the supreme Knowledge, the naked limbs of the real man. The poets of the Rigveda, the Rishis, expressed spiritual knowledge in divinely inspired words and rhythms; the Rishis of the Upanishads had direct vision of the true form of that Knowledge and expressed it in a few profound words. Not only Monism, but all the philosophical thoughts and doctrines that have come into being in Europe and Asia—Rationalism, Realism, Nihilism, the Darwinian theory of evolution, the Positivism of Comte, the philosophy of Hegel, Kant, Spinoza and Schopenhauer, Utilitarianism, Hedonism, all were seen and expressed by the Rishis endowed with *Direct Vision*. But what has been elsewhere partially glimpsed, proclaimed as the integral truth—in spite of its being only a fragment of the Truth—and given a distorted description with a mixture of truth and falsehood has been recorded in its fullness and right perspective, in a pure and unmistakable manner.

Therefore we should endeavour to find the true deep meaning of the Upanishads without being bound by the exposition of Shankara or anyone else.

The word 'Upanishad' means to enter into a secret place. The Rishis did not obtain the knowledge mentioned in the Upanishads by force of argument, extensive learning or from the flow of inspiration, but earned by Yoga the right of entry into the secrecy of the mind where hangs the key to the integral Knowledge, penetrated into the hidden chamber, took down the key and became sovereigns of vast realms of that infallible Knowledge. Unless the key can be secured, it is not possible to have access to the true significance of the Upanishads. Any attempt to discover the meaning of the Upanishads by argument alone is equivalent to investigating a dense forest with a lighted candle from high tree-tops. Direct vision is the sunlight which illumines the entire forest making it visible to the seeker. Direct vision can be attained only by Yoga.

## THE PURANAS

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Translated by Nirranjan from the original Bengali in "Dharma O Jatiyata")*

IN the previous article, I have written about the Upanishads and shown the method of seizing on their true and complete meaning. Like the Upanishads, the Puranas are authoritative scriptures of the Hindu dharma. Like the "Sruti" (the audible word), the "Smriti" (the divine word remembered) is an authoritative scripture though not of the same order. If there is any conflict between the "Sruti," the direct evidence, on the one hand and the "Smriti" on the other, then the authority of the latter is inadmissible. The revelations of the Rishis who were accomplished in Yoga and endowed with spiritual insight, and the Word which the Master of the Universe spoke to their purified intelligence, constitute the "Sruti". Ancient knowledge and learning, preserved through countless generations, is known as the "Smriti". This kind of knowledge in transmission might have suffered change, even deformation through different tongues, various minds and, under altered conditions, might have been modified by new ideas or assumed new forms suitable to the needs of the times. Therefore, a "Smriti" cannot be considered to be as infallible as a "Sruti". The "Smriti" is not a superhuman creation but the product of the limited and variable ideas and intelligence of man.

The Puranas are the most important among the "Smritis". The spiritual knowledge contained in the Upanishads has, in the Puranas, been transformed into fiction and metaphors ; we find in them much useful information on Indian history, the gradual growth and expression of the Hindu dharma, the condition of the society in ancient times, social customs, religious ceremonies, Yogic methods of discipline and ways of thinking. Apart from this, the composers of the Puranas are either accomplished yogis or seekers of Truth. The Knowledge and spiritual realisations obtained by their sadhana remain recorded in the respective Puranas. The Vedas and the Upanishads are the fundamental scriptures of the Hindu religion, the Puranas are commentaries on these scriptures. A commentary can never be equal to the original. My commentary may be different from yours but none of us have the right to alter or ignore the fundamental scripture. That which is at variance with the Vedas and the Upanishads cannot be accepted as a limb of the Hindu Dharma ; but a new idea even if it differs from the Puranas is welcome. The value of a commentary

## THE PURANAS

depends on the intellectual capacity, knowledge and erudition of the commentator. For example, if the Purana written by Vyasa were still existing, then it would be honoured as a "Sruti". In the absence of this Purana and the one written by Lomaharshana, the eighteen Puranas that still exist cannot all be given the same place of honour; among them, the Vishnu and the Bhagawata Purana composed by accomplished Yogis are definitely more precious and we must recognise that the Markandeya Purana written by a sage devoted to spiritual pursuits is more profound in Knowledge than either the Shiva or the Agni Purana.

The Purana of Vyasa being the source-book of the later Puranas, there must be, even in the poorest of them, much information unfolding the principles of the Hindu dharma and since even the poorest of the Puranas is written by a seeker of Knowledge or a devotee practising Yoga, the knowledge and thought obtained by his personal effort is worthy of respect. The division created by the English educated scholars who separate the Vedas and the Upanishads from the Puranas and thus make a distinction between the Vedic dharma and the Puranic dharma is a mistake born of ignorance. The Puranas are accepted as an authority on the Hindu dharma because they explain the knowledge contained in the Vedas and the Upanishads to the average man, comment upon it, discuss it at great length and endeavour to apply it to the commonplace details of life. They too are mistaken who neglect the Vedas and the Upanishads and consider the Puranas as a distinct and self-sufficient authority in itself. By doing this, they commit the error of omitting the infallible and supernatural origin and of encouraging false knowledge, with the result that the meaning of the Vedas disappears and the true significance of the Puranas is also lost. The Vedas must ever remain the basis for any true understanding of the Puranas.

## THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

IN 1921 I first met Sri Aurobindo. In 1920-21 I had joined the Non-cooperation Movement started by Gandhiji, but owing to certain events I felt that Gandhiji was not the prophet whom I could accept wholly. So, as fate would have it, I drifted to Pondicherry and there I was able to see Sri Aurobindo.

I went up the stairs. He was sitting at a table, surrounded by about five disciples. For a moment he looked at me and I had the feeling as if I was under a surgeon's knife: he pierced me through and through, and after a moment he was again normal and it seemed to me that he was looking at everything in a most unconcerned manner. I felt literally that before his Presence I was an insignificant midget.

I had already seen the two great sons of India, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji. It seemed to me that the former lived in the heights of ideal regions light and beauty, and the latter seemed to drink deep of human, all-too-human miseries and to want compassionately to lift his brothers out of them. But with respect to both these great men it struck me, maybe because of my extreme ego, that after all they were not beyond me, or that I could at least understand the way they were.... But when I saw Sri Aurobindo, I felt that here was one who was so different—a Man-God—or, better, a God who had condescended to be a Man.

After that I have ever tried to know him : but that is not easy because we cannot think of him as one about whom we can think, as we might do about any other person; for he comes to us from Within, and to know him would be to become like unto him...

At the time I knew nothing about the Mother, and years rolled by. In 1931, I wrote a book (*The Heya-Paksha of Yoga or Towards A Constructive Synthesis of Psychological Material From Indian Philosophy*) of which I sent him a copy and requested A. B. Purani to kindly let me know his opinion on the same. Instead of the opinion, I heard from Ambubhai that Sri Aurobindo wanted him to convey to me that from the book it seemed that I was not merely theoretically interested in the Yoga but also interested in it practically and that, if I had any results, I could lay the same before Sri Aurobindo. I wrote to Him that in order to bring about a synthesis between the extreme positions of Sankhya and Buddhism I tried to concentrate between the brows



at the Ajna Chakra, and it carried me deep—and I saw some lights which I took to be the physiological counterparts of an intenser co-efficient of attention at a particular centre. I got back Sri Aurobindo's remarks that the lights were not physiological, but that the consciousness entered a non-physical world and that I should put no interpretations on any experience that might happen to cross me, and that the meaning could only be understood when one progressed further.

Even up to this, I never knew the Mother.

In 1932, I fell very ill, the doctors put right one disease, but others cropped up and each a worse one. The trouble travelled down from the throat, spoiled the liver, gave broncho-pneumonia, then a queer fever, jaundice, sugar in the urine, a very bad fever,—and the body became dark and lost 40 lb. of weight. Earlier than this last stage, I wrote to Sri Aurobindo that it seemed to me that an external evil influence had jumped on me, because there was in me something that responded to it, and I had fallen ill....After waiting for more than a month, I received his letter of Grace—a typewritten sheet, saying in effect: "Many people fall ill like this but do not know the cause. It is good that you have been able to locate the cause. In such cases, any one of four things might happen: mental derangement, loss of morality, vital upheaval, physical illness. In your case it has been the last. You can drive it out either by invoking the Divine Grace, or by developing your strength, or by the help of a Guru, or by keeping a constant pressure of will on the heart centre."

The inner symptom of the disease was that whenever I tried to concentrate at the Ajna-Chakra, as I used to, I had a piercing pain in the chest, where the ribs meet.

The whole prescription might make no sense to one who has not suffered like that,—or I should better put it like this, that it was very difficult for me to understand the whole import of the different ways suggested, and I went from bad to worse. A. B. Purani wrote to me that even though I had received Sri Aurobindo's guidance of late, it must have been due to some Divine dispensation that I must pass through all the travail. By that time, the Doctor had declared that I was far advanced in T.B., my right lung was badly affected, and it was a matter of only some months for me to pass away.... Ambubhai wrote to me that as I had Sri Aurobindo's letter with me I should not worry, I should not "believe" that I had T. B., and that if I liked to test and try, I might even leave aside Sri Aurobindo's prescription, and only "meditate on Sri Aurobindo Himself at the heart centre, where I had the pain...."

I tried this last method, it was extremely difficult to do so, and the fever went up to 104 degrees, and the only thought that worried me at the time was: why of all people should I suffer from T. B.? I got over this in a couple of

days, and then I thought that even if I were to die, it would not 'solve' my problem, and after a few days I left that thought, or the thought left me (it is extremely difficult to say what exactly happens in the fluid mental realm). Whatever it was, I tried to meditate, and then I meditated, and I finally meditated calmly on Sri Aurobindo at the heart centre.

The medicines were the same, and one afternoon I woke up from the meditation at 10 minutes to 4, and I thought there were still 10 minutes left for me to take my dose of medicine, and I tried again to meditate,—and I went deep within my heart centre. As I came out of the depths, the words "Ma, Ma," were on my lips. I had read Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa's teachings, and about the Mother, but the thought had never come to me that one might as well approach the Mother. At the time there was no Sri Aurobindo, I was only flooded with the Presence of the Mother,—and as I came out of my depths, saying "Ma, Ma," the next thought that came to me was that my disease had left me. I called my eldest brother, there were tears of joy in my eyes, and I told him that my illness was gone, that from the next day I would be taking my full meals. My brother thought that I was talking in delirium !

It is extremely difficult to convey one's inner contact with the Mother and more difficult to describe the filling up of the Mother's energy in oneself, and what it is to live in the inner proximity of the Mother. I saw the Mother's Face delineated in lines of light, and all women seemed to be the forms of the One Mother...and I increased at the rate of 5 lb. per week ! My brother could not believe this, the doctors could not explain, but it was a fact.

It is extremely difficult to keep up our contact with the Divine Mother, to make commensurate our ordinary consciousness with Her and Sri Aurobindo—but the Deepest Mystery, and the Grace of it all that is, while one might stray aside and lose one's inner contact they do not leave us without protection, and in the times of extreme difficulty they come to us or rather we once more open to them. Usually I do not see apparitions, but once thinking about my plight, wide awake in broad daylight, I saw Sri Aurobindo at my heart centre, and one night I woke up in the early hours and saw the figure of the Mother in white, sitting on my bed. The Mother, keeping vigil over her child, knows best what I aspire to be.

PRANJIVAN PATHAK

## HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US\*

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(8)

### THE GIVER OF UNDERSTANDING<sup>1</sup>

I took up for study the second part of Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, but could neither get enough time for it nor achieve a clear mental state so that I might be able to read the book with understanding and derive full benefit from it for my sadhana.

I wrote about it to the Mother and she sent me her blessing-flowers.

Suddenly there was, as it were, a blooming of consciousness and an opening of the capacity to understand. I read the book with such concentration that I finished it within fifteen days.

With this came to me a deep conviction that I was born only for the Mother and that my duty was to remain ever in her service.

### THE BRINGER OF HARMONY

We had two brothers in our children's hostel. The elder used to beat the younger at least three or four times a day and the latter would come weeping and complaining to me.

I tried my best in various ways to stop their mutual quarrels but to no effect. Every time I intervened, the elder brother would promise that he would not in future repeat his violence, but the next day he would resume his cruel habit.

So I thought I must see the Mother and tell her about it.

Next day was the Distribution Day when the Mother would distribute toffees or sweets as her blessings to the children after the Playground activities, to "all the children up to the age of 99", as she once described the sadhaks who could participate in this function.

I took the boy with me to the Mother. She asked him how it was that he was beating his younger brother every now and then. The boy replied that he was not beating his brother, it was rather the opposite, it was his younger brother who beat him.

The Mother gave a sarcastic smile and said, "Oh, no, how can I believe this?" and added, pointing to me, "if he comes and reports to me that you who are so much smaller are beating him, well, how can I believe it? Anyway your eyes are showing that you are telling a lie."

The boy reflected a little and kept quiet. We returned.

As there had been no punishment I thought we could not expect results soon, for habits die hard. At most the boy might desist for a time.

\* Our readers are invited to send their experiences (Editor).

<sup>1</sup> With acknowledgement to the *Dakshina* (Gujarati) from where this incident has been adapted.

## MOTHER INDIA

However, day after day passed and he did not again touch his brother even once. They continue to live in friendship and harmony up to this day.

### THE REPAIRER OF CRUELTY

An old friend of my husband used to come to our shop and chat with him and thus bring cheer into his declining days.

One of his daughters was married in another town. For one year the couple lived happily but suddenly the attitude of the boy changed completely. He persecuted her constantly and at last her suffering was so much that she had to return to her father's house.

Her father came to my husband and explained to him the whole matter.

"I can only direct you to the sole refuge that has ever been mine," was my husband's advice, "turn to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Put the whole matter before them with a sincere prayerful heart. They will surely help you. But faith is very necessary. If you can do that, something will indeed be done for you."

Any straw of help was good enough for a person who did not know which way to turn. My husband sent his friend's daughter a Hindi translation of a part of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*, with the advice that she should spend some time in meditation and prayer.

She finished the book within a day. Her interest became intense. I was impressed by her devotion. We advised her to write a letter to the Mother putting before her the whole matter.

After a few days, the girl's husband suddenly appeared at her house. All were frightened as to what could have brought him there. But as soon as he came, he placed his cap on the feet of his father-in-law and asked pardon for his behaviour towards his wife. He did the same thing when his wife came and, putting his cap on her feet, asked pardon.

"One night I had a very strange dream," thus began his narrative as he was asked about the sudden and complete transformation of his behaviour. "I saw a very beautiful, though not very young, woman with an aura around her head and a blue light behind the aura. I was wonder-struck. Then she said : 'You have driven an innocent girl from your house ! Go and ask pardon from her !' I almost trembled with fear. I could not stay in my house even for a couple of days. Her words haunted me and I was led to come over here."

When my husband and myself were told about this dream, we could very well guess that it was the Mother who had responded to the girl's appeal to her for help. The girl felt the same. And the reconciliation of the young couple turned them and their family to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

*Compiled and reported by* HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## SUBMISSION AND DEPENDENCE

*"A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence are necessary."*—SRI AUROBINDO

ONE of the features of the unregenerate ego is a blind and arrogant 'independence', whose conception seems to be that to be dependent on anything, including God, implies a lack of liberty of action, a binding restraint or impediment in one's movements. Nor can the ego be readily persuaded that its cherished freedom is illusory and that it is in truth the plaything, the football of numberless forces in universal Nature. On the contrary, it prides itself on a unique distinction and separation defying all encroachments : it is the minute drop of water absurdly denying its relation to the sea.

A characteristic of intellectual egoism is its refusal to admit that whatever light it possesses is a borrowed light, and whatever comprehension a result of Grace. Presumptuousness, pride, refusal to acknowledge except by pretence any power above its own are a few of the choice qualities of this blight in our nature.

How are we to rid ourselves of this darkness that imposes itself between ourselves and God, and between ourselves and others, this danger that threatens our existence in the Spirit ?

The Mother replies : "In true sincere humility is our safeguard—it is the surest way to the indispensable dissolution of the ego."

Humility, it is noted, must be sincere. A humility lacking in sincerity is no longer humility, but a thing grown clownish and grotesque. It must also be true, that is, in possession of some conception or awareness of the greatness and majesty of God.

Deference is often mistaken for humility, but undue deference to man is not humility but servility, and whatever likeness there is is of the false and misleading appearances of things.

In the spiritual endeavour there seems to be so many qualities that are reciprocal and interrelated. Without humility submission is impossible, without awareness humility is impossible and without sincerity all is impossible; but, in passing, it is of some comfort to remember that a true consummation of one would inevitably bring all the others.

## MOTHER INDIA

It would seem that the lack of humility—pride—has the greatest power to blind. Because of it we must fail to comprehend and see, because of it we wound others as well as ourselves and because of it we often suffer a veritable hell of isolation. And lacking humility we cannot submit our precarious existence into the hands of the One who best knows how to care for it.

In our human vocabulary, dependence often implies weakness, and rightly so, but it is not the little ways of humanity with which we are dealing; we are dealing with the soul's aspiration for its own truth and divinity. Dependence on God is not a weakness but a strength, and it is only the ego in its small perambulations and in its overweening pride that fails to see that it is with the Almighty, the one Power from whom all lesser potencies are derived and to whom they owe their existence, that we seek a relation of dependence.

A story is told of how one day a wandering sadhu (Totapuri) came to Dakshineswar and offered to teach Sri Ramakrishna the precepts of Advaita. Ramakrishna considered the proposition and said, "Wait, I will go and ask my mother".

The sadhu might well have thought this young man a simple and dependent creature who had at every new step to ask permission from his parents, which is more the symptom of a retarded mentality than of anything else.

But it was to the temple that Ramakrishna had run, and to his beloved Kali. His mother was God.

Ramakrishna was indeed simple and dependent but in the highest and most spiritual sense. His simplicity was the fruit of wisdom and his dependence was the result of realisation. In his forthright childlikeness there was nothing childish, and in that straight sincerity nothing naive; for it is only our false poise of sophistication in the ego and its invincible characteristic of pre-judgment that rashly attributes its own negative qualities where they do not belong.

To be the child of God is to be the most adult of all things; it is only when we lose sight of the significance of God that we become childish and immature, for then our preoccupation is with ourselves, with other selves, or with things, and our high endeavour becomes lost in a maze of petty and puerile interests.

A complete dependence on God implies an equally complete independence of anything else. There is an ease, a sense of security and safety, a light freedom from all fret and care.

In any life, be it worldly or godly, a sense of security—the feeling that one can safely rely or depend on something—is indispensable to any kind of happiness; for, Man, despite his shallow boastings and vauntings, is a dependent creature. The man of the world, the worldling, derives this feeling from wife, from friends, from society or occupation while the spiritual man obtains it directly from the Divine.

## SUBMISSION AND DEPENDENCE

Hardly need it be said how important is the source of our security, because the source will determine its quality. An impermanent, time-fraught security is a contradiction in terms, an 'insecure security,' and can have no validity; all that is truly secure is of the Eternal.

Yet it is no small thing for the ego—which can in reality no more exist by itself than the surface of the earth without its centre—to admit either through reason or experience that there is such a power by which it exists and is supported, and that its sense of isolation and 'independence' is an illusion prompted by Ignorance. Therefore it is that the sense of dependence on God is to that degree a mitigation of Ignorance, and a making real to ourselves that which is eternally true.

Whatever in life we thus make real to ourselves is of a tremendous importance, because it is only that which is real to us that has the power to entice the soul.

To the materialist, the pragmatic values of the world are insistent realities of the first order. They have for him an immense significance, for 'whatever is taken to be real draws out the whole soul of man—his thoughts, his feelings as well as his will.' And it is on these spurious and shifting realities, as a house built on sand, that the life of the worldling rests.

To the man of spirit, those realities are but the foam and bubble of an ever-changing sea. He is forever released from their capriciousness and domination because by a willing and waking submission and dependence he now rests secure upon a deeper Reality which can never fail or disappoint.

When we thus consciously depend on the Divine (and this implies a constant and fond remembrance), the weight of responsibility the mature adult feels is lifted from his shoulders. For responsible we must be, however the weight, since irresponsibility is again the mark of frivolity and childishness. But, when by the operation of the divine Grace we are enabled to deposit that responsibility with God, we can with a smile say of ourselves, "O fool, to carry thyself on thy own shoulders."

This submission and reliance bring much more than a release and a resignation. It has more of the nature of a recognition, a relation, and a glad reconciliation.

And that which was weary and forlorn finds at last its homeward way.

GODFREY

## THE AWAKENING OF INDIAN WOMEN

A MOVEMENT is afoot in our country for the awakening and progress of our women. But for the success of the movement the first thing to be determined is its precise aim and purpose. Women are backward and asleep—but why? And what meaning do these words convey? What is wanting in our women, what shortcoming do we find in them? Of course at first sight many things come to our view. Our women fall short in power, capacity, education, knowledge and so forth. They are poor and destitute. But, to my mind, in the women of our country, at the bottom of all other wants, there is a fundamental one. The result of our endeavour is not up to the mark because we do not keep in view the fundamental cause and act up to that.

Where is the difference between man and man? Or where is the difference between man and animal? For what merit do we assign a higher position to man than any other animal or to a particular person among men? In the evolutionary process, by dint of what quality is a being raised to a higher place? That quality is self-consciousness, knowledge of one's own self. The feeling of "I" has brought about the distinction between man and animal. The transformation of the animal started the very day when the feeling of "I" dawned on the animal mind. Again, among men too we see that he alone is the greatest in whom this self-consciousness is heightened, deepened and enlarged. And that is why the sages of both the East and the West say, "Know thyself." The more one becomes conscious of oneself the more one becomes self-poised and can master life and action by one's personality and the speciality of one's manhood.

In the average man self-consciousness is not sufficiently developed and active; he cannot become the master and guide of his own duties and responsibilities; he acts like a powerless puppet in the hands of his own nature, like a helpless limb of nature herself; and that is why there is the common tendency of following the beaten track, the manifestation of speciality is proportionate to the scale of our ascent above nature.

In our country nature is a synonym for woman. But whatever may be the deeper significance of this term, we find in the practical field that herein lies the radical deficiency of our womanhood. That deficiency is lack of self-consciousness, selfhood and personality. Are not softness, loveliness, submissiveness and obedience of the womenfolk of India, particularly of Bengal, world-renowned? Our women do not know how to make a demand. They adapt themselves to the circumstances, without the least demur they efface themselves and accept the nature of another. Does this not signify that the nature of our women is fluid and takes, as it were, the form of the vessel in which they are kept, and that they have not the capacity and the impulsion to take a definite shape at will? Is not that the reason why we find that although



all our men are not realised souls they have in them an endless variety and each one is a different type, but in a sense all our women are of the same pattern—we do not find much variety in them ?

Our women are not conscious of themselves; they have not the sense of personality. This does not mean just that they, unlike Western women, do not know how to fight for their own rights. In the women of Europe this sense of rights in the external life may or may not be a sign of their personality, and in any case it is not the real thing. The real personality is an inner quality. I am a distinct entity, I have my own duties and responsibilities; the truth and urge of my inner soul will have to be used in the formation of my own separate condition of mind, life and the whole being. On such a feeling or on that line develops one's personality.

Our women were granted no opportunity for any curiosity or enquiry about themselves. The education and training that have been given to them, and the way their life has been guided and disciplined have kept this question as far away as possible. Women have no separate religious practice. "The virtue of the husband is shared equally by the faithful wife;" not only that, a woman has to remain in the care of her father in her early years, under her husband in her middle life and under her son in the evening of her days. How can self-consciousness grow in one who is subjected to others in every way ? The self-consciousness of men grows by free association in the external life. The more one comes into contact with things that are different from one the more one's selfhood manifests and develops speciality. The diversity that is found in men is due to the fact that in different ways and under different circumstances they have to undergo mutual exchange, acceptance and rejection and even have to resort to a fight. But the sphere of our women is limited and their environment too is always the same, devoid of variety and speciality—any larger and higher urge has no scope for play there, only the familiar wants, complaints, needs and requirements of the daily life.

The sense of personality and the power of selfhood grow when the human consciousness makes an effort to rise to the mental plane from the vital. The play of nature, the natural life, is the manifestation of the vital power; the special power of the mind is not developed there in its true nature; there it becomes part and parcel of life and flows as its current. Thus the field of life is a confluence, a multi-current of different powers; the universal specialities that are visible there belong to the group, class and collectivity and not to the individual. That is why the current of life-power is fluid and in flux—the formation of speciality is not to be found there. The individual formations that are the embodiments of the mere life-force, such as the lower animals, are only containers of the life-force set in motion. These formations have no

value of their own. At the end of the enjoyment that the life-force has in them they give way and crumble. It is the mental being that contributes to the special formation in life; under the pressure of the aim of the mental being the fluid, amorphous current assumes a solid form in a separate centre, that is to say, it acquires a personal value or attains to a personality.

Women, it is said, are full of the vital nature and they are symbols of the life-force. We may say that the very speciality of women consists in this feature of life-play. There may be truth in that. But we have made of women too much of an instrument for the natural aspect of life. The virtues of the Indian girls that we relate with pride are the purer, subtler and prettier qualities of the vital nature. But they are devoid of the formations of the mental being. Even on the plane of the vital force there is a sense of the ego—but that ego-sense is neither self-consciousness nor personality. Its rather indicates a deficiency of distinctive personality and self-consciousness, because it belongs to vital energy; it is merely a device of nature to carry out her work. The real personality wants to go on transforming life and nature into a virtue already descended and illumined in the mental plane, it cannot afford to remain a slave or an instrument of life.

Vitality in its higher and lower forms is in abundance in our women. And that is why they can be easily fitted to a particular ideal and can be directed in a particular way. But the question is whether any permanent result can be thus obtained and how far women can be led. Water assumes the form of the vessel into which it is poured,—no doubt, this is the nature of water; but that form does not become its own character, it is but an imitation of the moment, a mere echo. Real glory lies in a form carved out of a solid block of stone—that is what is called sculpture. The consciousness of personality is analogous to carved stone. It has the capacity of resistance, it has a strength of its own. What is brought about by using this strength is powerful and the perfection of beauty.

Our women have vital power. They need the power of knowledge. When their inner soul is awakened, strengthened, made capable and filled with greatness, then perhaps it will not be possible to mould them in any way at will. But then only will they be the receptacles of a stronger creation. The meaning of the progress of our women is at present therefore to rise up to the mental level and get established there. The awakening of women is the awakening in self-consciousness : it is to recognise and know their own nature and their own self, to be awakened in their own individuality.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

*(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali essay in "Narir Katha")*

## SRI AUROBINDO AND A FAMOUS WORDSWORTH LYRIC

(The following additional paragraphs are to be read at the end of Section 3 in the article of the above name which appeared in the previous issue.)

THE sustained singleness of essential technique as well as essential mood and the spirituality of the mood involved are more easily reached if we proceed to Sri Aurobindo's reading from a somewhat different shade of interpretation along the usual lines. The interpretations other than Sri Aurobindo's agree in general, as we said at the very start of the article : the possibility of a dissimilar stress on details is exemplified best by what R.O.C. Winkler has written while discussing how Wordsworth in some passages of crucial import leaves behind not only figurative but even evocative language and relies upon the bare significance of his assertions to create the required effect and chooses his words so as to convey his meaning with the minimum of distraction. Winkler tells us about *A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal* :

"The emotional force generated by this poem depends upon the apparent similarity, but profound disparity, between the two stanzas. The first create a sense of security and reassurance by its quiet, even, almost soporific movement. But the figurative language used gives this sense a trance-like unreality. The second stanza proceeds in the same quiet, even tone, but saying things which imply the total destruction of the dream-world created by the first. These statements are by no means either generalized or figurative. Each of them is a statement of bald fact, couched in what are practically clinical terms, and containing a terrible ironic contrast with those of the first stanza. Now the trite figure of the girl not feeling 'the touch of earthly years', untrue when it was believed, has been validated by the inescapably literal fact of death, which puts her securely beyond the reach of time. The calmness of this stanza is the calmness of death. Yet the tone of the poem is not, in total, simply one of bitterness or desolation, but rather of a sort of desperate consolation, derived from the same fact that the dead girl is now at last secure beyond question, in inanimate community with the earth's natural fixtures. Wordsworth has deliberately exploited here the contrast between the effect of a generalised, figurative manner and of bare particularization."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Wordsworth's Poetry" in *From Blake to Byron* (The Pelican Guide to Literature, 5), pp. 164-165

# MOTHER INDIA

Winkler's common ground with the authors of *Exploring Poetry* and with those of *Understanding Poetry* is the "profound disparity between the two stanzas" arising from an unreal dream-world and its destruction by fact. The difference is in the relation seen between "the touch of earthly years" and the state of death. Winkler does not say that the beloved woman by dying falls completely under this touch from which she was imagined as free: he says that the imagined freedom is actually achieved but in a manner undreamt of: what was visioned as success in not feeling the touch is now realised as failure to feel it—a living eternity is imitated by a dead immutability. There is a kind of *double entendre*: an escape is indeed made from earthly years—by dying and thus ceasing for ever to be aware of them. An ironic consolation instead of a bitter desolation is the result. But if that is so, half the task of reconciling the two stanzas by a spiritual interpretation of both of them is already done; just the irony remains to be got rid of in order that no contrast may exist, and this irony goes automatically when the "she" of the third line as well as of the fifth and sixth is taken to be doing duty for "my spirit" and the second stanza is thereby rendered continuous with the first in a development that is of an inward state.

K. D. SETHNA

TO MY SOUL

LIKE the shining lights in the black skies of the night,  
Are the memories of thy love in this endless vault of separation;  
Like the heaving pulse of the ocean waves—now resting, now reaching—  
Does my heart lift and yearn for its consummation in thee;  
Like the moon, garlanded in cloudy veils, climbing from out the ocean  
bed to her appointed height,  
Am I on the path to thy abode.

But, oh my beloved—  
When the dark night shall be eclipsed by day,  
When the restless waves shall subside into the still depths of the sea,  
When the moon's beams shall be lost in a vast celestial light—  
A constant ray in a boundless radiance—  
Then, Oh my soul, shall I come to thee.

BEVERLEY E. SIEGERMAN  
(SADHANA DEVI)

## TRANCE

FROM ethers of overwhelming silences free  
Comes down the chord of a single world-delight  
Into the rainbow-gulf of dreams of the night—  
A single passion of bare eternity.  
We awake smitten by its huge alchemy.  
A fresh dawn-echo jewels the soul eremite.  
The released spirit climbs up, a shining kite,  
And bears on its brow the pressure of a diamond sea.

The lost dominion of the Vast we feel  
Upon our transient thought : life stands unbarred  
By the lightning grace of a miraculous sword.  
The powers of silence upon our solitude steal.  
We have crossed beyond the harnessed fate and the wheel,  
Emerged into the ocean-summits of God.

ROMEN

## A GREATER GLORY (Balcony Darshan 30.8.58)

THE Sun broke through the clouds to see thy Face—  
All earth stood hushed, expectant in its heart  
As God Himself looked on the human race;  
And thou, O Mother, breathed in every part—,  
The rising up, the intensity of prayer,  
The coming down of Truth and Love and Light;  
The upward leap of soul on the vibrant air,  
The Calm, the Peace of a descending Might—  
And thou, O Grandeur, high above it all,  
Thou, O Priestess of the secret Flame,  
Thou, who first aspired, made first the Call—  
Blessed for ever be thy sacred name.  
A new Day dawns—the heavens do thee endow  
With a Greater Glory to adorn thy brow,  
As if the Past was gathered into one  
And offered to a new descending Sun.

NORMAN DOWSETT

# THUS SANG MY SOUL

(POEMS TO THE MOTHER)

(8)

## IV. THE NIGHT OF SOUL AND SELF-OBLIVION

*(Continued)*

### 24. WHERE IS THE BLAZE THAT ILLUMED MY WHOLE ?

WHERE is gone my aspiration of fire,  
Where is the blaze that illumed my whole,  
That always rose and shot in endless gyre  
Unhorizoned to my skyless topless goal.  
My flame the gusts could never extinguish or shake,  
Nor violent floods root out or overflow,  
Unflickering amid a world-vast quake,  
Unbent to destiny's sinister blow.  
Mounting ever aloft my burning urge  
Is unawares gripped into sudden neap-tides,  
A Time-conspiracy is out to scourge  
The verticality of my soul-strides.  
This fire of life in Thy ecstasy inlaid,  
Mother, revive in flares, conflagration made.

### 25. DARK IS THE PATH...

How savage is Fate's ineluctable snare !  
Tangible is felt nature's stark illusion,  
Dreadful and gripping is the mere nightmare,  
Fleeting moments of Time that know not fusion.  
In heart's lonely cave dash psyche's weary wings  
And helpless break against rock-void of Time,  
To spirit's calm turn their fate-torn sufferings  
To penance for the never-committed crime.  
But is that all, is Fate life's final Lord  
Where all cries fall unechoed dumb appeals,  
Each effort to be free casts a new cord  
For a stiffer knot around the escaping heels ?  
Dark is the path and through gloom and agony  
The Soul must pass before it zooms in liberty.

*(To be continued)*

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## WELL MET IN MALGUDI

(With acknowledgments to the "Times Literary Supplement" of May 9, 1958, we are presenting the review of R. K. Narayan's work, to which a reference was made in "India and the English Language" in our last issue.)

IN a front-page article recently published in this *Literary Supplement* under the heading "England Is Abroad," the critic discussed "the diminished importance of England's contribution to English literature," which "has continued and will continue to diminish ever further during the present century," prophesying that "a brand new 'English' literature will be appearing in Johannesburg or Sydney or Vancouver or Madras." It certainly comes as a slight shock to realize how many influential writers in English cannot, in the narrow sense, be claimed as English at all : James, Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Shaw, Conrad, Joyce, Katherine Mansfield. At the present time, when imaginative and experimental writing in England has reached a point of stalemate and the most conspicuous "movements" are backwards towards an aggressive orthodoxy, more and more readers are turning for stimulus to Australia and the West Indies. As yet, the Australian contribution is distinguished more by promise than performance, while the West Indians benefit from the attractive (and possibly suspect) exoticism which still attaches to their work. Few people would deny, however, that the prophecy quoted above may later be fulfilled ; while, in so far as it applies to Madras, it has to a large extent been fulfilled already.

R. K. Narayan, a Madras Indian who writes in English, has few equals among modern novelists. His first book, *Swami and Friends*, was published in 1935 ; his tenth, *The Guide*, has just appeared. Although he has received consistent and generous praise from such critics as Mr. Graham Greene, Mr. E. M. Forster and Miss Elizabeth Bowen, it can still be fairly said that he has not won the general appreciation that he deserves. No one who has read one of Mr. Narayan's books can fail to have been impressed by its quality, and in most cases the newcomer to his work must surely have become an addict ; but many may have been deterred from taking the first step by a confused ignorance of its nature. What is the Western reader likely to expect from Indian literature ? Hindu mysticism beyond his grasp, perhaps, or didactic political realism ; worse still, the lush Oriental *kitsch* which has in the

past vulgarized to the point of unconscious parody the work of those English writers vaguely attracted to the mysterious East. Let him read Mr. Narayan, and he will be pleasantly surprised. Surprise is, in fact, an integral part of this novelist's attraction : not the surprise of the cunningly contrived plot and the unexpected *coup de théâtre*, but the deeply satisfying surprise, occurring on every page, of unforeseen inevitability, which is the mark of the original artist. As in Chekhov (a writer whom Mr. Narayan resembles in many ways) the surprise may be provided by a single adjective or phrase which suddenly brings a character or a situation to life, and it may be provided by the sure serenity with which the story as a whole ignores the well-worn course of fiction, and follows that of truth.

All his novels and stories are set in Malgudi, a small town in southern India. A recent novel, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, provided a map of Malgudi on the end-papers ; to the Narayan fan, this was a charming but unnecessary idea. How well one knows the site and appearance of Albert Mission College, whence *The Bachelor of Arts* graduated and where *The English Teacher* lectured on Lear ; Nallappa's Grove, where *Swami and Friends* used to play and the Mahatma elected to stay when he visited the town ; the Railway Station, where *The Guide* began his dubious career and *Mr. Sampath* ended his ; the bustling Market Road, the exclusive Lawley Extension, the poor huts beyond Trunk Road and other landmarks omitted from the map. This topographical knowledge has been absorbed unawares and subtly imparted, without that cosy artificiality found in the work of certain writers who return to the same community and overload it with incidental detail ; Mr. Narayan does not have to persuade us that Malgudi exists, for we know that it does.

It is difficult to illustrate Mr. Narayan's distinction by quotation. He is a very funny writer, but his humour is closely woven into the texture of his prose. It never erupts in a detachable epigram or joke, never betrays itself by exaggeration and can only rarely be exactly identified in the use of understatement. It is the fruit of his consistently selective observation: the revealing, the typical, the unusual, are unerringly detected and simultaneously conveyed in a style which neither goes beyond nor falls short of the significance of its content. In the same way, the lyrical beauty and intellectual wisdom which permeate these books are impossible to isolate. He excels at portraying rather rascally but essentially likeable characters ; yet there is nothing self-conscious in his tolerance, no complacent creation of "lovable eccentrics." He writes without condescension of his own intellectual inferiors ; they are neither romanticized nor despised. He has a broad, compassionate understanding of humanity and a subtle sensibility to detail—qualities rarely combined in one writer.



His books can be roughly divided into two groups of three. *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*, although their protagonists have different names, can almost be said to form a trilogy, and may even be to some extent autobiographical ; while *Mr. Sampath*, *The Financial Expert* and *The Gude* are full-length character studies seen with a more decidedly external detachment. *Waiting for the Mahatma*, one of his most interesting but least perfect books, stands slightly apart ; in this fascinating story, Gandhi himself plays a leading part and for the first time the action moves a little way beyond the confines of Malgudi into the wide world of political endeavour. He has also written two collections of short stories, *An Astrologer's Day* and *Lawley Road* (the latter obtainable only in India) as well as *The Dark Room*, irrevocably out of print.

*Swami and Friends* is a wonderful book about childhood. This slight and episodic beginning contains most of the ingredients later developed in its successors. Already we are conscious of Malgudi as a halfway house between the primitive, pastoral simplicity of "the village" and the westernized sophistication of Madras ; visits to the cinema and an interest in cricket blend with bathes in the Sarayu River and consultations with astrologers. There are the formidable, superstitious grandmothers, sticklers for Hindu etiquette and conservative about caste ; the indulgent, hard-working, self-effacing mothers ; the curious, attractive boys and young men, always making stern resolutions and gaily breaking them, full of romantic ambition but easily deflected by inconsequent irresponsibility. *The Bachelor of Arts* is Swami grown up ; this is one of Mr. Narayan's most exquisitely touching creations. After feverish, last-minute study for his degree, he obtains it ; there follows a period of idle indecision, during which he falls desperately and romantically in love with a girl glimpsed on the river bank, to whom he has never spoken. Unfortunately, their horoscopes are not propitious ; they cannot be married. He leaves Malgudi and wanders from village to village posing as a *sannyasi*—a kind of beggar and holy man. Tiring of this, he returns home ; his parents have arranged another marriage for him, and he is amazed by the beauty of the girl ; appointed agent for a Madras newspaper, he becomes excitedly industrious. *The English Teacher* deals with young married life in a similar blend of lyricism, humour, and subtlety. Halfway through, the young wife dies ; gradually, the desolate teacher succeeds in achieving psychical contact with her spirit, and the happiness of their marriage is preserved. A difficult subject, and the nearest Mr. Narayan has ever got to whimsy, it is treated with a touch unfailingly sure.

In his introduction to *The Financial Expert* Mr. Graham Greene wrote : "Whom next shall I meet in Malgudi? That is the thought that comes to me when I close a novel of Mr. Narayan's. I don't wait for another *novel* ; I wait

to go out of my door into those loved and shabby streets and see with excitement and a certainty of pleasure a stranger approaching, past the bank, the cinema, the haircutting saloon, a stranger who will greet me I know with some unexpected and revealing phrase that will open a door on to yet another human existence." This exactly conveys the flavour of Mr. Narayan's work. These are not novels in the usual sense; the setting is established, the foreground vividly present and the background—vague, vast India—more mysteriously apprehended: each instalment is a further introduction to a particular personality, eccentric in its very ordinariness, who fills the scene and will, as Mr. Greene says, "on the last page vanish into life." In *Mr. Sampath* this personality belongs to Srinivas, editor of *The Banner*, the Malgudi newspaper. When this venture fails he falls in with the dubious Mr. Sampath, owner of a film studio, for whom he writes a script, with tragi-comic results. In *The Financial Expert* it is Margayya, who revels in the intricacies of usury. At first he operates humbly, squatting with a tin box beneath a banyan tree opposite the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank, advising the illiterate on their business affairs and carrying in his head the key to a complexity of loans and interest rates. He meets Dr. Pal (as poor Srinivas had met Mr. Sampath), "journalist, correspondent and author" of a book on sexual education called *Bed Life*; changing the title to *Domestic Harmony*, Margayya publishes it and becomes extremely rich. His downfall is eventually brought about by the unpredictable Dr. Pal and by his own son Balu, who has grown before our eyes from a delightfully impulsive child into a spoilt, sulky, unhappy young man. This development, so imperceptible and so convincing, is one of the author's finest artistic achievements.

The hero of *Waiting for the Mahatma* is Sriram, a boy of twenty. He falls in love with the fascinating Bharati, who is witty, idealistic and strong in character and mind; through her, he is drawn into the entourage of Gandhi and his followers. The portrait of Gandhi is masterly, a sure and delicate description of saintliness whose equal can perhaps only be found in the great Russian novelists; and the mistaken zeal with which Sriram responds to this inspiration, becoming a smallscale terrorist in complete contradiction to the Mahatma's teaching, is touching on the human level and instructive as history. Sriram, selfish, weak and romantic as are so many of Mr. Narayan's young heroes, is incapable of understanding Gandhi's message, but something in him responds to its grandeur and his confused fervour takes a poignantly ridiculous course. This is Mr. Narayan's most ambitious book, a clear statement of the inadequate disciple's tragedy; his technique, however, perfectly suited to the ironic mood and the episodic construction, is less happily adjusted to this graver theme, and the latter part of the novel (which ends with Gandhi's

assassination after he has blessed the marriage of Sriram and Bharati) is not entirely satisfactory.

His latest book *The Guide*, is one of his best ; Raju is possibly more complex than any of his earlier heroes. He has the propensity to bland dishonesty and the credulity which often goes with craftiness, leading to eventual victimization, which characterized the financial expert and Mr. Sampath, combined with the susceptibility to romantic excess and the reluctant mystical leaning of Sriram and the bachelor of arts : he is the prototype of Mr. Narayan's conception of human fallibility. Emerging from prison, he establishes himself in an abandoned temple, where a simple peasant mistakes him for a holy man. At first he exploits this error, complacently accepting the villagers' gifts of food. "He started narrating the story of Devaka, a man of ancient times who begged for alms at the temple gate every day and would not use any of his collections without first putting them at the feet of God. Halfway through the story he realized that he could not remember either its course or its purport. He lapsed into silence. Velan patiently waited for the continuation. He was of the stuff disciples are made of ; an unfinished story or an incomplete moral never bothered him ; it was all in the scheme of life."

Raju plays his part so well that he later finds himself in a position where he is expected by his disciples, who are suffering from drought, to undertake a fast as a propitiation to the rain gods. Before doing so, he confesses his true life story, which unfolds in a series of flashbacks as counterpoint to his experiences as a false sage. The story follows the customary pattern—a rise from humble beginnings to ill-gotten affluence, then disaster following on overconfidence. A guide to tourists, bored by the beauty spots which are his stock in trade, he becomes passionately involved with Rosie, a young married woman who wants to be a dancer. He makes a successful career out of being her lover and "impresario," only to fall into a trap set by her husband. The figure of Rosie proves, with Bharati and the English teacher's wife, that Mr. Narayan can draw women with the depth and subtlety than he bestows on men. The disciple who hears Raju's ignominious confession does not understand a word of it : and, in a moving end, the guide reluctantly assumes the role of martyr that has been imposed on him.

Mr. Narayan writes in English of an extreme purity and simplicity. Occasionally, in his early books, one notices a word which might not have been used by an author writing in his own language ; but it is always an unexpected and never a shop-soiled word, which only adds to the impression of unpretentious individuality that distinguishes his style. He has somehow or other overcome the problems posed by dialogue ; for his characters would, of course, be speaking in Hindi or Tamil. Their conversation never reads like a tran-

## MOTHER INDIA

slation, while it is at the same time free from English colloquialisms which in circumstances would ring false; he manages to make his people speak, in fact, as they *would* speak if English were their language, and if certain subtle social implications are inevitably lost the broader distinctions of character are triumphantly preserved. He can be enjoyed for the excellence of his prose ; for the unfamiliar society he describes, which soon becomes familiar but never loses its power to interest, charm and surprise ; as a comic writer of the most rewarding kind ; and as a humanist, who has made his own discoveries about the nature of mankind and presents them with a restraint and clarity which give them universal application : what is true in Malgudi is true in the whole world.

## JOY

Joy is energy when its burden is light.  
Joy shaken free from form is unbounded and free,  
Yet it seeks at once for renewed bondage in matter.  
At the peak of the spiral path Joy is released from its  
burdens and in the light of its own self-realization  
Descends again into the heart of new-born flesh.  
Forms and forces clash amongst themselves,  
Raising the fire within them to the point of its release,  
And their destruction.  
Yet fire burns food and seeks for constant renewal of fuel.  
As heat and matter are inseparable  
So are also body and spirit.  
Matter varies in form and weight;  
The spirit of fire is one.  
We can destroy or change all forms.  
But the spirit fire recedes to its secret place  
When we seek to destroy it.  
We do not destroy fire—we push it back to its source,  
To emerge once more when a door appears.  
But the spirit of fire and the Spirit of Life are one.  
And in this mystery lies hidden all mysteries.  
Joy is the Fire of Life within our hearts.

IRWIN L. ARLT

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

(Continued from the July issue)

(C) AN AUROBINDONIAN CONTEMPLATES PHILOSOPHY\*

XXVII. REASON CIRCUMSCRIBED<sup>1</sup>

"Mind is a tissue woven of light and shade  
Where right and wrong have sewn their mingled parts;  
Or Mind is Nature's marriage of convenience  
Between truth and falsehood, between joy and pain :  
This struggling pair no court can separate.  
Each thought is a gold coin with bright alloy  
And error and truth are its obverse and reverse :  
This is the imperial mintage of the brain  
And of this kind is all its currency."<sup>2</sup>

MIND is a passage, not a culmination. And hence it follows that mental reason, too, is only a messenger, a representative or a shadow of a greater consciousness beyond itself which does not need to reason because it is all and knows all that it is. It is only when we cease to reason and go deep into ourselves into that secrecy where the activity of mind is stilled, that this other consciousness becomes really manifest to us—however imperfectly owing to our long habit of mental reaction and mental limitation. Then we can know surely in an increasing illumination that which we had uncertainly conceived by the pale and flickering light of Reason. Knowledge waits seated beyond mind and intellectual reasoning, throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision.

Conditioned by the intrinsic nature of mind, mental reason proceeds with labour from ignorance to truth; it starts with the appearances and labours, never or seldom losing at least a partial dependence on appearances, to arrive at the truth behind them; it shows the truth in the light of the appearances.

The mental reason cannot see the totality at all and does not know fully any whole except by starting from an analysis and synthesis of its parts, masses and details; otherwise its whole-view is always a vague apprehension or an imperfect comprehension or a confused summary of indistinct features. The reason dwells with constituents and processes and properties; it tries in vain to form by them an idea of the thing in itself, its reality, its essence. The reason dwells in the diversity and is its prisoner; it deals with things separately and

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

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, pp. 112-113; *On Yoga, Book One*, pp. 550-552

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri*, X, P. 724.

treats each as a separate existence, as it deals with sections of Time and divisions of Space; it sees unity only in a sum or by elimination of diversity or as a general conception and a vacant figure.

The reason deals with the finite and is helpless before the infinite; it can conceive of it as an indefinite extension in which the finite acts but the infinite in itself it can with difficulty conceive and cannot at all grasp or penetrate. And even in the domain of the finite, to the reason only what the senses give is direct knowledge, *pratyakṣa*, the rest of truth is arrived at indirectly. In fact, the reason has as its first instrument observation general, analytical, and synthetic, it aids itself by comparison, contrast and analogy,—proceeds from experience to indirect knowledge by logical processes of deduction, induction, all kinds of inference,—rests upon memory, reaches out beyond itself by imagination, secures itself by judgment : all is a process of groping and seeking.

And the result is that the truth gained by the intellect, by the slow and stumbling process from reasoning to conclusion, is an acquisition over which there hangs always a certain shadow of doubt, an incompleteness, a surrounding penumbra of night and ignorance or half-knowledge, a possibility of alteration or annulation by farther knowledge.

XXVIII. MIND LOOKS UP<sup>1</sup>

“A labourer in the dark dazzled by half-light,  
What it knew was an image in a broken glass,  
What it saw was real but its sight untrue.”<sup>2</sup>

But this does not mean that man is inexorably doomed to move always in the cloud-land of uncertainties haunted by ‘tinsel thought-forms brightly inadequate’. For although reason is no more than ‘some half-seeing’s delegate’, yet in the principle of reason itself there is the assertion of a Transcendence. For reason is in its whole aim and essence the pursuit of Knowledge, the pursuit, that is to say, of Truth by the elimination of error. Its view, its aim is not that of a passage from a greater to a lesser error, but it supposes a positive, pre-existent Truth towards which through the dualities of right knowledge and wrong knowledge we can progressively move.

It is true that the real cannot be known if we consider Mind alone or only Mind’s power for ignorance. But Mind has a power also for truth; it opens its thought-chamber to Vidya as well as to Avidya, and if its starting-point is Ignorance, if its passage is through crooked ways of error, still its goal is always Knowledge : there is in it an impulse of truth-seeking, a power—even though

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, pp. 54,39,62, 443-444.

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri*, II,III, p. 323

secondary and limited—of truth-finding and truth-creation. Even if it is only images or representations or abstract expressions of truth that it can show us, still these are in their own manner truth-reflections or truth-formations, and the realities of which they are forms are present in their more concrete truth in some deeper depth or in some higher level of power of our consciousness.

But to seize this concrete truth of the realities one has to outgrow and outlive the rigid constructions of the ignorant intellect. For even the highest concepts of metaphysical knowledge gained by the complete use of pure reason cannot in themselves fully satisfy the demand of our integral being. They are indeed entirely satisfactory to the pure reason itself, because they are the very stuff of its own existence. But our nature sees things through two eyes always, for it views them doubly as idea and as fact, and therefore every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes an experience. But the truths which are now in question are of an order not subject to our normal experience. Therefore some other faculty of experience than pure reason is necessary by which the demand of our nature can be fulfilled.

And this other faculty already exists in man. For this is a sound rule inherent in the very constitution of universal existence that where there are truths attainable by the reason, there must be somewhere in the organism possessed of that reason a means of arriving at or verifying them by experience.

And this means left in our mentality is an extension of that form of knowledge by identity which gives us the awareness of our own existence. It is really upon a self-awareness more or less conscient, more or less present to our conception that the knowledge of the contents of our self is based. Or to put it in a more general formula, the knowledge of the contents is contained in the knowledge of the continent. If then we can extend our faculty of mental self-awareness to awareness of the Self beyond and outside us, Atman or Brahman of the Upanishads, we may become possessors in experience of the truths which form the contents of the Atman or Brahman in the universe. It is on this possibility that Indian Vedanta has based itself. It has sought through knowledge of the Self the knowledge of the universe.

But always mental experience and the concepts of the reason have been held by it to be even at their highest a reflection in mental identifications and not the supreme self-existent identity.

#### XXIX. LIFE, LIGHT AND REASON<sup>1</sup>

"In her eyes however darkly fringed was lit  
The Archangel's gaze who knows inspired his acts

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, pp. 62-63.

## MOTHER INDIA

And shapes a world in its far-seeing flame.  
In her own realm she stumbles not nor fails,  
But moves in boundaries of subtle power  
Across which mind can step towards the sun.  
A candidate for a higher suzerainty,  
A passage she cut through from Night to Light,  
And searched for an ungrasped Omniscience”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the reason active in our waking consciousness is only a mediator between the subconscious All that we come from in our evolution upwards and the superconscious All towards which we are impelled by that evolution. The subconscious and the superconscious are two different formulations of the same All. The master-word of the subconscious is Life, the master-word of the superconscious is Light. In the subconscious knowledge or consciousness is involved in action, for action is the essence of Life. In the superconscious action re-enters into Light and no longer contains involved knowledge but is itself contained in a supreme consciousness. Intuitional knowledge is that which is common between them and the foundation of intuitional knowledge is conscious or effective identity between that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge. But in the subconscious the intuition manifests itself in the action, in effectivity, and the knowledge or conscious identity is either entirely or more or less concealed in the action. In the superconscious, on the contrary, Light being the law and the principle, the intuition manifests itself in its true nature as knowledge emerging out of conscious identity, and effectivity of action is rather the accompaniment or necessary consequent and no longer masks as the primary fact.

Between these two states reason and mind act as intermediaries which enable the being to liberate knowledge out of its imprisonment in the act and prepare it to resume its essential primacy. When the self-awareness in the mind applied, both to content and content, to own-self and other-self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity, the reason also converts itself into the form of the self-luminous intuitional knowledge. This is the highest possible state of our knowledge when mind fulfils itself in the supramental.

*(To be continued)*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, II, 10, p. 278.



## VEDIC STUDY—THE ORIGINS OF ARYAN SPEECH

(Continued from the July issue)

So far we have the source of the sound which is the one-syllabic word *Om*, the seed-sounds (vowels and consonants, which have developed from the sound-source *Om*), the instrument of these sounds which is the mouth and the relationship of the different parts of the mouth with these seed-sounds. Now we shall examine the method adopted in the formation of words from the seed-sounds. Before words are formed, verbal roots (primary, secondary and tertiary) are formed, each of which is never more than a syllable. From these seed-sounds are first formed primary root-sounds either by each of the vowels in itself or by any single consonant prefixed to any vowel. These primary root-sounds have their root-ideas, which may be one or more. From these primary root-sounds, whether a single vowel or a consonant with a vowel, are formed secondary root-sounds by a consonant added at the end of each of them. If, for instance, *i* and *vi* are primary root-sounds, *idh* and *vidh* are secondary root-sounds.

Finally tertiary roots are formed either from the primary and also secondary roots which begin with a consonant by interposing one or two consonants between the first consonant and the succeeding vowel or by adding another consonant at the end of the secondary root. Examples for these are *dhyai*, *dhvan*, *sru*, *hlād*, *stu*, *ścyu*, *hrad*, *vall*, *majj* etc. These are all pure root-forms. But a sort of illegitimate tertiary root is formed by two kinds of vowel modifications, called *guna* and *vridhhi* in Sanskrit, of the simple vowels.

Simple vowel	a	i & ī	u & ū	ṛ & ṝ	lṛ
Its Guna	a	e	o	ar	al
Its Vridhhi	ā	ai	au	ār	āl

On account of this vowel modification and interchange of vowels with semi-vowels, the principal confusion that arises out of this primitive departure from simplicity of sound development is the frequent uncertainty between a regular secondary root and the irregular root formed by such modifications. For instance, the regular root *ar* derives from the primary root *a* and the illegitimate root *ar* derives from the primitive root *ṛ*; the forms *kala* and *kāla*, if judged only by their structure, may derive either from *klṛ* or from *kal*; *ayus* and *āyus*, similarly judged, may derive either from the root forms *a* and *ā* or from the root forms *ī* and *i*. These vowel

modifications and their interchange with semi-vowels “are of great importance in the study of the physical formation of the language and its psychological development, especially as it introduces a first element of doubt and confusion into an otherwise crystal clearness of structure and perfect mechanic regularity of formation.” (*On the Veda*, p. 664.)

“The main consonantal modifications in Sanskrit are structural and consist in the assimilation of consonants, a hard sound becoming soft by association with a soft sound, a soft sound hard by association with a hard sound, aspirates being replaced in conjunction by the corresponding unaspirated sound and modifying their companion in return, e.g. *lapsyate* and *labhdhum* from *labh* substituted for *labh-syate* and *labh-tum*, *vyūḍha* from *vyūh* replacing *vyūhta*. Beyond this tendency to obey certain subtle but easily recognisable tendencies of mutual modification which in themselves only suggest certain minor and unimportant doubts, the one really corruptive tendency in Sanskrit is the arrested impulse towards disappearance of the palatal family. This has gone so far that such forms as *ketu* can be considered by Indian grammarians, quite erroneously, to proceed from the root *cit* and not from the root *kit* which is its natural parent. In reality, however, the only genuine palatal modifications are those in *sandhi*, which substitute *k* for *c*, *g* for *j* at the end of a word or in certain combinations, e.g. *lagna*, for *lajna* *vaktṛ* for *vactṛ*, *vakva* for *vacva*, the noun *vākya* from the root *vac*, the perfect *cikāya* and *cikye*. Side by side with these modificatory combinations we have regular forms, such as *yajña*, *vācya*, *cicāya*, *cicye*. It is even open to question whether the forms *cikāya* and *cikye* are not rather from the root *ki* than actual descendants from the parent root *ci* in whose nest they have found a home”. (*Ibid.*, p. 665.)

Most of these roots, primary, secondary and tertiary, in their original form are used as verbs, while only some of them, in their original form are used as nouns, adjectives, verbs and other parts of speech. But most roots, before they form various parts of speech and before they form noun and adjectival bases for case-inflexion, undergo further changes in their form by the addition of enclitic or support sounds and appendage sounds. The simple vowels *a*, *i*, *u*, *r* with their long forms and modifications are used as enclitic sounds to be added to the root. Sometimes these sounds are sufficient by themselves to form or determine the roots as nouns, adjectives etc. At most times, with these enclitic sounds as mere connective sounds, appendage sounds taken from the seed-sounds are added to them to form words of all parts of speech. Thus having the root *vad*, with the addition of any of the vowels as enclitic sounds and then by the addition of the consonant *t* followed by other letters, they could form *vad-a-t*, *vad-i-t*, *vad-u-t*, *vad-r-t*, or *vad-a-ta*, *vad-i-ta*, *vad-a-ti*, *vad-i-ti*, *vad-r-ti* or *vad-a-tu*, *vad-i-tu*, *vad-u-tu*, *vad-r-tu*, or else by using

conjunct sounds *i-ti* produce *vad-a-tri*, *vad-i-tri*, *vad-u-tri* etc. or else could use the enclitic only and form words like *vad-a*, *vad-i*, *vad-u*, *vad-ṛ*, etc. As a matter of fact we do not find and would not expect to find all these possibilities actually used in the case of a single word. "We find the simple nominal form built by the addition of the sole enclitic richly and almost universally distributed. The richness of forms is much greater in earlier Aryan speech than in later literature. From the root *san*, for instance, we find in Vedic speech all the forms *sana*, *sam*, *sanu*, (contracted into *snu*), but in later Sanskrit they have all disappeared." (*Ibid.*, p. 668.) "We find certain appendage forms like *as*, *m*, *an*, *at*, *tri*, *vat*, *van*, formalised into regular nominal and verbal terminations. We see double appendages, side by side with the simple *jitva*, we may have *jitvara*, *jitvan* etc. Throughout we see or divine behind the present state of the Sanskrit language a wide and free natural labour of formation followed by a narrowing process of rejection and selection. But always the same original principle, either simply or complexly applied, with modification or without modification of the root vowels and consonants, is and remains the whole basis and means of noun-structure." (*Ibid.*, p. 669.)

"In the variations of the verb, in the formation of case we find always the same principle. The root conjugates itself by the addition of appendages" such as *mī*, *sī*, *tī*, *m*, *s*, *t*, *ta*, *va* etc., all of them forms used also for nominal structures either simply or with the support of the enclitic *a*, *i*, or rarely *u*, short, lengthened or modified, giving us such forms as *vakṣi*, *vadasi*, *vadāsi*, *vadat*, *vadati*, *vadāti*. In the verb forms other devices are used such as the insertion of an appendage like *n*, *nā*, *nu* or *ni* in preference to the simple vowel enclitic; the prefixing of the enclitic *a* or augment to help out the fixing of tense significance; the reduplication of the essential part of the root in various ways; etc. We notice the significant fact that even here the Vedic Sanskrit is much richer and freer in its variations. Sanskrit is yet more narrow, rigid and selective, the former using alternative forms like *bhavati*, *bhavah*, etc. "The latter rejects all but the first. The case inflexions differ from the verb forms only in the appendages prefixed, not in their principle or even in themselves;" *as*, *am*, *ās*, *ām* are all verbal as well as nominal inflexions. But substantially the whole of the language with all its forms and inflexions is the inevitable result of the use by Nature in man of one single rich device, one single fixed principle of sound formation employed with surprisingly few variations, with an astonishingly fixed, imperative and almost tyrannous regularity but also a free and even superfluous original abundance in the formation. The inflexional character of Aryan speech is itself no accident but the inevitable result, almost physically inevitable, of the first seed selection of sound-process, that original apparently trifling selection of the law of the individual being

which is at the basis of all Nature's infinitely varied regularities. Fidelity to the principle already selected being once observed the rest results from the very nature and necessities of the sound-instrument that is employed. Therefore, in the outward form of language, we see the operation of a regular natural law proceeding almost precisely as Nature proceeds in the physical world to form a vegetable or an animal genus and its species." (*Ibid.*, pp. 669-70.)

All that has been said above about the origins and growth of Sanskrit language is only one step and then Sri Aurobindo says that "this step is nothing or little unless we can find an equal regularity, an equal reign of fixed process on the psychological side, in the determining of the relation of particular sense to particular sound. No arbitrary or intellectual choice but a natural selection has determined the growth and arrangement of the sounds, simple or structural, in their groups and families....First: the seed sound *v*, for example, must have in it something inherent in it which connected it in man's mind originally in the first natural state of speech, with the actual senses borne by the primitive roots *va*, *vā*, *vi*, *vī*, *vu*, *vū*, *vr*, *vṛ*, in the primitive language. Secondly, whatever variations there are in sense between these roots must be determined originally by some inherent tendency of significance in the variable or vowel element *a*, *ā*, *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū*, *r*, *ṛ*. Thirdly, the secondary roots depending in *va*, *vac*, *vaj*, *vanj*, *vam*, *val*, *vap*, *vah*, *vaś*, *vas*, etc. must have a common element in their significances and, so far as they varied originally, must have varied as a result of the element of difference, the consonantal termination *c*, *j*, *m*, *l*, *p*, *h*, *ś*, *s*, respectively. Finally in the structural state of language, although as a result of the growing power of conscious selection other determining factors may have entered into the selection of particular significances for the particular words, yet the original factor cannot have been entirely inoperative and such forms as *vadana*, *vadatra*, *vada* etc., must have been governed in the development of their sense dominantly by their substantial and common sound-element, to a certain extent by their variable and subordinate element. I shall attempt to show by an examination of the Sanskrit language that all these laws are actually true of Aryan speech, their truth borne out or often established beyond a shadow of doubt by the facts of the language." (*Ibid.*, pp. 670-71.)

Thus the origins of Aryan speech has been dealt with in the above article in its bare form with extensive quotations from Sri Aurobindo; if one studies the Rigveda minutely one can find examples for all the above facts, processes and laws.

NARAYANA C. REDDY

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Mother of the Golden All**—By *Chinmoy*, Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry P. 48. Price Re 1.25.

The book under review is a collection of poems on various aspects of the life and personality of the Mother. The author, Chinmoy, is an aspiring soul of promising talents. He has already, to his credit, two slim volumes of poems, *Flame Waves* and *The Infinite : Sri Aurobindo*, in which he has shown his gift of poetic vision. This little book is also a testimony of his capabilities.

The title of the book, *The Mother of the Golden All*, is quite significant and fitting. "The one whom we adore as the Mother," says Sri Aurobindo, "is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates." (*The Mother*, p. 36) In fact the Mother represents the principle of the Eternal and the Immortal in things—the Power that is the Supreme Origin of all blossoming. As one looks through these pages one feels a touch of her sweet and serene Presence. A tender mystic light plays in many a line. Take, for example, the lines :

A day shall come when all will be drunk with the Sun;

Drunk with the hues of ecstasy of light  
Our heart shall brave the stalwart titan-night.  
Our body's all Her height's dominion.

Or the lines concerning the meeting of the Mother with Sri Aurobindo.  
The Infinite :

Thy Advent makes me whole to-day.  
I am now certain to flood the clay  
With my Spirit-Vision's golden Light.  
Thou art my only help in the Night.

The Mother :

Thou art the proof, O Lord Supreme  
That all shall be free from ignorance-dream.  
I know the darknesses shall be

## MÓTHER INDIA

Changed into light. For ever in Thee  
The ceaseless Fount of Life Divine :  
The earth with heaven's height shall dine.

There are poems in the book relating to several biographical details : the Mother's coming to India, her stay in Japan, her meeting with the great sons of modern India like Pandit Nehru and Rajendra Prasad and even poems on her wristwatch and sandals. Indeed the whole series appears like a garland of love-offerings.

This is not to say that there are no inequalities in the book. Some passages show that the poet has yet to acquire a sustained maturity. In one place two words seem to have got in by an oversight : what could be the sense of the words "of lore" in line 2 of the following ?

Our Mother's human brother saw the earth  
Eighteen long years before his sister of lore.  
Tranquillity was in flood in Mother's core,  
But to ruthless ire he opened his bosom's door.

One would expect line 2 to end with : "his sister's birth". Perhaps an earlier version has got mixed up with a later.

The value of the book is enhanced by the single-sentence introduction given by Nolini Kanta Gupta : "A child of the Mother is always a child unto the last—even unto the last achievement and fulfilment." This luminous utterance has a mantric effect on the mind of the readers and is probably meant to serve as a motto for the young poet's soul.

To crown all, there is at the very beginning of the book the voice of the Mother herself guiding the human aspiration of utterance : "C'est dans le silence que l'ame s'exprime le mieux." (It is in the silence that the soul expresses herself best.).

An extremely attractive feature of the book is the reproduction of an outline tracing of the Mother's Feet and a photo-print of Sri Aurobindo's—things that will be dear to the heart of the devotee and disciple.

K.P.

# *Students' Section*

---

## THE BIRTHDAY OF SRI AUROBINDO

*(Speech of Sri Bishnuram Medhi, Governor of Madras, who presided over Sri Aurobindo's Birthday celebrations held on August 17 at Madras by the Sri Aurobindo Study Circle.)*

Friends,

I must, in the first instance, convey my deep gratitude to the members of Sri Aurobindo Study Circle for their kind invitation to me to preside on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo Jayanti celebrations. This is indeed a rare opportunity for me to associate myself with a function of this importance. I am thankful to all of you for the kind and cordial welcome which you have extended to me on this occasion. It was a pleasure to listen to the discourse of Sri A.B. Patel of Sri Aurobindo Ashram on the life and work of Sri Aurobindo and also on the valuable message of the great seer and philosopher to the world at large. His address to us has been very illuminating and instructive and touched on almost all points of the life and work of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Patel himself belongs to the Ashram at Pondicherry and is the first Asiatic to have been a Minister to the Government of Kenya. He has been associated with public life in Kenya for the last 25 years and he was one of the chief sponsors of the Gandhi Memorial College at Nairobi. We should be grateful to him for his brilliant exposition of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and teachings in the short address which he has made to us this evening.

I am indeed very happy to have had this opportunity of paying my own tribute of admiration and gratitude to Sri Aurobindo, who was a beacon light to the great masses of people who followed him with rare devotion, having been attracted by his unique spiritual stature. He has earned for himself an important place in the gallery of international philosophers and seers as a forceful world teacher. Sri Patel has given us a full picture of Sri Aurobindo's early life, also tracing his growth and development right from his birth onwards till he left this mortal world. Though he was brought up completely in Western style in his early years, Sri Aurobindo's mind yearned for the knowledge of Indian

philosophy and the practice of Yoga. As a public worker he was revolutionary in the field of politics, but later he became mellowed and when the inner call came he left the political field and found solace and peace in a remote town of our country from where he gave the world accounts of his rich experiences, divine messages and teachings.

Sri Aurobindo believed in evolution and the substance of his teaching is that man is growing and will continue to grow in consciousness until he reaches perfection not only in his individual but in his collective life also. Therefore, according to him, man, though at present imperfect, can grow up to a perfect individual and a perfect man can become a nucleus and a force for the evolution of a perfect society, and the complete unity of the human race can be obtained only by a union at the soul level. His messages attracted a considerable number of men and women throughout the world, who continued to pay their homage to the great memory of Sri Aurobindo.

Great men come into this world now and again in order to remind us of our duties and responsibilities not only towards the society but to the Almighty as well. These great men when they arrive do not immediately disclose their identity from the beginning of their lives. But when the supreme moment comes they inspire the hearts of good men and attract them towards themselves by the exercise of their own spiritual power. The periodical visits of saints and seers, of teachers and philosophers to the earth have always saved humanity from going astray from its moorings. India specially has a great spiritual mission to perform and Sri Aurobindo himself believed in the great spiritual mission of our country. Such seers and saints as himself give rise to spiritual regeneration in the country and help towards a healthy reconstruction of the society with a spiritual background. If India is in the privileged position to carry the message of peace to the warring nations of the world amidst the din and noise of conflicts and commotions, it is because of her great spiritual heritage which is enhanced and enriched, from time to time, by the appearance and by the teachings of saints and seers like Sri Aurobindo.

On this solemn occasion, when we celebrate his birthday which is happily also the day of our Independence, that is 15th August, our hearts should go in prayer to Sri Aurobindo who was one of the great master minds and lovers of humanity and whose blessings and grace we seek in all our endeavours towards the national reconstruction of our country and for the inner self-development which may transform and divinise human nature in the individual as well as in the collective sphere.



## REVERIE

A TWILIGHT hour in autumn, half-light, half-darkness with the radiant sun just gone to sleep. Dewdrops appear to play with the green blades of grass. The pilgrims are proceeding slowly on their journey. Sitting in one corner, I am alone with a quiet mind. Sometimes thought-waves float before me. They strive to remind me of the works I did in my previous birth. They ask me not to forget the toil and sorrow, the light and darkness I experienced in that life. Cowardice and narrowness remind me of the mistakes that were then committed. They command me to see that I am a most ordinary slave of nature, with common habits and propensities. I do not know when my thoughts swept me away into such a deep darkness till I almost forgot that Almighty God dwells in the core of my heart. I cannot remember that He is my Dear and Constant Companion, and that I am ever-pure and free like Him. At this very moment, as though resembling my inner mental nature, the eternally pure face of the Moon is covered by a dark cloud. I do not know how long I stay with my eyes shut in this curious state of mind. Suddenly feeling the touch of a tender flowerlike hand over my head I wake from my trance. To my amazement I see the Mother smiling at me. The full moon in yonder sky shines ever bright. I am indeed an immortal child of the Mother !

CHINMOY

## THE SACRED SECRETS

THE best description of love is that it can never be adequately described.

\*

\*

In the realm of love, desire is the worst adviser and self-giving the safest guide.

\*

\*

Love is the greatest strength. Even the almighty Lord becomes a slave to one who loves Him.

\*

\*

Love changes even the vilest and the cruellest. This is what Sri Chaitanya did with Jagai and Madhai.

\*

\*

Love really speaks through self-giving, never through words.

\*

\*

There is no limit to the power of Love. Rana sent poison for Mirabai but it changed into nectar, he sent a venomous cobra for her but it transformed into a beautiful image of her beloved Krishna.

\*

\*

Love is the supreme Magic. It was through this Magic that Radha won Sri Krishna.

\*

\*

A tragedy in human love often proves to be a comedy in one's relation with the Divine. It was only after losing his earthly love that Chandidas could sing the songs of the Divine love.

\*

\*

The best way of loving all is to love the One in all.

\*

\*

There is no suffering which a true lover cannot bear, no barrier which he cannot leap across, no opposition which he cannot win over and no victory which he cannot achieve.

\*

\*

A true lover can even hurt or injure his beloved, if he finds it doing good to the object of his love. This is what the divine Lover often does with his beloved souls.

\*

\*

To the lover, the sweetest word in the world is the beloved's name, the most soothing balm the beloved's touch, the most melodious music the beloved's voice and the most charming figure the beloved's face.

\*

\*

A lover alone can understand the madness of a lover, no one else can do it.

A God-lover cannot be afraid of anything, for everywhere he beholds his own Lord in infinite disguises.

\*

\*

Love has three stages. In the first, one smiles; in the second, one weeps; and in the last, one sinks in a sea of ecstasy.

DEVAKI NANDAN

## OUR DEBT TO GREECE

SPUTNIKS, missiles, radios, automobiles, aeroplanes, televisions, air-conditioners, skyscrapers and a battery of other comforts and luxuries; that is the modern world. Indeed, so swift has been the development of our civilization in the past half a century, such lightning changes in science crowding into our life that we are apt to efface the past completely from our memory.

But to have a correct perspective of our position we must make an effort and speed through the long corridor of time back to 500 B.C. A look at Greece of that age will convince us that the idea of crediting our own selves with all achievements is a flattering illusion. A modern mind suddenly transported to the Athens of Pericles would certainly not be a stranger. It would find much that it could appreciate and enjoy.

The Greeks then had a wonderful idea of beauty, proportion and rhythm. A glance at their architecture, masterly in form and mathematically immaculate in symmetry, will suffice to show us how scientific was their spirit and how imaginative their art. Modern conceptions of physical charm and beauty and architectural perfection are all based on Grecian theories. It is doubtful if the skill and versatility of Phidias—the dominant personality of the Periclean Age (460-430 B.C.)—has ever been surpassed by anyone. He and his pupils had attained a complete technical mastery. His greatest works are the statues of Zeus in Olympia and of Athena in the Parthenon. The statue of Athena made of wood and overlaid with ivory and gold, though dilapidated, still exists and is an ever inspiring model for all sculptors. In addition to the Parthenon conceived by Ictinus, the Temple of Victory and the bronze statue of Athena with the shield and helmet flashing far out at sea on a sunny day bear vivid testimony to Greek skill.

The golden age of Pericles is one of the most brilliant periods of history; and, not satisfied with presenting us with immortal sculpture, it gave us notable contributions in literature, rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, medicine and science. The tragedies of Shakespeare so much loved and appreciated by us might not have existed without the past great tragic poets, namely, Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), Sophocles (495-406 B.C.), and Euripides (480-406 B.C.). Their works remain classics to this day. But these tragic poets were not the sole writers of this period. Herodotus (480-425 B.C.) and Thucydides (460-400 B.C.), the inventors of written recorded history and two of the greatest historians the world has known, lived through the Periclean age. Xenophon (430-355 B.C.), Socrates (469-399 B.C.) and Aristophanes (448-338 B.C.), the father of comedy, were young when the Parthenon was finished in 438 B.C. It was during this age that the Sophists also arose. They started a novel kind of thought. They were great doubters and eager to get at the root of things;

they mercilessly exposed shams and even went on to criticise religion. It was they who gave the first stimulus to oratory.

But it is not that only Pericles under his remarkable command produced all the great people of Athens. There were many before him and many after him who are remembered even to-day. In literature, round about 900 B.C., flourished the great bard Homer whose epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* live for ever. Then in the age of the Tyrants (600-500 B.C.) we have the songs of Sappho and Stesichorus, the first pastoral poet of the world. In the same age also lived Thales of Miletus, the founder of philosophy, who had an utter lack of conventional faith. In 585 B.C., he correctly predicted an eclipse of the sun and boldly declared that the movements of the heavenly bodies were not due to the whims of Gods but obeyed fixed laws of nature.

After the death of Pericles, a great war with Sparta broke out, but it did not stop the development of the intellectual life of Athens. Then lived Socrates the great philosopher. His personality was unique and impressive. Grotesque in gait and features—stout figure, bald head, snub nose, thick lips and protruding eyes—he strutted bare-foot and ill-clad on the roads of Athens talking, discussing with whomsoever he met, and convincing them of their lack of knowledge, fostering the spirit of enquiry and making them realize that the only lasting foundations can be established on truth and virtue. Rendered immortal in dialogues by Plato, he still remains fresh in our mind and his philosophy is still studied by many. Among his pupils were Alcibiades, Xenophon and Plato. Plato, like many other Greeks stands even now for something of universal value. In intellectual contemplation many claim kinship with his spirit and his dialogues are consummate masterpieces of philosophic reasoning.

Following Plato came Aristotle, a Macedonian, the tutor of Alexander the Great. He wrote on a variety of subjects—philosophy, politics, ethics, poetry, physics, biology, medicine and metaphysics. He may be reckoned as the founder of zoology and his pupil, Theophrastus, the founder of botany. The speculations on politics which were initiated by Aristotle mark a new development of human thought and show the Greeks as the inventors of the science of government.

In Zeno (336-264 B.C.) and Epicurus (342-270 B.C.) the Greeks produced two philosophers who founded schools destined to exercise much influence on posterity. Zeno was the first of the Stoics and he preached the necessity of mastering desire and of training the soul to control pain. The key-note of his system is fortitude. Among his subsequent disciples were Seneca and Marcus Aurelius and even now there are many whose religion may be called Stoicism. In contrast to this, Epicurianism has for its key-note happiness. But

the happiness which Epicurus advocated was not of a low sensuous type, the pleasure of the mere body: it was rooted in prudence and temperance and Epicurus believed that to live pleasantly one must live nobly and righteously.

To the Greeks also belongs the credit of producing the noted mathematician Archimedes (287-212 B.C.). The first person to declare that the earth revolves round the sun, thus anticipating Copernicus, was Aristarchus of Samos (320-250 B.C.). The works of the great physicians Hippocrates (460-351 B.C.) and Galen (130-200 A.D.) were the standard text-books on medicine until the end of the Middle Ages. Euclid's geometry (300 B.C.) is still taught in all schools and colleges.

The Greeks have not only made contributions in science, sculpture and philosophy but also in politics and games. The Olympiad which took place in their times is still continued in the modern world and contributes a great deal towards establishing friendly and peaceful relations between countries.

In politics, at one time or another, the Greeks went through all kinds of governments : monarchy, aristocracy, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. Draco (624 B.C.) made the first written code by which a government could function. We can say he made the first constitution. But his laws were too severe and the word Draconian is still a synonym of severity. After him came the laws of Solon (594 B.C.), much less severe and much more practical.

To the credit of Greece goes the establishment of the first democratic government. The people freely elected their ruler and they had every right to oust him. They had a voice in the functioning of the state and anyone could record his grievances in the assembly. It is on their system that our democratic regimes are based.

The Greeks had an intense love for freedom. Enchainment they hated. They wanted the free development of the human spirit and they have contributed singularly in this domain to the world. Freedom is their greatest gift to us.

Thus we may conclude that the terms and theories in use today to express our understanding of the world (in politics—monarchy, aristocracy, democracy; in literature—epic, lyric, dramatic, tragedy, comedy; in general knowledge—the names of the arts and sciences, poetry, physics, astronomy, mathematics, history, philosophy;) are all invented by the Greeks. Few races have ever grasped with such a clear insight and defined with such precision so many diverse branches of knowledge. Obsessed though we are with our own marvellous achievements, we cannot regard with disdain this mighty civilization. We have followed where they led, we have built where they left.

PRAVIN

# ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

## AN EXPOSITION AND AN INTERPRETATION

### D. TECHNICAL TERMS

ARISTOTLE uses several technical terms which he does not clearly define and which have raised a cloud of controversies. These are Poesis, Mimesis, Harmatia, Peripeteia, Anagnorisis, Praxis, Pathos, and Katharsis. The largest differences have arisen among scholars about the meaning of Katharsis.

Poesis which with its modifications is the central subject of the *Poetics*, is not defined by Aristotle. Tragedy is a form of Poesis. Poiein in Greek in the literal sense means to make. It corresponds to the modern idea of creative activity of the artist. Poesis therefore covers the whole range of the arts—singing, dancing, sculpture, painting, and the rest. Tragedy is thus one branch of artistic activity, namely, the dramatisation of human life upon the stage through Plot and Character, Song and Dance.

Mimesis is a term which has led to the worst confusion in ancient and modern scholarship. Mimesis has been interpreted in its literal sense as imitation, that is, a copy or photographic representation of objective reality. But the term must be understood in the context of the discussion then raging in the Academy between Aristotle and Plato. Plato had condemned Drama on two main grounds, namely, that Drama was a copy of the Idea or Supreme Truth several degrees removed from reality and therefore unreal and untrue and that it aroused pity and horror and the like unhealthy emotions in the young. It was thus exiled from the Republic of Plato. In the *Poetics* Aristotle is answering, possibly covertly, both the points. Poesis is creative activity. Drama is Mimesis in the sense of the creative representation in dramatic form of human life. It is not the copy of any original. The creative faculty is the natural appurtenance of Mind and the mental being. Its self-expression is Poesis. Its particular expression is the Drama. Dancing, singing, language, tune, sculpture and the rest are all forms of creative representation by different means or in different media of the same faculty of creation. The creative faculty is concerned with self-expression and not with the copying of truth. Or to put it in Aristotelean terms, the creative faculty is a bundle of potentialities which actualise into Poetry, Dance, Drama and the rest. As to the second point, Aristotle replies that Drama creates a Katharsis or release of our repressions which may produce in both the artist and the beholder either delight which is an end in life, or pleasure of self-expression, or even a sense of detachment, or any reaction of the emotions which may act as a release from the tension of life. Mimesis may be defined in the broadest sense as the natural expression of Selfhood in all the spheres of life in the form of all the arts. Mimesis is not photographic representation but the action of

Man's highest faculty, Imagination, on its grandest scale. For in creation he becomes nearest to the Divine. Divinity is creation.

Harmatia literally means a defect of character. The defect may be moral, intellectual or spiritual. It is the seed of imperfection inherent in man. It is the core of his possibilities which must fructify into action. The possibilities may have accrued by reason of his past action or the action of his parents. They cohere as the accumulated Karmic possibility of the individual. This Karmic seed of Character is the basis of Tragedy according to Aristotle. Thus in the character of Oedipus, the murder of his father Laius and the marriage with his mother Jocasta and the birth of his children Antigone, Ismene, and Eteocles and Polyneices are potentialities of the Drama of the House of Oedipus.

Peripeteia is the fall of character due to the defect mentioned above. The fall is connected with the defect. It is the Karmic effect of the error. The murder of Laius and the marriage with Jocasta lead to the fall of Oedipus. The fall of Oedipus leads to the fratricide of Eteocles and Polyneices. Peripeteia is the sequence of Harmatia. The fall is the Karmic effect of the defect.

Anagnorisis means discovery or self-realisation of the result of the Karmic action. The discovery of the murderer of Laius in *Oedipus Tyrannus* is started by Oedipus. It is his soul which pushes him to the truth. Discovery is the result of the defect and the fall of Oedipus. Harmatia is the hidden truth, Peripeteia is the fall which partially discloses the truth, Anagnorisis is the full realisation of the truth. At the conclusion of the play, Oedipus realises that his fall was due to the murder of Laius and the marriage with Jocasta. Harmatia, Peripeteia, Anagnorisis, defect, fall, discovery, are steps of the disclosure of the truth of life. They are the seeds of dramatic action ripening to close.

Praxis means action. Harmatia, Peripeteia, Anagnorisis are revealed by action. Harmatia is the root cause of action, Peripeteia is the result of action, Anagnorisis is the understanding by the soul of the action. Praxis therefore covers the whole of dramatic action.

Pathos means pity or any emotional effect. It is the suffering of character in the broadest sense. Pathos is the result of Praxis. Suffering is the effect of tragic action. Pathos of the Drama may create pity and horror in both the character and the audience.

Katharsis means literally purgation. Its meaning in the *Poetics* is not clear. Its definition was apparently reserved for discussion in the second book of the *Poetics* which has been lost. Its general sense must be sought in the atmosphere of the discussions of the Academy and in the light of the difference of opinions of Aristotle and Plato on the point of the merits of the

Drama. Aristotle is answering Plato's objection that the vital reaction of the young to Drama was likely to damage their sensitive faculties of soul. Aristotle replies that the Spectacle of Drama was likely to release their repressions. The exact nature of the release is not defined by Aristotle. The word is therefore to be given its largest connotation. Katharsis may be defined as the total reactions of the soul of the artist, the character and the audience, to the Drama. From the point of view of the artist, Katharsis is his release by artistic self-expression, by dramatic composition. This may be release in the sense of artistic pleasure or in the sense of his soul shaping by self-expression in art. Or it may be only the mental satisfaction of the artist. It may also be a release in the sense of a certain artistic detachment from life. From the point of view of the character, Katharsis would be the release from the hidden defects which cures his suffering. Katharsis would be the purgation of his past and his evolution out of suffering. All suffering is a Katharsis of the past. From the point of view of the audience which was perhaps Aristotle's main consideration, Katharsis has a variety of effects. Its meaning cannot be restricted. It would include the release from the pettiness of life—a release from repressions. Mind is cleared by diversion. Worries are removed by the spectacle of the Drama. Drama is not mere amusement. It has healing value. The attraction of the spectacle may cause the shifting of the consciousness from present and pressing worries. The release may be also by a certain detachment from present circumstances and from prevailing pathological conditions. The spectacle of the Drama may create detachment. The release may be by way of aesthetic satisfaction. Katharsis may include the purgation of the lower passions to receive the delight of the higher aesthetic consciousness. It may have an a-moral sense of pure artistic delight. It may have a moral sense of delight in the Drama as a matter of spiritual expression of the artist. Katharsis would include every effect of the Drama, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, spiritual, upon the audience.

The theory of Katharsis of Aristotle does not answer Plato fully. Assuming that Drama causes releases of various kinds, assuming also its therapeutic effects, we may still ask, do all dramas have a beneficial effect ? Do not the scenes of pity and horror disturb the consciousness of the young ? Is Plato wrong in seeking a higher value of art than the portrayal of lower realities ? Do not some dramas cause crime in the young ? The matter is to be decided by the quality of the Drama and the dramatist rather than by any theory of Katharsis.

*(To be continued)*

SYED MEHDI IMAM