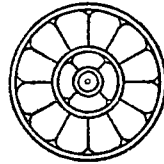


# MOTHER INDIA

APRIL, 1959

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. XI

No. 2

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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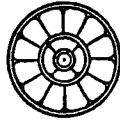
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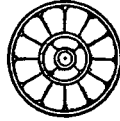




WORDS OF THE MOTHER

*There is one Truth but a  
million ways of distorting it  
in the attempt to express it.*

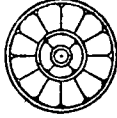




## THE MESSAGE OF MARCH 29, 1959

It is not perhaps very useful to forecast by the mind what will be the precise results of the descent of a supramental consciousness into a world in which up to now the mental intelligence has been the highest evolutionary product and leading power. For the supermind is a consciousness which will work in a very different way from the mind and the lines laid down for it by the latter are not likely to be respected by the greater energy in its self-organisation and operation here.

SRI AUROBINDO



## THE MESSAGE OF APRIL 4, 1959

Let the new birth become manifest in your heart and radiate in calm and joy and take up all the parts of your being, mind and vision and will and feeling and life and body. Let each date in your life be a date of its growth and greater completeness till all in you is the child of the Mother. Let the Light and Power and Presence envelop you and protect and cherish and foster, till all your inner and outer existence is one movement and an expression of its peace and strength and Ananda.

SRI AUROBINDO



## PRESENCES AND FORMS

*(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)*

28-10-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : What the deuce did you get afraid for ? Supposing any were there, you could have waited at least to see whether they were good presences or bad. If good, no harm; if bad, you have only to tell them to skedaddle. But I expect it was only a feeling of yours. Generally the *শুষ্কতা*<sup>1</sup> is either empty of presences and formations or only one Presence is there, that of one's Self or that of the Divine.

26-3-1937

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, sir, the Presence not finding an entrance into your waking mind easy, tried to take advantage of half sleep to do it. (Half sleep is always a favourable condition for these things.) But your body consciousness, not being familiar with such spiritual penetrations, got into a stew — and as a stew is accompanied by heat and steam, so your body got hot and perspired.

Sir, is the Presence of a physical nature or a spiritual fact? And is the physical sense accustomed or able to see or feel spiritual things — a spiritual Presence, a non-material Form ? To see the Brahman everywhere is not possible unless you develop the inner vision — to do that you have to concentrate. To see non-material forms is indeed possible for a few, because they have the gift by nature, but most can't do it without developing the subtle sight. It is absurd to expect the Divine to manifest his Presence without your taking any trouble to see it, you have to concentrate.

It simply means you have a subjective sense of Presence. But must a subjective sense of things be necessarily a vain imagination ? If so, no yoga is possible. One has to take it as an axiom that subjective things can be as real as objective things. No doubt there may be and are such things as mental formations — but, to begin with, mental formations are or can be very powerful things, producing concrete results; secondly whether what one sees or

<sup>1</sup> stillness

## PRESENCES AND FORMS

hears is a mental formation or a real subjective object can only be determined when one has sufficient experience in these inward things.

MYSELF : Is this what you call going inward ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No, not quite — but it is evidently the result of some opening from within — for without that opening one cannot become aware of Presences or Forms that are supraphysical in their nature.

There is nothing to do but to go on concentrating and calling the Presence within and without you, the opening, the power to receive and let it come. The more the mind falls quiet during or as the result of concentration, the better (no other thought in or out) but no need to struggle for that, must come of itself by the concentration.

## RISHI AND YOGI

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

9-2-1936

MYSELF : Would you call X a Rishi ?

SRI AUROBINDO : He is more of a Yogi than a Rishi, it seems to me. The happiness theory does not impress me,—it is as old as the mountains but not so solid. But he knows a lot about Yoga.

11-2-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : A Rishi is one who *sees* or discovers an inner truth and puts it into self-effective language—the mantra. Either new truth or old truth made new by expression and realisation.

He has expressed certain eternal truths by process of Yoga—I don't think it is by Rishilike intuition or illumination nor has he the mantra.

A Rishi may be a Yogi, but also he may not; a Yogi too may be a Rishi, but also he may not. Just as a philosopher may or may not be a poet, and a poet may or may not be a philosopher.

MYSELF : Don't poets and artists get intuition and illumination ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but poetic intuition and illumination is not the same thing as Rishi's intuition and illuminationn.

MYSELF : You have called Bankim a Rishi. Do you think his *Bande Mataram* a real mantra or that he actually saw the country as the Mother ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, the *Bande Mataram* acted as a mantra and so I suppose I gave him the credit of Rishihood. Can't say whether he saw. Must ask him.

## SRI AUROBINDO AND THE ASHRAM POETS

*(Q. There's a question I have been wanting to ask but I have hesitated lest you should think it improper. The answer, however, cannot fail to be enlightening : so I make bold to put the matter to you. How is it that the phrase "exceedingly fine" about our poetry is used by you so rarely? Is it possible to let us understand what subtle shortcoming somewhere still lurks in our work, which we must set right? We should like very much to please you more, but how are we to do it unless you explain to us where exactly we fall short. I have tried poetically to rise to the top of my capacity, but I quite understand that that need not mean I have really achieved the finest poetry. I sincerely hope you will give me some advice and help me improve myself. I am not competing with others : what I am attempting to do is not to rise superior to others but to exceed myself.)*

SRI AUROBINDO: You all attach too much importance to the exact letter of my remarks of the kind as if it were a giving of marks. I have been obliged to renounce the use of the word "good" or even "very good" because it depressed Nirod—though I would be very much satisfied myself if I could always write poetry certified to be very good. I write "very fine" against work which is not improvable, so why ask me for suggestions for improving the unimprovable? As for rising superior to yourself, that is another matter—one always hopes to do better than one has yet done, but that means not an avoidance of defects—I always point out ruthlessly anything defective in your work—but to rise higher, wider, deeper etc. etc. in the consciousness. Incidentally, even if my remarks are taken to be of mark-giving value, what shall I do in future if I have exhausted all adverbs? How shall I mark your self-exceeding if I have already certified your work as exceeding? I shall have to fall back on curse,<sup>1</sup> "Oh, damned fine, damned damned damned fine!"

15-5-1937

<sup>1</sup> Tentative reading (Editor).

# THE CHARIOT OF JAGANNATH

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Translated by Nirranjan from the Bengali of "Jagannather Rath")*

THE ideal society is the vehicle of the indwelling Godhead of a human aggregate, the chariot for the journey of Jagannath. Unity, Freedom, Knowledge and Power constitute the four wheels of this chariot.

The society, created by human intellect or by the play of the impure life-impulses of Nature, belongs to a different order : here it is not the chariot of God who directs the destiny of the collectivity, but a masquerading deity who deforms the divine intuition by covering up the God within; it is rather the vehicle of the collective ego. It wanders aimlessly along the path heaped with numerous pleasures, pulled by the immature and incomplete resolutions of the intellect, and the old and new dull urge of the lower nature. As long as ego is the master, it is not possible to find the goal—even when the goal is seen it is not possible to drive the chariot straight in that direction. The truth that the ego is an obstacle to the divine fulness applies not only to the individual but holds equally good in the case of the collectivity.

Three main divisions of the ordinary human society are noticeable. The first is the well-built chariot, polished, shining, clean and comfortable, fashioned by skilled artisans; drawn by strong well-trained horses, it goes forward cautiously at an easy pace without any haste along a good road. The sattwic ego is its owner-passenger. This chariot goes round the temple of God situated on a high region above it. Unable to go very close to the high ground, it circles it at a distance. If anyone wants to go up, the rule is to get down from the chariot and climb on foot. The ancient Aryan society which came after the Vedic age can be called a chariot of this type.

The second is the motor-car of the luxury-loving efficient worker. It rushes forward restless and tireless, at a break-neck speed, roaring through the storm of dust and shattering the street beneath it. Ears are deafened by the noise of its horn; it relentlessly pursues its way knocking down and crushing anybody that happens to be in its path. Danger to the life of the passengers is great; accidents are frequent; the car is often smashed and repaired with difficulty, yet proudly it continues. There is no fixed goal but whenever a new vista

## THE CHARIOT OF JAGANNATH

is seen not too far away, immediately the owner of the car, the rajasic ego, drives in that direction shouting, "This is the goal, this is the goal." One derives much pleasure and enjoyment in riding this car; yet peril is unavoidable, and to reach the Divine impossible. Modern society of the West is a car of this nature.

The third is the dirty, old, dilapidated bullock cart, slow as a tortoise, drawn by emaciated, starving and half-dead bullocks, and going on the narrow country roads; inside the cart is sitting a lazy, blind, pot-bellied, decrepit man in shabby clothes; smoking with great pleasure his mud-stained hukkah and listening to the harsh creaking of the cart, he is lost in the profusion of lazy and distorted memories of bygone days.

The name of the owner is tamasic ego and that of the cart-man book-knowledge. He consults an almanack to fix the time and direction of his departure. His lips repeat the slogan, "All that is or has been is good and any attempt to introduce something new is bad." By this chariot there is a bright and early prospect of reaching, though not the Divine, at least the Void of Brahman.

The Bullock-cart of tamasic ego is safe as long as it rolls on the dusty unpaved village roads. We shudder to think what might happen to it if one day it got on to the broad streets of the world where fleets of rapid automobiles rush about. The danger lies in the fact that it is beyond the knowledge and capacity of the tamasic ego to recognise or admit the time for changing the vehicle. It has no inclination to do so, for, then its business and ownership would be undone. When a difficulty arises, a few among the passengers say, "No, let it alone. It is good because it is ours." These are orthodox or sentimental patriots. Some say : "Why don't you repair it here and there ?" By this simple expedient, it seems the bullock-cart could be immediately transformed into a perfect and priceless limousine. Such patriots are known as reformers. Others say, "Let us have once more our beautiful chariot of yore." At times, they even try to find ways and means of accomplishing this impossibility. There is no particular indication anywhere to warrant that their hopes would ever be fulfilled.

If we must choose one of these three vehicles, giving up still higher endeavours, then it is logical to construct a new chariot of the sattwic ego. But so long as the chariot of Jagannath is not built, the ideal society will also not take shape. That is the ideal and ultimate image, the manifestation of the highest and profoundest truth. Impelled by the Universal Godhead, the human race is striving to create it, but owing to the ignorance of Prakriti, it only succeeds in creating a different image either deformed, crude and ugly or, if tolerably fair, incomplete in spite of its beauty. Instead of creating Shiva, it fashions either a dwarf or a demon or an inferior deity of the intermediate worlds.

Nobody knows the true form or design of the chariot of Jagannath, no

## MOTHER INDIA

artist of life is capable of drawing it. Hidden under many layers, this picture shines in the heart of the Universal Godhead. To manifest it, gradually through the effort of many divine vibhūtis, seers and creators, and establish it in the material world is God's intention.

The real name of the chariot of Jagannath is not society but commune. Not a loose human association with diverse tendencies or merely a crowd but an unfettered indivisible organisation, the gnostic community created by delight and the unifying power of self-knowledge and divine knowledge.

Society (*samāḥ*) is the name given to the organisation, that device which allows a human collectivity to work together. By understanding the root of the word, we can also seize its meaning. The suffix '*sama*' means united, the root '*aj*' signifies to go, to run, to fight. Thousands of people come together for the sake of work and to satisfy their desires. They pursue numerous aims in the same field—who can come first? who can get to the top?—and because of this there is struggle and competition, quarrel and fighting not only among themselves but with other societies as well. To bring about order into this chaos, obtain help and satisfy mental tendencies, various relations and ideals are established; the result is something temporary, incomplete and achieved with difficulty. This is the image of society, of the lower existence.

The inferior society is based upon division. A partial, uncertain and short-lived unity is constructed upon that division. The structure of the ideal society is entirely the opposite. Unity is the foundation; there is a play of differentiation, for the sake of multiform delight, not for division. In the society we find a hint of physical and mentally conceived unity arising from work; but unity based on the self is the soul of the spiritual commune.

There has been a number of partial and unsuccessful attempts to establish a commune in a limited field, whether inspired by the intellectual ideas of the West or in order to follow unhindered the discipline of inaction leading to Nirvana as among the Buddhists or because of the intensity of spiritual feeling like the early Christian communities. But before long all the defects, imperfections and normal tendencies of society infiltrated into the spiritual commune and brought it down to ordinary society. The idea of a restless intellect cannot endure; it is washed away by the irresistible current of old and new life-impulses. An intensity of emotion cannot bring about success in this endeavour; emotion is worn out by its own impetus. One ought to seek Nirvana all alone; to form a commune for the love of Nirvana is a contradictory action. A spiritual commune is by its very nature a field for the play of work and mutuality.

The day the Self-born unity will come into being by the harmony and integration of knowledge, devotion and work, as impelled by the Will of the

## THE CHARIOT OF JAGANNATH

Virat Purusha, the Universal Person, on that day the chariot of Jagannath will come out on the avenues of the world, radiating its light in all directions. Satya yuga, the Age of Truth will descend upon earth ; the world of mortal man will become the field for the play of the Divine, the temple-city of God, the metropolis of Ananda.



## THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER\*

(Continued from the February 21, 1959 issue)

3

### THE ALL-CURER

I CAME to the Ashram in February 1932 for the first time. When during the year I visited the Ashram again, I had got affected by rheumatism. My father-in-law told me that since I had turned towards Yoga this disease had taken hold of me and it was because of the Yoga itself.

In those days, nobody connected with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo liked to do anything, even the smallest thing, without asking the Mother. Accordingly I sent a wire to the Mother from my home town. After an hour or so, I felt a powerful current passing from the spot of pain in the waist to the feet. Even though I had been confined to bed for many days, I jumped out of it and started walking as if entirely relieved of all my trouble.

During the subsequent year I joined the Ashram.

The beginning of 1935 brought a new severity and suffering on me and kept its cruel encirclement for another four years. Yet during this entire period I depended only on the Force of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother because I had full faith that the only permanent way of getting rid of this terrible pain was to be cured by their Force which alone would bring real and perfect harmony in all the members of my being. For he writes in the *Life Divine*: "All problems of life are problems of harmony."

This is how he replied to one of my letters to him during this period:

"The illness has no doubt a physical cause, but there is associated with it a strong resistance to the Force—which is evidently seated in the sub-conscious, since you are not aware of it. This is shown by the fact that after Mother put a concentrated force there yesterday, the whole thing reacted more violently after an hour's relief. That is always a sign of a violent and obstinate resistance somewhere. It is only if this is overcome or disappears that complete relief can come.

"Your experiences related in the letter were quite sound and very good. There is no delusion about the Force working in the body, but there are evi-

\* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or contact the writer.

dently points where there is still much resistance. The body consciousness has many parts and many different movements and all do not open or change together. Also the body is very dependent on the subconscious which has to be cleared and illumined before the body can be free from adverse reactions."

When Dr. André grew familiar with the Ashram, once I went to him with the Mother's consent to seek his advice. He said he would give me such a strong medicine that for one year there would be no trouble at all. When I went to him the next day, he felt surprised that I had no fever as a reaction. The next surprise to him was that the pain returned after a month or so and grew worse.

Thus my disease remained uncured, my problem remained unsolved.

One day I wrote to the Mother : "Am I destined to be an invalid ? I have given the best part of my life to the Divine ; is this to be my fate ? Is there no way out ?"

"Have faith," the Mother wrote back to me. "There is no disease which cannot be cured by the Divine Grace."

In those days, the Mother used to come on the terrace for giving evening meditation to the sadhaks. During the day I would work all right, but, after returning from the work, I would get so much pain that it was impossible to stand even a minute or even take food. I went straight to bed, eagerly waiting for the time when the Mother would come to the terrace.

I would at once know while lying on my bed that the Mother had come on the terrace and the meditation had started, because I would suddenly feel the flow of her Force like a current or a stream either passing from above downward or from below upwards. As a result of that Force, my entire body would become motionless, at times like a pillar filled with quicksilver. I would remain motionless till the action of that Force lasted, which ranged from an hour to two or more.

Before the meditation the pain would be so acute and unbearable that to change sides and to get up and take even a tumbler of water was impossible. In the morning I would get up from the bed quite refreshed as if there had never been a pain in any part of my body. But in the afternoon, as the work of the day was going to be over, the pain would return with a doubled force as if somebody were taking revenge on me. On the day on which I could not so open myself as to receive the Mother's Force at the point of pain, the pain would remain unabated and unbearable and I dreaded the night. At times, the Force would go deep and act at once in the very spot where the pain would become most active. That gave me relief instantly.

Yet the disease continued to recur day after day. Months and months passed this way. After the lapse of another two years, the intensity of the

## PRESENCES AND FORMS

disease was reduced. No medicine was used. With this partial relief and reduction of pain I started doing heavy work and taking part in arduous physical activities. This hastened my recovery from the long-recurring malady. With the gradual coming of complete cure I could lift weighty loads or participate in such actions or physical-culture competitions as required strength and stamina.

What the grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother gave me has ever since been with me and I continue to be strong and healthy in spite of my mature age.

*(To be continued in the issue of 15th August, 1959)*

*Compiled and reported by*  
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

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

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the previous issue)

(14)

### CALL TO THE SOUL

MY friend's father after staying in England for two years started for India. As the Suez Canal was closed he came *via* Africa. He alighted at Mombasa, having decided to stay there a few months. Just by chance he applied for a permanency, which was granted—now an almost impossible thing. Before settling down he thought it would not be possible to visit India for at least five years, so he made the decision in a day and again applied for a permit to leave the country. The Immigration Department was astounded that this man after getting his permanency should go risking his grant. But he was given permission for six months.

He came to Bombay on 19th November. His ticket for Pondicherry was ready but he could not come here and thought he would come on his birthday, 1st January. He reached Pondicherry on 31st December but was disappointed as he could not see the Mother. He stayed on, and from 15th January he got Balcony Darshan. He had planned to leave Pondicherry for a South-India trip on 20th January, but he got fever on the 18th. He thought it was something ordinary and would subside. He wrote a letter to the Mother informing her about his intention to leave, but she was reported to have just smiled.

The fever continued. It did not come down at all to normal for days. His trip was cancelled. His ticket to Delhi on the 3rd was also cancelled. He had a disdain for medicine and tried out his own Naturopathy, in which he had acquired a diploma in England. He fasted for 20 days. On 15th February he was normal. He even got out of his bed, but otherwise was very weak.

On the 28th, at 10.55 p.m., just ten minutes before the Ashram Gate is locked, he asked his son to go to the Samadhi and bring flowers from there. When the flowers were brought, he reverently caught them to his breast. But his wife saw that his condition was a little serious and sent a neighbour to fetch the doctor. His feet were getting cold. So she applied some ginger powder. He said: "Don't call the doctor. I am quite all right."

\* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or contact the writer.

## MOTHER INDIA

At about 11.35, the doctor came. After feeling the pulse of the patient for a few seconds he said it was all finished. My friend's father had passed away without his family knowing it.

In the morning the doctor informed the Mother about it. She sent two beautiful roses to the wife and son and said, in effect: "Tell them not to sorrow. I had called his soul from Africa. He had no disease at all. It was just an excuse to leave the body. The soul had made the decision to leave. This might have happened in Africa. The soul is with me."

The brother of the deceased had been trunk-called in the night and he arrived with his wife in a plane which he had caught shortly after getting the news of his brother's death. He reached Pondicherry at 1.30 p.m., as if all had been planned.

The whole family went to the Mother on 1st March at the time of "Prosperity" blessings. The 1st of each month is the day when the Mother provides thesadhaks for their needs of the month and gives her blessings. The Mother caressed and blessed the wife of the departed and behaved as if she were removing all the looming grief off her environment. The wife left the Mother full of peace and gratefulness.

\*

\*

This reminds me of another similar incident, in which the Mother explained how she removes people's grief when they come to her for blessings with entreaties and prayers. A man had died. His brother who was in the Ashram had not broken the news to the man's family who were about to leave the Ashram that very evening, after getting the news of his illness. They were waiting near the door of the Mother's Interview Room for her parting blessings. The brother of the deceased told the Mother about the recently-received telegram concerning the death. The Mother took him to the Interview Room and worked in such a way that when he and the rest of the family went to their house and when their near and dear came with condolences and sympathies, the latter looked more sorrowful for the death than the members of the family who could not grieve, could not but remain peaceful and confident. The Mother explained to the brother in some such words: "When anybody comes to me full of grief and sorrow, I just make a movement like this as with a pin" (here she drew her finger in a line across her heart) "and by that I take away the grief. Then I stream out from my depths towards him a calmness, peace and joy that relieves him of all his worries."

*(To be continued)*

*Compiled and reported by*  
**HAR KRISHAN SINGH**

## THE UPANISHADS AND SRI AUROBINDO'S *LIFE DIVINE*

(A Letter)

YOUR uncle seems to be an odd fellow. He rejects *The Life Divine* of Sri Aurobindo because he regards the Upanishads as all-sufficing and yet he asks you to read the translation of an obscure Sanskrit work called *Tripura Rahasya*! That is the first and most obvious self-contradiction into which he stumbles.

His second self-contradiction is that the Illusionism of this *Tripura Rahasya*, in which the world is considered to be Maya and the universe to have no existence outside the mind, is thought of by him as giving an idea of what the "Life Divine" is : there is little meaning in the word "divine" as applied to an illusory life !

His third contradiction lies in equating the Upanishads with Mayavada : the Upanishads are a multiple system and though the Mayavada doctrine may find support in isolated passages the total vision of the Upanishads gives the world not an illusory character but a realness subsidiary to the essential Divine whose emanation it is. True, the Upanishads did not fully develop the implications of such an attitude and this led later minds to force them into a Mayavadin scheme, but that forcing took place because these minds were not many-sided and global enough to read what lay at the back of the Upanishadic revelation, what was faintly grasped in the Upanishads and left undeveloped because the time was not ripe for its complete emergence and affirmations. The secret of the Upanishads, to which there are various dim pointers in them, is certainly not Mayavada which makes nonsense of so many slokas but the Aurobindonian synthesis and integrality centred in the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness holding the realisable perfection of all that has emanated and making the entire transformation of every part of us both possible and imperative.

The fourth and final self-contradiction into which your uncle falls is his refusing to read *The Life Divine* and still declaring dogmatically that it is without an "Upanishadic backbone"! How does he feel sure that Sri Aurobindo disregards the Upanishads ? He is like a man shutting his eyes and saying he does not see the sun. In fact, Sri Aurobindo takes immense account of the Upanishads : if he did not set great store by them, would he have translated the *Isha* and the *Kena* and written long commentaries on them or headed each chapter of *The Life Divine* with quotations from the Upanishads as well as the Rig Veda

and constantly kept explaining the Reality as visioned and experienced by the Rishis ? What he has done is not to ignore the Upanishads but to take them in all their hitherto unplumbed profundity as the starting-point of an all-embracing and all-explaining and all-fulfilling way of mystical and spiritual realisation.

To accept them as the backbone of one's Yoga does not mean that a Maya-vada body should be the result. All depends on how we follow their line of revelation. We can make them the backbone of an ostrich that hides its head in the sand and feels the world has disappeared or we can make them the backbone of a creature that takes cognisance of all things and faces them instead of wanting an escapist solution. What is the right kind of backbone to be made out of the Upanishads ? That is a question answered differently by different minds according to the height and breadth of their vision, the acuteness and perspicacity of their perception. Your uncle's vision and perception grasp a few characteristics of the Upanishadic revelation, miss their vari-aspected richness, do not go beyond or behind this richness to its source in some integral harmony awaiting its own day of manifestation. Besides being hopelessly self-contradictory, he is a very poor builder of a backbone from the Upanishads and his poorness can be proved to him in no time if he cared to engage in a discussion. His sole safety resides in a bigoted refusal to discuss anything or to open his eyes to the illuminated persuasiveness and deeply satisfying comprehensiveness of the intuition-inspired logic of *The Life Divine*.

Well, let him enjoy his ostrichlike security : don't get distressed—his attitude is of little importance and perhaps the more you try to reason or plead with him the more rigid and high-handed he will be. Possibly a gesture similar to his saying about *The Life Divine* that to read it would be a waste of his time would have some shaking-up effect on him. Who knows but if you had flung his *Tripura Rahasya* into the tank adjoining his hut he might have sat up and taken notice !

10-1-1952

K. D. SETHNA

## SPIRITUALITY IN ART

Is there any natural opposition between art and the spiritual life ? The Puritans had cast aside poetry and music like poison. In the Talmud (the scripture of the Jews) there is the total prohibition to draw the picture of anybody, be he a man or a God. Plato in his *Republic* refused to award a locus to the poet. Even in the world of to-day we are after Idealism that awakens the higher emotion, the spiritual perception, and inspires the spiritual life in poetry, music, painting and sculpture. We want to do away with mundane art and have the art that helps to acquaint us with God. We want to turn our eyes from the art that depicts the lower propensities of our nature and like to gaze at the one that gives us a higher, nobler and purer inspiration.

The spiritual knowledge is the supreme knowledge, and the rest is the ordinary knowledge. The spiritual life is alone the best and the only thing worth aspiring for. If this is the only truth then men will aspire for nothing except that which is helpful to the spiritual life. Men will keep aloof from whatever is an obstacle to it. Every branch of the ordinary knowledge should be made into a step towards the supreme knowledge. If there is any glory or beauty in the world then it belongs to God. So the usefulness of the ordinary knowledge lies in being subservient to the supreme Knowledge. To-day we want to found this thesis. But how far is it correct, what is its precise meaning ?

At the very outset we would like to say that the object of art is to create joy. There is one joy in God-realisation, and another in the company of a woman : an artist can make a joyful creation out of either of the two. The depiction of the company of a woman may be harmful to the spiritual life, but, from the standpoint of the creation of pure and simple joy, is there any hard and fast rule that its value should be low ? The critic may say "God alone is the repository of the complete joy. In the ordinary worldly life there is no lack of joy or beauty, but that joy or beauty is a portion or a shadow of God himself, a major part of it a deformation. The story of the enjoyment of a woman may be very fascinating, but if we do not find in it anything that may lead our vision to and draw out the sweetness of God then from the side of the creation of taste too it falls short of the perfect perfection. If art were to exist in the creation of taste anyhow then the artist might deal with any subject to fulfil his object by any means. But if he wants



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to create the highest taste, the fulness of taste let him manifest God in speech, painting and sculpture.”

But the problem is: What is God, and what again is the blissful form of God ? The word God does not mean any fixed, invariable form. God has many a form. There is no end to the ways in which He has been seen by men. So at the very outset we may be in doubt : the God of a sadhu and that of an artist—are they identical or is there any difference between the two ? A sadhu’s vision of God may not tally with that of an artist. The blissful aspect of God which has been realised by a sadhu may also be realised in quite a different way by an artist.

In fact, in the eyes of a sadhu, that God alone is holy who is pure, unsullied and who cannot be stained by any earthly impulse. The God of a sadhu shines there alone where there is the complete absence of human impurity, sense-turmoil and grossness. In the eyes of a sadhu he alone is the real artist whose aim is to manifest God, who is behind the play of daily transient activities of life and who is All-Good and free from all worldly sin. That artist alone is dear to him who has depicted men as above wants and afflictions and the restlessness of the senses and endowed them with the glow of nobility. To a sadhu God may possibly be a disciplined, liberated Being, but to an artist He is also the slave of the mind, vital and body. A sadhu takes delight in renunciation, sanctity. It is the artist who can reveal that the delight of the physical enjoyment or even of the enjoyment which we call impure is no other than and in no way inferior to the delight of God. A sadhu may remain absorbed in tranquil pure bliss, but, if he fails to appreciate the ambrosial bliss which the artist finds in his artistic work in the midst of the surging current of earthly life, then has he not found God piecemeal ? God dwells in the generosity, the nobility of man as well as in the regions beyond the senses. But the same God also dwells in the meanness, narrowness and sensuality of man. The sadhu wants the former. But the artist can portray both the aspects equally in the full manifestation of their truth and beauty.

The aim and object of a sadhu and those of an artist are not the same. A sadhu and a reformer want to mould men and the world after an ideal. Chastity, truthfulness are such ideals. The demand of a sadhu is that all women for all time should remain chaste and all men remain truthful for ever. That is why he is averse to seeing and showing the picture of an unchaste woman or a man addicted to falsehood. For he fears that such an act may awake unchastity and falsehood in the society. The things that are morally undesirable must be undesirable also in art and in all fields of life. But the artist argues : “The things that we do not want to have or to become also harbour God. They too are images of the One who is infinite. They too contain

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truth. They too have their special nature and the secret reason of their existence and I would comprehend them and manifest them before the world's eyes. I may not like sin, but why should I remain blind to it ? In actual life I may very well be a pious man, if it be the Will of God to establish virtue in the world through me, but in spite of being a virtuous man why should I refrain from appreciating the play, the object and the ultimate essence of sin ? Nobody likes to grow old. Eternal youth should be the aim of all. The gods have eternal youth. But, for that reason, are we to say that there is no truth or beauty in old age ? Or are we to depict the picture of an old man in such a way that men may have disrespect and hatred for years and feel more attracted to the youthful than to the aged ?”

The art of an artist is not meant to set up an ideal however great in the world. The ideal is ever mutable. A certain ideal may prevail in a certain epoch to attract the heart of the world. The artist's genius does not follow that ideal. Art is beyond time and space. The artist sees only the eternal truth. He meditates upon the endless mysteries of the divine Nature at play in virtue and vice, in the small and the great, in the present and in the future. He tries to give expression to or manifest that Nature before the eyes of mankind. The art of an artist may be helpful for the accomplishment of some very useful purpose of the world, because he is able to bring out the real beauty of that purpose. But if he confines himself to this task alone, then human knowledge will remain circumscribed. The world-mystery will remain veiled to a great extent. We shall fail to relish the manifold joy that flows from the diverse beauty of the Divine.

When we sit in judgment to evaluate art we often remain oblivious to these infinite ways of appreciation of joy. At times we want to determine the value of art by the standard of ethical benefit to the pious or by the special form of the Divine imagined by the sadhu. At times we employ art for political or social welfare. A special form for the worship of the Divine may be necessary for practical purposes in different times and climes. The social, the political and the moral progress and welfare are also necessary. But these are not esoteric to the pure art.

We have already said that the fundamental principle of art is the expression of the infinite truth. This truth is vast, all-pervading. There is a hidden truth in everything which may appear beautiful or ugly to the eyes, which may appear attractive or repulsive to our disposition or which may appear good or bad to our intelligence. The truth of a thing consists in its quality, in its uniqueness and speciality and in the part it has to play on the stage of the world. This truth itself is eternal and full of delight. The artist tries to manifest the essence of this truth. Whatever there is in the world may

not appear conducive to welfare or convenient to a sadhu or a religious reformer. But there is nothing that is absolutely untrue. Everything manifests itself through some truth in the core of its being. This truth is the solid delight itself, and therein lies its beauty and this itself is the image of God in it. The manifestation of this God is the aim of the artist. The ability of the artist that can awaken the spirit of an absolute renunciation is the same as that which can awaken the thirst for action in the man of action. The artist's prestige does not suffer even when he depicts the madness of lust in a lustful man. There is no conflict between art and true spirituality. Rather, spirituality is the life-breath of art and its alpha and omega. Spirituality means things related to the Self. The quintessence of the yogi lies in his yoga and that of a carnal man in his carnality. The artist will reach the acme of his art if he can bring out the quintessence of yoga in the picture of a yogi and the quintessence of carnality in the portrait of the carnal, and godliness in the picture of the gods and beasthood in the likeness of the beast. In this sense the artist alone is the true spiritual man. An artist may depict Lord Buddha, the Incarnation of compassion, but that is no reason why the atrocious Nadir Shah's picture should be banished from the domain of art. In the pen of Kalidasa is found the spiritual description of sex-appeal. If this picture proves tendentious to some readers, then is the fault to be ascribed to Kalidasa the poet? His very purpose was to give expression to this idea. Under certain circumstances this idea may prove an obstacle to spiritual practice, but for that reason who can say that it is fundamentally untrue and ugly?

The picture of a naked woman is offensive to our eyes and not only to our sense of morality but also to our aesthetic sense. For the picture we often see is not verily a work of art but only a photograph, an exact imitation of nature. What is ugliness? Ugliness is that which shows only the outer form of a thing, phenomenon, and which fails to show the *raison d'être* of the thing, noumenon. A photograph of anything is ugly, be it of a naked woman or a saintly man. For we see therein only a naked woman and not the nakedness of a woman. We see therein a sadhu's lock of hair and the bark for his loins and not his saintliness. If we judge from an artistic point of view then the pictures of the gods and the goddesses drawn by Ravi Varma are as ugly as the worthless novels of the street. Where there is only body and where we do not get the meaning of the body in some deeper truth behind it the other-worldliness of the saint is an object of contempt equally to the moralist's sense of decency of the moralist and the artist's aesthetic sense.

The artist who has drawn the picture of a naked woman to express the soul of a naked woman has not seen the naked woman with the naked eyes of a lustful man, nor with those of a sadhu. He has seen her with the eyes of

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a seer. He has unveiled a divine truth. Other people being tools in the hands of the mind say that this is pure, that is impure, this is the virtue, that is vice. But the artist with an insight like that of a seer sees what is the truth, the hidden principle, behind a thing, the perennial source of true delight.

The poet or the seer creates something from the inspiration derived from the truth realised by him. Such an action is above the duality of good and evil, purity and impurity, good will and ill will. For an immature sadhaka, from the standpoint of his sadhana, the absolute realisation of truth by the adept may not always be desirable ; still his realisation is an unquestionable truth. The truth meant for the aspirant is momentary, temporary ; its value is neither universal nor eternal. The poet stands on the same footing with the adept. Neither of them should be judged by the standard of discipline applicable to the aspirant. The picture of a naked woman may perturb us. But for that reason why should we refrain from the appreciation of the true beauty revealed therein ? Why should we banish the legitimate enjoyment of the senses with a view to controlling them ? To deny the presiding deities of the senses for fear of the agitation caused by the senses is itself an obstacle to the realisation of truth.

It is not that art has no value from the standpoint of the spiritual discipline also. But the artist and the sadhu do not tread the same path. The way of the sadhu is "Not this, not this" and that of the artist "Here it is, here it is." The sadhu wants to control and get rid of the senses in order to reach the Transcendent or to confine himself within the boundary of a particular way of the use of the senses. The artist wants to feel the Transcendent in the plenitude of wealth of the senses. The sadhu wants to form a religious life through canon and conduct. The artist does not subscribe to any hard and fast rule. He considers himself free from the very beginning. If he can hold on to this principle for all time then he can attain to liberation and fulfilment in the entirety of his life. The sadhu and the pious measure the value of their achievements by the attraction and repulsion they have for the objects of the senses and sit down to analyse their real nature. But the artist pays no attention to discriminating the object he deals with. He is aware that there is no flaw in the object. His concern is with his inner attitude. He reveals the true and the beautiful form from whatever he undertakes in his spontaneous urge of the truth within him. The sadhu wants to have access to spirituality through conduct, example, discipline and interpretations of the scriptures. But the artist wants to attain his goal through the feeling of his art. You may depict the picture of a Madonna or that of a harlot; there is nothing inherent in the subject of your delineation to make you choose the one or the other. The question is whether you have been able to get at the truth of the thing.

## MOTHER INDIA

Subtle is the penetrating influence of art. We, who live in the physical nature, are unable to feel it readily. We require a massive influence. If it is not clearly pointed out to us we fail to grasp it; we need a baton-charge to be aroused from our slumber. That is why religious scriptures and moral codes have come into existence. We want to introduce moral doctrines in the realm of art as well. Moral doctrines may serve a useful purpose in changing the physical part of our nature. But the subtle inner nature and the spiritual being of man will never be awakened by the canons of morality. Art is but revelation. This revelation enables us to hold a direct communion with the innermost truth of our heart. Many a time we become identified with the spirit of things through art. This union is nothing but a union of delight. In religious terminology we may call it divine Grace. One who is endowed with this Grace has no need to observe the rules of conduct or spiritual practice. By the help of this divine Grace the artist can continue his enjoyment of sense-appreciation, yet become flooded with spirituality without undergoing any hardship or austerity.

In fact, there is no gulf between art and spirituality, provided that by the word Dharma we mean genuine spirituality and not merely moral conduct or religious ceremonies. If the aim of spirituality is to know the Self, then the aim of art too is the same. If the seer of the spiritual truth can see the Spirit everywhere without excluding the body or any part of it, then why should the artist not be able to manifest the glory of the Spirit through colour, sound, word and stone and thus play the role of a truly spiritual man ?

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

*(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali in "Sahityika")*

## THREE POEMS OF THINGS SEEN

### WINTER MOON

THE moon rises over rising trees,  
Trees rearing their strangle-hold  
Over the night air,  
Black spreading stragglers  
Their branches close  
On the surfacing moon.

### SALISBURY

Feeling my fancy in this great cathedral,  
Seeking the past and sensing the heart-leap  
Of thousands in this rocketing stone,  
I step out into the close of old green  
Under the unhistoric sun and clouds.

### AUTUMN

A straggle of Michaelmas Daisies in a deserted garden—  
Wind-bowed flowers over a muddied path,  
Or chrysanthemums growing under a dilapidated sill;  
Such are home-sick sights unrecognised until,  
Remembered later by a winter hearth,  
These autumn images of melancholy harden.

DICK BATSTONE

## THE CHASE

A STAG of sudden joy, a wallless leap,  
Came in my meadow-groves flameless in lull  
To break the green felicity, overran  
The hedged slumber of all my prairie's expanse.  
The lion within the swards awakes surprised,  
A golden dream assumes a bodied dawn  
To pursue the fleeing deer in the waste of my heart.  
My limbs are thrilled by their enormous chase :  
Their arrow-mood they spill in ecstasy's whirl  
Flamed with a strange intensity uncaught,  
Winging, running, sweeping across my calm.

He stops and charges with renewed bliss-breath,  
He seeks the other in the gloom and the blaze,  
In the courtyard and halls of my mind's stillnesses,  
In the mosaicked gardens of my life's loud ways,  
In the moonlit waters of my sky-flushed soul.  
They become birds in my wingless firmament;  
They become serpent-splendours in the grot of my sense;  
They become hooved coursers speeding on my sod.  
My life becomes the wide rhythm of their run.  
Then a quiescence drops like a mountain-screen  
Covering the impetuosity and the delight.  
All moods of existence converge on that deathless point.  
The stag is lost in the abyss of the Lion-sun !

ROMEN

## THUS SANG MY SOUL

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

(14)

### V. SELF-FATHOMING AND SOUL'S STRUGGLE

*(Continued)*

#### 34. DEJECTION

O LOOK at the sky of gloomy fire,  
O look at the trees in mourning  
In black attire;  
Over crossed arms their matted heads declining,  
My deepening depths are burning,  
My soaring silence sighing;  
O look at the cold-hearted busy world,  
And Nature with me pining.

Dustward my fate is whirled,  
Whenever I set to turning,  
To edifying  
Skyward my aspirations' scope,  
I find but shreds of shattered hope  
And all my efforts vainly spent;  
Remains my almanac of fortune furred.

Is it strange tragedy  
Or God's unseen intent,  
That in this vast expanse of life  
I see no soul of sympathy  
Who can infuse breath into my dumb life ?  
As flits by each small moment stern and stark  
My sun of hope sinks in the ocean dark.

*(To be continued)*

HAR KRISHAN SINGH



## THE EXECUTIONER

(Scene : Jerusalem : a long time ago.)

“YES, I suppose, as soldiers go I’m pretty old. (*Takes off his helmet and wipes the sweat from his forehead.*) Forty-seven I am and too damned old to stay in this rotten country. Only thing worth having is the wine they make here. It’s not so bad. (*Rubs his stubbly chin and grins.*) I get my fair share of it, I can tell you. I can stomach that all right but not these thievin’ Jews.

“You were asking me about this Jesus, weren’t you ? Well, you came to the right chap. I’m one of the men that crucified him.

“There’s always two of us, you know, sometimes three, all hefty chaps like me. It depends whether they kick up a fuss or lie quiet. It’s easier for themselves when they lie quiet, and we can get the nails in proper and quick.

“Now this Jesus fellow—well, I tell you, he was pretty calm. Mind you, I’m a soldier, an ordinary Roman legionary, so all this business about religion and holness just doesn’t interest me. Most of it, as far as I can see, is just a lot of hypocrisy anyway. Anybody’ll tell you that the richest people in this place are the priests. They do all right for themselves. But this Jesus, well, he seemed different.

“I’ve crucified a lot of people in my time, you know. I suppose you would call me an executioner. But this man, this Jesus.. (*A look which is half-pain, half-puzzlement comes into his eyes*) there was something about him that was different from the others. He seemed to hold your attention, or something, but I don’t know what it was.

“As I say, he was calm. They had clamped a wreath of thorns on his head and the dust was mixing with the blood and sweat. He carried the cross himself, you know, not like the rest of them, and I tell you it’s no easy thing. I remember now there was a woman there who came with a napkin and wiped his face. He smiled and said, ‘Thank you, my daughter.’

“It was funny his saying that, you know, because the woman was older than he was. I suppose it’s a Jewish custom ; but then all their customs are queer, not like our Roman ways at all.

“We didn’t have to force him to lie on the cross, he did it himself. He lay there with his arms outstretched, his palms open, and waited for the nails.

“As I said, I’m only a soldier—but there’s one thing I can recognise

## THE EXECUTIONER

when I see it, and that's courage. That's what makes me wonder about him, you know. What a great soldier he would have made, and I remember thinking what a pity it was to have to kill that courage. But then the people said he was causing more trouble and unrest in the country than a plague of hornets, so we had to do away with him. Naturally. We've got to have law and order, and I tell you, this hell-spot is bad enough as it is. The climate's bad, the food's rotten, the people vicious, and I wish, by Jupiter, that I was back home in Rome.

"Where was I? O, yes. Now this was the odd thing. Just as I was driving the nail through his palm he looked up at me. It was a strange deep look as if he were very sorry for me. For me, mind you. I was nailing him on a rack of wood and he was sorry...for me. And it's that look that sticks in my brain and sets me off thinking, which is all right except that I'm not good at thinking.

"Why did he have to look at me like that? All the others didn't do so. Some spat at me, yelled abuse and filth at me, glared at me with all the hate they could. And quite right too. I'm an executioner and I'm not used to anything else. So why did he have to look at me like that? That's what I can't understand, and it always disturbs me when I can't understand something. I'm just a simple man, you know. All I ask is a drop of wine now and again and some entertainment and I'm happy. Nobody ever feels sorry for me. Why should they? So why did he have to look at me like that? Why? Why?"

GODFREY

## TOWARDS UNITY

### II

THE political unit next in size to the old clan or city-state—namely, the nation—is the one we are most familiar with today and it might be asked why the nation did not come into being immediately after the small early organizations. As a matter of fact it did in a few isolated cases. Such for example was the case in ancient Egypt where the various nomes or clans which had been dotted along the Nile found their unity in the Double Crown of the Pharaoh at a very early date and preserved their unity for a considerable time. In Japan too we find a similar tendency to form a nation-unit through the subordination of the clans by the Mikado who remained throughout the history of Japan a lasting symbol of national unity. A similar tendency may also perhaps be discerned in the later history of the ancient Maya cities of Guatemala : the Toltecs and the Aztecs who came as conquerors from the north probably laid the foundations of modern Mexico. And the way the tribes of Israel were united in the kingdom of David is familiar to the student of Jewish history.

But these are isolated instances. The main tendency in the ancient world was not to create firm nation-units but empires. Why this should be so can be a matter of conjecture, but certain facts seem to stand out clearly. In the first place, the idea of exceeding the petty limits of the ego was in the air, and in some cases at least, even the mystics and philosophers seemed to support the growth of empires. The idea of *sāmrājya* was quite familiar to the Vedic Rishis and they sought to justify empire by sanctifying the sacrifice of the victor's horse in the *asvamedha* rite. Even after the older type of empire advocated by the Rishis had proved to be ephemeral, the political thinkers of India went on extolling the ideal of the *vijgīshu* or war-hungry prince who would subdue the rest and rule as emperor. If the old epic empires of the Bharatas or the Ikshwakus had been inspired by the Vedic sages, the later historic empire of Chandragupta Maurya had the direct support of the prince of Indian politicians, Chanakya.

What exactly happened in the case of Persia is not clear from existing records, and the influence of the Chinese philosophers on early Chinese history may need further study. But we know from the inscriptions of Darius that it was no other than Ahuramazda who "made Darius king, one king of many,

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one lord of many".<sup>1</sup> And it was with the help of the Confucian scholars that the Hans organised their empire : the Master had said, "the restoration of peace in the world depends on ordering the national life".<sup>2</sup>

Whether Alexander had been inspired by the Stoic Zeno before he began his conquests or whether the Stoic belief in the world-state was a philosophical restatement of an accomplished fact is a moot question; perhaps it might be more correct to ascribe the adventure of Alexander to an innate desire for personal aggrandisement than to any philosophical conviction. But there seems little doubt that the successors of Alexander in the field of empire, the Romans, had a definite faith in the Stoic's wisdom and the early empire builders of Rome had much to thank this eastern idea that the whole world was one.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of Jihad or holy war has been so closely associated with the teaching of Muhammad that it may not be very far from the truth to say that the empire of Islam which grew to such proportions within a few years after the Prophet's death was the direct result of his teaching whatever may have been its original import. The empire of the Mongols and the Turks who later supplanted the Caliphate no doubt sprang out of a simple desire for loot and personal glory, but with their nominal conversion to Islam these predatory tribes must have found ample justification for their imperial ventures in the precedent set by the Caliphs.

But whatever the sanction religious or philosophical, the early empires were in all cases the direct result of personal ambition. And this explains in part why they failed in the end. The builders of these early empires were too ambitious to remain content with small territorial limits. They must needs have an empire that would cover the whole world in so far as the world was known to them. India represented to the Maurya the limits of the civilised world, so the Maurya empire must cover the major part of India. The Hans could not be content with China alone, they must have Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan. The Achaemenids of Iran had the whole of western Asia and Egypt and a part of the European continent, and the Greeks succeeded to this heritage. The Romans lost to the Parthians the eastern provinces of the old empire but they added Gaul and Britain and the Iberian peninsula with the north African coast as a pendant. The Caliphs brought under their sway the whole of the old Persian empire and added north Africa and Spain.

Such huge agglomerations of territory could not long remain united. They had very little in common except the fact of their being governed from a single

<sup>1</sup> Naqshi-i-Rustam inscription, quoted in *Iran* by Ghirshman.

<sup>2</sup> Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Confucius*.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Ernest Barker in *The Legacy of Rome*.

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centre. True, in the case of India or China the people so brought together belonged more or less to the same cultural group and perhaps to the same ethnic stock. But they had in the past been used to autonomy under their respective chiefs or kings and the yoke imposed by the empire was a galling yoke. In the case of the other empires, there was not even a homogeneity of race or culture. It could of course be said of the Persian empire and its successor the Greek that the provinces were left very much to themselves in the matter of culture; the Roman empire had a common Graeco-Latin culture over the whole area; and the Caliphate was united by the bond of religion. But in all these cases, with the possible exception of the Roman, the ties were easily broken because what really kept them together was force and administrative arrangement. When the force showed signs of decay or the administration got lax, the empire fell apart.

The exception we have noted in the case of Rome is instructive, for it brings out the inherent weakness in any system of unification which is imposed artificially from above and is not a growth of the soil. The Roman had genius in the art of government and what he tried to do with his empire is an evidence of his genius. He built up his empire by force as the others had done. But once master of his domain, he did not rely on force alone. What he offered was not a choice between "guns and butter"; it was culture and the amenities of civic life for a population mostly accustomed to the village and the priest; it was opportunity to rise to the highest position in the state for any one who had the capacity; it was equality before the law; but it also meant dependence on Rome for every little thing. The result was that within a period of about three hundred years, the clan-nations who had once stood up against the legions of Rome had to invite the Teuton from across the Rhine and the North Sea to deliver them in their hour of need. Rome had given them peace and made them dead.

The empire-idea had failed because it relied on force rather than free-will and because it sought to impose uniformity in place of free variation; above all it was much too ambitious in that it did not prepare the base before taking the leap. The nation had to be developed to the full before one could think of exceeding its limits. That is why we see everywhere the attempt to build up the nation after the empires had registered their failure. The idea of empire persisted but the later empires had a character distinctly their own: they were ruled by people who were already fully grown nations. It is to the growth of the nation-unit that we must now turn.

*(To be continued)*

SANAT K. BANERJI

## MAULANA AZAD'S MEMOIRS

The posthumous publication of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's volume *India Wins Freedom*<sup>1</sup> has already brought into the arena of sharp controversy more than one feature in our struggle for independence which had so far been relegated to the realm of history. It is inevitable that opinions and judgments should vary in regard to the course of recent events and the personalities involved in them. But there will be wide agreement with Shri Humayun Kabir, the compiler of these memoirs, that "on all public questions he (the Maulana) spoke with the utmost frankness and sincerity".

The manner of compilation—the basic material being discussions between the two elaborated and revised by the Maulana—has left some obvious gaps in the narrative. Unfortunately, these will remain unfilled in the later editions of this volume. More light on the early growth of the national movement in Bengal in the first decade of this century under Sri Aurobindo's inspiring leadership would have been welcome. Also, the story of the beginnings of the Gandhian era in the history of the Congress seems somewhat sketchy. It does not, for instance, adequately focus light on Pandit Moulal Nehru's persistent but futile efforts in the closing years of his life to secure an enduring settlement of the Indian problem on the basis of Dominion Status; nor on the countering of those efforts by his distinguished son who many years later (such are the striking paradoxes of history) voluntarily commended to his countrymen a substantially similar solution.

With Lord Irwin at the helm of affairs in India and a Labour Government under Mr. Ramsay MacDonald pledged to the early grant of Dominionhood ("in a period of months rather than of years") India seemed very near the achievement of her national aspirations about thirty years ago. Mr. Jinnah, at that time, was an ardent Nationalist and no one had thought in terms of partition—except in regard to Burma. Even the Princes had been persuaded into an accommodating and friendly mood as a result of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's vision and political sagacity.

The first tactical mistake which later led to other wrong decisions—and ultimately to the creation of Pakistan—lay in the rejection of the plan conceived at the first Round Table Conference in London in 1930. Pandit Motilalji's tragic death at this juncture greatly weakened the forces working for a settle-

<sup>1</sup> Orient Longmans, Price Rs. 12.50.

ment. Precisely what part the Maulana played in this situation is not clear from the record.

Maulana Azad seems to have been most impressed with Lord Wavell among the Viceroy's with whom he had contacts. He does inadequate justice to Lord Irwin and to Lord Linlithgow, who though cast in a lesser mould, strove with a quiet patience (with Gandhi's encouragement), during the first half of his term of office, for an agreement with the Congress. The memoirs are silent on the significant part played by Sri Rajagopalachari in evolving a formula in 1937 which was acceptable to Lord Linlithgow and enabled the Congress to assume office in the provinces in which the party had triumphed at the polls.

The suggestion that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, by preventing in 1937 a Congress-Muslim League coalition from materialising in the U.P., had strengthened the League seems far-fetched. Even less convincing is the charge that in July 1946 Sri Nehru's unilateral interpretation of some parts of the Cabinet Missions' statement on 16th May was to some extent responsible for Mr. Jinnah's later decision to insist on partition. As a sober historical fact it may be recorded that on 18th September—that is, two months *after* Pandit Nehru's statement—Mr. Jinnah gave, for a considered reply, ten questions in writing to Sir B.N. Rau, at that time Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly. The questions and the detailed replies (which are contained in a document hitherto unpublished) related to the procedure that the Constituent Assembly was likely to adopt, the manner of its functioning, the composition and powers of the interim Government, etc. Beyond doubt it is clear from the document that Mr. Jinnah's mind was not finally made up, even at that stage, against participation either in the Constituent Assembly or in the interim Government.

Whether Sri Nehru's judgment in the two episodes mentioned above was sound or not seems to be, in a narrative of major events, a trivial matter of little significance. They had nothing to do with the ultimate decision in favour of partition. The question, however, is of enduring interest: how and at what stage did partition become inevitable?

Having had the privilege of being associated closely with many of the incidents mentioned in the memoirs, I have my own explanation. The Congress made grievous mistakes in tactics; but they were not Pandit Nehru's mistakes, at any rate not in the personal manner as suggested in the volume.

The first big mistake was the withdrawal of the Congress Ministries from office soon after the outbreak of the Second World War. Had they continued in office and the Congress leaders shown an inclination to enter the Viceroy's Executive Council, accepting the limitations of the 1935 Constitution softened

by a liberalisation of administrative practices, entirely from the standpoint of ensuring India's whole-hearted participation in the war, there would have been no partition; and, secondly, the problem of India's complete freedom at the end of the war would have been solved without even much discussion.

Lord Linlithgow seemed favourably disposed, despite initial rebuffs, towards such a settlement : provided that (as he told me in Simla in 1940) the Congress would accept the wise guidance of men like Sri Rajagopalachari. The Viceroy had little confidence in or use for Mr. Jinnah and would gladly at that stage have jettisoned him and the Muslim League if he could have been assured of Congress support. Unfortunately, the Congress was a divided body. Gandhiji was uncompromising in his opposition to India's active association with the Allies in the war under any terms, and Sri Nehru was temperamentally incapable of endorsing any tactical moves for gaining India's freedom. The Maulana is silent about his own part in the vital decisions of the Congress in the early stages of the war.

The Congress withdrawal from the provincial Governments compelled the Viceroy to lean more and more on the Muslim League. There was another difficulty which he mentioned to me. "You seem to forget," he said (when I was pleading for a maximum of autonomy for the Executive Council from the control of India Office), "that Mr. Churchill is now a member of the Cabinet." There was an additional complication : some of Gandhiji's statements on the war situation were not particularly helpful in securing British sympathies for our point of view.

A perplexed Viceroy, well-intentioned and anxious to make a success of the Constitution with whose inception he had a good deal to do, was finally driven to the farthest limits of his patience by the main resolution of the Congress session in 1940 on the fourfold exploitation of India by the British. Berlin radio made full use of it in its propaganda in neutral countries. Lord Linlithgow said to me that it would be extremely difficult thereafter to get the British Cabinet to consider a settlement with the Congress. From that point he was a different man.

By the summer of 1942, when a deepening war crisis caused by Japan's swift advance through Malaya and Burma compelled Mr. Churchill (by then the Prime Minister of a coalition Government) to explore the chances of an agreement with India through Sir Stafford Cripps, it was a frustrated and somewhat embittered Viceroy who was presiding over the administration, deeply committed to partition and the unwise policies of the Muslim League.

The Cripps Mission of that year broke down under the weight of a series of mistakes to which the Congress contributed its own (not inconsiderable) share. Lord Linlithgow could not forgive Sir Stafford for deciding to see



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Indian leaders alone without the Viceroy being present. "Did Mr. Montagu ever see a single Indian in Lord Chelmsford's absence?" he asked me angrily on one occasion immediately after the failure of the Mission. Sir Stafford was certainly not happy over the public interventions of Colonel Louis Johnson (President Roosevelt's personal Representative in New Delhi) in what the British regarded as an entirely domestic problem of theirs. The Congress Working Committee was suspicious of American intervention and strongly disapproved of Pandit Nehru's negotiations with Col. Johnson.

Sir Stafford was grossly unfair to Gandhiji in attributing the failure of his plan to long-distance telephone messages from Sevagram. Gandhiji had left New Delhi in the midst of the negotiations after owning defeat at the hands of the Congress Working Committee and had taken no further part or interest. But it would only be fair to Sir Stafford to recognise that he was seeking a solution for a most complicated problem in extremely difficult circumstances. The Maulana has speculated on the considerations which might have prompted him to vary the interpretations of the plan he brought to India on behalf of the Churchill War Cabinet at different stages of negotiations. Was he "inclined to paint things in a rosier colour than was warranted by the facts?" or only "placing a greater emphasis on practice and convention than on written agreements?" Is it not at least possible (as in fact was widely suggested in New Delhi at the time) that the variations came not from Sir Stafford but from Mr. Churchill and were prompted by the rapid changes in the fortunes of war, especially in the Bay of Bengal?

But whatever be the explanation for Sir Stafford's failure, the more relevant point for us to reflect on is the consequence of our decision to reject the Cripps plan. Gandhiji was opposed to it for reasons of his own, though he failed to carry the Working Committee with him. Sri Rajagopalachari was for its acceptance. Now according to the Maulana, Sri Nehru was more or less of the same view. The decisive factor in the situation was apparently the Maulana himself who favoured its rejection for the reasons he stated publicly at the time.

This, I consider, was for India the greatest tragedy during the war. We would have been far wiser to follow the advice of Sri Aurobindo to the Congress leaders that they should accept without hesitation or conditions the Cripps offer. After that rejection, there was no turning back for the British from full support to the Muslim League and all its demands. In 1931, in 1939, again in 1942 we had three separate opportunities for settling the problem of India on the basis of freedom without partition. Every time we failed to see that practical considerations were of greater value than clichés. After 1942, partition became the inevitable price of our freedom, as Sri Rajagopalachari was the first among India's front-rank statesmen to realise.

## MAULANA AZAD'S MEMOIRS

Critical in some respects as this review may seem of the central theme of the memoirs, it is far from my purpose to minimise their significance as an invaluable addition to the literature on the freedom movement. For fifty years, the Maulana took a leading part in the struggle and never at any stage was his staunch nationalistic outlook in question. Sri Humayun Kabir, as his faithful biographer, deserves our gratitude for the skill and lucidity of his achievement and his courage in publishing the volume, controversial though it be on many points.

B. SHIVA RAO

*(With acknowledgments to "The Hindu Weekly", February 23, 1959)*

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Poems from Bengali**, by Sri Aurobindo : Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry; Rs. 2/8.

Sri Aurobindo was busy mastering his parental language under a professional littérateur from Bengal, during the closing years of the last century, when he was at Baroda. It was at this period that *Poems from Bengali* and *Songs of Vidyapati* were born. The latter was reviewed in an earlier issue of *Mother India* (December 5, 1956).

In April 1908 the twin translations became State guests at Lal Bazar Police Station in Calcutta, not for any fault of their own but because their creator was a political under-trial prisoner in the now-famous Alipore Jail. He was honourably acquitted after confinement, both solitary and otherwise, for a full twelve months, but the manuscripts were released not without imprisonment for a little less than half a century,—long after the departure of the Master on the 5th of December, 1950.

The book under review is a collection of songs from four poets, arranged in chronological order. Nidhu Babu (1771) contributes twenty; Horu Thakur (1739) and Jnandas (1530) subscribe seven poems each, while Chandidas (1417) has three songs to his credit.

They are all love-lyrics, composed in a style much favoured among the Vaishnava poets, surcharged with “Madhura Bhava” (conjugal sentiment for the Divine).

Sri Aurobindo gives a spiritual colouring to those of Horu Thakur and Jnandas by inserting explanatory headings to them. The translation is free and fairly elaborated, as in the songs of Vidyapati. The publishers have very aptly remarked about it : “a youthful creation, ...fresh with the perfume of instinctive sensibility and spontaneous artistry.”

Barring Chandidas, who is really a maker of Bengali poetry, the three others are not so popular as they should be. Literary talent may be somewhat lacking in them. But Sri Aurobindo proves to us that even in these verses shines the wealth of a budding literature. And the Aurobindian touch glorifies each and every line.

The publishers begin their note : “In translating Bengali poems, Sri Aurobindo rendered the proper names, as much as possible, in their Bengali

way of pronunciation.” This is equally true of the spelling of his own name. A small incident may be of some interest to our readers. Only the other day, a little boy, still in his teens, came to our Ashram from a remote district of Bombay; and some sort of friendship grew up between us. Going back to his place, the lad accused us in Hindi thus : “Sir, you all in the Ashram mis-spell our Guruji’s name. It should be Shree Aravinda, and not Sri Aurobindo.” I wrote him a letter with the apology : “My friend, you are quite right. Thank you for the trouble to correct us. But we are helpless in the matter; our Master taught us so, and he himself learnt it from his father, who used to address him ‘Auro’. He, however, continued to sign his name according to general rules of phonetics, even up to the latest day of his student life, as we come to know from *Sri Aurobindo in England* by A. B. Purani. But, when back in Bengal, his ears got trained differently and he wrote his autograph in the way we spell his name now.”

The original poems, facing those of the translator, will be very entertaining to the Bengali-knowing readers. And it would have been more appealing, we suppose, to other parts of India as well, if they had been put in Devanagari characters, as we find in *Songs of Vidyapati*. It is not a new departure. We even read several Sanskrit and Bengali books transliterated into English script. Many of Rabindranath Tagore’s works are printed in Devanagari, if not in any other.

The facsimile of a page of the manuscript, showing Sri Aurobindo’s handwriting of those days, has enhanced the importance of the book. We can very well compare and distinguish the stages in the evolution of his calligraphy.

A quotation from Chandīdas may not be out of place here, to show the “youthful creation...and artistry” of Sri Aurobindo :

O heart, my heart, a heavy pain is thine !  
 What land is that where none doth know  
 Love’s cruel name nor any word of sin ?  
 My heart, there let us go...

O heart, my heart, merry thy sweet youth ran  
 In fields where no love was; thy breath  
 Is anguish, since his cruel reign began.  
 What other cure but death ?

PRABHAKAR MUKHERJI

**The Hour of God** by Sri Aurobindo. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Demy 8vo size, pages 110, price Cloth bound Rs. 4, Paper bound Rs. 3.

*The Hour of God*, compiled from Sri Aurobindo's notes on various subjects, gives us a glimpse and a taste of various forms of his writings. "The Hour of God", a short passage of a page or so, is one of his most inspired creations, suffused as it is with a thought-shaking divine breath and a drowse-breaking divine call. It reminds us, in a way, of some of the passages of *The Yoga and Its Objects* and the powerful spiritual stir and drive of *The Mother*. The "Hymn to the Mother of Radiances" carries the atmosphere of his Upanishadic translations and his spirit-arousing poetic style of writing prose. "Certitudes", "The Web of Yoga", "Purna Yoga", "The Supramental Yoga", bring to our memory the many-aspected march of the process of Yoga, all-embracing and integral in approach. "The Way" and "The Divine Superman" recall to us his little book, *The Superman*, for the directness and appealing tone of expression. "The Seven Suns of the Supermind", "Notes on Bergson", "Consciousness—Psychology", "The Supermind", reflect the illuminating and penetrating approach of his long explanatory *Letters*. "Man a Transitional Being" and "Evolution" cause us to remember his *Life Divine*; and "The Tangle of Karma" his *Problem of Rebirth*. "The Divine Plan" expounds the scheme of Existence and Creation in graphic detail, explaining the self-contained poise of the Absolute, its Aspects and the various planes and centres of Consciousness in Manifestation down to the last domain of the physical. "Words of the Master" are in the form of "sayings" and resemble his *Thoughts and Glances*.

A few quotations will serve as an introduction to the book and give a glimpse of its contents :

"First be sure of the call and of thy soul's answer. For if the call is not true, not the touch of God's powers or the voice of his messengers, but the lure of thy ego, the end of thy endeavour will be a poor spiritual fiasco or else a deep disaster."

"Imagine not the way is easy ; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place. Hell will vomit its hordes to oppose and enring and wound and menace ; Heaven will meet thee with its pitiless tests and its cold luminous denials."

"Strive rightly and thou shalt have ; trust and thy trust shall in the end

be justified ; but the dread Law of the Way is there and none can abrogate it.”

“Man in himself is little more than an ambitious nothing. He is a littleness that reaches to a wideness and a grandeur that are beyond him, a dwarf enamoured of the heights. His mind is a dark ray in the splendours of the universal Mind. His life is a striving, exulting, suffering, an eager passion-tossed and sorrow-stricken or a blindly and dumbly longing petty moment of the universal Life. His body is a labouring perishable speck in the material universe. This cannot be the end of the mysterious upward surge of Nature. There is something beyond...”

“Man’s greatness is not in what he is, but in what he makes possible.”

“Unhappy is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment ; for them is irreparable loss or a great destruction.”

“...O Mother of Radiances, my aim in life now and hereafter will be fulfilled in the true and right and vast way. Aspiration wakes in me ! Achieve in me all that I flame for !”

“Philosophy is the study of becoming in general and its method is intuition”.

Bergson—“philosophy of change”...“A philosophy of evolution itself evolving”, “positive and empirical” “moulded on experience, determined to base itself on solid grounds, doctrine in no sense systematic, distinguishes different problems to examine them one by one...enemy of conventionality ...antidote to the dogmatic finality of the traditional philosopher.”

“Psychology is the science of consciousness and its states and operations in Nature and, if that can be glimpsed or experienced, its states and operation beyond what we know as Nature.”

“The Infinite pauses always in the finite ; the finite arrives always in the Infinite. This is the wheel that circles for ever through Time and Eternity.”

Printing and get-up are in keeping with the tradition of the Ashram publications—neat and simple.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

**Atmasamarpan-Yoga** (Hindi) by *Keshavadewa Acharya*. Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Pustakalaya, Railway Road, P.O. Hapur (Meerut) U.P. Pages 40, price 12 Annas.

Dealing with the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo this book is well entitled *The Yoga of Self-Surrender*. The author enunciates three stages of self-surrender

on the part of the seeker. (1) Aspiration, the resolve and the will to surrender in which there is the central decision of the being to turn to the Divine and give itself to Him. (2) Self-giving or Self-dedication. This is achieved by gathering the divergent and stray strains of life in order to give and dedicate oneself to the Divine alone. (3) Self-consecration or Self-offering. In this stage the sadhaka puts himself entirely in the hands of the Divine. "Here I am, a creature, of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened. I offer myself as I am to you, take me up with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies—do whatever you like with me". (*Words of the Mother*) Or in the language of the Gita : "Leaving all codes and conducts of life, O Arjuna, seek thy refuge and protection in Me alone ; surely I will deliver thee from all sins ; grieve no longer."

With the consecration of works to the Divine, one's sadhana will be well-founded on effective surrender : "...afterwards you will realise that the divine Shakti not only inspires and guides, but initiates and carries out your works ; all your movements are originated by her, all your powers are hers, mind, life and body are conscious and joyful instruments of her action, means of her play, moulds of her manifestation in the physical universe. There can be no more happy condition than this union and dependence ; for this step carries you back beyond the border-line from the life of stress and suffering in the ignorance into the truth of your spiritual being, into its deep peace and its intense Ananda."

And when the ego has been completely effaced, this self-surrender becomes the basis of final transformation of human nature, its divinisation. One is totally in the hands of the Divine. "The last stage of this perfection will come when you are completely identified with the Divine Mother and feel yourself to be no longer another and separate being, instrument, servant or worker but truly a child and eternal portion of her consciousness and force. Always she will be in you and you in her ; it will be your constant, simple and natural experience that all your thought and seeing and action, your very breathing or moving come from hers and are her. You will know and see and feel that you are a person and power formed by her out of herself, put out from her for the play and yet always safe in her, being of her being, consciousness of her consciousness, force of her force, ananda of her Ananda. When this condition is entire and her supramental energies can freely move you, then you will be perfect in divine works ; knowledge, will, action will become sure, simple, luminous, spontaneous, flawless, an outflow from the Supreme, a divine movement of the Eternal."

The booklet will be enjoyed by all Hindi-readers for its lucidity of thought, simplicity of language, directness and precision of expression. There is a

frontispiece photograph of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at the time of Darshan. Printing and paper are fine and the price moderate.

“BANDA”

**Secrets of Indian Medicine** by Dr. R. S. Agarwal, published by Dr. Agarwal's Eye Institute, 15 Daryaganj, Delhi. Pages 176; price Rs. 4/-.

The book under review gives a useful and timely interpretation of Ayurvedic principles of Vata, Pitta and Kapha, for the English reader. This Tri-dosha theory is the basis of Indian medicine. But in the light of modern day it needs to cast off its outworn antique garments and take up not fashionable, gaudy and expensive adornments but the simple dress particular to the Indian spirit and temperament. This simplicity of Indian medicine must be brought to a level of efficiency with the refinement most cared-for in the usual Allopathic sphere. Ayurvedic medicines must be somehow made available cheap or free. The herbal wealth of India useful for the preparation of medicines is enormous and it is a pressing necessity that it should be exploited for the health and well-being of the nation as much as possible.

The author wishes to enunciate principles of a synthetic system of treatment. But nowhere in the book do we find any such principles, it is only said that one should collect “all the good points from each system”. It is doubtful whether synthetic systems are developed like that. In fact all systems have particular principles of their own and one cannot just mix the principles to evolve a synthetic system. Such a system is always welcome but will it be a system which “collects” good points from each? Will it not have its own soul and mould, its own principles? For it is always possible that a good point in one system may not remain good when this system comes to be coordinated with another.

But it is perfectly understandable, welcome and beneficial to apply different treatments to a patient if necessary, yet not without giving sufficient time and scope for one particular medicine to work, unless the coordination of different systems of medicine can be such that their *gunas* stand in sympathy and mutuality.

The one or two cases given by the author in support of his theory cannot quite determine anything, because it is not certain which of the medicines have been the cause of real cure in each case. Such efforts require a very detailed and long-enduring and scientific research. These restricted results got from a limited field of a few cases lead one to over-simplification of matters. One needs a steady and prolonged enduring experimentation on scientific lines on different cases in different situations by a team of experts of different



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systems. This will enable one to determine what medicines have worked the wonder or brought the fatality in each case and what principles coordinated or clashed during the experiment. And later another kind of effort will be needed to experiment and determine whether these principles can be brought together into coordination and finally into synthesis and, if so, on what natural, deeper and sounder basis.

The volume, much of whose later part is a near reproduction with minor alterations from the author's earlier-printed books, is written in his usual simple and clear style and will be welcome to those who cannot easily refer to the Ayurvedic shastras and do not require any extensive study of Tridosha. We have an earnest wish that such an attempt to enunciate the Ayurvedic theory of medicine in languages, Indian and foreign, other than Sanskrit in which the Ayurvedic books are written originally, is taken up in other quarters too for the complete rehabilitation of the glory which the Indian system of medicine rightly deserves. And above all will the synthesis be welcome when we arrive at it fulfilling all the indispensable conditions needed for it, after we have passed through a long and complicated process. The author's basic idea and intention are stimulating.

Printing and get-up are simple and praiseworthy.

“BANDA”

# Students' Section

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## TALKS ON POETRY

*(These Talks were given to a group of students starting their University life. They have been prepared for publication from notes and memory, except in the few places where they have been expanded a little. Here and there the material is slightly rearranged in the interests of unity of theme. As far as possible the actual turns of phrase used in the Class have been recovered and, at the request of the students, even the digressions have been preserved. The Talks make, in this form, somewhat unconventional pieces, but the aim has been to retain not only their touch of literature and serious thought but also their touch of life and laughter.)*

### TALK THREE

IN the last two talks we touched on the poetic mood and the poetic process from various sides and gave them a high significance and value. Today I wish to quote a few lines from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, which sum up, as it were, the psychology and metaphysics of poetry. But before I do so I must notice a possible objection to the spiritual view we have taken of the poetic process. We may be told : "All fine poets do not offer us spiritual matter. They speak of all sorts of earthly things and some of them are even disbelievers. Lucretius, the great Roman poet, scoffed at religion, and said that the gods were created by human fear : he was a materialist and atheist by intellectual persuasion."

This is quite true but what it means is simply that a lot of poetry does not directly refer to any divine reality. It does not prove poetry to be non-spiritual in its origin as well as in its process. The spirituality lies fundamentally in the Form and not in the Substance—or, rather, since we have defined Form as really an inward thing exteriorising itself, poetry is spiritual by the manner in which any substance is inwardly experienced and explored and then outwardly expressed in a rhythmic Form answering to the thrill of the experience and exploration. Poetry, whatever its subject, communicates a sense of perfect beauty by its

absolute and unimpeachable expression. All that it says comes with the faultless face and gait of a godhead. How even materialism and atheism could come like this is well suggested by a phrase of Elizabeth Browning about Lucretius. She writes in a poem that he "denied divinely the Divine".

This intrinsic divineness should provide us with a safe passage everywhere in the world of poetry and also steady us against any wavering in our appreciation on account of themes not usually associated with the pleasant, the agreeable. Poetry is of an endless diversity and we shall lose much if we are too choosy. But, of course, first we must learn by sympathy something of the poet's aesthetic mode : without it we shall pervert the drift of his art. The poet has an acute universal aesthesis, he can discover the essence of beauty in what others may pass by as plain or even condemn as ugly. He is not guided by the conventional idea or feeling of the beautiful. He can take up for poetic expression anything that catches his mind. By a subtle transmutation he reveals in the most unpromising subject the significant form which is within or behind it and which, in however weird or bizarre or grotesque a fashion, comes through it under the intensity of the poetic process. The student of poetry should be ready to respond even to what Flecker calls a monstrous beauty

Like the hindquarters of an elephant.

Do not be shocked by this phrase. There is a paradoxical perfection of cumbersome ease in the movements of an elephant's posterior parts, and the poet would be unworthy of the name if he failed to thrill to it and make us light up in response by his word and rhythm. Mark, in passing, how expressive in technique the line is : two initial monosyllables followed by a trisyllable between which and another such word there are again two monosyllables, a symmetrical swaying of two equally long words with short equal intervals, a slow ponderous double movement interspersed with, and thrown into relief by, a pair of small gaps.

Now we may turn to Sri Aurobindo's lines. They occur in Book V, Canto 3, of *Savitri*, where he is describing the early life of Satyavan. Satyavan is called

A wanderer communing with marge and depth.

This is itself a suggestive summary of the poet's mood in its basic orientation. The poet moves among a diversity of things but everywhere he gets into living touch with what seems to overpass the limits of life, he is in his mood always at the edge of things, communing with the beyond and experiencing profundities in all with which he establishes a contact of consciousness. Yes, this line is a good hint of the poetic process. But it is not what I specifically wish to put

## TALKS ON POETRY

before you. The lines I want to quote are some others —six in all, not occurring immediately after one another, but presenting in the combination I have made of them a brief yet precise picture of what I have termed the psychology and metaphysics of poetry. Mind you, I am not saying that Sri Aurobindo is exclusively describing the poetic mood and process : I am adapting to my own purposes some phrases of his that can be taken to describe them because they occur in a context where the inward soul-development of Satyavan is described in relation to his experience and exploration of Nature, a soul-development on a broad scale that does issue also in art-activity on Satyavan's part. Here are the lines:

As if to a deeper country of the soul  
Transposing the vivid imagery of earth,  
Through an inner seeing and sense a waking came...  
I caught for some eternal eye the sudden  
Kingfisher flashing to a darkling pool,...  
And metred the rhythm-beats of infinity.

In the first three lines we have the indication of a new awareness which is not on the surface but in the depth of our being, the depth that is our soul. On a hasty reading, we may be inclined to think that the word "soul" is here used in a general way for our self and that several countries are ascribed to it, some shallow and some deep, and that the reference is not so much to the soul in a special connotation as to "a deeper country". Such an interpretation would be a mistake. The soul is not here a generalisation, it is acutely contrasted to "earth" : the two turns — "of the soul" and "of earth"—are balanced against each other : there are only two countries implied, the country of earth and the country of the soul, the former a surface territory, the latter a "deeper" domain. And by "earth" with its "vivid imagery" is meant the contents of our normal waking consciousness packed with thousands of observations, whereas the "soul" stands for a consciousness other than the life-force and mind operating in conjunction with a material body and brain. This consciousness is ordinarily like a dream-region, but the poet undergoes a novel "wakening" there by which he reinterprets in a different and deeper light the earth-experience. Nor is that all. His reinterpretation involves the experience of new things in the soul's depths, things which are as if earthly objects "transposed" into them but which in reality exist in their own rights, native to those depths and constituting the originals whose copies or representatives are earthly objects. The quality of the experience of these originals is to be gauged from the use of the word "soul". Poetry is primarily a speech of the soul—not the mind's exclamation, not the

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cry of the life-force, not the lifting of the body's voice. All of them are audible too, but in tune with a central note that is the soul's, a note charged with the presence of the Divine. It is because the soul finds tongue through the poet that there is a light in poetry, a delight in poetry. Light and delight are the soul's very stuff, and by virtue of them the poetic expression which fuses the "vivid imagery of earth" with the soul's "inner seeing and sense" is not just a fanciful entertainment but a kind of revelation. Of course it is not directly a spiritual, a mystic movement : it is only indirectly so and even when its subject is spiritual or mystic the poet does not necessarily become a Yogi or a Rishi. But the soul-quality ensures, as Sri Aurobindo puts it in *The Future Poetry*,<sup>1</sup> that the genuine poetic expression is not merely a pastime, not even a godlike one: "it is a great formative and illuminative power."

The psychological instrument of this power is defined by the phrase : "inner seeing and sense." Here the stress is not only on the inwardness : it is also on sight. The poet is fundamentally concerned with the activity of the eye. When he turns to the phenomena of earth, what he busies himself with is their "vivid imagery". An image is something visual. A keen experience of shapes and colours is the poet's speciality and it is this that is conveyed in the words : "seeing and sense". "Sense" is a term suggesting at once perception and feeling and understanding, a contact of consciousness with an object; but the main channel of the contact here is the sight. The perceiving, feeling, understanding consciousness of the poet comes to an active point, an effective focus, through the function of seeing : his the concentration and merging of all sense in vision. "Vision," says Sri Aurobindo in *The Future Poetry*,<sup>2</sup> "is the characteristic power of the poet, as is discriminative thought the essential gift of the philosopher and analytic observation the natural genius of the scientist." A very acute and felicitous statement, this. Note first the noun "power" in connection with the poet. It recalls us to De Quincey's division of literature into the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. Philosophy and science are the literature of knowledge while all prose and poetry that are pieces of art fall under the category of literature of power because they affect the emotions and change attitudes and remould character. Note next the adjective "essential" in relation to the philosopher's gift. Philosophy is supposed to make clear the basic principle of reality, the essence of things. Then note the epithet "natural" apropos of the scientist's work. The scientist cuts into the physical universe and reaches down to its system of laws—his field is what commonly passes as Nature. A born master of words has made the

<sup>1</sup> P. 14.

<sup>2</sup> P. 39.

statement, instinctively using the most expressive turns. But we are not at the moment concerned so much with the art of the statement as with its isolation of the poet's function from the functions of the philosopher and the scientist : this function is primarily neither to think out reality nor to dissect phenomena but to experience the play of light and shadow, fixity and flux, individual form and multiple pattern : the poet may have a philosophic or a scientific bent (Lucretius had both), but he must exercise it in a glory of sight, set forth everything with intimate image, evocative symbol.

The ancient Indian word for poet is *Kavi*, which means one who sees and reveals. Of course the revealing, the making manifest, the showing out is an inevitable part of the poet's function, and it is this function that is stressed in the Latin term *poeta* from the Greek *poetes*, which stands for "maker", "fashioner", "creator". But the whole labour of formation lies in rendering visible, in making us see, what has been seen by the one who forms. The vision is the first factor, the embodiment and communication of it is the second. The Indian name goes to the root of the matter in speaking of the seer who reveals instead of the revealer who has seen. Shakespeare—the greatest poetic phenomenon in English history, poetry incarnate if ever such a thing has happened—bears out the Indian characterisation by the famous passage describing what the poet does. In picturing the poet's activity he speaks of "the poet's eye" —

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

Yes, the poet is primarily a seer, but we may remember that he does not stop with mere sight of the surface of reality : his is not sight so much as insight : he sees through, behind, within, and he bodies forth the forms of things unknown, and there is always something unfathomable about his vision—a distance beyond distance, a depth beyond depth : this constitutes the transcendence of the intellectual meaning by poetry.

Ultimately the transcendence derives from the Supreme Spirit, the Poet Creator whose words are worlds. The human poet's vision has a contact, remote or close, with "some eternal eye," as the phrase runs in the fourth line of our quotation. Sri Aurobindo has written in *The Future Poetry*:<sup>3</sup> "The intellectual,

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 308-9

vital, sensible truth are subordinate things; the breath of poetry should give us along with them or it may even be apart from them, some more essential truth of the being of things, their very power which springs in the last resort from something eternal in their heart and secrecy, *hr̥daye guhāyām*, expressive even in the moments and transiencies of life." Mark the words : "something eternal". In another place in *The Future Poetry*<sup>1</sup> we read that the poet may start from anything, "he may start from the colour of a rose, or the power or beauty of a character, or the splendour of an action, or go away from all these into his own secret soul and its most hidden movements. The one thing needful is that he should be able to go beyond the word or image he uses into the light of that which they have the power to reveal and flood them with it until they overflow with its suggestions or seem even to lose themselves and disappear into the revelation. At the highest he himself disappears into sight : the personality of the poet is lost in the eternity of the vision, and the Spirit of all seems alone to be there speaking out sovereignly its own secrets." Note again the turn : "the eternity of the vision." The Eternal Eye is at the back of all poetic perfection, and what this Eye visions is the Divine Presence taking flawless shape in a super-cosmos. To that shape the poet, in one way or another, converts the objects or events he depicts.

This conversion is the act put before us in the fourth and fifth lines. Every word and turn in them is worth pondering. "I caught," Sri Aurobindo makes Satyavan say. There is implied no mere touching, no mere pulling, not even mere holding. Nothing tentative is here : we have an absolute seizure, a capturing that is precise and complete. The poet gathers and grips a thing unerringly and for good. Such a gathering and gripping suggests to us a shade in the adjective "eternal" which is not directly mystical but still very pertinent to the artistic process. Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* talks of timeless eternity and time-eternity—an eternity which is outside or beyond the time-movement and an eternity which is constituted by time itself going on and on without end. This latter kind—indeinitely continuing world-existence—poetry achieves for whatever it catches. The perfection of phrase in which it embodies its vision makes that vision memorable for ever : it confers immortality on its themes by expressing them in such a way that the expression gets imprinted indelibly on the human mind : it eternises for all future an occurrence or an object of the present or the past. As Landor says :

Past ruin'd Iliion Helen lives,  
Alcestis rises from the shades;

<sup>1</sup> p. 209-10.

<sup>2</sup> p. 48.

## TALKS ON POETRY

Verse calls them forth : 'tis verse that gives  
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Shakespeare in several places in his Sonnets declares that his powerful verse shall outlive marble and the gilded monuments of Princes. In one sonnet he asks : who or what can save you, my lover, from being destroyed or forgotten ? And he gives an answer paradoxically pointed :

O none unless this miracle have might,  
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

Of course, the black ink here is not any and every writing fluid of a dark colour but the contents of the ink-horn in which the quill of Shakespeare got dipped in order to trace on paper the quiverings of his poetic imagination.

Now to the rest of the quotation from *Savitri*. But before we proceed, let us hark back a little to observe an unconscious yet highly relevant pun. A pun, you know, is a play on words, either a use of the same word to suggest different meanings or a use of different words with different meanings but the same sound. A wit at the court of Louis XIV claimed that he could make a pun on any subject. Louis asked him to do so on Louis himself, the king. The pun-maker refused, saying, "Sire, the King is no subject". Here the same word "subject" is employed in the two different meanings of "theme" and "one who is ruled by a king". The second kind of punning word-play finds an excellent example in Hilaire Belloc's epitaph for himself :

When I am dead, let this of me be said :  
"His sins were scarlet, but his books were read."

That the habit of punning is not unworthy of even great poets may be established from the practice of Shakespeare himself. He never misses an opportunity for a *double-entendre*. Three whole sonnets of his are devoted to turning to all possible uses the word "Will", including the use of it for his own name William. Sometimes in the midst of the most serious writing he indulges his pun-mania, so that his poetry is at once godlike in greatness and devilishly clever. One of the most famous instances is the sonnet-beginning,

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action,

which is perhaps too naughty to be explained by me in this young Class and luckily too much of a complex knot—too knotty—for you to unravel on your own.



Of course punning goes back to a time far earlier than Shakespeare's. Even the Rishis of the Rigveda were in a special sense pun-makers. According to Sri Aurobindo, there was throughout the hymns an esoteric cult and an exoteric religion, a hidden spiritual meaning and an outer secular suggestion. *Go*—wait a minute, I am not asking you to take a holiday. I am not using an English word. It is an instance of what the Rishis did : they employed the Sanskrit word *Go* to signify both a ray and a cow. To the ordinary primitive Aryan of the time it stood for a very useful milk-yielding animal but to the initiate it spoke of the pure white light of the Divine Knowledge. The habit of punning which the Rishis started went down as a legacy to later days and reached very ingenious forms in Classical Sanskrit literature where the *slesha* was to be met with at every step. The Classical Sanskrit scholars would have been delighted with Shakespeare and if they had known English they would have paid a compliment simultaneously to his vast learning and to his inexhaustible employment of that learning in the interests of the *slesha*, the pun : they would have called him a real pundit !

Even things like Shakespeare's "his eye I eyed" would have been admired by them. And it is from this bit of somewhat excessive punning that I wish to step you on to the unconscious yet deeply significant *double-entendre* that has occurred in Sri Aurobindo's lines. Mark the phrase : "I caught for some eternal eye .." The first personal pronoun with which it starts may be taken to suggest that the catching for some eternal eye is done by the poet's own visual organ, his own faculty of sight, his own eye. The whole personality of the poet, his total self or "I", is summed up, as it were, in his visual organ : the essential poetic part of a poet's being is his faculty of seeing. And it is through this faculty that he proceeds to discover in all things the significance and value those things could have or should have or do have for the Eye of the Divine Creator.

We are all the more emboldened to point out this pun because in a certain sense all poetry is punning. When we designate it as symbolic what do we mean except that through one thing which is apparent we are pushed on to another which is concealed ? The same image, the same word, has a surface suggestion and a depth suggestion. And in the rest of the passage which I have built up from Sri Aurobindo I am going to read depth suggestions through the surface ones, depth suggestions which are warranted to be there because of the adjective "eternal" which is central to the passage.

AMAL KIRAN

## FLASHES

LOVE is sacrifice. Sacrifice is bloom and doom—bloom of the Soul, doom of the Ego.

God is not a thing to be achieved but a thing to be.

Time and again nearness throws shame, and farness showers fame.

Imagination either devaluates or evaluates the truth. But experience gives to truth its due value.

Often our eyes are stronger than our hands and feet in exercising our pride of authority.

The first and last word of schools, colleges and universities is example and nothing else.

We all know that there is a book called 'the book of fate,' but its Author is ever fond of remaining anonymous.

To-day belongs to us. With it we can make our to-morrow possessed either by God or by Satan.

Strength is the child of Will.

Jealousy is the step-daughter of love and the dearest sister of stupidity.

## MOTHER INDIA

To endure is to qualify for seeing the face of the inner Sun.

Enough cannot satisfy our soul. Plenitude alone can.

A bullock is far better than a man who refuses the yoke of responsibility.

Poetry and music are the disarming smiles of God himself.

To the common run, to promise and forget is as easy as to breathe in and breathe out.

Human life is craving. Divine life is offering.

Quickest are defence and offence of our eyes.

Open your eyes and close your mouth and lo, the thing you seek for is achieved.

Often we love a man for a cause but oftener we hate a man without any.

My enemy can easily be God's friend, but God's enemy can never be my friend.

Humility is the fastest way of climbing God's Himalaya.

CHINMOY

## BIRD OF FIRE

“O BIRD of fire, O beautiful bird,  
Thou hast flown too fast away  
Into the azure Deep unheard.  
Wilt thou not a moment stay ?

O let my small eyes catch thy beauty  
Of the blue and golden wing !  
Leave me not alone, have pity,  
Spare a moment's grace, O King !

Return, O come to me again ;  
Strains my heart to thee alone.”  
“Thou strivest to catch me, all in vain—  
I fly to a liberty unknown”.

“Then sing again, O bird of fire.  
Awake in me the Light's desire.”

SUHASH

## PRESENCE

I WALKED with Her midst meadows green,  
Harkening to the twitter of birds, from far and near  
The robin, the swallow, the nightingale watched me, all keen.  
Happily I strolled, laughed, yet a tear  
Flowed down my cheek ; the silent tall trees cast  
A tender glance and sighed with pity for the ending charm.  
Desire and fear mingled like a fountain fast,  
And joy, lulled by a sweet sadness, made my heart calm.  
The Sun began its downward descent through thorny trees,  
Flung the last beams away with outstretched hand  
And kissed with passion the dust of the land.  
Left lone, dim-gazed I watch—the Presence overpowers my thought and flees.

RAMRAJ

## LIFE'S JOURNEY

LIKE the Fountain's leaping, laughing sprays,  
A child's energies shoot high in the air ;  
In mirth and happiness it speeds along  
Through Life's spaces without a care.

The youth or maid we see like the Brook  
Coily through the woods winding its way ;  
To the weary it brings rest and relief,  
Aspiring to turn a Stream some day.

A forceful River with maturity it grows,  
Coursing boldly through busy lands ;  
Loaded with burdens, it seeks repose  
In the vast ocean where its journey ends.

The constant pouring of the Divine's Grace  
Is seen in the mighty Waterfall—  
Symbol of our Lord's glorious Ascent,  
To bring the Supramental Descent over all.

TIM

## STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

### STUDY NO. I. *THE TEMPEST*

(Continued from the March issue)

#### (C) THE CHARACTERS OF *The Tempest*

THE major characters of *The Tempest* are Prospero, Ariel, Caliban Ferdinand and Miranda. The minor characters are Alonso, Antonio, Gonzalo, Sebastian, Stephano and Trinculo.

Prospero represents higher humanity, exploring the realms of hidden powers, dedicated to the uses of beneficence. His study of the occult leads him to a one-sided concentration away from the field of practical life. His unconcern with the affairs of Milan lead to his fall and exile and, in natural sequence, his arrival on the Magic Island of Sycorax. Here he has scope for the exercise of those faculties of the unseen inherent in his nature. His proper domain was not Milan but the enchanted isle. Here his white magic has full vent. The liberation of Ariel from the tree is a natural incident of his occult studies. The deserted isle gives him full opportunity for his magical pursuits. The planetary position brings his enemies into his hands. This was to test to what use he would put his magic. He chooses the path of the White Magician and not of the black. This decision colours the rest of the action of *The Tempest*. All his acts are necessarily beneficent. Hence the dramatic close of the play in the love and reconciliation with all his enemies. Prospero is the reservoir of magical power wisely directed. He has absolute command of the spirit world. Ariel is his special minister. His attitude to Ariel is austere. His austerity is wisdom. Ariel is a free spirit checked solely by his severity. Early liberation would have marred the course of the main action. He secured Ariel's cooperation by the promise of freedom. His anger is not anger but necessary reproof. It is the seed of correction and not of trouble. He does not torture Caliban but humanises him. He punishes him to tame him. His forgiveness of him is the test of his sincerity. The harshness of his dealings with Ferdinand is directed to try him. There is no temper or cruelty in the character of Prospero. His surface movements must be distinguished from his real beneficent intentions and practical action. The figure of Prospero is in dynamic action throughout the play. In the beginning he is an occultist. Power is his sole concern. The five acts of *The Tempest* are the five expressions of his power. The exercise of power shows him the weakness of power. White Magic demonstrates the illusion. In the conclusion, he transcends the mysteries

of the Force and seeks by its abandonment the truth which lies behind the manifestation of energy. He buries his rod of enchantment five fathoms deep and strives to find the Master who lies beyond the play of Magic. From the magician he becomes the Sage in solitude.

Ariel is a Deva of the fire, the water and the air with the quality of instantaneous change into any shape, visible or invisible. Necessarily he is non-human. He does not belong to Prospero's kingdom. He has no sense of ingratitude. Neither gratitude nor ingratitude are portions of his temperament. A free Spirit, he seeks freedom which pertains to his nature. His obedience to his human master is not drawn from a sense of loyalty, but from the imperative necessity of immediate liberation. His imprisonment by Sycorax in the tree trunk increases this craving for liberty. Ariel is essentially a spirit which seeks an escape from form. All restrictions, however slight, even the work of his Master, is tacitly resented. Where his engagements require formless activity, he runs swift as the wind or quick as the lightning. His habitat is the unseen. There, despite the human fetter, he is happy and emancipated. Ariel is the chief channel of the Force of Prospero. He is his destructive agent. He raises the tempest, fires the ship, scatters the survivors in several parts of the island. He is the magic Power in active operation. He is his constructive instrument. He is the lure which brings Ferdinand to Miranda. He is the love-charm in their eyes. He draws Alonso and his party and Caliban and his conspirators into the cell of Prospero. He is Prospero's subtle seduction which frustrates the schemes of the dark. He confounds the conspiracy of Antonio and Caliban. He is a spirit and a fairy. As the first he is the sovereign of the winds and the waves, and as the second he is the playmate of the flowers. He has quality but not character. His body is a temporary and uncertain clothing. He materialises and dematerialises at will. His presence is as an aroma rather than a material embodiment. His character is aerial and intangible. It lacks the human content. Ariel is above humanity as Caliban is below it. He is an exhibition of an impersonal Force. He looks from above upon the human scene. His Love is a broad and superhuman commiseration for men. He seeks to cure and heal without the human touch. His nimbleness is not the trait of mind but of Spirit, his delicacy is born of the air. His humour is derived of the winds. He is the viewless, impersonal Angel, fretful of human restraint.

If Ariel is the essence of soul, Caliban is the essence of matter. He is therefore subhuman. His body has a chaotic formation. It is an amorphous mass rather than a concrete form. He is mistaken for a landfish or a tortoise. His inner nature is also contaminated and confused. He bows to the stupidity of Stephano and Trinculo. He disavows the potency of the magic of Prospero

of which he is psychically fully aware. Caliban is mindless clay. Morality has not awakened in him and hence his dangerous desire for Miranda. The miracle of creation is that he wins our sympathy by reason of his gross nature and nascent animality. His deformity raises him above Stephano and Trinculo, who by drink have lost the last traces of the human intellect. Their grossness debases them. Caliban's animality calls for pity. Caliban, though below the mental level, has keen occult instincts. He is the brain of the conspiracy against the life of Prospero; yet he does not think. His crude gross instinct suggests to him that the success of the plot lies in the seizure of the occult books of Prospero. In the cell he is not attracted by the rich apparel displayed by the invisible magic of Ariel to trap and divert Stephano and Trinculo. He moves straight to the murder and the capture of the secret literature. He works with the psychic sense which, dark or bright, lurks beneath the mask of his animal nature. Similarly when viewless Ariel confounds by his direct voice from the invisible air Stephano and Trinculo, Caliban alone is aware of the source of subtle sounds and noises. When Prospero arrives upon the magic coast, Caliban alone is cognisant of the dark secrets of the isle. Caliban is the child of the occult. There is a soul, hidden but active, behind his animal form. This is the source of his poetry. Some of the finest verses of *The Tempest* issue from his lips. Caliban is not devoid of the divine urge. His sense of the godhead is only immature. Not possessed of mind, he takes everyone for Setebos. Yet he is in a state of evolution. He receives the first touch of humanity from the caresses of Prospero. To this he reacts with animal ferocity. It kindles his appetite and desire. At the end of the play, he has evolved. Forgiven by Prospero, he leaves the stage in grace and gratitude.

Ferdinand and Miranda are, at the human level, at a point of equilibrium. These characters cannot be separated as they possess a common vibration and work as one. They emerge from the two different worlds, the natural and the supernatural. Ferdinand is a prince from the domain of earth. Miranda has been born in the magic Isle. She has seen no mortal form other than her father, Ariel and Caliban. Her natural scenery is of the mystic seas, the viewless spirits of the air, and musical breathings of the enchanted isle. She is the child of the wonderland. It is the marvel of the supernatural world to that the lover is a stranger that draws Ferdinand to Miranda. It is the miracle of the natural world in which Miranda has never in fullness participated that drives her spirit to the arms of Ferdinand. Their love is in the attraction of two opposite poles of being which, being complementary, demand union. Hence the necessary harmony of the pair. In Miranda womanhood is suppressed, in Ferdinand manhood is incomplete. Ferdinand has not the supernatural



## MOTHER INDIA

grace of the girl of the magic isle. Miranda has not felt the pulsation of the hearts in the commonality of the flesh. Both characters invite the harmonisation of the sexes. Miranda's simplicity, humility, and perfection of womanhood are human qualities, long held back from outer expression, rush in resistless surrender to Ferdinand. Miranda retracts in bashful modesty and womanly confusion from her marriage proposal until firmly held by the arms of love which will not let her go.

In contrast, Alonso, Antonio, Gonzalo, Sebastian, Stephano and Trinculo are human characters at lower and varying levels out of adjustment. They all lack equilibrium. The first four form the nobility of Milan and Naples, and the second two are the butler and jester of the court. The first four stand near the thrones of power and are led solely by their sense of political ambition. Antonio is the villain of the tragedy of Milan. He has usurped the power of Prospero with the assistance of Alonso and Sebastian, and is guilty of the attempted death of Prospero and Miranda. The political intriguer continues his intrigues upon the enchanted isle and contemplates to kill Alonso with the help of Sebastian. His conspiracy is frustrated and his character is unmasked. Alonso, having given his daughter in marriage to the Prince of Tunis, seeks to annex to Milan and Naples the kingdom of Tunis by alliance. Power also is his only aim. He is also held in the secret vice of the Force of Prospero. Deprived of his sole heir, Ferdinand, and at the last conscious of the magic of Prospero he willingly yields to his superior force, and in repentance seeks forgiveness from the hand of his son. Sebastian, the co-conspirator, aiming also at the throne of Naples is disarmed by Prospero. Gonzalo is the wise counsellor of Antonio. He alone is free of ambitions. He is an onlooker of the fight for power. All four are under the direct play of the force of Prospero. All are changed. Stephano and Trinculo sink to even lower levels. They are mental beings with animal appetites. Through intoxication they are unbalanced. Drink sharpens the animal sense of Caliban but destroys the intelligence of Stephano and Trinculo. They do not listen to the counsel of Caliban. Attracted by riches in the cell of Prospero, they fail to burn the occult books of Prospero. They muddle in executing the plan of the conspiracy to kill Prospero and are led by the music of Ariel, into the bog. Stephano and Trinculo are the foil of Caliban. Caliban evolves from his animal nature into the human by the sense of gratitude to Prospero. Stephano and Trinculo sink from their mental nature into the animal. Both groups of characters are grasped by the power of Prospero and are both liberated. All the characters of *The Tempest* Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, Gonzalo, Ferdinand, Miranda, Stephano, Trinculo, Ariel and Caliban, shadowed by the Force, enter into the ring of Harmony. In Prospero the superhuman, the human,

and the subhuman, Ariel, Ferdinand, Caliban find their true friend and emancipator. Out of Magic, Prospero finds himself the spiritualised man standing clear in the supreme Light where Wisdom not Power is potency.

(D) THE DRAMATIC MOVEMENT OF *The Tempest*

The dramatic movement of *The Tempest*, subject to the local limitations of the Greek state, follows broadly the principles of Drama propounded by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. According to the great Philosopher, dramatic action flows from the defect of Character called Harmatia. Imperfection of character is the seed of dramatic action. Praxis is the plot or action working out the imperfection of character. Peripeteia is the fall and crisis of character resulting from the action. Discovery is the realisation by character of the reason or rationale of the action. Pathos is the pity caused by the spectacle of sufferings of character. Katharsis is the purification of character resulting from the completion of the action. Harmatia, Praxis, Peripeteia, Discovery, Pathos, and Katharsis form the six leading principles of Greek Drama. These are synthesised in the seventh principle of the drama—the coherency of plot, action, and character.

The chief figure of *The Tempest* is Prospero. His principal passion is the desire for Power over matter symbolised by White Magic. Thus Harmatia or defect of character works out into action, Praxis, when his enemies fall into his grip upon the magnetic island. His crisis or Peripeteia follows when he learns the illusion of White Magic and when he abandons Power for Wisdom. He discovers the wider truth that Power is appearance when even exercised for noble purposes. This is dramatic discovery. He undergoes with his daughter sufferings in exile from Milan. This is dramatic Pathos. In the conclusion, he drops his quest for Power and buries his magic rod. His character is purified by a completed experience of occultism. This is Katharsis. These six movements of *The Tempest* blend into one in the coherent action of the central character. This constitutes the dramatic unity of the play. The remaining characters, major and minor, of *The Tempest*, Ariel, Caliban, Ferdinand and Miranda and the rest revolve in time and tune with the central motions of Prospero. The drama thus exhibits a coherent unity of Plot, Character and Action. The wreck, the conspiracy of Sebastian against Alonso and of Caliban against Prospero, the engagement of Ferdinand and Miranda, settle on the crucial point, the departure of Prospero, under surfeit of power, from the illusions of the Magic Isle. Dramatic unity is the keynote of *The Tempest*.

SYED MEHDI IMAM