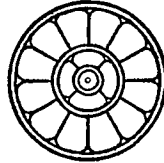


MOTHER INDIA

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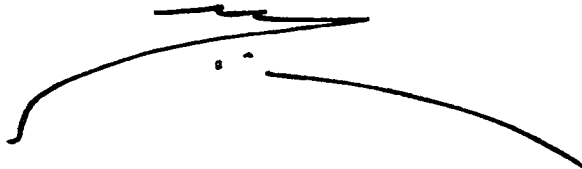


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XI

No. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

MOTHER and I are one but in two bodies ; there is no necessity for both the bodies to do the same thing always. On the contrary, as we are one it is quite sufficient for one to sign, just as it is quite sufficient for one to go down to receive Pranam or give meditation.

*

You should not get upset because I point out your difficulties—you should rather be glad and feel in it a help to get rid of them. What I meant by old ideas and feelings was those which prevent you from accepting the ways of the life here freely—old ideas and feelings remaining from the family and social life in Bengal. And I said it was a pity because you got disturbed because of them instead of remaining in full peace. It was a pity does not mean দুঃখের বিষয়—it simply means in English that it would be better if it were not so.

So, cheer up and don't get sorry for nothing. The change we want of you is not to get troubled by trifles but to remain in all conditions and all circumstances cheerful and contented and happy. If you do that, all the rest will be done for you by the Mother.

31-5-1934

*

...After all when one comes to an Ashram to do Yoga, one leaves social rules, caste, ceremonial purity etc. behind one. Also one tries to practise সমতা (samata) to all people and all things, because the Divine is everywhere. Why not take that attitude instead of the old one ?

*

If you want to have knowledge or see all as brothers or have peace, you must think less of yourself, your desires, feelings, people's treatment of you, and think more of the Divine—living for the Divine, not for yourself.

25-2-1936

*

I

MOTHER INDIA

No—we do not put our picture inside anybody when we give the first blessing. But if you go on looking inside, you will one day find the Mother there.

*

In work there must be a rule and discipline and as much punctuality as possible in regard to time.

What is good work and what is bad or less good work ? All is Mother's work and equal in the Mother's eyes.

*

The Mother's force can come down quite nicely and gently—there is no need of palpitations, giddiness or nausea for that.

The Mother was not at all angry with you. I suppose you expected her to be angry and see like that ?

All the sadhaks do that—and I have not yet been able to cure them of this seeing their own imaginations in the Mother's face or manner.

*

You have now taken the right attitude, and if you keep it all will go better. It is to the divine Mother that you have come for Yoga, not for the old kind of life. You should also regard this as an Asram, not an ordinary Sansar, and in your dealings with others here strive to conquer anger, self-assertion and pride, whatever may be their attitude or behaviour towards you ; for so long as you keep these moods, you will find it difficult to make progress in the Yoga.

8-7-1932

*

It is very silly and childish to have *abhiman* ; for it means that you expect everyone including the Mother and myself to act always according to your ideas and do what you want us to do and never do anything which will not please you ! It is for the Mother to do whatever she finds to be right or necessary ; you must understand that ; otherwise you will always be making yourself miserable for nothing.

28-4-1932

(To Mridu)

FOUNDATIONS OF YOGA

SELF-CONTROL—PURIFICATION OF NATURE—PEACE AND SURRENDER

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Niranjana from the Bengali Letters in "Patrawali")

To have self-control—not to be attracted to anyone, not to encourage the vital pull of anyone and not to throw any vital spell or attraction on a person—this is called remaining sincere within oneself.

★

Why do you speak of sin—it is not sin but human weakness. The soul is ever pure, the psychic being too is always pure and the inner mind, vital and physical can also become pure, yet the old weaknesses of character stick to the outer nature of the external being for a long time ; it is difficult to acquire a perfect purity, complete sincerity, determination ; patience and an ever wakeful vigilance are necessary. If the psychic being remains in front, ever awake, exercising its influence, there is nothing to fear, but often it is not so. The Rakshasi Maya, the evil nature, dupes the mind and finds a way of entry through this old weak point. So every time it has to be chased away and the road blocked.

★

The vital must not be destroyed ; no work can be done without it, indeed life could not be maintained. The vital has to be transformed and made into an instrument of the Divine.

★

Keep within you the peace and the Mother's force and light and do every thing peacefully—then there is no need of anything else—all this will clear up.

★

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This is a conflict of two opposite influences—when the influence of the forces of truth touches the body, everything is cured—the influence of ignorance brings back disease, pain and neurosis.

All that is in the ignorance dwells as light-darkness within a universal consciousness, but that does not mean that light and darkness have the same value. One has to reject darkness and welcome light.

It is not at all necessary to observe rules. If one refuses calmly, quietly and with determination, then gradually the hold of ignorance falls away. If one is upset, (impatient, blind or loses hope), then the forces of ignorance become stronger and gather more courage to attack.

*

The difficulties do not go away easily. Even all the difficulties of a very great sadhak do not disappear in a moment on a fixed day. I have already said it many times that one has to remain peaceful and unagitated and slowly advance with full trust in the Mother—it cannot be done in an instant. “I want everything today”: if you make this demand, it may create more difficulties. One has to remain calm and quiet.

*

There cannot be any ego behind the psychic and the psychic condition. However, the ego coming from the vital tries to associate itself with the psychic. If you observe anything of this nature, do not accept it but surrender it to the Mother in order to be freed from it.

The straight road is the way of the psychic ; it goes up without winding on the strength of surrender and in the light of true vision ; somewhat straight, somewhat circuitous is the path of the mental askesis and completely tortuous is the path of the vital, full of desire and lacking in knowledge ; but as the vital has true yearning, it is nevertheless possible to go by that road.

*

First, the consciousness must be empty and vast in which the light and force from above can find room. If it is not emptied the old movements continue to play and the things from above do not find a suitable place.

FOUNDATIONS OF YOGA

This kind of emptiness comes to the sadhak when the higher consciousness descends into the mind and the vital in order to prepare them before occupying them. Also when the Self is experienced, its first touch brings a vast peaceful emptiness ; later on a vast and massive peace and silence, a calm and immutable Ananda descend into that emptiness.

*

In this yoga the realisation cannot be attained by going upwards alone—the realisation will come when the higher truth, peace and light etc. descend and get fixed in the mind, vital and body.

If the higher consciousness comes down and you reject all the falsehood of the mind, vital and body, the truth will be established.

It will not do to be entirely silent nor is it good. In the early stage to remain silent and grave as much as possible is favourable to sadhana—when the external nature will be full of the Mother, the true consciousness will remain even while speaking and laughing etc.

Contact with the higher consciousness and descent of the nature of that higher consciousness, its peace, knowledge and depth—are the only means of obtaining siddhi in the yoga.

The vital has to be controlled and the Force allowed to occupy the mind, vital and body.

*

This state of sleep is very good. Sleep must be conscious like this.

It happens like this when sleep becomes conscious—the sadhana continues in sleep as in waking.

The rule in this sadhana is to bring down everything, to have all the spiritual experiences in the waking state. Of course, in the early stages there is more meditation and it may be very beneficial right to the end—but, if the experiences are obtained in meditation only, the entire being is not transformed. For this reason to have them in a waking state is a good sign.

*

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Peace is the first to come; unless the whole instrument becomes full of peace, it is difficult for the knowledge to descend. Once peace is established, the vast infinite consciousness of the Mother manifests itself; the ego is drowned in it and finally disappears without leaving any trace. In that infinity only the Mother and Her eternal portion are left.

This is very good. It is a genuine experience. When this peace spreads in the entire being and becomes firm, solid and durable, the first foundation of the spiritual consciousness is established.

To bring down peace and force in the nervous system is the only way to strengthen the nerves.

★

What you have been told from within is really true. Only errors, blunders, falsehood and suffering come from the external consciousness which is a field for the play of the little ego. One has to remain within—the real consciousness which has true feeling and true vision and is free from the least stain of ego, pride and desire; let that grow. Then the Mother's consciousness will be established in you. Pride, conflict and the difficulties of the human nature will come to an end.

The more one thinks of the obstacles, the more power they have over one. One should open oneself to the Mother and think more of the Divine, of the light, peace and Ananda.

This limitless peace, the more it increases, the better it is. Peace is the foundation of the yoga.

When this empty state comes, remain calm and call the Mother. Everyone has this empty state, only when it is full of peace, can it be beneficial. If there is unrest, it gives no result.

THE 15th AUGUST 1959

PRESENTATION OF SRI AUROBINDO'S PORTRAIT
TO THE RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

I

Two months ago my daughters, who have been living in the Ashram at Pondicherry from their early childhood, went out for the first time after about fifteen years to visit some places of pilgrimage in North India and Kashmir. First they came to Delhi and took the opportunity to visit the Rashtrapati Bhavan, its Museum and Art Gallery, where the portraits of the eminent leaders of India are to be seen.

In this visit they had the opportunity of meeting the Rashtrapati himself and were introduced to him as members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. He heartily welcomed them. Suddenly at that moment, to the surprise of all of us, one of my daughters, Tara, told the President that she would like to ask him something if he did not mind. He very kindly gave her permission to do so. Then she asked, "Why, among all the portraits of the great men of India here in the Art Gallery, that of Sri Aurobindo is missing?"

The President felt pleased with this question and after a pause, affectionately replied, "My child, only the portraits of the political leaders are displayed here, and as Sri Aurobindo was considered to be a Maharishi no one thought of placing his portrait there." With due apologies, the girl persisted that Sri Aurobindo had been a great political leader as well, and had played an important part in the political field of our country. Moreover, was there not a portrait of Rabindranath Tagore who had not been a political leader?

The President now fully appreciated her point and turning to his A.D.C. asked him to get immediately a portrait of Sri Aurobindo for the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The next day I received a phone call from the Rashtrapati Bhavan enquiring if the Sri Aurobindo Ashram could provide a suitable portrait of the Master. I replied that I would write to the Mother; and in due course I

MOTHER INDIA

informed the Rashtrapati Bhavan that the Mother had graciously agreed to have a portrait of Sri Aurobindo painted.

The Mother entrusted the painting of this portrait to an eminent artist of the Abanindra School of Oriental Arts Calcutta, Sri Promode Kumar Chatterjee, who is now residing in the Ashram. It was expected that he would take at least six months to paint this portrait. But with the Mother's Grace it was completed in a much shorter time.

Here it will be interesting and significant to note a side of the story, which I came to know later. At first Sri Promode Kumar found it a very difficult job, because the material he had was only four small photos of Sri Aurobindo of the days of the political movement of 1907-1908. The photos had, moreover, faded and become indistinct. To make a representative portrait of Sri Aurobindo out of such material was a problem. Yet it was the Mother's wish that this portrait should be done and it was she who had given him those old photos. So he invoked the Master for days and weeks, and as a response to his prayers the portrait emerged. The artist in all sincerity told his friends that he did not know how he did it. He felt that he was only the instrument in the hands of the One to be painted. So in less than one month the work was accomplished.

II

The second phase of this divine drama, as I now call it, began when I received a letter from Pondicherry saying that the Mother wished the portrait to be presented to the Rashtrapati Bhavan on the 15th August, Sri Aurobindo's birthday, by the Delhi branch of the Ashram to whom it would be sent shortly. She wanted to know the programme of the Presentation Ceremony.

This puzzled me. What ceremony, and why? It is the Government who had the portrait made. How could I ask for a Presentation Ceremony? Yet such was the Mother's wish. So I set about arranging a suitable programme. I also asked for an urgent interview with the President, which was granted.

When I met Dr. Rajendra Prasad I made a request for this auspicious ceremony in the Rashtrapati Bhavan for presenting the portrait on the 15th of August. With an open heart I tried to convey to him how the Mother felt on anything concerning Sri Aurobindo. She had often told us that she had descended upon earth solely to carry out Sri Aurobindo's mission and work. To her the portrait of Sri Aurobindo was a living symbol. The President was obviously moved, but regretted that he would be away from Delhi on the 15th August, and that Dr. Radhakrishnan would be the master of the House, whom he advised me to meet and request officially for a ceremony. I, however,

respectfully asked the President if he would kindly convey my sentiments to the Vice-President, to which he agreed and added that Dr. Radhakrishnan was going to call on him the next day.

Two days later I received news from the Rashtrapati Bhavan that the President had spoken to Dr. Radhakrishnan and that we could get in touch with him and with the Deputy Military Secretary to the President, who would make the necessary arrangements for the ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Accordingly I met the Vice-President with the proposed programme, and he told me that the Rashtrapati had already spoken to him and he had consulted the Prime Minister about it, but there could be no installation ceremony. He would accept the portrait on behalf of the Government. However, when he saw our programme for the ceremony, he very kindly agreed to it. Then when I made the suggestion to arrange the time for 12 noon for receiving the portrait, he readily assented and said with enthusiasm that 12 midday and 12 midnight are the most auspicious hours which can always be fixed even without reference to them, and in support of this he quoted certain slokas and further said that he would come to the function at 11.35 a.m. and would join in the programme to accept the portrait at 12 noon. He also told me that the portrait would be kept in the Rashtrapati Bhavan and when the President returned he would select the final place for it in consultation with the Prime Minister.

I conveyed all these matters to the gracious Mother. Then for some days I hesitated and felt perplexed, but I did not receive any further instructions from Pondicherry, which I had been expecting so much. When only a few days were left I thought that I must now proceed to fulfil the Mother's wishes.

So I phoned the Deputy Military Secretary, Lieutenant Colonel M. Guffran, who immediately said that he had already received instructions and would be glad to make all the arrangements we needed, and that we should go to the Rashtrapati Bhavan to see and finalise the proposed arrangements. So we contacted the Rashtrapati Bhavan and a bright room facing the Moghul gardens was agreed on. At our request the furniture was removed and new carpets were spread, as we wanted to have sitting arrangements for the function. We again visited the Rashtrapati Bhavan the next day and at our request the Deputy Military Secretary agreed to have suitable decorations made.

Mr. S. D. Dhir went to Pondicherry and brought the portrait by air. While handing it over to him the Mother instructed him specially that it should be carried carefully and should always be held by the hands and not be put down anywhere. The portrait was sent from the Ashram to the Madras Airport in a special car, and again Mr. Dhir was instructed by the Mother to hold it carefully and as far as possible not to allow it to be subjected to jolts. At the Palam Air-port the portrait was received on the 12th evening,

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and brought to the Ashram at Delhi and placed in the Meditation Hall for darshan.

On the 13th afternoon, suddenly the Deputy Military Secretary phoned me that he had come to know that the Prime Minister would also attend the function, and that he was wondering why we had not informed him. I replied with as much pleasure as with surprise that it was the first intimation I had of this. He then advised me to get in touch with the Prime Minister's Secretary and obtain confirmation. I went immediately to the Vice-President's residence and was informed that Dr. Radhakrishnan himself had invited the Prime Minister. With great joy I realised this was the Mother's Grace. I phoned the Prime Minister's Private Secretary and told him to convey to the Prime Minister that we felt it a great privilege and welcomed him on this auspicious occasion.

III

Now came the great Day, 15th August,—the “eternal birthday” as the Mother calls it. This day, memorable in the history of India, is doubly momentous. First, because it is the birthday of Sri Aurobindo and, secondly, because it is the day of India's Independence,—“the sanction and seal of the Divine Force,” as the Master has called this wonderful coincidence.

At eleven o'clock the Portrait was taken in a procession of cars from the Delhi Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Nearly eighty people, with many ladies and children, marched in silence carrying the symbol flags of the Mother and of Sri Aurobindo in front. They were received by the Deputy Military Secretary at the entrance and they proceeded into the reception room. There the simple artistic floral decorations, the beautiful carpets on the floor, the attractive pedestal for the portrait, the ālpanā design in the foreground were not only befitting the occasion but reflected the sense of refinement possessed and the pains taken by the decorating artists of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

At exactly 11.35 the Vice-President Dr. Radhakrishnan and the Prime Minister Pandit Jawharlal Nehru arrived. Our heart's greetings went out to them with folded hands. All of us sat on the floor, grouping ourselves around the portrait. Some of the prominent guests were Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, Mr. K. C. Reddy, the Union Minister for Works, Housing and Supply, Sri Surendra Mohun Ghose, M.P., Dr. M. S. Aney, M.P., Mr. Biswanath Das, M.P. and a number of other members of the Government.

The brief programme which preceded the actual presentation ceremony itself consisted of an invocation to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, then followed

ten minutes' meditation, after which there was sung a hymn to Sri Aurobindo. The atmosphere was not of this earth; in that meditative deep calm gathering together with the whole assembly filled with dignity and grace, we felt completely transported.

At 11.45 Mr. S. D. Dhir made the presentation of the Portrait to the Vice-President, on behalf of the Ashram, explaining the significance of the time of this portrait when Sri Aurobindo was only thirty-five, and was fully engrossed in the political movement for the liberation of the Mother Land. Then in a brief but impressive speech our learned Vice-President explained the central principle of Sri Aurobindo's work and sādhanā. He said that work was not divorced from the spiritual life of Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Aurobindo's own life was a demonstration of this fact. He quoted relevant lines from the scriptures of the East and the West in support of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of life and yoga.

This memorable presentation meeting, which had lasted for half an hour, ended with the enchantment of a devotional song. Then sweets, sent by the Mother as prasād from the Ashram, were distributed to all, while cold refreshments were served by the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Then for a short time the Vice-President, the Prime Minister and all the distinguished guests mixed with the audience and chatted freely. Our Prime Minister, who had come just after the strenuous function of the Independence Day celebrations from the Red Fort, looked a little tired in the beginning, and it was evident that this sublime function and the atmosphere of meditation had toned him up and he looked quite cheerful and bright now. He was seen to be often admiring the portrait, and was interested to know of the artist who painted it; also when told about the photograph of 1907 from which the portrait had been painted, he immediately said that in that photo Sri Aurobindo was deeply engrossed in a discussion with Tilak.

Dr. Radhakrishnan added that Sri Aurobindo looked quite young here. "Yes," remarked the veteran leader Dr. M. S. Aney, M.P., "I remember, for I was also thirty-five at the time. I remember quite well, for this face of Sri Aurobindo which is most uncommon to all is the only face that I remember, because I had seen him only in those days."

The final gesture on the occasion was when Dr. Radhakrishnan called me over to him and in a jovial mood asked me, "Mr. Jauhar, are you happy now?" I expressed my gratitude to him for his kindness.

Every one present, including the officials, felt moved, and spontaneously expressed their feeling that they had never had the opportunity of taking part in such a solemn function in the history of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

IV

When the ceremony was over, we were naturally very happy, as we had felt all along that it was the Divine Grace and Power of the Mother, which had conducted the whole movement to its final success.

But from the 16th afternoon I began to feel extremely restless. There was a very great pull such as I had never experienced before. But my work at Delhi was so important and serious that it was practically impossible even to think of leaving. I cannot say how I passed the next two or three days. On the 19th at about 7-30 in the evening I suddenly made up my mind to go to Pondicherry, and at 8.30 I phoned my son Anil to secure a seat on the plane for me and bring the ticket to the Airport. I left for the Airport at 9 p. m. and reached Pondicherry on the 20th afternoon.

Two hours after my arrival I had the happy opportunity of going up to the Mother for pranams. And she spontaneously said : "Oh, you have come after a grand success !" After my grateful pranams I told her that soon after the ceremony I had begun to feel extremely restless to come over to her ; and to that she replied : "Yes, I know." Then I told her that if I had not come now it would have been only in December next, and that would have been a very long gap. To this the Mother said, "Certainly, it was necessary."

As I entered the Ashram, I was surprised to see that the whole Ashram was full of enthusiasm. Everybody who met me expressed his appreciation and kindly feelings ; many congratulated me ; even those who are little known to me or are generally reserved looked at me with fond appreciation. It was a new experience to me. I was embarrassed but at the same time I was trying to understand why such a simple affair as presenting a portrait should move the entire Ashram. Certainly there must be some deeper significance in it, which we may not be able to follow just now.

Practically everyone wanted to know the details from me. But how was I to tell everyone ? Then surprisingly I was asked to speak before all the brothers and sisters in the evening gathering at the Playground. As so many people were interested to get the full report of this divine drama, I could not refuse. I am not accustomed to speak before a big gathering, and least of all in English. Yet by the Mother's grace this was accomplished to the satisfaction of all.

Now that the ceremony is over, I see clearly that the time has come when we must realise how the Mother's Grace is working constant miracles. Though the human in us still doubts, takes all as chance, yet if with a devoted and prayerful attitude we hold on to the work entrusted to us by her, we shall have the privilege of discovering the secret of our success.

THE 15TH AUGUST 1959

Then miracle is made the common rule,
One mighty deed can change the course of things ;
A lonely thought becomes omnipotent.

(Sri Aurobindo - *Savitri*, I. 2.)

SURENDRA NATH JAUHAR

ASPECTS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

IV

ARCHITECT OF FREEDOM

SRI AUROBINDO returned to India early in 1893. For fourteen years he had lived in England divorced from the culture of his country. But

“there was no unhappiness for that reason, nor at that time any deliberate will for re-nationalisation—which came, after reaching India, by natural attraction to Indian culture and ways of life and a temperamental feeling and preference for all that was Indian”¹

His education in England had given him a wide introduction to the culture of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe. He was a brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin. He obtained record marks in these subjects at the competitive examination for the Indian Civil Service which he had taken before he went to Cambridge. At the University, “he was able to win all the prizes in King’s College in one year for Greek and Latin verse”² and “took a high place in the first class of the classical Tripos, Part One, at the end of the second year of his residence”,³ although normally it is taken after three years. He had learned French from his childhood in Manchester and studied for himself German and Italian sufficiently to appreciate Goethe and Dante in the original.⁴ “Besides, he possessed a knowledge of English literature far beyond the average of undergraduates, and wrote a much better English than most young Englishmen.”⁵

Nevertheless, “there was no regret in leaving England, no attachment to the past or misgivings for the future. Few friendships were made in England and none very intimate. There was an attachment to English and European thought and literature, but not to England as a country...If there was attach-

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³ A. B. Purani : *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, p. 23.

⁴ *Sri Aurobindo : A Life Sketch*, p. 32.

⁵ Prothero’s letter, quoted in Purani, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

ment to a European country, it was intellectually and emotionally to one not seen or lived in in this life—not England, but France...”¹

*

Speaking about his first appointment in Baroda, Sri Aurobindo once remarked :

“It is strange how things arrange themselves at times. For example, [just before leaving England] when I was looking for a job, exactly then the Gaekwad of Baroda happened to be in London. I don't know whether he called us or we met him, but an elderly gentleman whom we consulted was quite willing to propose Rs. 200 per month. That is, he thought ten pounds was a good enough sum, and the Gaekwad went about telling people that he had got a Civilian for Rs. 200 ! [The I.C.S. men of those days used to start on an initial salary of Rs. 450 and reached the Rs. 1000 mark within less than five years.]...But I left the negotiations to my eldest brother and James Cotton [a friend of the family]. I knew nothing about life at that time...

It was a disappointment to my father, because he had arranged everything for me through Sir Henry Cotton [a high official in the Indian service]. He had arranged to get me placed in the district of Arrah [in Bihar, then a part of Bengal] which is regarded as a very fine place and that Sir Henry Cotton would look after me. All that came down like a wall...

I wonder what would have happened to me if I had joined the Civil Service. I think they would have chucked me for laziness and arrears of work!”²

However, the Gaekwad had sense enough not to “chuck him for laziness and arrears of work.” Instead, we are told, he gave him “a certificate for ‘ability and intelligence’ but also for lack of punctuality and regularity. If instead of ‘diligent and serious’ and ‘a career of meritorious service’, it were said that he was brilliant and quick and efficient in work, it would be more accurate.”³

The work he was given to start with was the dullest imaginable.

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, pp. 18-19.

² *Purani, op cit.*, pp. 48-49.

³ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, pp. 21-22.

“He was put first in the Land Settlement Department, not as an officer but to learn the work; for a short time in the Stamps Office; then in the Central Revenue Office...Meanwhile, whenever he thought fit, the Maharaja would send for him for writing letters, composing speeches or drawing up documents of various kinds which needed special care in the phrasing of the language...”¹

“Generally, the Maharaja used to indicate the lines and I used to follow them. But I myself was not much interested in administration. My interests lay outside, in Sanskrit literature, in the National movement.”²

He might have equally applied to himself the words which he wrote in 1894 about the early official career of Bankim, the prophet of nationalism in Bengal : “The drudgery of existence met him in the doorway, when his youth was still young.”³ No wonder we find him writing to his sister from Baroda about this time :

“There is an old story about Judas Iscariot, which suits me down to the ground. Judas, after betraying Christ, hanged himself and went to hell where he was honoured with the hottest oven in the whole establishment. Here he must burn for ever and ever; but in his life he had done one kind act and for this they permitted him by special mercy of God to cool himself for an hour every Christmas on an iceberg in the North Pole. Now this has always seemed to me not mercy, but a peculiar refinement of cruelty. For how could Hell fail to be ten times more Hell to the poor wretch after the delicious coolness of his iceberg ? I do not know for what enormous crime I have been condemned to Baroda, but my case is just parallel. Since my pleasant sojourn with you at Baidyanath.⁴ Baroda seems a hundred times more Baroda...I have brought a fund of health with me from Bengal, which I hope it will take me some time to exhaust; but I have just passed my twenty-second mile-stone, August 15 last,... and am beginning to get dreadfully old...”⁵

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¹ *Ibid.*

² Purani, *op. cit.* p. 55.

³ Bankim Chandra Chatterji : *Indu Prakash*, 1894

⁴ A health resort, now in Bihar, where he used to spend some of his vacations with his grandfather.

⁵ Letter dated August 25, 1894, published in *Yugantar* (Calcutta) Puja Annual, 1958.

Sri Aurobindo is once reported to have said to a disciple in the course of conversation : "Politics is a very dirty affair—but unfortunately it is a necessity."¹

In his own case, it *became* a necessity. This is how it began.

"When I came to Baroda from England, I found out what the Congress was like at that time...:Then I came in touch with Tilak [who later became a famous political leader in India] and Deshpande [a Cambridge friend who was at the time the editor of a Bombay weekly, the *Induprahash*] ...Deshpande requested me to write something for the *Induprakash*..."²

The editor of the paper introduced the new-comer in these words :

"We promised our readers some time back a series on our present political progress by an extremely able and keen observer of the present times. We are very much pleased to give our readers the first instalment of that series....The questions at issue are momentous. It is the making or unmaking of the nation. We have therefore secured a gentleman of great literary talents, of liberal culture and of considerable experience, well versed in the art of writing, at great personal inconvenience and probable misrepresentation, to give out his views in no uncertain voice, and, we may be allowed to add, in a style and direction peculiarly his own....We assure them that they will find in those articles matter that will set them thinking and stir their patriotic souls."³

The articles Sri Aurobindo contributed in the first instance were entitled "New Lamps for Old" and were published anonymously. The title "did not refer to Indian civilisation but to Congress politics. It is not used in the sense of the Aladdin story, but was intended to imply the offering of new lights for the old and faint reformist lights of the Congress... The first two articles made a sensation and frightened Ranade [the noted social reformer and a leading figure in the early Congress] and other Congress leaders. Ranade [who was then a judge in the Indian service] warned the proprietor of the paper that if this went on, he would surely be prosecuted for sedition. Accordingly, the original plan of the series had to be dropped at the proprietor's instance. Deshpande requested Sri Aurobindo to continue in a modified tone and he reluc-

¹ "Pages from a Journal" · *Mother India*, October 1952.

² Purani, *op. cit*, p. 55

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

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tantly consented, but felt no farther interest and the articles were published at long intervals and finally dropped of themselves altogether.”¹

*

The first article in the series began with a suggestive caption : “If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into a ditch ?” This was the main theme of his attack on Congress policy and the men who framed that policy. It continued in this vein :

“...I am not ignorant that I am about to censure a body, which to many of my countrymen seems the mightiest outcome of our new national life ; to some a precious urn in which are guarded our brightest and noblest hopes ; to others a guiding star which shall lead us through the encircling gloom to a far distant paradise : and if I were not fully confident that this fixed idea of ours is a snare and a delusion, likely to have the most pernicious effects, I should simply have suppressed my own doubts and remained silent. As it is, I am fully confident, and even hope to bring over one or two of my countrymen to my own way of thinking, or, if that be not possible, at any rate to induce them to think a little more deeply than they have done.”²

And then a first fling at those admirers of British institutions who wished to import the methods of nineteenth century parliamentarism into the Indian question :

“I know also that I shall stir the bile of those good people who are so enamoured of the British Constitution, that they cannot like anyone who is not a partisan. ‘What!’ they will say, ‘you pretend to be a patriot yourself, and you set yourself with a light heart to attack a body of patriots, which has no reason at all for existing except patriotism,—nay, which is the efflorescence, the crown, the summit and coping-stone of patriotism ? How wickedly inconsistent all this is ! If you are really a friend to New India, why do you go about to break up our splendid unanimity ? The Congress has not yet existed for two lustres ; and in that brief space of time has achieved miracles. And even if it has faults, as every institution, however excellent it may be, must have its faults,

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 27.

² “New Lamps for Old”, *Induprakash*, August 7, 1893.

have you any plausible reason for telling our weakness in the streets of Gath, and so taking our enemies into the secret ?'...

Now, if I were a strong and self-reliant man, I should of course go in the way I had chosen without paying much attention to these murmurers, but being, as I am, exceedingly nervous and afraid of offending any one, I wish to stand well, even with those who admire the British Constitution. I shall therefore find it necessary to explain at some length the attitude which I should like all thinking men to adopt towards the Congress....

Let us grant for the moment that the Congress has achieved miracles for us. Certainly, if it has done that, we ought to hold it for ever in our grateful memory ; but if our gratitude goes beyond this, it at once incurs the charge of fatuity. This is the difference between a man and an institution ; a great man who has done great things for his country, demands from us our reverence, and however he may fall short in his after-life, a great and high-hearted nation—and no nation was ever justly called great, that was not high-hearted—will not lay rude hands on him to dethrone him from his place in their hearts. But an institution is a very different thing ; it was made for the use and not at all for the worship of man, and it can only lay claim to respect so long as its beneficent action remains not a memory of the past, but a thing of the present. We cannot afford to raise any institution to the rank of a fetish. To do so would be simply to become the slaves of our machinery.

However I will at once admit that if an institution has really done miracles for us,—and miracles which are not mere conjuring tricks, but of a deep and solemn import to the nation,—and if it is still doing and likely to do miracles for us, then without doubt it may lay claim to a certain immunity from criticism. But I am not disposed to admit that all this is true of the Congress...."¹

There follows a long reasoned argument on the achievements of the Congress during the first eight years of its existence.

(To be continued)

“PUBLICUS”

¹ *Ibid.*

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the previous issues)

(19)

A SAVING PORTENT

IN 1950, I was returning from Pondicherry after the darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. On the way, as my journey had to be broken at a city where my younger brother was working in an office, I went to see him. Later he came to see me off at the railway station. When I was going to board the intended train, I felt a strange uneasiness within me. I told this to him. He replied that it could be nothing, maybe I felt uncomfortable because of the hustle-bustle and the clatter on the platform. Yet something in me was not convinced and kept me back from travelling by that train. Anyway I decided to go by the next train which left after a couple of hours.

When I reached another station midway my journey back home, there the news was about that the train in which I had desisted from travelling had met with an accident some stations ahead and for that reason our train would not be leaving the platform for a time.

Although I was entirely ignorant of the coming calamity, the Mother portended to my heart inwardly by that knowing uneasiness not to travel by the first train and saved me from the fatal consequences.

STRENGTH OF THE WEAK

During our stay at Madras from 1952 to 1955, we often heard from various people a story of two birds (eagles) believed to be two ancient Rishis flying daily from Benaras to pay their homage to the Lingam of Shiva in the temple of Trikalikundam which is on the top of a steep hill about 45

* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or the compiler—or directly to the Mother.

miles far from the city. We naturally felt a desire and a curiosity to visit the place. But unfortunately every time we had to postpone our visit as I was suffering from asthma and used to find it difficult even to climb an ordinary staircase. At last in March 1955, my husband received an order of transfer from Madras. Hearing of it I and my child went to Pondicherry to receive our farewell Blessings from the Mother. On my return I asked my husband to arrange for our long-cherished visit to Trikalikundam and Mahabalipuram, for if we missed them now we might not get a second chance again. My decision was happy news to my husband though he felt a bit nervous and worried on account of my weak and asthmatic condition. How could he possibly believe that I who could not climb an ordinary staircase would be able to perform the task of climbing a huge hill up 600 steep stony steps ! However, finding me adamant and undaunted he agreed to my proposal, perhaps secretly believing that I might have brought with myself some divine strength from the Ashram. So, next morning along with our little boy who was nine years then, we reached the spot in a taxi. There were lots of people ready to go up for the sight of those strange birds. My husband enquired if there was any means available to carry me up, but there was no such arrangement. I looked at the top of the hill and felt dizzy for a moment, but I lost neither courage nor confidence, for I felt convinced that my heart's prayer to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had been answered and they were sure to carry me through. I inwardly placed myself like a little child in the lap of the Mother. As soon as I did that I at once felt light and happy and was filled with enthusiasm like my little son at the very idea of marching up and up to reach the summit. My husband was rather apprehensive not only on my account but even for himself ! We started our upward journey. Believe it or not I was feeling so light and strong that I went on merrily jumping like a bird ; I forgot all about my physical limitations. So much so that now I started teasing my husband who in spite of his good health and strong body was showing signs of exhaustion. Oh ! how happy and grateful I felt when at last I reached the top at the exact appointed time and actually saw the birds coming down from distant skies like aeroplanes, eating *prasad* from the hands of the Pujari and then flying back to their destination.

When we got down from the hill I was in such a good condition that we proceeded to Mahabalipuram and there further wandered about to see the caves etc. On our return my husband said that I was sure to feel the after-effects of the difficult journey when I lay down and relaxed. But instead I had sound sleep and got up hale and hearty next morning ! My husband whose muscles were aching was wondering at the miracle !

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Whenever I am reminded of the above experience my heart is filled with joy and gratitude and automatically these words come out :

*mūkam karoti vācālam paṅgum laṅghyate girim
yatkr̥pātamaham vande parmānandamādhavam*

Salutations to Him, the Supreme Delight,
By whose great Gracious Might,
The dumb is made to speak,
The lame to scale the peak.

(To be continued)

Reported and Compiled by
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

VICTIMS OF INTELLECT

“The human mind even at its best is a stupid thing...”

Sri Aurobindo

THERE is something humorous in the fact that as a rule each of us is inclined to regard the other as something of a fool ; not an absolute fool perhaps, but, in comparison to ourselves, somewhat inferior. We make an exception of course of those who have achieved some reputation for wisdom ; they are inviolate and we feel safe to regard them with distinction. But as to lesser mortals, well, they are the ‘run of the mill’ with whom we must be patient until they measure up to our own satisfactory standard of intelligence.

Seen from the other viewpoint, we in our turn must be resigned to being considered lacking, to being viewed more in the bleak light of what we do not know rather than what we do know. Our discrepancies are laid like heavy marks against us and often we must fail to please our intellectual examiners.

It is notable, and often noticeable, that when we perceive another’s intellectual inferiority, our egoism is bolstered with an encouraging sense of superiority and we can thus face life with a little more confidence ; for life is often a tedious business and we will gladly clutch at whatever support there may be. How often are our dearest friends those on whom we can comfortably ‘stand’ ! They assure us of our worth which would apparently be in doubt did they not submissively take a position below us, and we are comforted by a spuriously moral support. Equality must ever be repugnant to us if it robs us of our significance and, while it may be easy for us to follow the example of Ramakrishna and discard the distinctive thread of the Brahmin, we may find that the caste of Intellect is not so easy to renounce.

Yet when we come to examine the matter we see how naive and often primitive are the attitudes of the too-self-consciously intellectual. The pride of mind is not so far removed from the pride of body and, while the thinker may regard it as absurd for a man to fall in love with the contours of his own body, he often fails to see that he himself has been seduced by the agreeable qualities of his own mind. He has become a victim of Intellect.

Very often the power of intellect is employed very much in the same way as our primitive ancestors used the power of muscle. The cave-man on encountering a stranger would instinctively ask himself, “Can I kill him ?” Nowadays, however, we have grown a trifle more refined—except perhaps in pugilistic circles—and the instinct is sublimated to : “Can I subdue him intellectually ?” And when we succeed in reducing our opponent to a state of

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blithering intellectual impotency, we feel much the same glow as the victorious gladiator or the conquering cave-man.

Young children, and stress must be laid on the adjective, are free from intellectual egoism, which perhaps contributes to their charm. They possess the virtue of knowing that they do not know and can thus be likened to the wise. Nor have they yet been tutored to feel shame because of their not-knowing. But alas, the state is transient and children seem to grow out of a natural and spontaneous wisdom into a proud and civilised ignorance. There is somehow a tyranny in custom that induces pride and self-awareness and gives the twist to what otherwise might be straight and unaffectedly simple. The blight of egoism is but postponed.

To the young boy, his father begins by being something of a hero. He admires his strength, his confident capacity, the bulwark he provides against a much-too-large and sometimes frightening world. There seems nothing his father cannot do or know. As the years pass and the growing lad begins to manifest the signs of dawning manhood, he is apt to revise his opinion and consider his father something of a fool. The young eagle, in the proud discovery of his strength, feels much swifter than the old. Later, however, as he grows a little more and comes to know the buffets and blows and injustices of the world, he regains a healthy respect for his father who has apparently fronted them all and survived. He recognises the value of experience and learns also not to be overwhelmed by discoveries which though excitingly new to him are old and dusty to his forbears.

At the moment of writing, the writer ruefully recalls an incident of his own youth, an incident distinguished for its callowness. The details may be vague but the essentials remain.

One Sunday, many years ago, while listening to the parish minister delivering his sermon, he noticed that the man possessed a considerable histrionic talent which he was using most freely. Hell had never before sounded so hellish, and Heaven which had a decidedly Scottish flavour was never more enticing. The man stood there making magnificent gestures in his sombre robes and speaking with a grandiloquence that seemed wasted on so small a congregation. Small, because the Scottish climate is often bitter and when huddled near the fire on a gusty Sabbath night it was difficult to leave, even for the Church. It was perhaps a matter of preferring the wrath of God to the fury of the elements.

Having made the discovery that the minister was also a competent actor, the youth was almost overwhelmed by his knowledge; he also felt that no-one else could possibly have been so acutely observant as himself.

Shortly afterwards, he had occasion to visit the minister on some domestic matter. When the business was finished, a conversation began in which the

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youth made it evident that he had observed the histrionic personality of his host and wasn't quite sure whether to find it admirable or not.

The minister, a good and patient man, smiled tolerantly. The callowness of youth had long ceased to be offensive and had become merely amusing. He replied, in effect : "It is true that I act a little. It is useful to emphasize or illustrate a point. And if I can't convince, at least I can entertain. I don't doubt that in all walks of life, from the lowest to the highest, there are people with a capacity for acting or dramatisation, and if the pulpit gives me an opportunity to exercise mine, it need not imply insincerity. And can it be questioned that to use whatever talent we possess in the service of God is anything but good ?" All this was said in such a simple and disarming manner as to make the youth realise that his precious piece of perception had gone to his head and had made him priggish; a little knowledge had become egoistically dangerous.

To recall our own *faux-paux* may prove embarrassing, yet it might ensure some kind of humility. "I shall believe in Intellectuals", someone has remarked, "when I meet a humble one." Humility, like the heart, is not devised for wearing on the sleeve, yet even if it were it might still be difficult to encounter a humble intellectual.

The question, though, is perhaps a matter of values, and the transition from worldly to spiritual values is not achieved overnight. If fault there be we must charge it to the general Ignorance which in the normal run of things is the climate wherein we dwell, and is responsible for our world. Our values and beliefs are stereotyped and customary, they are fashioned for us by society and we are lulled into a thoughtless acquiescence in, and acceptance of, their highly-respected but impotent gods.

"How can ye believe (in Me)," said Christ, "which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God alone ?"¹

The famed intellectual is greeted with much 'honour from men', sometimes even an adulation calculated to make Hollywood filmstars green with envy, while the quiet lover of God is considered of little account. The knee of the worldling bows readily to a power which is to him both comprehensible and worthy of veneration, the power of the mind; and the power of God is seldom acknowledged. The truly wise are as a rule ignored, which is indeed all they would ask since they already 'have their Reward' and would contentedly leave others to theirs.

In discussing the difficulties of an integral Yoga, one hears so much of 'vital troubles' but comparatively little is heard of 'intellectual troubles' which can be just as frequent and as difficult to eradicate since we insist on the supre-

¹ John 6.44.

macy of the intellect to the deficit of the soul. In the experience of Margaret Scotti, the Christian mystic, pride lies at the root of the trouble and she advocates the 'surrender of the understanding' :

“Pride is the greatest obstacle to believing in God, for it will not suffer the Intellect to become the slave of Faith, bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of God.

Faith requires that all pride of soul be brought low and humbled before the majesty of a God who speaks and reveals His mysteries in order to receive from us the sacrifice (surrender) of the understanding, which is first in order—destroying every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.”

Intellectual exaltation, the ballooning of intellectual egoism, the proud awareness of our mental capacities, the pleasure of verbal gymnastics raise a formidable barrier to the delight and knowledge of God. Even the most complete metaphysical understanding when it is prized for itself and not for That to which it points becomes merely a stumbling-block to the only real and spiritually concrete Experience.¹

On the other hand, intellectual or mental surrender does not mean a witless nullification of thought. It is an attitude formed by the knowledge that we are other than the mind, and that like the body it can serve us once we have taught it not to tyrannize over us. For the mind like the body can give us pleasure or pain and both can enslave the soul.

As in so many other things, a sense of humour, an appreciation of the ridiculous, a capacity to laugh at our own pretensions, intellectual or otherwise goes far to keep us balanced. There comes to mind, however, the story of the young lady who had recently graduated with full honours from her University. Her particular sport was skating and one day whilst performing a difficult and speedy manoeuvre, she fell very abruptly and was propelled in a sitting position for several yards across the ice. Her fellow-skaters considered this excruciatingly funny and roared with laughter. She, however, was indignant. Regaining her feet she drew herself up imperiously and said, “Don't you realise that I am an M.A. ?”

GODFREY

¹ In Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, a book that was prized by the great Vivekananda, there is a passage : “There is a great difference between the wisdom of a devout man lightened by grace, and the cunning of a subtle and studious clerk. That learning is much more noble and much more worthy that cometh by the influence and gracious gift of God, than that which is gotten by the labour and study of man ” The use of “clerk” is forceful and ironic.

TWO POEMS

DISSATISFACTION

WHAT music do I hope to hear
That this is not it ?
What writing do I miss
When I leave this book for another ?
This painting is full of colour
But it is not this
Not this.

Standing by an uncurtained window at night
There is undifferentiated depth outside
The light is behind me
Ahead only what I cannot see.
I must go outside.

AGAINST DARKNESS

NEVER O dust into the returning night reduce
Sunlight in memory and the God-returning fire.
Never O dust to dust with no bright residue resign
But upward with crescendo of incantation rise aspire
Know you are star dust. Against darkness loose
Ardent and golden the sidereal flame. So shine.

DICK BATSTONE

BROTHER MAN

You say that you love me—
And I believe you.
But do not try to possess me.
Leave that alone, to God, I beseech you.

You say I am not enough with you—
And I say, yes, enough.
For often I am more with you when
I am absent in the flesh.
Let me have my secret time with God,
And take your own time with Him,
And we will be more together than you dream.

IRWIN L. ARLT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Continued from the previous issue)

(19)

VI. AGONY OF SEPARATION

(Continued)

40. O MYSTIC MESSENGER !

O MYSTIC messenger of space !
Convey my message to the Mother of Love,
Carry the speechless orison to my being's source
And secretly tell Her of the dying soul's wordless call.
Narrate to Her my bruises received at destiny's hands ;
Recount the wounds Time ceaselessly inflicted upon me.
O atmosphere calm and quiet, O air careless, free !
No more be at peace—doom-tense is the hour.
Put on thy wings of flight and lose no time.
Quick, quick ere lost is the one opportunity
And life is left barren and stark.
Relate silently in a tone humble and meek :
“Darker gets the plight of the fainting child,
On all sides prevail obscurity and the mist.”
Call on Her—the period is short.
Prostrate thyself and pray in a submissive note ;
Humiliate thyself to thy breath's end.
Claim not her attention by noise and din ;
Cry not in an arrogant and haughty voice ;
Weep not in a clamour of demand and desire ;
Shed not thy tears in lamentations weak
Lest some black nurse happen to overhear,
Lest a dark influence succeed in cutting off the finer link,
Lest an evil eye fall on the purer bond.

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O carrier of the echoes of my sinking self !
Go at once, beseech, beg and throw thyself
At Her Feet, and return not
Till Her eyes of grace turn to thee in answer,
Till a music divine starts pouring from Her lips,
Till the compassion-milk streams from Her breasts,
Till a supernal love overflows from Her heart,
Till the mercy supreme responds to the last prayer
Or till thou get thyself exhausted forever.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

MEANING IN HISTORY

“DANS chaque pays, la meilleure éducation à donner aux enfants, consiste à leur enseigner quelle est la vraie nature de leur pays, ses qualités propres et la mission que leur nation doit remplir dans le monde, sa place véritable dans le concert terrestre.

A cela doit s'ajouter une vaste compréhension du rôle des autres nations, mais sans esprit d'imitation et sans jamais perdre de vue le génie propre de leur pays...”¹

[“In any country the best education that can be given to children consists in teaching them what the true nature of their country is and its own qualities, the mission their nation is to fulfil in the world and its true place in the terrestrial concert.

To that should be added a wide understanding of the role of other nations, but without the spirit of imitation and without ever losing sight of the genius of one's own country...”]

The Mother gave this Message on the occasion of the inauguration in April 1955 of a French Institute in Pondicherry. This may be taken as the charter and sanction for all students and teachers of history. It also gives history a method and a meaning.

*

We might recall in this connection some words of Sri Aurobindo.

“The earth is in travail now of one common, large and flexible civilisation for the whole human race into which each modern and ancient culture shall bring its contribution and each clearly defined human aggregate shall introduce its necessary element of variation...”²

At present, the first great need of the psychological life of humanity is the growth towards a greater unity; but its need is that of a living

¹ *Bulletin of Physical Education*, April, 1955.

² *The Ideal of Human Unity*, chapter 6.

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unity, not in the externals of civilisation, in dress, manners, habits of life, details of political, social and economic order, not a uniformity, which is the unity towards which the mechanical age of civilisation has been driving, but a free development everywhere with a constant friendly interchange, a close understanding, a feeling of our common humanity, its great common ideals and the truths towards which it is driving and a certain unity and correlation of effort in the united human advance... For the final end is a common world-culture in which each national culture should be, not merged into or fused with some other culture differing from it in principle or temperament, but evolved to its full power and could then profit to that end by all the others as well as give its gains and influences to them, all serving by their separateness and their interaction the common aim and idea of human perfection..."¹

*

"Towards the spirit if not all the way to it man must rise or he misses his upward curve of strength ; but there are different ways of approach to its secret forces. Europe, it would seem, must go through the life and the reason and find spiritual truth by their means as a crown and a revelation.... But Asia, or at any rate, India lives naturally by a spiritual influx from above ; that alone brings with it a spiritual evocation of her higher powers of mind and life....

The two continents are two sides of the integral orb of humanity and until they meet and fuse, each must move to whatever progress or culmination the spirit in humanity seeks, by the law of its being, its own proper Dharma.

A one-sided world would have been the poorer for its uniformity and the monotone of a single culture ; there is a need of divergent lines of spirit in which there is a light broad enough to draw together and reconcile all highest ways of thinking, feeling and living. That is a truth which the violent Indian assailant of a materialistic Europe or the contemptuous enemy or cold disparager of Asiatic or Indian culture agree to ignore. There is here no real question between barbarism and civilisation, for all masses of men are barbarians labouring to civilise themselves. There is only one of the dynamic differences necessary for the completeness of the growing orb of human culture..."²

¹ *Ibid.*, chapter 31.

² *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Book Two, Chapter 4.

MEANING IN HISTORY

From the view of the evolutionary future European and Indian civilisations at their best have only been half achievements, infant dawns pointing to the mature sunlight that is to come. Neither Europe nor India nor any race, country or continent of mankind has ever been fully civilised from this point of view ; none has grasped the whole secret of a true and perfect human living, none has applied with an entire insight or a perfectly vigilant sincerity even the little they were able to achieve...

Not only are there everywhere positive, ugly, even "hideous" blots on the life of man, but much that we now accept with equanimity, much in which we take pride, may well be regarded by a future humanity as barbarism or at least as semi-barbarous and immature. The achievements that we regard as ideal, will be condemned as a self-satisfied imperfection blind to its own errors ; the ideas that we vaunt as enlightenment will appear as a demi-light or a darkness. Not only will many forms of our life that claim to be ancient or even eternal, as if that could be said of any form of things, fail and disappear ; the subjective shapes given to our best principles and ideals will perhaps claim from the future at best an understanding indulgence. There is little that will not have to undergo expansion and mutation, change perhaps beyond recognition or accept to be modified in a new synthesis.

In the end the coming ages may look on Europe and Asia of today much as we look on savage tribes or primitive peoples. And this view from the future, if we can get it, is undoubtedly the most illuminating dynamic standpoint from which we can judge our present, but it does not invalidate our comparative appreciation of past and extant cultures."¹

*

What then should be the criteria by which a culture is to be judged ? For this is a major problem facing the student of history ; he is always in danger of missing the wood for the trees.

"It is essential, if we are to get a right view of...any civilisation, to keep to the central, living, governing things and not to be led away by the confusion of accidents and details...

A civilisation, a culture must be looked at first in its initiating, supporting, durable central motives, in its heart of abiding principle ;

¹ *Ibid.*, Book I, chapter 3.

otherwise we shall be likely to find ourselves...in a maze without a clue and we shall stumble about among false and partial conclusions and miss entirely the true truth of the matter...¹

The whole aim of a great culture is to lift man up to something which at first he is not, to lead him to knowledge though he starts from an unfathomable ignorance, to teach him to live by his reason, though actually he lives much more by his unreason, by the law of good and unity, though he is now full of evil and discord, by a law of beauty and harmony, though his actual life is a repulsive muddle of ugliness and jarring barbarisms, by some high law of his spirit, though at present he is egoistic, material, unspiritual, engrossed by the needs and desires of his physical being. If a civilisation has not any of these aims, it can hardly at all be said to have a culture and certainly in no sense a great and noble culture...

Misfortune is not a proof of absence of culture, nor good fortune the sign of salvation. Greece was unfortunate ;...yet Europe owes half its civilisation to those squabbling inconsequent petty peoples of Greece. Italy was unfortunate enough in all conscience, yet few nations have contributed more to European culture than incompetent and unfortunate Italy...²

Culture cannot be judged by material success...Philosophic, aesthetic, poetic, intellectual Greece failed and fell while drilled and militarist Rome triumphed and conquered, but no one dreams of crediting for that reason the victorious imperial nation with a greater civilisation and a higher culture. The religious culture of Judea is not disproved or lessened by the destruction of the Jewish State, any more than it is proved and given greater value by the commercial capacity shown by the Jewish race in their dispersion...

A culture must be judged, first by its essential spirit, then by its best accomplishment and lastly, by its power of survival, renovation and adaptation to new phases of the permanent needs of the race...³

★

The question arises: how do we apply these criteria to a particular case ?

¹ *Ibid.*, Book III, chapter 3,

² *Ibid.*, Book III, chapter 4.

³ *Ibid.*, Book II, chapter 3.

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“The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects.

There is a side of thought, of ideal, of upward will and the soul’s aspiration; there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation.

A people’s philosophy and higher thinking give us its mind’s purest, largest and most general formulation of its consciousness of life and its dynamic view of existence. Its religion formulates the most intense form of its upward will and the soul’s aspirations towards the fulfilment of its highest ideal and impulse. Its art, poetry, literature provide for us the creative expression and impression of its intuition, imagination, vital turn and creative intelligence. Its society and politics provide in their forms an outward frame in which the more external life works out what it can of its inspiring ideal and of its special character and nature under the difficulties of the environment. We can see how much it has taken of the crude material of living, what it has done with it, how it has shaped as much of it as possible into some reflection of its guiding consciousness and deeper spirit.

None of them express the whole secret spirit behind, but they derive from it their main ideas and their cultural character. Together they make up its soul, mind and body...”¹

The culture of a nation is not a static thing. It grows, has its period of maturity, then it declines and possibly dies, unless it has vitality enough to start on a fresh cycle of progress. This too we must clearly grasp if we are to understand its past.

“But there must be in any culture aiming at completeness, not only great and noble governing and inspiring ideas, but a harmony of forms and rhythms, a mould into which the ideas and the life can run and settle.... Form has a certain fixity which limits; no form can exhaust or fully express the potentialities of the idea or force that gave it birth. Neither can any idea, however great, or any limited play of force or form bind the infinite spirit : that is the secret of earth’s need of mutation and progress....

In the history of all great cultures therefore we find a passage through three periods, for this passage is a necessary consequence of this truth

¹ *Ibid.*, Book II, chapter 2.

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of things. There is a first period of large and loose formation; there is a second period in which we see a fixing of forms, moulds and rhythms; and there is a closing or a critical period of superannuation, decay and disintegration. This last stage is the supreme crisis in the life of a civilisation; if it cannot transform itself, it enters into a slow lingering decline or else collapses in a death agony brought about by the rapid impact of stronger and more immediately living though not necessarily greater or truer powers or formations. But if it is able to shake itself free of limiting forms, to renovate its ideas and to give a new scope to its spirit, if it is willing to understand, master and assimilate novel growths and necessities, then there is a rebirth, a fresh lease of life and expansion, a true renaissance...."¹

*

And lastly, it will never do to forget that no nation can live or has in the past actually lived, alone and all by itself; there are always interactions and mutual influences.

“Not only when a lesser meets a greater culture, but when a culture which has fallen into a state of comparative inactivity, sleep, contraction, is faced with, still more when it receives the direct shock of a waking, active, tremendously creative civilisation, finds thrown upon it novel and successful powers and functionings, sees an immense succession and development of new ideas and formations, it is impelled by the very instinct of life to take over these ideas and forms, to annex, to enrich itself, even to imitate and reproduce, and in one way or in another take large account and advantage of these new forces and opportunities. That is a phenomenon which has happened repeatedly in history, in a greater or a lesser degree, in part or in totality....”²

This interchange has often taken continental proportions.

“In the historic ages of the present cycle of civilisation the movement [of human progress] has been almost entirely centred in the twin continents of Asia and Europe....As the cycle progressed, the Eastern continent has more and more converted itself into a storehouse of spiritual

¹ *Ibid.*, Book II, Chapter 6.

² *Ibid.*, Appendix.

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energy sometimes active and reaching forward to new development, sometimes conservative and quiescent. Three or four times in history a stream of this energy has poured out upon Europe....

The first attempt was the filtering of Egyptian, Chaldean and Indian wisdom through the thought of the Greek philosophers from Pythagoras to Plato and Neo-Platonists; the result was the brilliantly intellectual and unspiritual civilisation of Greece and Rome. But it prepared the way for the second attempt when Buddhism and Vaishnavism, filtered through the Semitic temperament, entered Europe in the form of Christianity.... The Islamic invasion of Spain and southern coast of the Mediterranean... may be regarded as a third attempt. The result of its meeting with Graecised Christianity was the reawakening of the European mind in feudal and Catholic Europe and the obscure beginnings of modern thought and science. The fourth and last attempt which is yet only in its slow initial stage is the quiet entry of Eastern and chiefly of Indian thought into Europe....

On the other hand, there have been two reactions of Europe upon Asia; first, the invasion of Alexander with his aggressive Hellenism which for a time held Western Asia, created echoes and reactions in India and returned through Islamic culture upon mediaeval Europe; secondly, the modern onslaught of commercial, political, scientific Europe upon the moral, artistic and spiritual cultures of the East....¹

History has to take note of all this, and a lot more besides.

SANAT K. BANERJI

¹ *Ideals and Progress*, "Our Ideal."

THE GOD OF THE SCIENTIST

It is meaningless to hold that a scientist must necessarily be an atheist. There is no need to cite instances of the past. Leaving aside the examples of Newton, Kepler and Tycho Brahe, even in the world of to-day it is not rare to find more than one scientist who believes in God. In this respect Lodge, Eddington, Einstein and Planck are outstanding figures that require no introduction. It is generally said that a scientist may indeed be a God-believer, but not in the capacity of a scientist. The faculty by which he acquires religious certainty has no scientific bearing, it belongs to quite a different sphere of human life. The being of man comprises such a dual nature ; on one side he may be a scientist and on the other he may remain a non-scientist. Often philosophers see eye to eye with scientists.

The reasoning faculty, the intellectual power of the mental being is the instrument by which the scientist carries on his search after truth. If he wants to remain strictly faithful to reality as it appears, then he cannot exceed the realm of sense-perceptions. But without reason he will simply indulge in chimeras and build castles in the air which are but deformations of sense-perceptions. Bergson the philosopher, however, opines that the intellect by itself cannot go beyond the domain of sense-knowledge, because it comes into being and exists in the field of the senses by way of a necessity and as a reaction of the senses to their objects. The intellectual faculty develops in man so that he may handle material things properly and effectively. The so-called universal truths or laws of Nature that the scientist discovers by virtue of his keen intellect have their chief advantage in enabling one to deal with the external world with considerable ease. That is why the scientist is blind to any other mystery than that of Matter. This is a defect pertaining to and inherent in his nature. Be that as it may, we have still to say that the intellect has attained its acme in the scientist. The speciality of the intellect has found its best manifestation in him. On the basis of the wealth of sense-perceptions and by their analysis and synthesis and by observation and experimentation, to arrive at a universal law as wide as possible marks the special genius of the scientist.

The mysteries of Nature that have been discovered by scientific methods are not the last word or the whole of her truth. However, it may be said: "There is no other means of arriving at the realistic truth. By treading any other path we can get into the worlds of imagination, poetry, illusion and

delusion, surely not into the world of realities." We shall have occasion to say something about the possibility of other ways of knowledge and enquiry into the truth. For the present, we shall try to investigate whether the scientific method can lead us any further. And the scientists who have made such an advancement in knowledge—where have they arrived and what is the value of their work ?

We have already mentioned that sense-perception is the basis of scientific research. The whole gamut of scientific knowledge is founded on it. And the scientist cannot violate or overpass the canons of science. Still there is one thing more—here we deal with the limits and limitations of human knowledge. But how can science or the scientific methodology assert that it has alone found the clue to the essence and nature of knowledge and truth ? The question can be asked whether the theism of Einstein or Planck is the ultimate consequence of their scientific intellect or a reflection of some other non-scientific faculty. A class of continental scientists says that the religious sentiment and the puritanism of the scientists of the British Isles are so strong that they will not feel happy unless they can introduce a few Biblical expressions even into the table of logarithms.

However that may be, it must be admitted that the theism of the scientist may also be the natural and spontaneous outcome of his scientific intellect. It is not necessary that it should originate from some primitive faculty apart from reason. The purely scientific intellect and the theistic spirit may belong to the same mode of human consciousness. The sense of infinity, the sense of magic and wonder are common to both ; thus the two may be congruous and commensurate, although the purely religious spirit, the soul's seeking for the Divine and the type of theism proper to the scientific mind are different in nature and orientation and are independent of each other.

From the standpoint of norms and ultimate values that science brings forward, reasoning does not play the most important part. Science presumes to arrive at a logical conclusion from observation of facts of Nature. The advantages and benefits that we get from science are its material side. But there is another aspect of the scientific intellect which is incorporated into it as its fragrance and beauty, like that of a fruit or flower. What is that thing ? Different scientists have expressed it in different ways. But all expressions centre round the same truth. Science avowedly seeks to arrive at the truth within the framework of reasoning by weighing and measuring the material limbs of Nature, confining itself strictly within the four corners of material Nature. But the one thing which, if not manifest even at the outset, has gradually blossomed and taken hold of the scientist, that has from the beginning existed as a hidden inspiration behind the veil, is the sense of a profound mys-

tery, the touch of an infinite eternity, something inexpressible, something to be wondered at, an unmanifest that cannot be defined yet can be felt, a glimpse of a conscious existence—that has been called the supreme unity by some ; others have called it the Pure Reason, yet others have called it the highest law or dispensation while there are people who prefer to call it consciousness or awareness. Such a sense and perception and experience does not fall under the strict field of scientific research, but the scientist is surrounded, as it were, by a subtle atmosphere, a halo wherefrom proceeds his inspiration for research, for clues, for the vision of truth. Do we not admit that all great scientists possess this turn of temperament, an opening, as it were, into other subtle realms ? Perhaps many are merely compilers, cataloguers, but those who have invented something genuine and have been able to unveil some secrets of Nature emanate the fragrance and radiance I speak of, beyond the reasoning faculty. When Kepler looked at the sky through his telescope to observe the course of the stars and the planets he was deeply absorbed in the experience of something vast, infinite, strange and mysterious. Was it not then at this golden moment that it flashed like lightning through his mind that the orbits of the planets were elliptical (and the Sun is at one centre of these apparent ellipses)? Is not this incident as mysterious as the law of gravitation discovered as we all know by Newton when he noticed an apple fall to the ground ?

In fact, it is merely a notion or a mental complex that the scientific knowledge is solely or chiefly the outcome of the reasoning process. Many of the scientists are perhaps of the opinion that it must be so, perhaps many take it to be a true truth that actually holds, but the fact is otherwise. Discovery means the removal of a veil and that too all on a sudden. Reasoning steps in later to establish the discovery on a firm footing, at the most it makes slight alterations here and there, adds or subtracts a few necessities, clarifies the discovery and gives precision to it. In the matter of all true knowledge and ultimate certitude the inner perception and intuition come first and what provides the major premiss to the logical syllogism is beyond reasoning.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that however subtle and high or even theistic and religious may be this scientific faculty it has not come up to the level of genuine and integral spirituality. Many philosophers must have had easily and naturally some realisation of the kind. The intuition of infinity in the philosopher Spinoza and in the scientist Einstein is of the same quality and status—impersonal, abstract, a mathematical infinitude, an x as it were. The scientist has reached the acme of his specific faculty as a result of the sublimation of his sense-perception, the philosopher by the sublimation of his conceptual ideation. But both are unable to surpass the boundary of the brain and the intellect. The true spirituality lies in exceeding this limit

—in the terms of the Tantra, the penetration of the six centres. The *amor intellectualis Dei* of Spinoza may signify the theism of the scientist, but it has not reached the status of spirituality.

We do not know how many have given due regard to this remarkable fact that the rational mind of modern times, inspired by the spirit of science which has turned towards spirituality for whatever reason, is often attracted to the pure Vedanta or the Buddhistic philosophy of India.¹ The chief reason for this appears to me to be this that the truth and the essence of religion are looked upon as anthropomorphic by the scientist. The scientist can hardly admit this truth. For, the very speciality of the scientific procedure is to keep aside the human factor from human knowledge. A particular knowledge bears the stamp of the knower, but science aims at knowledge independent of its knower. Now the scientific faculties from their summits declare, "We do not know the unknown and the unknowable that is beyond." This learned ignorance which is called agnosticism, and a little altered form of which is known as scepticism—that is the legitimate consummation of scientific rationalism. But when one looks upon this unknown and unknowable with religious reverence one says, "Therefrom speech returns baffled along with the mind." This is verily the Brahman, beyond speech and mind; and its other name is then Nihil. Mind can understand mind or its absence or disintegration. It is extremely difficult for it to comprehend anything that is apart from these two extreme terms. It is not so difficult for the rational mind to accept the spiritual doctrine of 'not this, not this'; but the other aspects of spirituality—the truth about divine Forms and Incarnations, about Purushottama, the supreme Being, even the transmigration of the soul, all these are senseless enigmas to reason-bound mind. The triune principle of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss of the Vedanta is such a general, neutral and indefinite principle that it seems to be intuited and felt by the pure intellect when it climbs up to its acme. In other words, at the highest level of the brain, as it were, there takes place the first revelation of spirituality, a glow and reflection amounting to the perception of a formless infinite, whose true nature is separately or simultaneously an existence, consciousness and bliss or a non-Being pregnant with all the essence of Being.

The scientific intellect has thus reached a certain theism and the poet and the artist also have reached similar levels through different ways of approach. The aesthetic taste of the artist, the sense of intense delight in the beauty of the cosmic creation is not born of the intellect but is allied to it, and falls within

¹ In India Rammohan Roy has introduced European rationalism. He too is found to have laid stress on the Vedantic and not on the Vedic conclusions—although, it is said, there was an esoteric Rammohan too.

the category of the mind—it is a thing that belongs to this side of the boundary of consciousness, which we have to cross to attain to the true spiritual world. The generic or twilight consciousness is, as it were, on the border-line; it belongs in its rhythm, gesture, gait and expression still to this shore-land rather than the other, howsoever may the artist aspire for the shore beyond. No doubt, I speak of the creations of artists in general. There are rare artists whose creation embodies genuine spiritual experience and realisation. But that is a different matter—it concerns the purely spiritual art. Ordinary works of art do not belong to that category, and derive their inspiration from a different source. With regard to philosophy something similar might be said. Most of the Indian philosophies are of this type. The philosophies of Shankara, Ramanuja, the sage Kapila and Patanjali are but intellectual expressions of different spiritual visions and realisations. If it be so, then is it not possible for science also to become a vehicle or expression of spiritual realisations? This may not have materialised up till now; generally or to a large degree perhaps an attempt of the kind was made in the line that is known as occultism, and which was called alchemy by the ancients, but the effort ended in a spurious system of rites and ceremonies. No doubt this knowledge, even at its best, falls short of the Higher Knowledge, Paravidya; still there was a time when the Inferior knowledge, Aparavidya, was accepted as a stepping-stone to the Higher. “Exceeding death by Avidya (Ignorance) one has to enjoy immortality through knowledge”—*“Avidyayā mrityung tirtwā vidyayā amṛtam aśnute.”*

But whatever may have been the past, is there any possibility for the most materialistic science of to-day—the ultra-mundane knowledge—to become directly and integrally united with the supreme spiritual Knowledge? If there is any possibility, then wherein does it lie? We have elsewhere said that it will be possible only when we shall learn to collect data for scientific discoveries and to search after truth not only with our physical senses but also with subtler and inner senses, and those subtler and inner senses will wake up and become a part and parcel of our nature only when the outlook of the scientist will get detached from the material plane and allow itself to be widened, deepened and heightened and transformed on the way to its being finally established in the pure consciousness of the Soul and the Self.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

A Rose-Bud's Song : by *Prithwindra N. Mukherjee*. Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. 31 pages, price 0.75.

This booklet contains 25 poems, written during the last six years. It is the young author's first published collection of poems in English, and it is an interesting one.

The difficulties confronting an Indian, who has not lived or been educated in England, when he writes English poetry are so great that one is tempted perhaps to praise indiscriminately—not only when it is well done but because it is done at all. But let us be stern and say that not all these poems under review are successful. It would indeed be prodigious if they were. There are too many of those superlative and more often than not pretentious words like Infinite, Supreme, Immortal; for instance this book contains 10 raptures, 5 ecstasies, and 4 blisses, while the subject-matter is 11 times vast, 6 times sublime and 4 times deathless. This is dangerous,—dangerous because, although in their right place these words have a function, their over-use by so many devotional poets, now and in the past, has taken away all their force and freshness and given them an inescapable flavour of cliché. There are also other “poetic” and suspect phrases and inversions used such as “bleakish steep”, “golden ruth” and “night immense”, and inevitably some lapses in verbal awareness.

On the other hand there are striking originalities, and some of the poems are vivid and beautiful—for example “A Rose-bud's Song”, “They call me in dream”, “Love-Plant” and “A Child's Fancy”. These particularly have a fresh and varied sense of rhythm and form. Like true songs of innocence they have a spontaneous clear melody, which seems to correspond to the original poetic impulse and delight which gave rise to their expression—without mental interference.

“Silver torrents burst from rocks,
Gazelles of gold flame flee—
Rose and sky and my love plant
Blaze in ecstasy.”

(p.6)

Another characteristic of these poems is the vivid use of colours. The writer is a visual poet, but it is often a dream vision—the sights come to him from the fields of sleep, “Purple clouds and orange rain...” This dream

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world is sometimes surrealist and fantastic, as in the strange poem "Credo"—with images here and there from the French Symbolists, but often it is an inner place of devotion and aspiration where the writer is an opening bud, a growing plant, a child or a priest in a world given and presided over by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. This inner world must in time transfigure the outer :

"Unending dreams
Thou hast given to my eyes,
And brought me the slumbering buds from the Parijata-woods :
They shall blossom on this earth,
Therefore those myriad stars and those planets
Dance round me !"

(p. 13)

DICK BATSTONE .

Kundalini-Yoga by *M. P. Pandit* Publishers Ganesh and Co. (Madras) Private Ltd. Price Rs. 6/- only. Pp. 80.

Kundalini Yoga is usually identified with some physical exercises such as Asanas and breath-control and its profound spiritual metaphysics often ignored. Sir John Woodroffe's colossal work in clearing the mist that has blurred its spiritual truth is growingly recognised and winning the warmest gratitude from all lovers of Indian culture. The works of Sir John are spread over many bulky volumes and are beyond the reach of the ordinary reader who shies away from scholarly controversies and yet wants to acquire a systematic knowledge of this esoteric knowledge.

The book under review helps him over the stile by providing him with a well-balanced knowledge of this important offshoot of the Tantric philosophy.

It can be said that Tantra is the only spiritual philosophy which is consistently monistic in its account of the universe and the destiny of man. Mayavada cannot circumvent the contradictions which the concept of Maya in contradistinction to the ultimate Reality that is Brahman raises. As Sir John often points out in his works, Brahman is Sat but Maya is neither sat nor asat nor sadasat, i.e. neither real nor unreal nor partially real and partially unreal. According to the Tantra philosophy the ultimate reality is sachchidananda : that is, being, consciousness and bliss. The principle of being is called Shiva and that of consciousness Chit-Shakti, i.e. consciousness-force. The principle of bliss is common to both. In the supreme status Shiva-Shakti are one. Shiva without Shakti is Shava, that is, a corpse. These are the kinetic and the dynamic aspects of the same reality which is one in two. The universe is neither an

illusion nor a mechanical psycho-physical principle (prakriti), it is a manifestation of Shiva-Shakti.

The other principle of the Tantra philosophy is that what is here is there and what is not here is not there : in other words, the microcosm is a replica of the macrocosm. This is the foundation of the Kundalini Yoga. Kundalini is the latent divine power in each being coiled at the bottom of the spine, and Sahasradala Chakra is the lotus with the thousand petals on the crown of the head. All the cosmic principles are represented in the six centres and the aim of the Yoga is to wake from slumber this serpent power so that it courses through the different centres and finally meets her lord in the highest centre. This union of Shiva and Shakti not only brings the spiritual immortality but is believed to give conquest of physical death also.

Mr. Pandit's book throws light on all the salient features of this yoga—its theory and practice and the rationale of the importance given to Mantra. The special value of the book lies in its broadbasing the principles of this yoga in such a way that the follower of any yogic discipline can benefit by its study. The style is lucid and straightforward. The book is handsomely printed and produced, and contains an appendix in which there are appreciations of Sir John Woodroffe's *Serpent Power* by such balanced thinkers as Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore and Sri K. Guru Dutt.

R. KHANNA

Students' Section

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 EIGHT

WE have said that Victor Hugo made history by using the word *mouchoir* (handkerchief) in a poetic drama. By the way, I myself made a bit of history last time by using not the word but the thing itself in an extraordinary context : absent-mindedly I wiped the blackboard with my *mouchoir* ! I would have made still more history and, while being historical, made you hysterical if I had wiped my face afterwards with the chalk-powdered handkerchief. Well, something like acting so queerly was what the poetic pundits of England thought the first practitioners of Romanticism were doing : they were shocked at the manner in which the Romanticists were trying to change the whole face of poetry.

In England Romanticism started less violently than in France. There was no fighting except in black and white—but tempers ran quite as high as on that fateful night in the Paris Theatre, and pretty deep cuts were made by the vigorous play of polemical pens. The central figure in the Romantic Movement in England was William Wordsworth, though Burns and Blake may be considered the pioneers in a general sense. You might think Wordsworth was rather a contrast to Hugo. We have been accustomed to picture him as a sedate and philosophic solitary of Nature. But we must not

allow our notion of him in middle or old age to colour or discolour the reality of him in his youth. Wordsworth learned his lesson in Romanticism not in England but in France. He was there just after the outbreak of the Revolution and had already tasted the intoxicating doctrines of Rousseau, the father of Modern Romanticism, both French and English. Wordsworth would even have been guillotined and lost his head if he had not taken it away from France in the nick of time. But, though he took his head away, he left his heart behind—and not exactly with any political party but with a very young person. Himself very young, he seems to have mixed up Romanticism with Romance. Some years ago it was discovered that the Archbishop-like Wordsworth of old age had in his youth a love-affair with a French girl named Annette Vallon and, just as Rousseau was the father of Anglo-French Romanticism, Wordsworth the Romanticist was the father of an Anglo-French baby.

I hasten to add that to my mind this love-affair had no significant bearing on either the development of Romanticism or the development of Wordsworth. I mention it in order only to contradict the importance attached to it by some critics in connection with the sudden decline in Wordsworth's poetic powers a little past his middle age. Herbert Read is the chief exponent here, and he takes his cue from the fact that, although Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy did all they could to help Annette and the baby-girl, Wordsworth instead of marrying Annette moved away from her more and more and throughout his life concealed the early romance from the world's eyes and never referred to it in his *Prelude* which is a poetic autobiography of his mind. Read argues that the poet refused to come to terms psychologically and morally with his feelings for Annette and thus created in his personality a split leading to loss of the emotional spontaneity which is essential for poetic health. According to Read, the emotional being was wilfully ignored and hypocritically covered over and its conflict submerged in order to achieve some sort of harmony in the surface consciousness: the submerged conflict took its revenge by drying up the fountains of poetry.

This theory is psychoanalytic. Psychoanalysis is the investigation into one's suppressed impulses and the interpretation of all phases of one's mental life in terms of what is thrust into or lurks in the subconscious. Psychoanalysis even goes further and traces all the higher mental manifestations to the mind's interest in one's physiological processes. I believe that psychoanalysis overshoots the mark a great deal and, in its preoccupation with the underworld of the subconscious, misses the in-world of the subliminal and the over-world of the superconscious which are the true sources of art and philosophy and religion and mysticism, however crossed here and there these things may be by miasmas from the subconscious.

Much folly is committed by the psychoanalytic approach. A recent book, written in all seriousness, by a thinker named Wisdom is foolish enough to account for the Idealistic philosophy of Berkeley by the state of his bowels ! Berkeley's Idealism holds that matter is not a reality independent of mind but a phenomenon of mind itself and that it is ultimately composed of perceptions from which it is logically impossible to disengage a material world in its own rights. Wisdom studies the medical reports about Berkeley and sums up the whole problem by saying in effect : "Everybody is intensely interested in the movements of his bowels, especially in the impressionable period of childhood. Poor Berkeley, ever since his childhood, suffered from looseness of bowels and from an early age was deeply imbued with the discovery that nothing solid came out of his system. As a result the philosophical system he built up could not admit anything so solid as an independent material world. Everything was liquidated into the subtle flux of mental experiences."

The eagerness of psychoanalysts—or, as the fashionable term goes, psychiatrists—to find concealed complexes and hidden disorders in the mind lands them at times in sheer fantasy. There was a boy who was thought by his parents to be acting rather oddly. I suppose he was not conforming very much to their demands or expectations ; talented children, no less than young ruffians, are often like that. The mother of this boy took him to a psychiatrist. The mighty man of mental science wanted to get the spontaneous response of the boy's subconscious. So he fired at him the startling question : "What would happen if I cut off your right ear ?" The boy at once replied : "I would hear everything half." Then the psychiatrist asked : "What would happen if I cut off your left ear also ?" The boy unhesitatingly answered : "I wouldn't be able to see anything." "Ah, there you are," muttered the psychiatrist with grim pleasure and a knowing look at the parent. He took the mother aside and whispered : "We shall have to examine this matter very deeply. Something abnormal is evidently at work in a hidden way. We'll gradually bring it up to the surface and effect a cure." The boy and his mother went home. The lady was as puzzled as the psychiatrist by the boy's answer. But she was not entrenched in psychoanalytic pseudo-profundity. So she did the most natural thing and directly asked her son : "Johnny, why did you give that queer reply—that if both your ears were cut off you wouldn't be able to see anything ?" Johnny smiled and said : "Why, mamma, if both my ears were cut off, my cap would come down over my eyes. How would I then see anything ?"

It goes without saying that there was no return next day to the psychiatrist's clinic. But let us return to Wordsworth. I consider Read's reading of Wordsworth's poetic decline to be far-fetched. There were seeds of the decline from the very beginning. For one thing, Wordsworth began under

the influence of the 18th century and broke off from it under the influence of the new ideas that were sprouting in France, new ideas that had nothing directly to do with having a romance with a mademoiselle of Paris or any young lady. And he lost his Romanticism when he lost his ideal of political liberty and his intuition of the One Spirit within the physical universe as well as within the mind of man and manifesting its presence through both Nature and life.

This intuition was the deepest essence of Wordsworth the poet : when we think of him it is always lines like those in the Tintern Abbey poem that come up to us—

...And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
 A motion and a spirit that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things.

I may remark, *en passant*, that Tennyson considered the phrase,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

as the grandest line in English poetry. It is, at least, one of the grandest and as long as Wordsworth was alive to the feeling it expressed he kept in touch with his own genius and the genius of Romanticism. His decline started when he moved away from the two people who were most responsible for keeping alive in him this feeling : his friend Coleridge and his own sister Dorothy. The mind of Coleridge, at once soaring and systematic, quicksilver and mountainous, sensitive and poised, was a great help and so too was Dorothy's intense happy Nature-insight and highly imaginative human sympathy. An unfortunate series of incidents separated Wordsworth from Coleridge. Wordsworth was not physically separated from Dorothy, but his marriage with Mary Hutchinson withdrew him psychologically from her. Besides, he had always a dry intellectual in him plus a prosaic moraliser, and this part of his personality which had been fused with the visionary poet and Nature-lover in his early days got the upper hand as he became increasingly obsessed with his own importance as a Teacher and as he got further and further drawn to the Ortho-

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dox Christian Church after falling away from the beautiful blend of Pantheism and Transcendentalism that had grown in him from his own personal mental-spiritual experiences.

The ideal of political liberty which had been like a golden flame in both his heart and mind, broadening his vision and sharpening his sympathies and nobly humanising his "sense sublime" of the Universal Spirit—the ideal of political liberty he lost when he found that the overthrow of the old order in France by the intellectual and emotional earthquake of the Revolution gave a chance to a man like Napoleon to get the whole country into his grip and to menace the independence of neighbouring nations in Europe and even the security of insular England. Wordsworth became a stern Tory and a supporter of Puritan institutions : he even went to the extent of devoting several dull sonnets to the theme of Capital Punishment ! His change of mind is a little complicated. We can, of course, understand his anti-Napoleon attitude. Perhaps the strongest single factor here was Napoleon's treatment of the Negro who liberated Haiti from French rule—Toussaint L'Ouverture. Toussaint is a figure worth a small digression. So I'll tell you something about him.

Haiti, also known as Santo Domingo, was a French possession in the West Indies. The influx of the new ideas about liberty, whose fount was the work of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists and Rousseau, was as much French as was the actual sovereignty that denied liberty to this colony of Negroes. So at the spur of French ideas Toussaint led an insurrection against the French. This reminds us of what happened in our India. Our democratic inspiration, our desire to be free from British Rule drew strength from the same source—England—from which hailed the Imperialism that held us subject. With the growth of the English language in India there grew in Indian minds the liberalism of English political thought. It is Wordsworth who opens a sonnet with the thrilling phrase :

We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake...

Well, when educated India adopted the Shakespearean tongue, the seeds of the country's freedom got sown and the grave of British Imperialism began to be dug. India could say cheekily to her rulers :

We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
Your Shakespeare spake....

There could be no possible reply to such a demand : all replies would be self-contradictory. France too of 1791, France of the Revolution, could not logi-

cally oppose Toussaint's insurrection. The new regime in the mother country liberated the slaves. And then Toussaint reciprocated by accepting French rule and the office of Commander of Santo Domingo. But Napoleon, on rising to power, sought to re-enslave the colony. Toussaint resisted him, and with his small army of ill-fed ill-clothed ill-armed Negroes he humiliated every force sent to subdue him. The pick of the French army he foiled by his military genius. Once when the French had driven his ragged troops into the hills, he had the brain-wave to make them sing *La Marseillaise* against the enemy. What Frenchman could fight *La Marseillaise*? The French soldiers were bewildered and unnerved and Toussaint drove them into the sea. Not only was he a leader of extraordinary gifts: he was also a man of spotless character, the utmost integrity. To all lovers of liberty in Europe as well as to all admirers of greatness he shone out from the small island of Santo Domingo, a rival of quintessential quality to the great Napoleon. Napoleon who could stand no rivals planned to ruin him. All the more a cause of annoyance to the mighty Emperor was this Negro because he had styled himself "Bonaparte of Santo Domingo". Napoleon sent an offer to discuss terms, guaranteeing safe conduct. Toussaint who never broke his word put absolute trust in the Emperor's offer and went unprotected on board the French ship where the conference was to be held. As soon as he sat down at table he was declared prisoner. Without any trial he was thrown into a dungeon near the French Alps, a dungeon so miserable that when a model of it was once shown to Napoleon he shut his eyes and ordered the model to be taken away. Toussaint was allowed to rot in captivity. Once his gaoler forgot to give him food for some days! Starved and chilled, Toussaint was found dead. Wordsworth was so moved by the heroism and martyrdom of this Negro that he wrote one of his finest sonnets to him, a poem ending with the immortal cry:

Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

From his championship of Toussaint we might expect Wordsworth to have strengthened all the more his old ideal of political liberty. But the growing resentment he felt against Napoleon led him to believe that a phenomenon like Napoleon would have been impossible if the French Revolution had not occurred and undermined the ancient order of feudal Europe. Liberalism he saw as a danger everywhere, a potential mother of revolutions and a potential grandmother of Napoleonic despotisms. So all liberal movements were to be checked and democracy kept at bay.

Wordsworth could not comprehend the paradox that was Napoleon. All Europe was against the France of the Revolution. All Europe was planning to crush the new movement. Napoleon rose as the organiser of his country. France had initiated a liberal order but could not hold it together. The forces of the French Revolution were in practice more destructive than constructive : they could make their hatreds take effect but not their loves get realised. The slogans of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* were a divine music hanging over a human chaos. If Napoleon had not come with his Titanic genius and gripped the country for his own ends, the old Europe would have swamped the new France. Napoleon by compelling his country into a unity enabled it to stand against the united onslaught. By the endless campaigns of his military ambition he not only kept France going but broke the back of the opposition. The new France could thus have an opportunity to get organised as a force for the future. Sri Aurobindo, in an early article, has well hit off the role of Napoleon by calling him "the despot of liberty, the imperial protector of equality, the unprincipled organiser of great principles". A man like Napoleon is born to carry out a certain vast work : true to some unplumbed instinct in himself he sweeps on, careless of human codes and inhibitions : he can be egotistic and cruel, committing a number of actions which could have been avoided but were not avoided because the energy at work was no human consciousness but an elemental agent from beyond the earth sent in a human form to achieve a great end. Of course such an energy may overlive its usefulness and Napoleon did so and had to be eradicated. But he was not merely a colossal self-aggrandiser : he was a formidable instrument of the Spirit of Progress. And if Wordsworth had possessed sufficient insight he would have at the same time sung the praises of Toussaint and recognised the *Vibhuti*, the man of a super-human mission, in the destroyer among whose victims Toussaint unfortunately figured. France herself had the needed insight, though unconsciously, and by putting herself under Napoleon's spell she got reborn, however imperfectly, as the home of the progressive mind of man, the centre of free civilisation in Europe.

Wordsworth, by falling out of tune with the France for which he had been so enthusiastic as a youth and by making a political *volte-face*, helped to finish digging for the Romanticist in him the grave which his loss of Nature-mysticism was fast preparing. The eighteenth century returned to him, and his sense of self-importance hardly noticed the uninspired *revenant*, the ghost come back. Long-faced sermonising and flat philosophising, which had been visible without being predominant in even the grand days of his Romanticism, asserted themselves and they justify on a broad survey of both his early and later work the satirical sonnet written by J. K. Stephen. Wordsworth himself has an excellent sonnet, beginning :

TALKS ON POETRY

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains : each a mighty Voice...

Stephen sums up Wordsworth's double poetic character thus :

Two voices are there : one is of the deep;
It learns the storm-cloud's thunderous melody,
Now roars, now murmurs with the changeful sea,
Now birdlike pipes, now closes soft in sleep :
And one is of an old half-witted sheep
Which bleats articulate monotony,
And indicates that two and one are three,
That grass is green, lakes damp and mountains steep,
And, Wordsworth, both are thine : at certain times
Forth from the heart of thy melodious rhymes
The form and pressure of high thoughts will burst :
At other times—good Lord ! I'd rather be
Quite unacquainted with the A B C
Than write such hopeless rubbish as thy worst.

It is interesting to note that the central figures of both English and French Romanticisms were very flawed poets, superb on one side, dreary or windbaggy on the other. And the reason why so much of the dreary remains in Wordsworth and so much of the windbaggy in Hugo is the same : a huge conceit that led them to overwrite themselves. Hugo was a more tempestuous person, hence his conceit is louder in accent. Wordsworth was a more reserved man, hence his conceit is quieter in tone. But there is in both the conviction that everything they uttered was a revelation and that consequently the more things they uttered the luckier the world would be. The conviction came all the easier because in fact many of their utterances are revelatory. Hugo was the less mystical of the two and, from our standpoint, his revelations are the less precious. But to be precious as spiritual effects does not imply from the poetic point of view the superiority of these effects to others. As poetry, Hugo's less mystical verses are of equal value as Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey lines or the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*. That is why the greater mass of excellent Hugoesque poetry makes its author stand very close to the sheer First Class in Sri Aurobindo's eyes while the smaller corpus of excellent Wordsworthian poetry keeps its author at a further distance.

The two poems of Wordsworth just mentioned formed part of the book named *Lyrical Ballads* which came out in 1798, much before Hugo's splash into poetry, though not earlier than Rousseau's famous Romanticist books in prose.

Lyrical Ballads was the joint work of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Coleridge had *Christabel* and *The Ancient Mariner* in this publication and these poems were as organic to the new Romanticist Movement as those two of Wordsworth's. But Wordsworth was the more powerful, more comprehensive, more harmonised poet and he is the more central figure and it was his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* that constituted the first Manifesto of English Romanticism. Like Hugo's championship of common words, Wordsworth had his demand for normal speech in poetry instead of what had been practised in most of the eighteenth century, an abnormal speech trying to be poetic by avoiding straightforward and simple expression. You must have heard of Poetic Diction. Well, it is true that poetry has at times a special speech, words and turns not easily usable in prose discourse; for poetry brings into action a higher range and pitch of vision and emotion than does prose, and certain subtleties and profundities and splendours of that higher range and pitch have a spontaneous language more iridescent or rainbowlike on the one hand and more richly dazzling or sunlike on the other than the spontaneous language of the philosophic or scientific intellect's conceptual clarities on the one side and common life's unchiselled simplicities on the other. But there is a true Poetic Diction and there is a false Poetic Diction. I shall illustrate both. But let me finish first with the fight over Wordsworth's innovation in poetry and over Romanticism in general.

Lyrical Ballads was attacked in the periodical which was then pontificating on poetic values, the periodical entitled *The Quarterly Review*. A very dogmatic and downright reviewer, one Francis Jeffrey, started to hit out. How wrong-headed was the hitting can be realised if we observe that some of the best poetry of Wordsworth was slashed the most. Over the Immortality Ode Jeffrey shook his head and passed the damning sentence : "This will never do." But neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth was chicken-hearted. They went on in their Romanticism, and Wordsworth by sheer persistence created the new taste by which he and Coleridge subsequently came to be enjoyed.

Many, however, were the battles the enemies waged, and one of the fiercest was against the young John Keats. Keats's *Endymion* was torn into ribbons. Not that this poem was blameless. It had immaturities, and Keats was fully aware of them, but the immaturities were closely intertwined with genuine poetic expression, and on the advice of his friends as well as on his own judgment Keats chose to let the poem go out into the world.

The bell has rung. So we must leave the classroom and also go out into the world—some of us, let us hope, like Indian Endymions.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

SRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER*

A COMMENTARY

IX

THE problem of King Cepheus is precisely his deep-rootedness in the old tradition of religion, politics and social life. He believes that

...the mighty gods
Are masters of the earth and sea and heavens,
And all that is, is theirs. We are their stewards.
But what is once restored into their hands
Is thenceforth holy : he who even gazes
With greedy eye upon divine possessions,
Is guilty in Heaven's sight and may awake
A dreadful wrath.

He is a lover of justice and that requires him to give Poseidon his due and, when anyone stands in the way, to punish him by offering him as a victim to the dire god. Similarly the established convention of marital alliances and relationships is based not on the emotions of the people concerned but on the needs of state and it requires men and women to subordinate their likes and dislikes to matters of high policy. So he feels it very unfortunate that his children should violate this hoary tradition and talk of a deeper centre of motive force for their actions. He has indeed the deepest attachment to his children and that is exactly the reason why he feels irritated and unhappy at the turn of events. He feels absolutely helpless and weak and leans at every crisis in his affairs on the help of his strong and wise partner in life. He had hoped that everything would go well and his life be without any friction if he pleased the gods and so he had set aside the timely warnings and shrewd suggestions of his queen against the priest, the demagogue and the mob. In this hour of crisis he cannot do anything else except indulge in remorse or he 'hides his eyes and sinks his forehead like a common man, overtaken by grief.' The situation becomes too grave even for Cassiopea but she advises rejection of remorsefulness and acceptance of the decree of fate and a heroic facing of the issue. He rises to the occasion and declares :

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Voices of insolent outrage
Proclaim the heartless rabble. On the steps
Of our own palace we'll receive our subjects.

The declaration earns him the queen's commendation :

This, this becomes thee, monarch.

Yet he would request the fearless queen, who pronounces the priest a madman and inhuman monster, to refrain from words and he is perturbed at the Tyrian invasion.

But what he thinks as unfortunate turns out to be the most fortunate and full of the choicest blessings. The radiant coxcomb, that he in his irritation declares Perseus to be because his advent disturbed the foundations of the ancient world, becomes the deliverer and he gets a new courage and a new hope. He realises that Perseus is a 'god or else the gods walk close to him.' With a heart full of genuine gratitude he exclaims :

Hero, thou camest to change our world for us.

But even then he has a lingering fear of the dread god and asks, 'Will the fiercer Grandeur that was here permit ?' and is at peace only when Perseus reveals the transformation of the Occult Power itself into regions of Light. So at last he becomes a votary of Pallas Athene.

Similarly deep-rooted in tradition and affectionate to the children and therefore anxious on their behalf is the head of the palace household in the women's apartments. Praxilla is perturbed seriously at Iolaus's behaviour because the priest is dangerous and the god is dreadful. She is deeply worried at the wilfulness of Andromeda and her determination to rescue the merchants and disobey her father in rejecting Phineus and choosing her sun-god. She only hopes that this love of barbarous jabbering foreigners and the strange fancy dream of the sun-god are only strange imaginations. All her pleasure with the whip vanishes into the gravest anxiety at the unfortunate turn of events. She is in a state of terror at the perception of the mob's Poseidon-inspired demoniac frenzy. But she lives through the crisis and feels a happiness only mingled with a pang at Andromeda's marriage with Perseus, for that means her losing both the truants, the princess and her slave girl. Her hands will be lighter (she pities Perseus whose hands will become heavy) but her heart is too heavy.

X

Iolaus begins with a well-formed encrustation of allegiance to the old order but his contact with the instrument of Pallas Athene whom he loves with a deep-

SRI AUROBINDO'S "PERSEUS THE DELIVERER"

seated affinity brings about a progressively quick transformation in his life and conduct. He who has come to do his duty as captain and capture the victims and hand them over to the priest feels a sudden affinity for Perseus and flouts the authority of the priest. He does this well before the demonstration of Perseus's godlike strength. His happiness at the revelation that the hero is still human is very great for he discovers his friend for life in Perseus, and so he directs his friend to Cydona's village and companionship. He is prepared to face the worst ordeal for the sake of his friend but he does not feel like helping the poor merchants at all now. He tells his sister that he cannot do anything for them. When Perseus tells him later that he would release the merchants so that 'they could slay him alone' he replies :

Poseidon's wrath will wake, whose lightest motion
Is deadly.

He defends his father for not being able to baulk the priest.

But he recognises the Vibhuti in Perseus and that invests him with an extraordinary courage to become ready to face death in vindication of the new values. He prepares to take farewell of his lady-love and march to face the furious mob. Just a passing doubt if Perseus could meet a whole people single-handed and that dissolved by the memory of the earlier exhibition of prowess and no more hesitations on his part. He could wait with a quiet confidence in the help of the divine power of the hero. He sees the self-defeating character of evil and the frailty of human instruments in Polydaon's life and declares :

...best to be Heaven's child.
Only the sons of gods can harbour gods.

And the last act reveals him as a mature ruler ready to take the throne after his old father—a ruler whose power is shown, by his dealing with Phineus and his judgment on the offenders and victims, as seasoned with mercy. He is already a denizen of the new world of Love and Truth.

In the same manner though not in the same degree we have Diomedes the witty and imaginative slave girl evolving by contact with Andromeda. Talking wittily with Circe about his red nose and paunch which are worthy food for Poseidon she comes to know of the shipwreck and feels it a memorable sight and takes pleasure in relating it with minute details to the princess who wonders how her heart could bear the cruelty. She is surprised that Andromeda should at all weep for the merchants, for they are not Syrians. She feels happy that

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the god will have dainty food. She commends the stern action of the king in dealing with Andromeda and insisting that she must marry Phineus :

Parthian tactics are best when we deal with our mutinous daughters.

She tries to dissuade Andromeda from taking the plunge because of the disastrous consequences. But when she comes to see that her decision is irrevocable for the alternative would be falling down dead on seeing the sacrifice which she is supposed to preside over and grace and when she finds her in tears, her love prevails and she becomes ready to stand by the princess. She sees the strange light of supernatural grace around her after her darshan of Athene and she is with Andromeda in her perilous adventure. But the old *sarṁskāras* die very hard and in the moment of crisis when her friend is caught and examined she tells her :

Oh, the merchant's seized
And all is known. Deny it, my sweet lady,
And we may yet be saved.

and again:

Say nothing.

So she runs to warn Iolaus to flee and save himself from the fury of the mob and feels weary of this war of gods and hides awaiting her friend's fate. Her love is rewarded abundantly in the end for Andromeda 'will drag her to the world's far end with her' and the witty slave girl thinks of sending Praxilla 'a brand new leather for a relic, to whip the memory of her.'

XI

With Cassiopea, the princess of Chaldea and Tyrnaus, her countryman we pass on to characters belonging to a different and brighter tradition but thrown by adverse Fate amidst a society embracing the religion of cruelty. The creed of Poseidon-worship paralyses the energies and faculties of man and seals the inner springs of nobility in him by subjecting him to a state of continuous and abject terror and unleashes only the worst and most hideous subconscious impulses in him. But the religion of Chaldea helps its votaries to exercise all their faculties with full freedom and, when circumstances become adverse and perilous, face their inevitable end with an undaunted will and only after a heroic fight. Men and gods are subject to grim Necessity but man's manhood consists not in quailing before it but in heroic resistance and honourable death.

SRI AURORINDO'S "PERSEUS THE DELIVERER"

A heart of passionate love for children and husband, a mind of considerable practical insight and power of understanding of the temperaments and hidden motives of men and a highly developed will which can execute what she conceives with resourcefulness and tact and a moral fibre and strength which makes her absolutely fearless—that is Cassiopea. Witness her readiness to face death in saving her children, 'her coming with no half soul to share her husband's kingdom and his joys and to take the evil also with him,' her estimate of the characters of the priest, Phineus, Therops and the people, her management of the situation when her husband is helpless and turns to her ; and her fearless and flouting words to the furious mob and the gloating blood-thirsty Polydaon. We see her nobility, sense of gratitude and love in the last act when she is prepared to pardon all the offenders and to become a second mother to Cydone and finally when she refers with grateful adoration to the services of dutiful and heroic Nebassar and blesses Perseus. To embrace the religion of Athene appears to be the most natural thing for her.

Tyrnaus, with his feeling of gratitude and thankfulness to his saviour, freedom from meanness, calm and reconciled attitude to living and dying, becomes the prophet announcing the advent of the new age and religion when he addresses Andromeda kneeling in devotion :

O human merciful divinity,
Who by thy own sweet spirit moved, unasked,
Not knowing us, cam'st from thy safe warm chamber
Here where Death broods grim-visaged in his home,
To save two unseen, unloved, alien strangers,
And being a woman feared not urgent death,
And being a child shook not before God's darkness
And that insistent horror of a world
O'ershadowing ours. O surely in these regions
Where thou wert born, pure-eyed Andromeda,
There shall be some divine epiphany
Of calm sweet-hearted pity for the world,
And harsher gods shall fade into their Hades.

And Perseus rightly says :

O excellent Chaldean,
The world has need of men like thee.

XII

We have one more type of character which does not belong to any tradition organised by adult man through the ages nor does it ever feel the need for embracing any external discipline or ritual or pattern of behaviour. The Light of the inner consciousness guides it through weal and woe and the outer person is so plastic to the inner that action is the spontaneous expression of the inward heart and not the result of deliberation or ratiocination. Such is the child Cydona who lives, no doubt, in the Syrian world but is not of it. She has a natural openness to Sweetness and Light because of her loving heart and the vibrations of the outer world of darkness and unhappiness do not affect her at all but on the other hand are dissolved in her radiant presence and cheerful aura. Andromeda sums up her character when she says to her mother about her :

...for she alone,
When I was lonely with my breaking heart,
Came to me with sweet haste and comforted
My soul with kisses,—yes, even when the terror
Was rising from the sea, surrounded me
With her light lovely babble, till I felt
Sorrow was not in the same world as she.
And but for her I might have died of grief
Ere rescue came.

She bids people hope and trust in the saviour Perseus and she seems to have only one duty and joy in life—to live in and for love. She tells the hero :

I love you because you love Iolaus,
And love the world that loves my Iolaus,
Iolaus my world and all thy world.

And so she would have all people who hate her love reduced to black stone with the Gorgon's head. And she has such supreme confidence in the power of love that she thinks it can transform even a cold heart. Life is sweet for it is the field for loving and, as for the darkness in it, one need not brood upon it and court it. Let it come when it does and if it does. Love means for her the union of two consciousnesses and that gives her the heroic strength to tell her lover when he is preparing to face the mob :

SRI AUROBINDO'S "PERSEUS THE DELIVERER"

Let's be going.
Often you've said that you and I are only one,
I shall know now if you mean it.

And when he threatens to tie her to a tree-trunk she replies :

I will bring the tree and all and follow you.

Childlike and childish indeed ! So is her curiosity to open the wallet of Perseus which fortunately she cannot. This simple and 'bright philosophy, but with the tears behind' enables her to sing even in that murky world of Poseidon-worship and she is the only character who sings :

O the sun in the reeds and willows !
O the sun with the leaves at play !
Who would waste the warm sunlight ?
And for weeping there's the night.
But now 'tis day.

and

And will not marble even grow soft,
Kissed so warmly and so oft ?

Thus this child lives 'in a small world of radiant white perfection/ With eye averted from the night beyond,/ The night immense, unfathomed.' Her philosophy is essentially sound though its childish element has to be corrected and the orientation has to be made more deep and high. One must be a child of the Divine to go through life armoured against all obstacles from the physical and the supraphysical planes. Such a mature child is Perseus, the conscious instrument of the Divine Mother who carries on the evolution of individuals and collective groups.

All the different types of characters in the drama recognize in Perseus their saviour from the old order of hideous religion and the founder of the chastened religion of Athene with its emphasis upon the Intuitive Reason and Will and the deeper purified Emotion. So the last scene is one of sincere gratitude and devoted thanksgiving to Perseus, *the Deliverer*, who in his turn points to Pallas Athene, the Divine Mother as the Force which has brought about the new order working of course through the Karma of each and all and always supporting the endless evolutionary endeavour of the human race, thereby assuring victory despite repeated retardations :

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But the blind nether forces still have power
And the ascent is slow and long is Time.
Yet shall Truth grow and harmony increase :
The day shall come when men feel close and one.
Meanwhile one forward step is something gained,
Since little by little earth must open to heaven
Till her dim soul awakes into the Light.

...So the Light grows always.
As for the shadow it is only a shadow
And will disappear in the growing Light.

(Concluded)

M.V. SEETARAMAN

WORLDS INVISIBLE

ONE night I sat looking at the stars and the planets and I soared up into space, into infinity. I lost sight of the earth and was wheeled into another world. A limitless world of time and space it seemed. I searched for heaven, the dwelling of the gods, which my childish imagination had, years ago, stamped into my brain and fascinated it. But nowhere did I find Indra seated on a magnificent throne, no beautiful apsaras laughed and sang nor were there angels around the Father of man. Yet everywhere, in the light of the stars, in the moon and the flaming sun, a mighty presence seemed to hide. An energy revealed itself. Then I knew that I was groping for invisible worlds which were beyond me. So in despair I reeled back and rested on Venus, Evening Star, and drank from her tangible beauty, then flew from there to Jupiter and in reverence enjoyed his grandeur and majesty. Then Mars attracted me and I saw the peaceful face of the war-god. And beside him Perseus and Andromede and Cassiopea for ever immortalised. Then suddenly taken back to earth by these kings and queens I saw myself perched on the roof of my house. From invisible worlds to a visible world I came yet never retired from them, for my mind was ever an invisible world, intangible, ever changing. That is the gift of man : he can at any moment soar into worlds numberless, for the universe of God is infinite.

REBA ROY

(An essay written by a student of Standard 9 in a recent periodical test)

HAPPINESS

THAT people hunt for happiness is an established fact. But the methods of approaching it are different. It differs from one individual to another, from one society to another. Anyway the want of happiness is everywhere. Happiness is generally judged by outer appearances. Just as the poor think that the rich are happy, because they seem to possess everything they wish, the rich think that the poor are happy, because they have less worries and lead a day-to-day life—a hand-to-mouth existence. But neither the poor nor the rich are happy. Therefore we see that happiness does not come from the outer surroundings or circumstances. Many great men say, “The happiness that you get from yourselves is much greater than the happiness that you obtain from your surroundings”. This is very true. Why? Obviously because our surroundings are not always very pleasant nor satisfying. We wish, we hope, we desire and we are disappointed. This is the basic cause of unhappiness.

Shakespeare said, “Nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so.” So we see that we will have to adjust ourselves and our thoughts in the best manner with the outer surroundings and circumstances. Marcus Aurelius said, “Happiness depends upon your quality of thought.” So we learn that our minds should be very flexible. They should have the capacity to change according to the circumstances.

We always have certain desires and a particular way of thinking, and we always hope that others will think in the same manner and have the same desires. This is impossible. Again we wish, we hope, we desire and finally we are disappointed. This is the basic cause of unhappiness.

The surest way of unhappiness is to hunt for happiness. Happiness is like a butterfly which when pursued is just beyond your grasp. But if you sit down quietly it may alight upon you. We shall get slowly what is destined for us. But if we try to get it before the time it is like expecting a reply before posting the letter.

“No man is happy who does anything with an undesirable motive,” said the Mother. So we see that we have to do everything with the best motive but without desire. People believe that Montagne was very happy, because he led a solitary life. This is not true. Montagne himself wrote that he was happy because he found out what could make him happy. No man is happy who does not think himself so.

Thus I conclude that no one can make us happy or unhappy; we ourselves are responsible for our happiness or unhappiness.

MANJU

(An essay by a student of Standard 8 B)

HER TOUCH

NATURE stands still and mute,
Life-Ocean is calm, silent, sad;
Once devouring, cruel, faithless, mad,
Now it tunes softly to Soul's flute.

Mind wishes to understand no more,
Heart hovers tenderly on nothingness of self,
I hear the slow moaning cry of my little elf
Helpless, alone, staggering to its very core.

Grace I ask or shall perish and lose :
To live in Her, delve deeper to the very essence.
And never would I forget the Touch of Her Presence.
That solitary messenger from above I feel, and must choose

To live within Her and to Her bound,
Breathe in Her sweet fury and voiceless sound.

RAMRAJ

THE MOTHER*

MONEY, plutocracy, a force on earth—
Its shining fount is the Sole Absolute.
Its flux belongs to His unerring might.
Our eyeless 'I' and the wild titan beneath
Cherish for ever money, power, grasping love.

The strangling and long hands of the Asura
Have blighted affluence upon our earth.
To escape this all-enveloping heavenless trend,
Giant relentless discipline is the path
Toward self-mastery—the golden Peak.
But never cry, "Wealth is a foe of light.
A weak, a barren and a naked life
Is the sole gateway to the Spirit's Vast."

To win money again for the One, its Fount,
And divinely play with it to found new life
On aspiring soil must be the tireless quest
Of all the climbers to the Zenith beyond.
Let not the song of the anchorite win thy heart.
Shut not thy heart from the gleam of human coin,
Yet wallow not in the mire of perishing joys
Making thy soul the vassal of carnal powers.

Wealth is God's power, it is a verity masked.
Reconquer it for the Mother of the Sun
And place at the service of Her feet supernal
All eldorados lost in the abyss.
In the creation-flood of the Golden All
The money-force must come back to its Queen.

¹ A versification of the substance of Chapter 4 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

THE MOTHER

In the sea of honey-profits never swim.
Be thou a hero-surge of rectitude;
Preciseness, vigil, candour—thy other names.

The climber of the Spirit is he who dwells
In penury if necessity demands.
No sense of want can hurt his royal thoughts
Or halt the march of the consciousness within.
And yet when the Spirit wills, he can clasp all wealth.
Alone he shall be flushed with triumph's rays,
Whose nature adamant is and void of 'I',
Whose single soul kneels but to God's pure claim.

“MADAL”

MOTHER AND CHILD

WITH a naughty smile in my dedicated eyes
I was gesturing “No” through their frolic orbs
To Shyama, whose grace had drawn me to Her feet—
My prank when the child within me was let loose
In its revelling flush of carefree moments :
“No, Mother mine, I will not fall at Thy feet,
And I’ll but do what’s true to my own mind.”

I was out from my flesh, my bones, my blood—
In my formless, unveiled nakedness serene,
The riotous joy that could swallow the Directions,
And shatter the entrance to the limitless Blue,
For I stood face to face in the majestic region
Of One, whose name once having uttered,
I could transcend all that had gloomed in my way.

So there stood I to Her divinity close—
When my looks were nailed to her giant anklets
With the persistent “No” in my blissful eyes,
A stir was manifest in the realm of the weak,
All who had yet to dive in the mystic depths—
The small earth trembling in her meaningless rage,
The choking wind and the sky pale with fear.

In Her vast diamond glory the Mother smiled;
My limbs moved forward in a trance ecstatic,
Though the eyes were replete with childish defiance;
Then fraught with the force that would shake the universe
I called out, “O Shakti ! O Saviour mine !”
And fell at her feet with wide-open consciousness
To merge in them with the grace of a child.

SHIV SHARAN DIKSHIT

SOCRATES

“It (the true soul) is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic.”

SRI AUROBINDO

ONE of the greatest of the Greeks was Socrates who is known as the father of Philosophy. His early life is not much known but he must have lived a disciplined life right from early boyhood. We are told that he had a great power of endurance and could bear extreme cold and heat. He was a sturdy soldier and had shown remarkable skill and valour in several battles.

It is, however, said that he was very ugly; he had a snub nose and a considerable belly. He was always dressed in shabby old clothes and went barefoot everywhere.

But he was a profound thinker and philosopher. Even when he went to serve in the Army, he used to spend his time in thinking. One morning, while he was on military service, he was thinking about something. He thought and thought over some problem which he could not solve. He would not give up and continued thinking from early dawn until noon—he stood fixed in thought; at noon when attention was drawn to him all people began to wonder at him. At last, after supper some people brought out their mats and slept in the open air to watch him and see whether he would stand all night. There he stood until the following morning; and with the return of light he offered up a prayer to the sun, and went his way.

At another time, Socrates and his friend Aristodemus went together to a banquet, but on the way Socrates went into a trance and dropped behind. When Aristodemus arrived at the feast, he was asked by the host: “What have you done with Socrates?” Aristodemus was astonished to find that Socrates was not with him; in those days rich people used to have slaves; so a slave was sent to look for him. The slave returned and said: “There he is fixed, and when I called him he would not stir. Those who know him well explain that he has a way of stopping anywhere and losing himself without any reason.” Socrates came only when the feast was half over.

Socrates was a great seeker of truth and he had developed a method of enquiry which has come to be known as the Socratic method. This method, which is also called dialectic, consists of arriving at conclusions by question

and answer. Socrates used to begin an enquiry by saying that he knew nothing or very little about the subject of enquiry. Then he would invite certain notions or definitions of the subject under enquiry; this would be followed by presenting some difficulties in accepting those notions or definitions; he would then suggest some modifications or present some new hypothesis followed by fresh discussions. Quite often the discussions would end in stimulating questions instead of arriving at conclusions. But when he would arrive at any conclusions, it would be only after examining the subject freely and from as many points of view as possible.

This method seems to have been practised by Zeno, the disciple of Parmenides. For if we read Plato's dialogue, *Parmenides*, we find that Zeno uses the same kind of dialectic as Socrates uses elsewhere in other dialogues of Plato. But there is no doubt that Socrates developed this method and, through Plato, it has determined to a very large extent the form of subsequent philosophy.

There is a fundamental distinction between science and philosophy; science seeks facts and the laws governing them, while philosophy attempts to interpret and evaluate the facts from the point of view of the whole. Evidently, the Socratic method is not the scientific method; for it presupposes the prior existence of notions or definitions about the subject under inquiry; it does not arrive at new facts. What the method attempts to do is to examine the given facts and notions from various points of view, to clarify them and to give them a coherent form. This is the philosophical method. For although in philosophy, nothing is to be taken for granted, it cannot and does not originate in a vacuum; there must already be some glimpse of light in the human mind which would initiate philosophical reflection. This glimpse may be either in the form of a personal experience or in the form of a Word or, to use the Indian terminology, *śruti*, heard from the lips of the man of experience or realisation. In Indian philosophy, the authority given to *śruti* is higher than that given to any other mode of knowledge except that of direct experience or realisation. In many ways, therefore, the Socratic method and the Indian philosophical method are similar.

Socrates used to go to market places and ask questions to the passers-by. But his questions were so deep that many young people found in him a great teacher. He had therefore gathered round him a band of young people who used to go to him for learning. One of these young men was Plato, his chief disciple and one of the greatest philosophers of the world.

Socrates had a friend whose name was Alcibiades. Once he went to the oracle of Delphi whom he asked if there were any one wiser than Socrates. The oracle said that there was none. On hearing this Alcibiades was very pleased and told Socrates what the oracle had spoken to him. But when Socrates heard

SOCRATES

this he was greatly puzzled. He thought that he knew nothing and yet he could not believe that the god Apollo could be wrong. He therefore went about among those people who were famous for their wisdom. First he went to a politician who was thought wise by many and regarded himself as still wiser. But Socrates found out that he had no wisdom. He then went to poets and asked them to explain their poems. But they could not. Then he knew that poets do not write by wisdom but only by genius and inspiration. Then he went to the artisans, but found that they too were not wise. Finally he concluded : "God alone is wise; the wisdom of men is worth little or nothing. I am called the wisest among men; but that is not because I have wisdom. Others too have no wisdom and yet think they have it, whereas I who have no wisdom know that I do not have it. This is the truth of the oracle."

But during this inquiry, Socrates showed the people whom he interviewed their ignorance and this embittered many. Already many elderly philosophers and politicians of Athens were afraid of the great influence that Socrates wielded over the young people. They therefore brought a charge against him. They said : "Socrates is an evil-doer and a curious person, searching into things under the earth and above the heaven; and making the worse appear the better, and teaching all this to others." They held that Socrates was guilty of not worshipping the gods of the State and inventing new gods. They further said that he was guilty of corrupting the young by teaching them wrong things.

In his dialogue, *Apology* Plato has described the trial of Socrates. Socrates defended himself. But his accusers were not open to reason. He was therefore sentenced to death. In those times, it was a custom that the wife and children of the accused would come before the court; they would cry and beg of the judges to lessen the punishment. But Socrates was not afraid of death and he was sure within himself that he was not guilty. He therefore prevented his wife and children from coming to the court for pleading. On the contrary, he said, "Those of us who think that death is an evil are in error...for death is either a dreamless sleep or the soul migrates to another world. In the next world, I will converse with Hesiod and Homer; and in that world they do not put men to death for asking questions." And then he added : "The hour of departure has come, and we go our ways—I to die and you to live. Which is better God alone knows."

Socrates was cheerful up to the last minute of his life. When he was given hemlock to drink he took it without any complaint or sorrow. Within a few minutes, his limbs became cold and thus ended the great life of Socrates.

(To be continued)

MOHINI M. DADLANI

STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

STUDY NO. 4: *A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM*: OR *LOVE-IN-IDLENESS*

Oberon : Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

THE GATEWAY TO THE COMEDIES

Whether the Sources of this Drama are *Palamon and Arcite* of Chaucer, *Theseus* of Plutarch, *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, *Diana Enamoranda*, Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, or Lyly's *Endimion* is a matter of conjecture and learned import which, if pushed to extremes, is likely to tear the tender tapestry woven by Puck and Pease-Blossom. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*—Fugue or Fantasy—stands as the Gateway to the Comedies of Shakespeare.

THE POSITION OF THE PLAY

What *Romeo and Juliet* is to the Tragedies, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is to the Comedies. The Fairy-world of Oberon and Titania is descended from the wonderlands of Queen Mab. Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-Seed are the Pixies of Mercutio. Puck is the tickler of lover's Fancies. The Play is a Fantasy of a summer-night, swollen with mischievous gales, filled with the frolics of Sylphs and Gnomes, yet awaiting the breezes of a marriage-morn.

THE TRIPLE RINGS OF ACTION : (a) THE OUTER RING

There are Triple Rings of interlinked Action. In the Outer Ring is Athens, the Idyllic City of man's Imagination where Theseus in anticipation of his marriage with Hippolyta, free of fervour, quarrel or infatuation, rules upon an impartial judgement-seat consuming the lingering hours in masques, festivities, and hunts. It is the Portal of the Real from which the Poet descends, in successive steps, into the fantastic kingdom of Oberon.

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(b) THE INTERMEDIATE ZONE

The Second Ring is the Intermediate Zone—the Wood—where lovers, bound by a charm or released by a spell, are lost in the mazes of Maya. It is the Field of Infatuation where Love is changed into Hate and Hate into Love. It is here that Puck waits with the fateful Juice of the Western Flower purple with Love's wounds; it is here that Cupid lurks under briar and bush to throw his darts into unsuspecting eyes. Here madness, not sanity, reigns.

(c) THE INNER RING

The Third Ring is in the deeper cavities of the inane and viewless air—the Crystal Realms of Oberon. It is the Fairyland of Puck and Pease-Blossom where thyme and violets grow, where Pixies hide in Cowslip bells sipping honey-dew from curled cups :

Oberon : I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine;
There sleeps Titania some time of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.

FUSION OF RINGS

The Three Rings of Action fuse and fade into Fantasy. The bounds of the Real and the Unreal are inextricably blended and lost :

Thes : 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 give to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena, swept by the contrary and turbulent currents of love, threatened by the rigour of Marriage Laws, abjuring the jurisdiction of the Imperial City, run into the Woods of Glamour. Oberon too in

piteous thralldom, watching with wide and secret eyes happenings outside his Fairy kingdom, enjoins Puck to anoint the Athenians with the syrup of Love-in-Idleness. The Wood is thus the middle realm of the Spirit linking the Outer and the Inner worlds. Puck flies from Fairyland into the Forest; Bottom is borne from the Forest into Fairyland. The Fairy and the human kingdoms fuse. Fantasy is transmuted into a Farce. There the course of Love is confounded, Titania becomes a mistress and Bottom a King.

Order resigns her reign till Oberon, touched by the return of the changeling, throws the dust of a fresh charm into the lovers' eyes and restores sanity and reason. At last on the approach of the wedding-morn Theseus, an austere on-looker from the walls of the Imperial City, issuing the banns of several marriages, linking Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, Helena, and Egeus, closes the gateway to the mischief of Puck or the magic of Oberon. All the spheres of action revert to their natural orbits. Fantasy becomes sense and certitude.

EARLY DRAMATIC ART

A Midsummer-Night's Dream is a Fugue, a Masque, and a Farce. It has a medley of movements and is thus, like *Romeo and Juliet*, an early example of Shakespearean Art. Spectacle, Dance, and Song dominate Drama. Plot is subordinated to Fantasy; Comic situation is substituted for Comic character. Through puns, conceits, malapropisms, exaggerations and mixtures of style, Shakespeare moves steadily to the firm phase of the Blank Verse of his Tragedies. Also all characters, except Theseus and Puck, are shadowy formulations awaiting the touch of a surer hand. The play is a Dream rather than a Drama. In the expression of Imagination and Fancy, in the creation of the dream-world of Oberon, Puck and Titania, in the many-plashed colourings of the Fairy-kingdom, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ranks first among the plays of Shakespeare.

PRINCIPLES OF COMIC DRAMA

There are five principles of Comic Drama underlying this play, namely a Comic Situation, the equivalent of *Harmatia* or defect of Character in Tragedy, Comic Complications or *Praxis*, Comic Reversals, Crisis or *Peripeteia*, a Comic Harmonisation (Release) or *Katharsis* of Comedy, and Comic Discovery of the Situation or *Anagnorisis*.

The Comic Situation in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*—the madness of the lovers—is the Seed of Action. The Law of compulsive marriage, the infringement of the rights of true Love, is a defect of Society (*Harmatia*) from which the complications of Comedy ensue. Upon the demand of Egeus of his parental

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rights upheld by the judgement of Theseus, Lysander and Hermia, fleeing the territorial jurisdiction of his Laws, followed by the watchful eyes and hasty steps of Demetrius and Helena, enter the Forest of Infatuation. Complications entail reversals. The mischievous Puck and the mystical Flower transform the scene. Lysander and Demetrius both fall in love with Helena; Hermia is deserted. In Oberon's kingdom there is a similar reversal. The juice of Cupid is dropped upon the eyes of Titania. Bottom is carried by Puck to the underworld of the Elves.

Titania's love of Oberon is transmuted into the love of Bottom who, wearing the head gear of an ass, graciously and royally issues warrants for hay and provender. There follows the Comic Harmonisation (Release) in the Outer and Inner worlds. By the counter spell of Dian's Bud, the Love-charm is reversed. Lysander is drawn to Hermia, Demetrius to Helena, and Egeus to both. The Illusion is shaken off. Love discovered (Anagnorisis) ends in Dance, Song and Comic Spectacle. Comedy is the Katharsis of laughter.

HUMOUR

There are several shades of humour in this drama ranging from the quaint quips of Quince, Flute Starveling and Snout to the mystic smiles of Oberon. The royal authority and tempered wisdom of Theseus, enforcing Love by decrees, humourously open the Comedy. The complex mutations of Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena threaten a tempest but pour a shower of laughter. The frivolities of Puck raise the frown and then the smile of Oberon, the omniscient seer, softened by the follies and the returning wisdom of Titania. Puck is a grin, Bottom a grimace, Titania a laugh, and Oberon a gaze of benevolence upon the troubled waters. The glances of Cobweb, Mustard-Seed and Pease-Blossom, the mirth of Puck, the moonstruck exchanges of the eyes of Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia and Helen conclude in the marriage of hearts in the Court of Theseus.

(Continued)

SYED MEHDI IMAM

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