

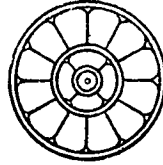
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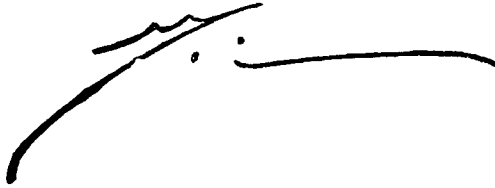


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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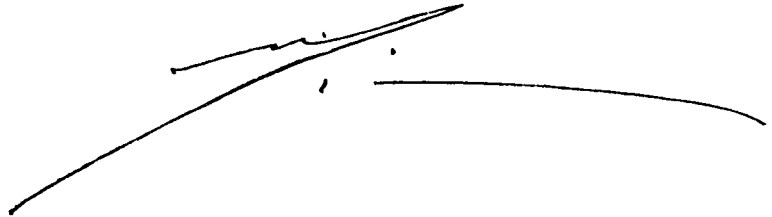
Victory is certain if we persevere, and what price of difficulty and endeavour can be too great for such a conquest?

Arichand

Une foi et une confiance absolue en la Grâce est, en dernière analyse, la Sagesse Suprême.

*
**

An absolute faith and trust in the Grace is, in the last analysis, the Supreme Wisdom



Tant que l'ego est là, on ne peut pas aimer

*Il n'y a que l'Amour qui puisse aimer, et il n'y a que
l'Amour qui puisse vaincre l'ego.*

*
**

So long as the ego is there, one cannot love.

Love alone can love, Love alone can conquer the ego.



THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

THE AGE OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA OF CHANDOD

THERE is no incontrovertible proof. 400 years is an exaggeration. It is known however that he lived on the banks of the Narmada for 80 years and when he arrived there, he was already in appearance at the age when maturity turns towards overripeness. He was when I met him just before his death a man of magnificent physique showing no signs of old age except his white beard and hair, extremely tall, robust, able to walk any number of miles a day and tiring out his younger disciples, walking too so swiftly that they tended to fall behind, a great head and magnificent face that seemed to belong to men of more ancient times. He never spoke of his age or of his past either except for an occasional almost accidental utterance. One of these was spoken to a disciple of his well known to me, a Baroda Sardar, Muzumdar (it was on the top storey of his house by the way that I sat with Lele in Jan. 1909 and had a decisive experience of liberation and Nirvana). Muzumdar learned that he was suffering from a bad tooth and brought him a bottle of Floriline¹, a toothwash then much in vogue. The Yogi refused saying, "I never use medicine. My one medicine is Narmada water. As for the tooth I have suffered from it since the days of Bhao Girdi." Bhao Girdi was the Maratha General Sadashiv Rao Bhao who disappeared in the Battle of Panipat² and his body was never found. Many formed the conclusion that Brahmananda was himself Bhao Girdi but this was an imagination. Nobody who knew Brahmananda would doubt any statement of his—he was a man of perfect simplicity and truthfulness and did not seek fame or to impose himself. When he died he was still in full strength and his death came not by decay but by the accident of blood-poisoning through a rusty nail that entered into his foot as he walked on the sands of the Narmada. I had spoken to the Mother about him, that was why she mentioned him in her Conversations which were not meant for the public—otherwise she might not have said anything, as the longevity of Brahmananda to more than 200 years depends only on his casual word and is a matter of faith in his word. There is no "legal" proof of it. I may say that three at least of his disciples to my knowledge kept an extraordinary aspect and energy of youth to a comparatively late or quite advanced age—but this perhaps may be not uncommon among those who practise both Raja and Hatha Yoga together.

I-2-1936

From RAJANI PALIT

¹ Uncertain reading (Ed.)

² January 14, 1761 (Ed.)

EDITOR'S NOTE

Some references to Brahmananda occurring in Nirodbaran's *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* may be quoted here. In the Talk of January 3, 1939, already published, we read :

SRI AUROBINDO : ...He had the most remarkable eyes. Usually they were either closed or half shut. When I went to see him and took leave, he opened them full and looked at me. It seemed as if he could penetrate and see everything within clearly.

In the Talk of January 10, 1939, which will be published next month, we have the report of some miraculous events :

DR. B : Brahmananda on several occasions supplied many people out of a small quantity of food. Also, when the ghee ran short, he used to take water from the Narmada and have things fried in it. And when the occasion was over and a fresh supply of ghee came along he would throw into the river a quantity equivalent to the water taken.

N : Are such things possible ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, they have happened. You can't say Brahmananda played a trick.

We may conclude with the fact that Brahmananda was indirectly connected with Sri Aurobindo's own beginning of Yoga, through one of the disciples mentioned in the above letter. Sisir Kumar Mitra writes about Sri Aurobindo in his forthcoming book, *Resurgent India* :

"In 1904, in the midst of political activities, he started practising Yoga with the help of a disciple of Swami Brahmananda of Chandod. The result was : 'My brain became *prakāśamaya*, full of light. The mind worked with illumination and power...I could write two hundred lines of poetry in half an hour, which before I took a month to produce. Along with this enhanced mental activity I could see an electric energy around the brain.'"

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were : Dr. Mamilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the Notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.

This is the sixteenth talk in the new Series which follows a chronological order and begins at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India in 1952. We are now picking up where we then stopped and shall continue systematically.)

JANUARY 9, 1935

IN the evening Dr. Rao had come and again he unconsciously broke his promise of not speaking about removal of splints.

Then the usual discussion followed again and the differences of opinion among doctors were commented on. After he had departed Sri Aurobindo started the conversation.

SRI AUROBINDO : Two doctors coming to quite different conclusions from the same data !

S : Doctors are not cutting a very brilliant figure and yet one has to take their help.

SRI AUROBINDO : According to Gandhi, doctors are agents of the devil.

N : Yet he had to be operated on for appendicitis.

Then followed discussions on Gandhi, his experiments with diet, with food consisting of five elements, with raw food and how he came to the point of death by these experiments, etc.

P : Formerly he was not taking garlic. Dr. Ansari prescribed garlic for his blood-pressure and he found good results. Then Gandhi began to advise everyone to take garlic.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes; in whatever he takes up, he goes the whole hog. If it is celibacy, all must observe celibacy. When somebody asked him how the world was to go on in that case, he said that it was none of his business.

Here came in the talk about the researches of science to create life by artificial means and to find a suitable medium for keeping the sperms for a long period so that distance or time might not interfere with procreation.

SRI AUROBINDO : You mean that a man of the present time could have a child from a woman, say, of 500 years after ? (*Laughter*)

S : Talking of procreation, what will be the place of it when the Supermind comes ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Let us leave it to the Supermind to decide when it comes down.

But is procreation necessary in the Supramental creation ? The whole of mankind is not going to be supramentalised; so there will be plenty of people left for that purpose.

N : Is it possible to create *mānasaputra* ("mind-child") by will-power ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Anything is possible under proper conditions.

N : I am afraid it is like the Maharshi's reply : "The Divine Grace can do everything." (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO : But it is true in principle.

N : The question is whether proper conditions would be available.

SRI AUROBINDO : It depends. If man, instead of living on the basis of his animality and outward nature, lived in his inner being and acquired its powers, then things like these would be possible. Such things are now mystic or magic or extraordinary because man has been seeing them from his present poise. They are mysterious because they are exceptional. But if, just as people are advancing in physical science and trying to explore every possible secret of Nature, so also they went into the inner being and tapped the powers from the unusual ranges of Nature then there could be no limit to possibilities. Things like telegraphy, wireless, etc., would not be necessary; one could dispense with the whole machinery because it would be quite possible to telepathise with a person in America through a subtle medium. Even death would not be like that of an ordinary man. One could go whenever one wanted.

N : They say that after the Supermind's descent there won't be any death.

SRI AUROBINDO : Do you mean to say that one will have to remain till Doomsday and then walk into the presence of the Creator ? Perhaps one may not choose to go away till one finds another to take one's place.

S : They say Ashwasthama is still alive.

SRI AUROBINDO : What is he doing ? Wandering about in jungles ?

S : There are five immortals, they say. Hanuman is one.

SRI AUROBINDO : That may be possible considering the length of his tail which Bhima even could not raise!

Here P brought in the topic of the Mahabharata, mentioning one G. Ram's interpretation of that poem as symbolic, Bhima symbolising the military genius and Draupadi...

SRI AUROBINDO : Nonsense ! It is something like Byron's joke on Dante's *Divine Comedy* that Beatrice was a mathematical figure.

P : Critics say that in the future the epic will be more and more subjective.

SRI AUROBINDO : It looks like that. The idea has always been that an epic requires a story. But now it seems to have been exhausted. Besides, there is the demand of the present time for subjectivity and the epic too will have to answer it.

P : Some maintain that as there is no story in the *Divine Comedy*, it is not an epic.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is certainly an epic. *Paradise Lost* has very little story in it and very few incidents. Yet it is an epic.

P : Some consider that Keats' *Hyperion* would have been as great as Milton's poem if he had finished it.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, if the whole had been as great as the first part, then it would have been equal to Milton's work. But I doubt if Keats could have kept that sustained height, for I find that he has already declined in the second part. As soon as he began to put in his subjective ideas at the end of the first part, he could not keep up that height.

P : There is an idea that the new form may be a combination of epic and drama or like the Odes of Meredith on the French Revolution. They give some clue to a possible epic form in the future.

SRI AUROBINDO : There has been such an effort by Victor Hugo. His *Légendes des siècles* is an epic in conception, thought, tone and movement. It is the only epic in French. But as yet, I think, it has not been given its proper place. It does not deal with a story but with episodes.

P : It is a pity Tagore has not written an epic.

SRI AUROBINDO : Tagore ? He has not the epic mind. But he has written some very fine narrative poems.

A few of William Morris' narratives are also very fine—his *Sigurd the Volsung* and *Earthly Paradise*, especially the latter. I read them a number of times in my early days. There is a tendency to belittle him, because he wrote about the Middle Ages and Romanticism, I suppose.

N : You said the other day there has not been any successful blank verse in England after Shakespeare and Milton. What about Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I didn't say there is no successful blank verse. Plenty

of people have written successfully, *e.g.* Byron, Matthew Arnold (*Sohrab and Rustom*) and some others. But there are only three who have written *great* blank verse : Milton, Shakespeare and Keats.

N : What about Harin?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't think he has written anything wonderful in blank verse.

N : And Amal ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The trouble with him is that he has a strain of what may be called post-Victorian. I had great difficulty in knocking it out. I had to screw and screw him up to get the right form. I had to send back his poems many times, suggesting to correct and alter here and there till he got the right thing. Now he has fallen back to his post-Victorian in Bombay. He sent me a poem from there the other day.

The trouble in general with Indian poets writing in English is that they may be successful poets but it is not as if the very man spoke. Their work gives the impression of one who has studied English literature and spun out something. I read Jehangir Vakil's poems. The same difficulty. Mrs. Naidu wrote something fine at times and she had a power of expression but her range was small.

Harin and Amal have been thinking and speaking in English since childhood. So for them writing in it is comparatively easy. Harin has from the very beginning been always original.¹ There are several reasons why he is not appreciated in England. Firstly, he is an Indian. If he published anonymously, say, under the name of "John Turner", he would have a better chance. Even so he got high appreciations from critics like Binyon.

Secondly, his poetry can be appreciated by those who have not lost the thread of English poetry since the Victorian period. Poetry is not read in England nowadays, I hear.

One can gather this also from what was said about my poetry. Some of my recent poems were sent to the reader of an English publishing firm. He said, "They are remarkable and there is something new in them. But I would not advise him to publish them. For poetry is not read nowadays. If he has written anything in prose, it is better to publish it first and then the poems may go down the public."

It is no wonder that people don't read poetry these days : the modernists are responsible for it, I suppose.

N : Harin's poems were sent to Masefield.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why to Masefield ?

N : Perhaps because he is the Poet-Laureate.

¹ This does not apply to his Communist or other propagandist outpourings. Sri Aurobindo set no value on them. (Ed.)

SRI AUROBINDO : Poet-Laureate ! Anybody can be a Poet-Laureate. The only people of real worth to whom the title was given were Tennyson and Wordsworth. Masfield's poems are Georgian, full of rhetoric.

P : Thompson asked me to read the poems of Eliot. He was in ecstasy over them. I read them. I couldn't find anything there. Neither in Ezra Pound. I asked Amal's opinion.

SRI AUROBINDO : What did he say ?

P : He is of the same view. He cut a fine joke on Ezra Pound : "His name is Pound but he is not worth a penny." (*Laughter*).

SRI AUROBINDO : Eliot is the pioneer of modern poetry. I have not read much of him. Do you know the definition of a modern poet ? It is : "a modern poet is one who himself understands his own poems and is understood by a few of his admirers."

N : Eliot has written a poem *Hippopotamus* which is supposed to be very fine.

P : Hippopotamus the animal ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I thought he had written about himself. (*Laughter*).

N : The modern young poets of Bengal seem to like him very much.

SRI AUROBINDO : Because he is the fashion, I suppose.

N : You have written an epic called *Aeneid* ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No, *Iliad* : it is in hexameters and about the end of the siege of Troy.

N : What about Radhanand's poetry ? He writes in French also.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, his French poetry is very good. The Mother likes it ; there is imagination and beauty. Of course, she corrects the poems. He is a stupendous writer with great energy. He has written 200 books in six months. He has written my life also. I had a great tussle with him not to get it published. He is very popular with the Tamils. He is supposed to be as great a poet as Bharati. His prose is rather rhetorical.

N : Toru Dutt is said to have had great genius. They say that if she had lived she would have been a very great poet.

SRI AUROBINDO : Nobody knows of her in England as a great poet. Perhaps the only vigorous poetry she wrote was about the German invasion of France in 1870. That was because she had a deep sympathy for that country. I remember just a few lines from it. She addresses France :

Head of the human column...

And she calls the invaders :

Attila's own exultant horde.

These two lines at once strike one as if they were spoken by the poet and were not an imitation. If one can write like that, it cannot but be recognised.¹

N : What about Madhusudhan ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I read only one poem of his and that was an imitation of Byron.

¹ The whole poem runs :

FRANCE — 1870

Not dead,—oh no,—she cannot die !
 Only a swoon from loss of blood !
 Levite England passes her by,
 Help, Samaritan ! none is nigh ;
 Who shall stanch me this sanguine flood ?

Range the brown hair, it blinds her eyne,
 Dash cold water over her face !
 Drowned in her blood, she makes no sign,
 Give her a draught of generous wine.
 None heed, none hear, to do this grace.

Head of the human column, thus
 Ever in swoon wilt thou remain ?
 Thought, Freedom, Truth, quenched ominous,
 Whence then shall Hope arise for us,
 Plunged in the darkness all again ?

No, she stirs !—There's fire in her glance,
 Ware, oh ware of that broken sword !
 What, dare ye for an hour's mischance,
 Gather around her, jeering France,
 Attila's own exultant horde ?

Lo, she stands up,—stands up e'en now,
 Strong once more for the battle-fray,
 Gleams bright the star, that from her brow
 Lightens the world. Bow, nations, bow,
 Let her again lead on the way !

TORU DUTT

REMINISCENCES

VI

(We resume here the thread of the story from where we left it in our issue of March 1962. The author describes in vivid detail the way the members of the terrorist group were rounded up by the police, how a sudden flash of intuition on their part spared Sri Aurobindo an unnecessary amount of trouble, how the police treated them at the lock-up, and how they found at last a haven of refuge when transferred to Alipore Jail. In his assessment of the work done by "Bandemataram" and "Yugantar" and of the general attitude of the terrorist group towards non-violence and the limitations of armed resistance, the author throws welcome light on important aspects of contemporary history.)

Now I come to the last phase of our life at Manicktolla Gardens, that is when we turned towards terroristic activities like the manufacture of bombs, collecting pistols and rifles and making good use of them. The first chapter had already begun with the *Yugantar* newspaper.

As we took up these revolutionary activities, we discovered that it was not easy to carry on this kind of secret work unless there was common in the country as a whole a keen desire and hope for freedom. What was needed was a favourable atmosphere from which the revolutionaries could get the desired sympathy and support. One could not expect anything but opposition from a people cowed down by fear, shut up within its narrow selfishnesses and wholly preoccupied with its dull routine. That is why Sri Aurobindo started his daily newspaper, *Bandemataram*, which was the first to declare in clear language that what we wanted was the freedom of India, a total freedom, a freedom untrammelled by any kind of domination by the British. Its aim was to carry into the ears and hearts of our people a message of hope and faith and enthusiasm, a message that spoke of independence full and absolute, not the kind of freedom that looked to England for protection and help, and such independence too not as a distant possibility of the remote future but an immediate gain of the morrow.

Even so, *Bandemataram* had to keep within the letter of the law ; its advocacy of freedom had to follow as far as possible the lines of peace, its path had to be that of Passive Resistance. But *Yugantar* shed off all the masks. It was the first to declare openly for an armed revolt and spoke in terms of regular

warfare. It wrote out its message in words of fire and spread it to the four corners of the land. Balthazar the king of Babylon had once seen similar writings on the wall of his hall of feasting, words that spoke of the imminent doom of his empire. To the country and its youth the *Yugantar* gave its initiation of fire for nearly a couple of years. It was only after the *Yugantar* group had decided that the time had now come for action and not propaganda alone that there came to be established the centre at Manicktolla Gardens in Murari-pukur. The section entrusted with real work and the people concerned with propaganda were to form two distinct groups ; one was to work in secret, the other out in the open. Hence the work of *Yugantar* was entrusted to the propaganda group. The gentleman who took charge was named Taranath Roy. Those who had hitherto been on the staff of the paper left it and joined the Manicktolla Gardens for intensive training and work. It was however agreed that here too there would be two groups, one for regular work and the other for propaganda. Only, the propaganda here would be of a different kind, for here it would not be possible to speak openly of armed revolt as that would be to draw the attention of the authorities to the regular workers. It was therefore decided to have a paper in Bengali with a policy analogous to that of *Bandemataram*. A paper named *Navashakti* was already there, owned and conducted by Sri Manoranjan Guhathakurta. It had a house rented in Grey Street (North Calcutta). An understanding was reached between the parties so that the spirit and letter of *Yugantar* could continue in and through *Navashakti*. The house was built more or less on the pattern of the one we had later at Shyamapukur. There were two flats. The one in front was used as the *Navashakti* office ; Sri Aurobindo occupied the other with his wife, Mrinalini.

A word about Manoranjan Guhathakurta will not be out of place here. In that epoch Aswinikumar Dutt and Manoranjan Guhathakurta of Barisal were two of the mighty pillars of nationalism. But whatever their achievements as political leaders and selfless patriots, as writers and orators, it was their greatness of character that mattered more. By a great character I mean one in whom there has awakened in a certain measure and manifested to some extent the inner being and the indwelling spirit ; this is what Vivekananda used to call the awakening of the Brahman in the individual. I had come to know Sri Manoranjan Guhathakurta personally and I had been to his house in Giridih and stayed with him more than once. Giridih being not very far from Deoghar, he was aware that we dabbled in the bomb. He was not only aware of it, he also gave us all his help and sympathy. It had even been suggested that a factory for the making of bombs might be tried somewhere around the mica pits he owned in that region. His eldest son Satyendra had been a schoolmate and friend of Barin and the two were practically co-workers. This family had helped Barin a good deal by their offers of money and advice. But what I had in mind was not these external things but an inner life. Manoranjan

Guhathakurta had an inner life, a life of *sādhanā*. His wife in particular was known for her *sādhanā*. In his eyes the service of the country was an occasion and a means for the service of God. But his saintliness or *sādhanā* did not stand in the way of his strength of character. In him there was a fine blend of strength and sweetness.

Manoranjan's son Chittaranjan became for a time a centre of great excitement and violent agitation in those days. There was a session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Barisal which was attended by all the leaders like Sri Aurobindo and Bepin Pal. But there came a clash with the Government, the police raided the pavilion and attacked the procession with lathis. The boy Chittaranjan went on shouting "Bandemataram" as the police beat him mercilessly. He fell down wounded and covered with blood but he did not cease his "Bandemataram". This raised a furious storm of protest throughout the country, which gave an opening to the terrorists too.

This shining example of non-violent resistance occurred long before the Gandhian era. To us who were in favour of armed resistance this kind of forbearance seemed intolerable. When, after this incident, the journalists and the poets began to sing in chorus, of "Barisal of glorious virtue", we could not help adding with a little sting, "thanks to those beatings."

I have said that Sri Aurobindo came to occupy with Mrinalini a portion of the house in Grey Street. It was here that they arrested him later. The *Navashakti* too did not last long. In the course of their search, the police discovered in one of the rooms occupied by Sri Aurobindo a lump of clay, which Mrinalini had brought from Dakshineswara as a sacred relic. But the suspicions of the police were not to be allayed so easily. They thought it might as well be some kind of raw material for the manufacture of bombs, so they had it sent to their chemical laboratories for a chemical analysis!

Now let me come to the story of this final rounding up. For some time past almost all of us had been noticing one thing. Whenever we went out on whatever business, for shopping or to visit people, somebody seemed to be following us, from a little distance no doubt but it was clear enough that we were being watched. When we stopped, he too would stop; if we tarried a little, he too kept himself occupied on some pretext or other. We talked about this among ourselves and made the great discovery that this must be what they called spying, and that we must henceforth take extra precautions. So far, we had never had this kind of trouble. Ours had been a secret society only in name, for the whole thing was out in the open. Anybody could enter the Gardens from anywhere at any time and move about the place, for it was all open compound without any fencing or walls. That is why on the morning of our arrest, a couple of boys from the neighbourhood also found themselves under arrest along with us. In piteous tones they implored the policemen, "We are innocent, sirs; we came here only for a morning stroll." The poor innocents!

The evening before our arrest, it was already getting dark and we were thinking of retiring for the night, when some voices came to our ears in a rather peculiar way, and lanterns were seen moving about in the dark. "Who are you? What do you do here?" the voices said. We did our best to give evasive replies. "Very well, then, we come again tomorrow morning and will know more about it." With these words, the strangers seemed to make their exit. Were these warning voices? In spite of our dull wits, we could understand at least this much that things were now getting rather serious and that we must take our precautions. The first thing we decided upon was that we should leave the place before daybreak and disperse. Unen told us later that he had wanted us to disperse immediately and make no further delay. But that was obviously not to be, for it was destined that we should pass through the experience of jail. Nevertheless, we did start doing something at once; that was to remove all traces, by burning or hiding away or whatever other means, of anything that might raise a suspicion against us. The very first thing that came to our heads was this. There were two or three rifles in the house where Sri Aurobindo lived. They were in the custody of Abinash (Abinash Bhattacharya) who lived with him and looked after Sri Aurobindo's affairs. Those rifles must be removed at once, they could on no account be left there. Had the police found them on Sri Aurobindo's premises, it might have been more difficult to secure his release. The rifles were brought back, they were packed in two boxes bound with iron hoops, together with the few revolvers we had and all the materials for the making of bombs, and hidden away underground. Next, getting hold of all our papers that might contain names and addresses and plans, we set fire to them. This went on far into the night. We could not however burn up everything. A number of names were still left intact and with the help of these clues, the police subsequently searched a number of other places and made several arrests. Had I been able to make good my escape then, it would not have been difficult for the police to trace me through my address; there was the Imperial Library card issued in my name and it gave the address of my Calcutta Mess, 44/3 Harrison Road.

We went to bed after doing away with all we could, in the hope that we might run away by daybreak. But the running away did not materialise. In the early hours of the morning,—it was not yet light,—we were awakened by an eerie sort of noise. We sat up in bed. But what was all this going on? Shadowy forms were moving about the place, there was a clatter and a creaking of boots. Suddenly out of the dark silence, a conversation arose:

"You are under arrest. Your name?"

"Barindra Kumar Ghose."

"Arabinda Ghose?"

"No, Barindra Kumar Ghose."

"Well, we'll see."

The next thing I knew was a hand clapping on my shoulders. "Come," said a voice.

Several people have expressed great surprise at this facile surrender on our part, as though we were goody-goody boys innocent as lambs. Why, it has been asked, did we not give them fight and take a few lives before we surrendered? But our aims were of another kind, our path, our very policy was of another character. Our goal was not to die a martyr's death. We wanted to be soldiers. The martyr is happy if he can give up his life. But the duty of the soldier is not to give his life but to take the lives of others. The soldier seeks the maximum protection for himself, he goes under cover, and he seeks to kill as many of the enemy as he can. He does not think it enough that he should only sacrifice himself. No doubt there comes a time when it is no longer possible to find a shelter or go under cover, it may not even be desirable. Then one throws off one's masks, one comes out in the open and acts in the way so vividly described in these lines of Rabindranath :

There began a scramble
As to who should be the first to give up his life;
That was the only hurry.

Or else, the way the Light Brigade of England acted at Balaclava in the Crimean War :

Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell,
Rode the six hundred.

The Japanese soldiers too in one of their encounters with the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War did not wait to build a bridge over the ramparts of a ditch; they made a solid bridge with the pile of their dead as they jumped in one after the other and let the army march over their bodies. To save oneself does not mean that one should, like Nandalal of the comic skit, take a vow to "keep oneself alive at any cost, for the good of the country and all", or live by the bourgeois doctrine that one should always save oneself anyhow, even by the sacrifice of one's wife, *ātmānam satatam rakṣet dārair-āpi dhanair-āpi*.

That is why we used to tease Paresh Mallick and called him a descendant of Nandalal. Have I told you the story? He was once deputed to present Kingsford, the Presidency Magistrate, with a live bomb packed in the form of a book; the bomb was to explode as soon as the book was opened. Paresh went in the garb of an Englishman's bearer. We looked out every day for an account in the papers of some serious accident to Kingsford. But nothing happened. He seemed to be attending court regularly and was apparently

quite safe and sound. So we had to ask Paresh at last if he had in fact reached the bomb to its destination or whether he had thrown it away somewhere to save his own skin. However, the bomb was found later among a pile of books belonging to the Magistrate. It had been lying there safely and caused no harm. The people were demanding vengeance upon Kingsford because he had sentenced a young student, Sushil, to flogging, simply because the boy was involved in a tussle with the police. That was an occasion for us terrorists. Sushil later on joined the revolutionary group at Manicktolla.

The police had on more than one occasion suggested to Sri Aurobindo, in order that he might feel flattered or perhaps even get excited and be moved to act according to their wishes, that a strong and truthful and straightforward man like him could certainly not adopt a false pose or act in secret; that he had the courage to do openly whatever he considered to be his duty or the right thing to do; that he would never care to run away and hide himself; and that whatever he did he would frankly acknowledge and say without hesitation, "Yes, it is I who have done it." But Sri Aurobindo was not to be trapped like that. He held that far more important than any question of personal honour or indignities, or a parading of one's capacity or virtue, was the work to be done and its success. He would cite the example of Sri Krishna in the Mahabharata story; Sri Krishna had no intention of being caught by Jarasandha and he fled to Dwarka in order to make ready for the adversary. That is why Sri Aurobindo did not consider a retreat to be a bad thing always. "We live to fight another day" : this should be the motto of the soldier. That is why he left standing instructions with Barin and his group that they were not to admit anything immediately they were caught by the police. They should keep their mouths shut and make whatever statements were necessary only when the time came at a later stage. It is however true that Barin and some of the senior members of the group did make a full confession soon after their arrest. But they did that purposely, with a view to save the party by the sacrifice of some of its members. They had hoped that by taking on themselves all the responsibility, the others might be proved to have been innocent, so that instead of all of us dying together, some might still live on to carry the work forward.

Nevertheless, we were all arrested in a body. The police made us stand in a line under the strict watch of an armed guard. They kept us standing the whole day with hardly anything to eat. Only towards the evening, some of them were kind enough to get us some fried stuff from the market. Our throats were so dry by the time that we would have gladly taken a sip out of that famous pond of ours. In the evening, the order came, "Follow us." But follow where ? I somehow had the feeling that here was the end—"Remember, O soul, the day of the Great Departure." I could not conceive at the moment that a case would have to be framed against us, that there must take place a trial and there might be counsel to defend us. I thought on the contrary that they would

take us straight to Fort William and finish us off with a firing squad ! I was in fact getting myself ready for that. But things turned out rather differently. The British Government could not be so heartless after all. We were taken to the lock-up at the Lal Bazar police station. There they kept us for nearly two days and nights. This was perhaps the most trying time of all. We had no bath, no food, not even a wink of sleep. The whole lot of us were herded together like beasts and shut up in a cell. The police showed by their manner how rude and bitter they could be. Then, after having been through all this, we were taken to Alipore Jail one evening. There we were received with great kindness and courtesy by the gentleman in charge. He said, "Now there will be no more of that harassment by the police. You will find it quite comfortable here." And he had us served immediately with hot cooked rice. This was our first meal in three days, and it tasted so nice and sweet that we felt as if we were in heaven.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the original Bengali)

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND MODERNISM

(May 7 marked the birthday of the Poet. This article may serve as a little homage.)

IN the consciousness of the artist of the past each concept, each thought, each sentence or word appeared as a well-defined, separate entity. Artistic skill lay in harmonising the different and separate entities. The criterion of beauty in that age consisted in the proportionate, well-built formation of the constituents—a symmetry and balance. In the modern consciousness and experience nothing stands in its own uniqueness. The lines of demarcation between things have faded, are almost obliterated—no faculty or experience has its separate existence, everything enters into every other thing. In the consciousness and experience of men and in the sphere of artistic taste there is now a unification and an assimilation just as men want to unite, irrespective of caste and creed and national or racial boundaries. We want to replace the ancient beauty of proportion by a complex system of sprung rhythm and a sport of irregularities and exceptions.

So we may say that the difference between the past and the present is something like the difference between melody and harmony. The ancients used to play as it were on a one-stringed lyre accompanied with a melodious song, or carried on a symphony comprising the same kind of melodies. The moderns like polyphonic movements, conglomerations of many heterogeneous sounds.

From this standpoint it will be no exaggeration to say that Rabindranath Tagore has modernised the Bengalis and Bengali literature and the Bengali heart. Madhusudan brought in Blank Verse. But still his metre was based on the unit of word. By creating and introducing the metre of stresses Tagore brought about a speciality in modernism. In words, rhythms and concepts he has brought in a freedom of movement and swing, a richer, wider and subtler synthesis and beauty.

A poet of the olden times sings :

Who says the autumnal full moon can be compared to her face ?
A myriad moons are lying there on her toe-nails.

Or take the famous line that brought ample praise to Bankimchandra—

The fair lady leaves, imparting overwhelming pangs of separation.

How far away have we come when we listen to the following lines of Tagore:

“Who art thou that comest to me, O merciful one ?”
 Asks the woman. The mendicant replies,
 “The destined hour is come to-night.”¹

Or,

Thy feet are tinged red with the heart's blood of the three worlds.
 O Thou, who hast left thy hung-down plait uncovered,
 Thou hast placed thy nimble feet on the central part
 Of the bloomed lotus of world-desires.

After sharpening and heightening the intellect by the urge of inspiration, after magnifying and diversifying his imagination by the intellect infused with the delight of the inner soul, Rabindranath's experiences at different levels of consciousness synthesised them all in a free and vivacious metre embodied in waves of poetry. He created a Utopia in which the modern world with all its hopes, aspirations and dreams have found the reflection of its own deeper nature.

The sweetness, skill and power of expression that are found in the Bengali literature of today were merely an ideal before Tagore bodied them forth. We, the moderns, who are drawing upon the wealth amassed by him for over half a century and we who are using it according to our capacity often think that it is the outcome of our own genius.

We are swept by the giant billow caused by Tagore. But being placed at the crest of it we can hardly conceive how far we have come up. Again forgetting all about the wave we claim all the credit for ourselves. One of the signs of the rich and mature language is that every writer has at his command a ready-made tool of which he has to know only the proper manipulation. In the literature of that language no writer falls below a particular standard or a level of tune. The writer, who imbibes the genius of a language and literature and its ways of expression, is carried on by them in spite of himself. Of course, we do not claim that Bengali literature has already reached the acme of perfection. But the growth and the development amounting to a full-fledged youth have been the contribution solely of Rabindranath. Again, in this respect his indirect thought-influence has far exceeded his direct contribution.

We have used the word “modern”. Now the question is whether the term “modern” should include the ultra-modern also. The ultra-moderns have gone one step forward. The movement of eternal youth and the overflow of youthful delight in Rabindranath are apt to march towards the ever-new, to commune with the novel, to accord a cordial welcome to the ever-green. There it is quite natural that he should have sympathy and goodwill for the ultra-modern also. Nevertheless, it must be kept in view that

¹ The mendicant came to nurse the deserted woman whose allurements he had once rejected and to whom he had promised to come in proper time.

above all he was the worshipper of the beautiful and of beautiful forms and appearances. However soft and pliant might have been the frame of his poetry, in the end it remained after all nothing other than a delicate shape of beauty. It is doubtful whether the ultra-moderns have retained anything like the frame-work of beauty. In fact, under their influence, the frame-work has not only got dissolved but also practically evaporated. Not to speak of rhyme, they have banished the regulated rhythm and pause. They have adopted a loud rhetoric and an over-decorated personal emphasis. If we want we may trace a reflection or have a glimpse of ultra-modernism in the following lines of Tagore's *Purabi* and *Balaka* :

Behold, by what a blast of wind,
By what a stroke of music
The waters of my lake heave up in waves
To hold speechless communications between this bank and the other!
(*Purabi*)

The mountain longs to become an aimless summer cloud.
The trees want to free themselves from their moorings in the earth
And to be on the wing and to proceed in pursuit of the sound
And become lost in their search for the farthest of the sky in a twinkling.
(*Balaka*)

But still here we do not come across the note of a reversal, dissolution, revolution. It seems, the poet retains an inner link with the heart of the hoary past in spite of so much of his novelty and modernism. And he did not like to cut asunder that link.

This deep conservatism alone made Tagore the worshipper of symbols and did not allow him to be a revolutionary iconoclast. Indeed one can draw one's attention to the speciality of his unique skilfulness. Many a time he held firm the structures and forms first in a sportive mood and then shaped them under strict restrictions. The play of bondage, freedom and lightness found more expression in his words, nay, more in his metres, still more in his concepts, and lastly his attitude far surpassed even his concepts. In connection with his delineation he gave expression to a unique softness and delicacy in the midst of firmness. He placed the formless soul in the inert body and brought the Infinite into the finite and gave us the taste of liberation amidst innumerable bondages. Further, in spite of close intimacy and familiarity, there is an aristocracy and glory in the manners and movements of his poetry; this too became a stumbling-block on the way of his becoming an ultra-modern.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali in "Rabindranath")

THE LIFE DIVINE OF SRI AUROBINDO: ITS LEADING PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS

(Classified Excerpts)

(Continued)

SECTION V : THE UNIVERSE AND THE DIVINE POWER

(1) MAYA

MAYA in its original sense meant a comprehending and containing consciousness capable of embracing, measuring and limiting and therefore formative; it is that which outlines, measures out, moulds forms in the formless, psychologises and seems to make knowable the Unknowable, geometrises and seems to make measurable the limitless. Later the word came from its original sense of knowledge, skill, intelligence to acquire a pejorative sense of cunning, fraud or illusion, and it is in the figure of an enchantment or illusion that it is used by the philosophical systems.¹

This distinction between the lower and the higher maya is the link in thought and in cosmic fact which the pessimistic and illusionist philosophies miss or neglect. To them the mental maya, or perhaps an Overmind, is the creatrix of the world, and a world created by mental Maya would indeed be an inexplicable paradox and a fixed yet floating nightmare of conscious existence which could neither be classed as an illusion nor as a reality.²

For there in the higher and divine Maya is the conscious knowledge, in its law and truth, of that which works in the subconscious by the lower Maya under the conditions of the Denial which seeks to become the Affirmation. For this lower Nature works out what is willed and known in that higher Nature.³

All the works of Maya look like the production of a suprarational magical Power which arranges things according to its wisdom or its phantasy, but a wisdom which is not ours and a phantasy which baffles our imagination. The Spirit that manifests things or manifests itself in them so obscurely, looks to our reason like a Magician and his power or Maya a creative magic : but magic can create illusions or it can create astounding realities, and we find it difficult to decide which of these suprarational processes faces us in this universe.⁴

Maya, if it be an original power of the consciousness of the Eternal, cannot itself be an ignorance or in any way akin to the nature of ignorance, but must be a transcendent and universal power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge; ignorance can only intervene as a minor and subsequent movement, partial and relative.⁵

(ii) CONSCIOUSNESS—FORCE

Consciousness that is Force is the nature of Being and this conscious Being manifested as a creative Knowledge-Will is the Real-Idea or Supermind. The supramental Knowledge-Will is Consciousness-Force rendered operative for the creation of forms of united being in an ordered harmony to which we give the name of world or universe; so also Mind and Life are the same Consciousness-Force, the same Knowledge-Will, but operating for the maintenance of distinctly individual forms in a sort of demarcation, opposition and interchange in which the soul in each form of being works out its own mind and life as if they were separate from the others, though in fact they are never separate but are the play of the one Soul, Mind, Life in different forms of its single reality.⁶

The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of supermind towards the divine being.⁷

Since the Consciousness-Force of the eternal Existence is the universal creatrix, the nature of a given world will depend on whatever self-formulation of that Consciousness expresses itself in that world. Equally, for each individual being, his seeing or representation to himself of the world he lives in will depend on the poise or make which that Consciousness has assumed in him.⁸

If we place ourselves in a silent Self-existence immobile, static, inactive, it will appear that a conceptive Consciousness-Force, Maya, able to effectuate all its conceptions, a dynamic consort of the Self of silence, is doing everything ... But when we step back from the outer dynamic appearances of things, not into a witness Silence, but into an inner dynamic participating experience of the Spirit, we find that this Consciousness-Force, Maya, Shakti, is itself the power of the Being, the Self-Existent, the Ishwara. The Being is lord of her and of all things, we see him doing everything in his own sovereignty as the creator and ruler of his own manifestation; or, if he stands back and allows freedom of action to the forces of Nature and her creatures, his sovereignty is still innate in the permission, at every step his tacit sanction, "Let it be so," *tathāstu*, is there implicit; for otherwise nothing could be done or happen.

Being and its Consciousness-Force, Spirit and Nature cannot be fundamentally dual : what Nature does, is really done by the Spirit.⁹

It is the incompleteness and weakness of the Consciousness-Force manifested in the mental, vital and physical being, its inability to receive or refuse at will, or, receiving, to assimilate or harmonise the contacts of the universal Energy cast upon it, that is the cause of pain and suffering. In the material realm Nature starts with an entire insensibility...¹⁰

(iii) CHIT-SHAKTI

That Force (which constitutes the atom) is fundamentally the Chit-Tapas or Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta, consciousness-force, inherent conscious force of conscious-being, which manifests itself as nervous energy full of submental sensation in the plant, as desire-sense and desire-will in the primary animal forms, as self-conscious sense and force in the developing animal, as mental will and knowledge topping all the rest in man.¹¹

IV. SHAKTI (CONSCIOUS-POWER OR DIVINE POWER)

The passivity of Brahman is Tapas or concentration of Its being dwelling upon Itself in a self-absorbed concentration of Its immobile energy; the activity is Tapas of Its being releasing what It held out of that incubation into mobility and travelling in a million waves of action, dwelling still upon each as It travels and liberating in it the being's truths and potentialities....The passivity is a great conservation of Shakti, of Tapas supporting a manifold initiation of movement and transmutation...¹²

Aware of the Divine as the Master of our being and action, we can learn to become channels of his Shakti, the Divine Puissance, and act according to her dictates or her rule of light and power within us.¹³

(v) THE DIVINE MOTHER

If we look again more largely and take account of both the impersonal and the personal truth of things as one truth, if in that light, the light of personality in impersonality, we see the true aspect of self and self-power, then in the Person Aspect a dual Person emerges, Ishwara-Shakti, the Divine Self and Creator and the Divine Mother and Creatrix of the universe; there becomes apparent to us the mystery of the masculine and feminine cosmic Principles whose play and interaction are necessary for all creation. In the superconscious truth of the Self-Existence these two are fused and implied in each other,

one and indistinguishable, but in the spiritual-pragmatic truth of the dynamism of the universe, they emerge and become active; the Divine Mother-Energy as the universal creatrix, Maya, Para-Prakriti, Chit-Shakti, manifests the cosmic Self and Ishwara and her own self-power as a dual principle; it is through her that the Being, the Self, the Ishwara, acts and he does nothing except by her; though his will is implicit in her, it is she who works out all as the supreme Consciousness-Force who holds all souls and beings within her and as executive Nature ; all exists and acts according to Nature, all is the Consciousness-Force manifesting and playing with the Being in millions of forms and movements into which she casts his existence.... If we would realise a higher formation or status of being, then it is still through her, through the Divine Shakti, the Consciousness-Force of the Spirit that it has to be done ; our surrender must be to the Divine Being through the Divine Mother : for it is towards or into the supreme Nature that our ascension has to take place and it can only be done by the supramental Shakti taking up our mentality and transforming it into her supramentality.¹⁴

Compiled by NATHANIEL PEARSON

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A VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO

O GOLDEN God
In the Orange-Red
Round Sunset's Sun
And in a Dawning India—
O Golden God
Of India's Bright Noons
And Huge Tomorrows,
Come to us now.
No longer wait !
We are awake !
Come to us in green fields,
Alongside brown roads,
In quiet homes,
In quick city streets.
Bring Thy Strength.
Give us Thy Strength.
And realize in us
Thyself—
O Golden God,
Orange-bright, flame-red,
Of India !

MILIANA

SOARING

TIMELESS and rare with a beauty of infinite solitude,
Radiant with the heart's sea-foam of joy,
Curved and carven valleys of still re-awakening
Clouded with forests of strong re-endeavour—
Up surge the unbonded minds of men
Straining towards the newness of width :
Wings throng my vision—studded with light waves,
Glowing glory of love and huge roses swirling,
Upwards I soar into diamonded air,
Petalled and regnant with all my desire;
The surge of my soul through the boundaries of Time
And into Your blissfulness.

ANURAKTA (TONY SCOTT)

A MOMENT

QUIVERING played a luminous naked gleam
Upon my conscious being's deathless crest—
A moon-reflection on a deep blue stream.
Body's balance grew a cross of Calm and Rest.
Opened were the shield-gates of flood all-blind;
A form, a mould, a hymn the Sound became;
A bubbling call rose in each realm of mind
Bringing again the hour of trance supreme.
Under cloud-shadows of new flares of Flame
Brightened in the sweetness of enchanting stirs
A soft dream-wondrous Path, love-fragrance trod;
My palm's hollow now mirrored the universe.
I stood a moment face to face with God.

Transmuted were the names in one bright stroke;
The codes that revived the past from memory broke.
Cutting the body in two the Lightning fell;
Like freezing waters all grew silent and still.
The roaring storms were lured to pull their reins;
An upward whirling sweep surged in the veins;
Dead were the battle and the ever-flaming fight
That shimmer from ages immemorial.
In the warm womb a sapling new of dawn—
A morning-glory's wreath in each hand of Night,
In each receptive finger, like the lone
Peak-points of branches fanned by entrancing air !
And drenched in the morn's breath the heart lay bare
On the fateful unimaginable Road.
For a moment I stood face to face with God.

DEV DUTT

(Translated by Har Krishma Singh from the author's Hindi prose-poem)

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(45)

VIII. THE HOUR OF GRACE AND SELF-FULFILMENT

77. NOW I BREATHE IN HER DAY, SHE PERVADES MY NIGHT

I AM left unprotected, alone on the shores
Of a sea, on the edge of a height when I must
Now solely depend on the lead from Above;
On Her must I hang and in Her have my trust.

I have torn the vestures that confined me in bounds,
I have washed the colour that obscured my gaze,
I limit not myself to a place or a time,
I can look in my soul as if out of a maze.

I once gave godhead to form after form,
I was charmed by the masks representing the gods
And, enchanted by grandeurs of outward pomp,
I forgot my own force and insight in lauds.

I am out of the whirl that impeded my course,
I am no more in the mesh that ensnared my soul,
I have climbed to a height where my will is supreme
To press on my path to the end of my goal.

I have done with obstacles that stood on my way,
Far behind are the tracks, now begins the true road,
I am set on the route that spirals to Her peaks,
Here Love and Love alone is Nature's goad.

I have felt Her beside when some longed for a touch,
I have missed Her—strange !—when She stood by my side.
Now I breathe in Her day, She pervades my nights,
She becomes my lord and perpetual guide.

She has affixed Her seal on my lustrous fate,
My determined will has Her force behind.
When Her quick dawning light shall break on my soul,
Never shall the wheel of my nature turn blind.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

DIVINE ACTOR

“If you, a part of My Prakriti, can for a few hours on a temporary man-made stage produce dramas tragic or comic, painful or pleasant, humorous or heart-rending, and can act successfully in them various roles even contrasting to your own original natures which remain unaffected, thus displaying for your enjoyment a part of the potentialities hidden in a human actor, *why then* do you wonder, praise or criticize, feel happy or hurt to see my enticing eternal Divine Play which is forever formulated, organized, directed and acted by Me for My own Delight, on the divinely created ‘frail’ stage of this universe, through all as my various disguised material stage-dresses, as a manifestation of My infinite potentialities, numerous varieties of forms, features and colours, natures and habits, from Matter to the Supermind, each during its temporary life-span playing the allotted portion of My Play, divine or undivine, happy or miserable, cruel or sympathetic, of a devil or of a saint according to the Play commanded by Me, the Supreme One, the Playwright, the Director and the Actor, the Supreme Divine Creator ?

“Why cannot I also manifest my potentialities and take the disguise of a silent stone or a raging cyclone or a soft soothing breeze ? Why cannot I erupt like a blazing volcano, or bless you with delicate flakes of a cooling snow-fall ? Why not run down as a stream, impart fragrance as a dainty flower or form flavour in a fruit, creep like a tiny ant or stride majestically like an elephant ? Why not arouse your sympathetic tears by my helpless grief-stricken appearance as an innocent toddler left neglected on a foot-path, or test your compassion in my garb of a blind beggar approaching you for alms ? Why can’t I try to bring destruction and disaster as a Timur to crush your vanity, or conquer creatively as a Napoleon, or garb Myself as a non-violent Gandhi, a life-revering Schweitzer ?

“It can also be My supreme choice eventually to manifest My Supramental Powers in the Divine Master Sri Aurobindo, in the Divine Mother for the transformation of human anguish and misery into heavenly joy, bliss and peace on earth.

“Take it all easy. It is you who make yourselves unhappy by misjudging the infinite varieties of My Manifestation, the examples and demonstrations of my numerous actings. Do not cry out like an ignorant child, one of the spectators of your play, who screams in fright at a devil acting on your stage. It is necessary training infused in the Play for the soul to earn finally its cherished calm, peace and joy of heaven.”

So the Spirit says. Then let us enjoy all this as a Divine Play, be indifferent to the apparent surface imperfections in it, concentrate on probing into the hidden humour and wisdom behind His ingenuity, not being critical of others, not worried or glad about sufferings or comforts, but peep within for our own shortcomings and individual responsibility to the Divine, criticize and progress within ourselves, and thus grow wiser and nobler towards the Supreme Goal of our Eternal Parents, the Master and the Mother, and bring down heaven on this earth.

NARWANI

THOUGHTS

THE Himalaya is immovable. This amazes us. But this is not the best specimen of amazing immovability. There is nothing new or marvellous in it.

It is merely the perfect solidification of an element.

There is another immovable that is the Veda which can beat hollow the Himalaya. Even the Himalaya is bewildered at its breath-taking stability.

Why ?

That incessant flow of words which even Brahma cannot stem is perpetuated in the Veda.

The Veda has arrested an ever-moving element and made it stationary.

Don't stop at the pilgrimage of the Himalaya. You should also set out on an expedition to explore the supreme mountain of the height beyond the mind. But only if the being can stand that rarefied atmosphere.

*

*

Just as a top appears to stand still when it is spinning at full speed, man after realising God, though very active, appears to be actionless.

But as all know that the top when it appears to be still is moving fastest, the adepts know that a realised soul though actionless on the obvious level is inconceivably dynamic, creating things wonderful and everlasting.

GIRDHARLAL

(Translated from the author's Gujarati book "Uparāma")

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

(REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER)

THE HIDDEN HELP

BEFORE I settled in the Ashram permanently, I was working in a department of the West Bengal Government.

In our office, there was the practice of drawing up a leave chart for the whole year at the very beginning of the year, indicating the order in which the officers would proceed on leave.

As I returned to office from Pondicherry, my Executive Engineer told me that my name for the next leave had been placed in the month of August.

But I wanted the leave in November.

"There is now no possibility of a change. The chart has been drawn up finally and each officer has been given one fixed date for proceeding on leave," the Executive Engineer told me. I was not pleased because this arrangement did not suit my programme to go to Pondicherry for the November Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

I simply kept quiet, helpless yet undisturbed, for there was no other go, unless I could arrange to exchange my leave with somebody else. The Mother was all the time in my mind.

After a few minutes, when the subject was still alive, the Chief Engineer entered our office room.

"So you have come?" he spoke in a pleased enquiring tone. "What about your next leave? When do you want it?" he asked me affably.

"In November," I replied.

He sat down in a chair by my side and asked the Executive Engineer to bring the leave chart.

"So I shall put you in November. Is that all right now?"

Tears came into my eyes, not, in fact, in special gratitude to the Chief Engineer, but in joyous gratefulness to the Mother, for I could know that it was She who was really responsible for all this.

Of course the Chief Engineer too deserved thanks. He was all human and was moved by my moist eye. "No need to have worried, my friend," he said.

His understanding nature has made him my best friend ever since.

(To be continued)

Reported and compiled by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

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

A VEDIC TRUTH IN THE CRUCIBLE OF MODERN SCIENCE

SIR Jagadish Chandra Bose is an immortal name in the scientific world. He was the scientist of scientists, not made but born. Yet to say that he was only a scientist is not to say all. J. C. Bose the seer is as great as J. C. Bose the scientist. He represented a novel type in the world of science. He was the forerunner of a new age of scientific research. He had moved the frontiers of intuitive science towards a fresh attainment. A man of deep faith, a perfect example of artless living and lofty thinking, an embodiment of all that is good and inspiring was Jagadish Chandra.

Sarvam prāṇa ejati mṁṣṛtam (Every thing springs up from life and makes its movements therein).

This eternal message of the Upanishad ceaselessly reverberated in the innermost recesses of the discoverer of "Plant sensitivity". The world has come to learn from this son of India the secret of observing a plant shivering, suffering, struggling, perhaps even reciprocating love. In a word, but for him the modern world would have remained quite in the dark about the deeds and misdeeds of the plants so near and dear to the Mother Earth and us as well. His approach to the scientific world was absolutely original. Although his apparatus did not demand of him a heavy charge, yet, strangely enough, by virtue of their skill he won the greatest honour.

In 1900 an International Exhibition of scientific researches was held in Paris. Many eminent scientists from all parts of the world gathered there to offer their contributions. The spiritual giant Swami Vivekananda happened to attend it. Highly impressed by the admirable achievements of those scientists his heart pined to see a son of Bengal who could walk 'shoulder to shoulder with those mighty figures. Suddenly to his astonishment the magnetic personality of J.C.Bose caught his eyes. He was overjoyed to find his Bengali brother eclipse his colleagues. His assertion about Bose ran :

"To-day Jagadish Bose—an Indian, a loving son of Bengal—heads the list of the galaxy of scientists. Three into three cheers for Jagadish Chandra !"

Let us also not miss a thrilling and arresting report that appeared in a London daily :

"...if you watch his astonishing experiments with plants and flowers, you have to leave an old world behind and enter a new one. The world where plants are merely plants becomes mercilessly out of date, and you are forced abruptly into a world where plants are almost human beings. Professor Bose makes you take the leap when he demonstrates that plants have a nervous system quite comparable with that of men, and makes them write down their life-story."

Now, lest the metal should be displeased with him the seer scientist revealed to the world that the metal too possesses signs of life. Life is within, life is without each object. To quote Sri Aurobindo the Master of Integral Yoga : "A bridge has been built between man and inert matter. Even, if we take Dr. Bose's experiments with metals in conjunction with his experiments on plants, we may hold it to be practically proved for the thinker that Life in various degrees of manifestation and organisation is omnipresent in Matter and is no foreign introduction of accidental development, but was always there to be evolved. Mind, which modern Science has not yet begun rightly to investigate, awaits its turn."

To Professor Bose scientific research was nothing other, than the life principle itself. As the spiritual thirst in him was great, he made bold to say in a wonderful speech delivered at the Royal Institute, London, that "they who behold the One, in all the changing manifoldness of the universe, unto them belongs the eternal truth, unto none else, unto none else."

Bose gives a revealing intimation of the Truth that man must seek brotherhood to-day so that he may grow capable of liberating himself from the clutches of superiority that threaten to eclipse the sun of true civilisation.

"Science and art belong to the whole world, and before them vanish the barriers of nationality."—Goethe

The Indian scientist sees eye to eye with the mighty poet. He takes one step further :

"Nothing is as far from truth as saying that the world is indebted to some particular nation for its progress in the sphere of knowledge. All countries of the world are interdependent.... This attitude of interdependence forges the bond of unity and determines the pause and progress of civilisation."

In this positive assertion we do observe that his cosmopolitan heart is almost smitten beyond cure with a vision of endless brotherhood.

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."—(Bacon)

Verily Jagadish Chandra's *Avyakta* (The Unmanifest) is one of the few that are to be chewed and digested. Here the style is vigorous, the analysis and arguments telling. Reading this unique work of his between the lines we can easily form the idea that he was an expositor of rare rounded knowledge. While presenting the book to his life-long bosom friend Rabindranath he writes :

"Friend,

Around you are entwined the memories of years of my joy and sorrow.... To-day I send into the glare of your sunlight the glimmer of my glow-worm.

Yours,
Jagadish."

Rabindranath's immediate reply too is arresting and it throws much light on Jagadish Chandra's literary genius. His letter runs :

"Friend,

Much of your Avyakta is well known to me.... Although you have Science as your first love, yet well could literature claim that coveted place. It is only by your inattention that she stands neglected.

Yours,
Rabi."

The seer scientist successfully crossed the barrier between physics and physiology. He crossed also the barrier between the living and the non-living just to inform the world of his rare realisation that there is but one Truth which simultaneously embraces all the branches of knowledge. He admitted the fact that public life and various other professions will be apposite spheres of activity for aspiring young men. But he desired something more from the chosen few : "I call on those very few who, realising an inner call, will devote their whole life with strengthened character and determined purpose to participate in the infinite struggle to win knowledge for its own sake and see truth face to face."

"You have left us nothing to do !" such was the glowing tribute paid to Bose by the scientists of Vienna after observing his investigations, so complete and perfect. Their sincere appreciation of Bose clearly indicates that he stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries in the world of science.

While presenting his works George Bernard Shaw, who is known all the world over for his challenging plays, for his love of fun, his keen wit, his sharp criticism, writes :

"From the lowest physiologist to the greatest Physiologist of the world."

The matchless novel *Jean-Christophe* reached the hands of the Indian scientist from the French savant Romain Rolland with an extremely significant message : "To the discoverer of a new world."

It is imperatively necessary to write a few words about his wife, Lady Abala Bose. She was a personality of tremendous executive drive and precision. She was at once his guide and disciple as necessity demanded. Sister Nivedita and many other eminent figures remained beholden to this venerable woman to the end of their lives.

I am tempted to bring Socrates on the scene. The matchless philosopher was addressed by his own wife Xanthippe as "Public Nuisance Number One." And when a bucket of filthy water was emptied over the husband by his better-half after delivering a wifely lecture the wise heart of the philosopher voiced forth : "Rain always follows thunder."

Strange are the ways of Providence. To the scientist his better-half proved a veritable blessing. To the philosopher his better-half proved a deplorable

misfortune—although his compassionate philosophic heart could never subscribe to this view.

Back to the scientist. No doubt, there is a great possibility even for the most materialistic science of today to become intimately united with the higher spiritual knowledge. But when can that fated day dawn? The moment the scientists will endeavour to discover truth not solely with their external gross senses, but with their subtler and deeper senses. For a happy synthesis between science and spirituality, between Matter and Spirit is not only possible but inevitable.

The Bose Institute, which was to him a Temple and not a Laboratory, he dedicated to the Nation on the 30th November, 1907. *Basu Vignan Mandir* has proved a stupendous success in his life. The seer scientist has left an imperishable memorial of himself in his *Mandir*.

Bose's internal life was sanctity exemplified. He was a repository of gentleness and kindness. His life was as clean as it was simple. His was a long record of scientific research—selfless service to humanity. His manifest earnestness and zeal and easily winning personality had endeared him not only to the Indian souls but to those of the West. Truth to tell, as a seer scientist the world has not seen his like again.

CHINMOY

“GRACE” AND “SELF-EFFORT” IN THE UPANISHADS

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DR. S. K. MAITRA AND A. B. PURANI

(Continued from the previous issue)

Benares Hindu University

28-6-1944

My dear Mr. Purani,

I am very sorry to have kept your letter unanswered for such a long time. The thing is, as I have already explained to you, I was very busy keeping my engagements with the editors of journals, especially the editor of the Sri Aurobindo Patha Mandir Annual. In addition to this, I had to examine some answer books of the Dacca University and give value to these for a prize essay. These took away so much of my time that I could not answer your very long and thoughtful letter, though if I had any choice in the matter, your letter would have been the first thing that I would have attended to. The editors of journals are very impatient people, and if you cannot send your promised article on or before a specified date, they begin to pester you with reminders.

Be that as it may, I am glad that at last I could shake myself free from other duties and find time to answer your letter. A glance at your letter shows that you and I have fundamentally different views about grace. This reminds me of an old story. Two men were hotly discussing the nature of God. After they had discussed for a pretty long time, one of them suddenly discovered that they had fundamentally different notions about the subject-matter of their discussion, and remarked, “Your God, my friend, is my Devil.” Although your ideas and mine about the nature of grace may not be so diametrically opposed, yet they certainly differ very much from each other. For instance, you use the word grace in a very general sense which includes the grace of the guru. I, on the contrary, use it in a very restricted sense to imply such aid as it is not possible for any human agency to give. I have made this point very clear in my article *Grace or Self-Effort?* in last month’s *Vedanta Kesari*, a copy of which I have sent you. In that article I have said, “If the world is to be lifted out of its present rut, it must be hooked on to something higher than itself. Grace supplies this element. It is another name for the descent of the Divine Light into the world.” I have used the word throughout in my correspondence with you, as well as in the above article, only in the restricted sense of the descent of the Divine Light. Sri Aurobindo also has made it very clear that the Divine Descent

should not be confused with any of the ordinary agencies which our socio-religious life has provided for the maintenance of the present world-order. Thus, discussing the meaning of the word धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय in that famous verse of the Gita, यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य (1v.7), Sri Aurobindo says, "If there is not this rising of man into the Godhead to be helped by the descent of God into humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the Dharma would be an otiose phenomenon, since mere Right, mere Justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation?" (*Essays on the Gita*, First Series, p. 217). Here, of course, he speaks of the special Divine Descent which is called *Avatāra*. But what he says is equally applicable to the other kind of Divine Descent—the General Descent into the world by which the level of the world-evolution is raised, which he has exhibited so clearly in *The Life Divine*. Here I cannot help observing that Sri Aurobindo has not yet enlightened us when the Divine Descent takes the special form of an Avatara and when, on the other hand, it appears in the form of a General Descent into the whole world as a Higher Principle, transforming all the lower principles that are operating in the world and thereby raising the status of the whole world. In *The Life Divine*, as you are aware, he has only dealt with this latter descent, the descent, for example, as Matter, Life and Mind, and the imperative necessity of the descent of the still higher principle of the Supermind. Indeed, the word *Avatāra* does not occur even once in the three volumes of *The Life Divine*. In fact, except for a stray mention in *The Riddle of This World*, the word does not occur in any of his published writings since the appearance of *Essays on the Gita*. I do hope he will enlighten us in the near future on this most important question of the relation between these two kinds of Divine Descent.

All this, of course, is a digression. What I want to say is that we must not confuse any of the ordinary social agencies, by which the world-order is maintained at the present stage of world-evolution, with Divine Grace. The guru is one of these ordinary social agencies, just as the machinery of the State and social institutions are other social agencies, by which world-evolution maintains itself at its present level. Lest I should be misunderstood, I must say that what I mean is that the guru *qua* guru cannot be regarded as Divine, that is to say, as a concrete embodiment of the Divine Descent. The guru may, of course, in exceptional cases, be a Divine Teacher. The best known example of this is Lord Krishna. It is a delicate question as to who is to be included, and who is not to be included, in this category. I am not going to discuss it, and it is not at all relevant to our present discussion. But that there are such Divine Teachers does not alter the fact that the guru *qua* guru cannot be regarded as belonging to this category. The mere fact that a man has to learn from a teacher does not invest the whole process of learning with the character of

Divine Grace. In our present complex social organization it is impossible to say what a man can learn simply by his own exertions, apart from all help which he may receive from his fellows. What the condition of human beings would be if all of them were, like Alexander Selkirk, living alone in solitary islands, may be an interesting problem in sociology, but surely it is not one which I can discuss here. If you exclude from self-effort all that is derived from association with one's fellow-beings, then it is reduced to a nullity. If, therefore, self-effort is to have any meaning, it must include all the help that a man normally gets through the ordinary human social agencies, and the term “grace” should be reserved for such help as human agencies cannot give.

I come now to Sanatkumara and the passage of the Chhandogyopanishad which you have quoted. I cannot help observing that you have attached undue importance to the words तमसस्पारं दर्शयति. Do you mean to say that it was only the prerogative of Sanatkumara to show *tamasaspara*, that, for instance, Uddalaka Aruni did not show it to Svetaketu when he made him realize the truth of the great Mantra *tat tvam asi*? These words *tamasasparam darśayati* are only a rhetorical device to heighten the importance of the knowledge of Brahman that Sanatkumara communicated to Narada. He who gives Brahman-vidya to his disciple undoubtedly shows him “the other shore beyond darkness”.

Far be it from me to belittle the importance of Sanatkumara. He was undoubtedly a great teacher. But so were Uddalaka Aruni who taught Svetaketu, Ajata Satru who imparted Brahman-vidya to the “haughty” Balaki Gargya, Yajnavalkya, King Janak and a host of other Brahmarshis and Rajarshis mentioned in the Upanishads. All of them were Brahman-vidyots, knowers of Brahman. All this is admitted. But the Upanishads did not treat any of them as an Avatara. In fact, the idea of Avatara is conspicuous by its absence in the Upanishads. There is no reason why we should single out Sanatkumara and treat him as a specially appointed Divine teacher. The Chhandogyopanishad certainly does not treat him as such.

Then again, you have suggested that first the cords of the heart are snapped and sins are washed out, and then a man, with the help of a teacher like Sanatkumara, crosses over darkness and becomes emancipated. I do not think there is any reason to believe that the processes are successive. They are, in fact, simultaneous. In the case before us, the disciple Narada himself admitted that he had not been able to overcome sorrow. When he came to Sanatkumara for instruction he said, “It has been heard by me from those who are like you, Sir, that he who knows Atman crosses over sorrow. Such a sorrowing one am I, sir. Do you, sir, cause me, who am such a one, to cross over to the other side of sorrow?”. Even with his knowledge of the four Vedas, History, Legend, Grammar, Propitiation of the Manes, Augury, Chronology, Logic, Polity, the Science of the Gods (Devavidya), the Science of Sacred Knowledge (Brahman-vidya), the Science of Rulership (Kshatra-vidya), Astrology (Nakshatra-vidya),

the Science of Snake-charming, and the Fine Arts, he could not overcome sorrow. It is not that he could snap the cords of the heart himself (if he could do that, he could overcome sorrow itself) and Sanatkumara's help was only needed to show him the other shore beyond darkness, but the moment he could, with the help of Sanatkumara, snap the cords of his heart, that very moment he crossed over darkness. That the two things, the snapping of the cords of the heart and the attainment of salvation are simultaneous, appears very clearly from Kath. 2.3.14-15.

It also appears clearly from Mund. 2.9. :

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशया ।
 क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परापरे ॥
 यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि स्थिता ।
 अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवति अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥
 यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते हृदस्येह ग्रन्थय ।
 अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवति एतावदनुशासनम् ॥ कठ०२ ३, १४. १५

I now come to your contention that Isha 15—

हिरण्यमयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
 तत्त्वपूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥—

clearly indicates the idea of grace. At first sight, it no doubt seems to do so but a closer examination will show that this view is not correct. This appears very clearly from Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of this verse. In a footnote to p. 8 of his *Iśa Upaniṣad*, he explains the significance of this invocation to Surya to open the cover which hides the face of truth. "In the inner sense of the Veda," he says, "Surya, the Sun-god, represents the divine illumination of the Kavi which exceeds mind and forms the self-luminous Truth of things. His principal power is self-revelatory knowledge, termed in the Veda 'Sight'. His realm is described as the Truth, the Law, the Vast. He is the Fosterer or Increaser, for he enlarges and opens man's dark and limited being into a luminous and infinite consciousness....His rays are the thoughts that proceed luminously from the Truth, the Vast, but become deflected and distorted, broken up and disordered in the reflecting and dividing principle, Mind. They form there the true golden lid which covers the face of the Truth. The Seer prays to Surya to cast them into right order and relation and then draw them together into the unity of revealed truth. The result of this inner process is the perception of the consciousness of all beings in the divine Soul of the universe." These words make clear that Surya dwells within us, it is self-revelatory knowledge, it is the illumination of the Kavi which exceeds the power of the mind. The action of Surya is definitely called an inner process, the perception of the consciousness of all beings in the Soul of the Universe.

It is, in fact, nothing but the Supermind. But it is not conceived as a Transcendent Power which needs must descend into us in order that we may

get the benefit of it. It is, on the contrary, viewed as an *Inner Consciousness*. This is made further clear by what Sri Aurobindo says at p. 96 of this book, “The face of the Truth,” he observes, “is covered with a brilliant shield; covered, that is to say, from the view of our human consciousness.... We can only arrive at the Truth, if Surya works in us to remove this brilliant formation of concepts and percepts and replaces them by self-vision and all-vision. For this it is necessary that the law and actions of the Truth should be manifested in us. We must learn to see things as they are, see ourselves as we are.” Further he says (p. 98), “Thus we arrive at the fullness of action of the Illuminer in us, accomplish the entirety of the Consciousness. We are thus able to see that all that is contained in the being of Surya, in the Vijnana which builds up the worlds is becoming of existence in the one existence and one Lord of all becoming, the Purusha, Sachchidananda.”

These quotations sufficiently clearly show that Sri Aurobindo takes Surya here as an internal principle. The description of Surya as the Illuminer in us, as a principle which works in us to remove the brilliant formation of concepts and percepts and replaces them by self-vision and all-vision does not show it to be of the nature of a transcendent Truth which has got to descend into us to raise us from our present level, but rather proves it to be an immanent Truth working already within us, which has got to be awakened.

But apart from Sri Aurobindo’s interpretation, this view that the verse of the Isopanishad does not look upon Pushan as a transcendent Reality but as an immanent one, is perfectly clear from the fact that immediately after this verse there occurs that famous assertion योज्सावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि. This definitely identifies the Pushan with our self and thereby lifts it out of the category of a purely transcendent principle. I do not deny that it is possible to interpret differently this assertion and say that this knowledge “I am He” is itself due to the descent of the Pushan into us, but that is not the natural interpretation of the verse, as will appear from the following considerations : If you take into account the whole of the Ishopanishad and not merely this isolated verse, you will find that the idea of grace is wholly foreign to it. Take, for instance, Verse 3 :

असूर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः ।
तास्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥१॥

This verse evidently describes the condition of those souls who have not received the illuminating light of Surya. They are said to be dwellers in sunless worlds enveloped in blind gloom. But why ? Is it because the sun has not chosen to descend into them ? Not at all, but it is because they are what they are. The fault is theirs, for they have killed their souls. They cannot therefore blame their fate for this. They cannot say that this has happened to them because

Surya has not chosen to descend into them. This has happened because they have neglected their souls and indulged their passions.

Further, we find that verses 1 and 2 lay stress exclusively upon man's self-effort. His fate depends entirely upon himself. They enjoin upon him the fundamental principle of morality : तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः। In the spirit of this principle all actions should be performed. Actions performed in this spirit, that is, in the spirit of complete detachment from the idea of possession, in a spirit of complete *anāsakti*, as the Gita puts it, do not produce bondage. These two verses emphasise the principle of self-exertion. They do not indicate any need of grace. Then again, in the four groups of verses as we may call them, verses 9-11 and 12-14, there is not the faintest indication of the need of grace.

It does not seem likely, therefore, that without saying a word about grace in the previous fourteen verses, the Upanishad should suddenly inculcate this principle in the fifteenth verse.

I therefore do not think that verse 15 supports the doctrine of grace, and I believe that that is also the view which emerges from Sri Aurobindo's masterly exposition of this verse in his book *Īśa Upaniṣad*.

There is one further point in your letter to which I would like to refer. It is your contention that the contrast in the verse of the Kathopanishad नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः cannot be between knowledge through reason and knowledge through intuition. I still maintain that the contrast here is between reason and intuition. Throughout this Upanishad this contrast is clearly discernible. In Kath. 1.2.9, नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया it is clearly present. So again in 1.3.12,

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गृहोत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रथया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

it is distinctly pointed out that the nature of the Atman can only be revealed to the sharp-edged *buddhi* and not to reason or logic. In another place (2.1.11) this Upanishad says : मनसैवेदमाप्तव्यम् । Of course, by *manas* here the Upanishad does not mean what we ordinarily call mind, but the mind freed from its defects, that is to say, the Supermind.

My object in this long correspondence, as you are aware, is not to show the uselessness of grace. On the contrary, in my view, grace is an essential element in spiritual progress. As I have said in my recent article *Grace or Self-Effort ?*, "Grace supplies the essential transcendent element, without which evolution would be a Maypole dance round and round the same immobile stagnancy." But the earlier Upanishads, perhaps as a reaction against the excessive emphasis upon grace in the Vedic period and the consequent relegation of man to a condition of absolute helplessness, rejected the notion of grace. But grace made its appearance later in our culture. And its re-appearance we first notice

definitely in the Svetashwatara Upanishad. The clear enunciation of तपप्रभाव that is, of self-effort and grace, as the two essential requirements of spiritual advancement, in Sv. 6.21 is a landmark in the evolution of Indian thought. But the Svetashwatara Upanishad did not consistently keep to this standpoint. In the earlier chapters it still clung more or less to the old standpoint of self-effort as the only way to salvation. Take, for instance, Swet. 1.14 :

स्वदेहमरणं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।
ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासादेवं पश्यन्ति गूढवत् ॥

It is a very beautiful verse, and gives practical directions as to how a man can attain God, but the whole stress is upon the method of *dhyāna*. It is not until we come to the Gita that a true reconciliation is effected between self-effort and grace and an attempt made to reconstruct our spiritual life on the basis of a conjunction of these principles. But the wonderful work of the Gita suffered very much when, later, under the influence of the Bhakti schools, grace again became the dominant note of our culture and self-effort receded into the background. What we need today is to reconstruct our spiritual edifice on the joint foundation of self-effort and grace. This is what Sri Aurobindo has done.

I think our correspondence on this subject has become sufficiently long, and that it is time to cry halt to it. At least, so far as I am concerned, I do not want to pursue the subject any further. You may, of course, reply to this letter. I am extremely thankful to you for the opportunity that this long correspondence has given me of learning a good deal from you of the many aspects of this most difficult question. If occasionally during this correspondence my criticism has been somewhat severe, please take it in the spirit in which it has been offered, that is to say, in the spirit of free discussion, without the least trace of any personal rancour.

I trust you are keeping quite fit,

Yours sincerely,

S. K. MAITRA

(1) I have given above Hume's translation of the names of the sciences which Narada claimed to have studied. The word "nidhi" is usually translated as Geology.

(2) Kshatra-vidya can also be translated as Military Science.

(3) In the list of the earlier Upanishads I would include the following Upanishads : Brihadaranyaka, Chhandogya, Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya and Kaushitaki.

(Concluded)

ON TERRESTRIAL CHANGE

AN OBSERVATION

THE world is changing at a very rapid pace, so much so that it is difficult to recognise in the present world the world even of a century before, not to speak of the ancient past. It has been so mostly on account of the wonderful discoveries and corresponding developments in the field of science and technology. Change is the law of existence and, as such, the many-sided contribution of the scientific age is in keeping with the nature of things but for the undue and exclusive emphasis given to this aspect only. Presumably because of that emphasis a dumb question throbs in all hearts, "What is the purpose behind such a huge and unending material development; where will all of it ultimately lead us?" The enigma of life and existence is a problem for all times. The same question from a different angle appeared once in ancient minds. The answer was found and given in the form and language natural to them. The reply is attempted now by the modern mind, but with a difference in approach from the past.

In the ancient past the method of replying was direct, spiritual and intuitive and, starting from within, would come without with symbolic expression of the subtle, deep and effective inner truth of being and becoming. Nowadays the method is generally rational and deductive and, starting from without, strives to enter within by scrutinising and theorising at every step the gains of the pursuit. The two systems are wide apart in character. But in reality they may not be so uncompromising as they appear to be. The compromise is already there in the lives of leading spiritual figures of our time. In fact the ancient cannot be completely lost to the modern since its treasure is preserved still in the cavern of human hearts, in the womb of Mother Nature and in the works of culture and religion of the race, and often comes out through the lives and teachings of missioned personalities of the age. It waits to work with full force and renewed vigour as and when the time and circumstances will permit it to do so. Sri Aurobindo says, "All that was found must again be sought."¹ The implication of the statement will be clear from the following opinion of an eminent thinker, as reproduced by Swami Vivekananda, "At the beginning of this century, Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, studying from a not very clear translation of the Vedas made from an old translation into Persian and then by a young Frenchman into Latin, says, 'In the whole world there

¹ *A God's Labour.*

is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.”¹ Now let us hear a little more from the Swami’s own speech. “The eyes of the whole world are now turned towards the land of India for spiritual food, and India has to provide it for all the races. Here alone is the best Ideal for mankind and western scholars are now striving to understand this Ideal which is enshrined in our Sanskrit Literature and Philosophy and which has been the characteristic of India all through the ages.”²

From an integral point of view the modern and the ancient are not contradictory, rather they are complementary. So also the Truth in its essence is undivided and one, no matter whoever may be the exponent of it, provided it is actually lived at the time when it is expressed. The variation is in the manner of presentation only, but not in the substance. The following quotation from Sri Aurobindo regarding the Vedic Rishis will make the point clear. “The Rishis are the seers of a single Truth and use in its expression a common language. They differ in temperament and personality ; some are inclined to a more rich, subtle and profound use of Vedic symbolism ; others give a voice to their spiritual experience in a barer and simpler diction, with less fertility of thought, richness of poetical image or depth of fullness of suggestion.”³ Here is his view of Rabindranath Tagore : “Tagore has been a wayfarer towards the same goal as ours in his own way—that is the main thing, the exact stage of advance and putting of the steps are minor matters. His exact position as a poet or prophet or anything else will be assigned by posterity and we need not be in a haste to anticipate the final verdict.”⁴ Sri Aurobindo has always given more importance to the inner aspects of things than to the outer. What is achieved and established in the inner world cannot be immediately appreciated from outside. It takes time to reveal itself in full. So he says, “Break the moulds of the past, but keep safe its genius and its spirit, or else thou hast no future.”⁵ In this context his inspired opinion on Swami Vivekananda may be worth reading. “Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if ever there was one, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, ‘Behold Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children.’”⁶

¹ *Collected Works of Swam Vivekananda.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *On the Veda.*

⁴ *Sri Aurobindo on Rabindranath.*

⁵ *Thoughts and Aphorisms.*

⁶ *Bankim — Tilak — Dayananda.*

Now as regards our main question about terrestrial change and its underlying meaning we can say in tune with the ancient Rishis that we are all pilgrims of eternity. We are so by the very fact of our being in the cycle of creation. But we are not helpless in our journey. Our leader constantly moves with us as a pilgrim and at the same time He is also the God of our goal seated on the altar of eternity. When we shall be in unison with His will and intention in us, and also in the world, then only can the meaning and purpose of all changes be clear to us. Vivekananda announces in his speech, "There is a God in this universe. It is not true that this universe is drifting and stands in need of help from you and me. God is ever present therein, He is undying and eternally active and infinitely watchful. When the whole universe sleeps He sleeps not ; He is working incessantly, all the changes and manifestations of the world are His."¹ The texture of the statement is simple but charged with such a powerful conviction born of flaming realisation that it straightaway destroys or dispels any question of doubt or disbelief. But the two propensities mentioned above are too deep-rooted to be easily eradicated from human nature. Particularly in this rational age the demand of the reason cannot be altogether bypassed. At the sight of measureless calamities, conflicts and anomalies in the world, naturally the question comes up in certain minds, "How can God, who is revered as all-good and all-justice, be at the back as a support of all these ontoward happenings ?" The question is not a new one and the Swami also does not pretend to tell anything new on the point. He simply makes a restatement of the answer and puts before us the ancient truth in the language of modern times. Thus in the manner of the Upanishad he says, "He who in good action sees that there is something evil in it, and in the midst of the evil sees that there is something good somewhere, has known the secret of work."² The value of these expressions lies not in the soundness of argument but in the suggestiveness of the Truth contained in them. Moreover, they are pure gold tested by the touchstone of the author's realisation and experience. So there is nothing for us to despair about. There may be falls and upheavals, crooked turns and twists, dark tunnels and rocky hills in our way, we may not always find and feel God as our leader ; in spite of all this we must have the conviction that He is there and ever busy to pave the way, to clear our path for our journey towards Him. The discord, dispute, tussle and turmoil on the surface and a hundred other ills both visible and invisible are the result of His tremendous labour within. The secret of secrets is the sincere aspiration to be in touch with that superior Self and Will. Once that is achieved the cause and effect of all changes do not remain obscure any more. At a glance is known what is there in this earthly plane and also in the planes beyond.

We can find the truth of it in the person of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa,

¹ & ² *Collected Works of Swami Vivekananda.*

the synthesis and embodiment of spiritual realisations of all the main religions and sects of the world. About yoga (divine union) his words are, "Kamini Kanchan (lust and greed) are the illusions, these two removed from the mind starts Yoga. Paramatma (Supreme Self) is a Magnet, Jivatma (Individual Self) is as if a needle. When He (the former) attracts then starts yoga. But if the needle is soiled with mud, the Magnet does not attract. The mud of Kamini Kanchan has to be cleaned."

Q. "How can it be cleaned?"¹

R. "Earnestly weep for Him ; when that water will touch the mud it will be slowly washed away and when the needle will be sufficiently clear the Magnet will draw it towards Itself. Thus will begin the Yoga."

What a simple statement but pregnant with what a significant and living spiritual truth ! Unfortunately this will not, perhaps, receive proper response from the scientific, rational and intellectual mind, as it does not satisfy its needs, *i.e.*, practical proof and concrete experimental results. The idea of weeping and cleaning the mud may appear to be a repulsive affair and a useless botheration to such a mind. In fact an intellectual dissection and scrutiny can hardly make a just evaluation of this marvellous symbolic expression. The secret of it lies in the practice and realisation of its contents. Sri Ramakrishna is not equipped with modern scholarship and learning, his grasp of knowledge is intuitive and direct like that of the ancient Rishis. His sayings will be justified and validated from the example of his own life and also from the lives of his disciples, of whom Swami Vivekananda is the chief and most widely known. It is a fact that as a result of Sankara's influence and teaching a philosophy grew up in India which treated the world as an illusion and it had a far-reaching repercussion on the mind and life of the community. In connection with that, Ramakrishna states, not basing anything on argumentative philosophy, because he cannot do that, but giving the simple and bare truth of his vision and experience: "Why should the world be an illusion ? All these are talks of reasoning. When we have His darshan we can realise that He Himself has become the world and the living beings. The Mother showed me in the Kali temple that the Mother has become all. She showed me that all are conscious, the Idol is conscious, the Altar is conscious, Kosha Kushi (the copper vessels for worship) are conscious, the frame of the door, the marble-stone, all, all are conscious. I saw inside the room that all are dipped in a conscious fluid (Rasa), the fluid of Sachchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). I saw a notorious man in front of the Kali temple, but in him also I found His force shining brilliantly."²

This reminds us of Sri^mAurobindo's famous Uttarpara speech. Coming

¹ *Ramakrishna Kathamrita*.

² *Ibid.*

out from his seclusion at Alipore he tells of the experiences he had in the jail. The part which is almost identical in essence with the above experience of Ramakrishna is quoted here. "I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned ; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me His shade. ...I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in those darkened souls and misused bodies."¹

The importance and authenticity of these visions and realisations cannot be gauged by a purely scientific, philosophic and mental method of comprehension. On that ground to deny them their purpose and bearing will be a mistake. Probably, to some extent, they serve the same purpose as did the vision of the World-Spirit given by Sri Krishna to Arujna in the battle of Kurukshetra and may be (who knows?) many things more. On the other hand, scientific searching and philosophic investigation also cannot be decried for their shortcomings in judging purely spiritual matters. They have importance in their own field of study and action. According to Sri Aurobindo, "There are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect,—this is the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world ; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation. Ordinarily, a sharp distinction is drawn between the two, and it is supposed that when we get to the higher knowledge, the God-knowledge, then the rest, the world-knowledge becomes of no concern to us : but in reality they are two sides of one seeking. All knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of God,..."² That being the case, the intellectual study also may, if followed in the true line, be of considerable help to spiritual seekers.

It is said that the Sankhya philosophy of India stands as an exceptional and most perfect example of intellectual approach towards matters spiritual. It is alluring to express here the stress and importance that Swami Vivekananda gave to the subject while on his lecture-tour through India. He says, "This (Sankhya) is the basis of the philosophy of the whole world. There is no philosophy in the world that is not indebted to Kapila. Pythagoras came to India and studied this philosophy and that was the beginning of the philosophy of the Greeks. Later it formed the Alexandrian school, and still latter, the Gnostic, The Sankhya philosophy of Kapila was the first rational system that the

¹ *Uttarpara Speech.*

² *The Synthesis of Yoga.*

world ever saw. Every metaphysician of the world must pay homage to him. I want to impress on your mind that we are bound to listen to him as the great father of philosophy. This wonderful man, the most ancient of philosophers is mentioned even in Sruti. 'Oh, Lord, Thou who produced the sage Kapila in the beginning.'"¹

However, it goes without saying that modern philosophy and philosophers have deviated much from the original trend. The following version of Vivekananda will tell an interesting story about them. "There are philosophers who talk of the wisdom of India and use big psychological terms, fifty syllables long, but if an ordinary man like me goes to them and says, 'Can you tell me anything, to make me spiritual?' the first thing they would do would be to smile and say, 'Oh, you are too far below us in your reason. What can you understand about spirituality?'"² If, on the contrary, anyone of these philosophers with a high-class rational faculty would have gone to Sri Ramakrishna and asked the same question the probable answer would have been, "Oh, you are too strong and rigid in your reason and philosophy. What can you understand about spirituality?" But actually the answer might have been a different one. Because immediately he would have seen the aspiration of the soul of the questioner : had it been found strong and sincere the superficial rational rigidity would not have stood in the way of becoming spiritual, as it did not do in the case of Vivekananda himself. Probably that is why the Swami is reported to have said once that Sri Ramakrishna, while seeming to be all bhakti, was really, within, jnana ; but he himself, apparently all jnana, was full of bhakti. It is of course a fact, according to all teachers, that the intellect, for its own sake, is an obstruction in the way of spirituality. It must be docile and receptive to the touch of the spirit and the truth.

By now we have been able to notice the element of excellence in the lives of these eminent personalities of our time, who stand as connecting links between the past and the present. We shall conclude with a touch of the typical trait of Sri Aurobindo's life, philosophy and teaching. Unlike Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo is fully conversant with modern scientific thought, culture, philosophy and literature. But this cannot be the quality that gave him access to the realm of the spirit, although it might have helped him much to reproduce the wealth of his attainment in a way suitable for the modern mind and the thinking world. His untiring yogic effort and sadhana all through his life brought him in contact and communion, it is understood, with a superior Truth and Power which at the same time includes and overrules both the ancient and the modern and by its free and unhampered action can bring about a reconciliation between the two terms of existence, and can moreover

¹ & ² *Collected Works of Swami Vivekananda.*

help the growth of a new creation adding a fourth step to the evolutionary ladder. The harmonious development of all the powers of our being, physical, mental, vital, psychic and spiritual rests on this new power, provided the rigidity of human mind, life and body gives way and makes room for the power to act.

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

Students' Section

A PIECE OF LAND

RECENTLY a new teacher had come to the school. He was at once liked by most of the pupils because of his very new and interesting ways of teaching even the most dull subjects. He made the subjects jump out of the books and become so living that the students no more thought History a subject of dead kings and Mathematics a study of headaching figures and eye-straining equations. History started breathing faith, courage, loyalty and unity, Geography grew a lesson in picnics in deserts or at Murchisson Falls or among the Rockies, while mathematical sums turned as interesting as the counting of twinkling stars, and equations were like a search for flowers and butterflies in a garden.

Now the vacation was about to start and the new teacher wanted his students to spend their time in doing some useful job. He said that the job could be amusing or serious but it should be harmless and they should put in their own labour to perform it. He wanted to see, he said, the best thoughts put into practice in the best way.

The children were overjoyed at the idea of being able to do something. Their young minds immediately began thinking about all sorts of things they could do.

The vacation commenced and the children got busy with their own jobs. They set about them with all their sincerity because they now felt that they were important persons doing a special work.

And it was amazing to see what various jobs their little heads could think of. Some went after their mummies or grannies to learn sewing and started making small articles like handkerchieves or toys or decorative gifts. Some started collecting money to buy books for the poor children who could not afford them. Some started polishing shoes and motorcars to get money which they could contribute to the school library or the school dramatic society. Practically all of them had begun something or other.

But there was Mina who could think of nothing at all. She thought and thought but as she was brought up in a very wealthy house where she never had any work to do at all, she found it extremely difficult to choose a specific task. One morning she got up earlier than usual. The house was all in silence as all were sleeping. Only in the garden below she could hear the rustle of the

gardener sweeping away the dry leaves. She was trying to follow her thoughts back and forth with the gardener's broom's rhythmic sweeps when suddenly she heard him angrily scolding somebody. She pushed away her silk covering with her legs and ran to the window to see who was the victim of the gardener.

To her surprise she saw a young boy of about her own age timidly talking to Ramu. She knew quite well Ramu's rough handling of children. So she put on her sandals and ran down the stairs into the garden and reached the spot breathlessly. She asked, still gasping, "What's the matter, Ramu?"

"Oh, this beggar wants to steal the flowers from our garden and I know they are such cheats that they will go and sell all of them in the market and make money on them. Oh yes, I know this lot very well."

Mina looked suspiciously at the young miserable. Hesitatingly he said, "I... I... didn't want to steal. I...just...want to gather..."

"Gathering someone else's flowers is not stealing, you mean, eh?" put in the gardener very cruelly cutting short the boy's words. Mina boldly asked him to keep quiet and, slowly going to the boy, asked softly, "Come, tell me whatever you have in mind." The boy timidly looked at the gardener who had started scolding Mina for sympathising with a dirty street-urchin. Mina commanded him like a mistress to do his work and putting her hand on the boy's shoulder asked him to continue with his explanation. He explained in a few words that he was the son of a *mali* who used to grow flowers and make garlands and sell them. But now his father had died and his old mother could work no more. They had no plot of land where they could grow plants and earn money. Seeing Ramu daily sweeping away the fresh flowers fallen on the lawn, he thought of collecting them and weaving a garland out of them. He could then sell the garland and get some money.

Mina understood that he had had no ill intention of stealing anything. He had only wanted the flowers which Ramu was sweeping away because they were useless to him. Moreover they dirtied the beautiful lawn. Mina was ashamed of Ramu's mean nature and called him a dog in the manger. She began thinking quickly to find a way to help the poor boy. She thought of a plan and asked the boy to see her again that evening.

At lunch-time she asked her father to help the boy somehow or other. Her father said that he did not believe in charity to young children as this made them lazy, but that he could rent a piece of land to the boy where he could grow flowers for his livelihood. Mina at once agreed to this. But her brother asked her, "Where is he going to pay the rent from, Mina?"

"Oh, I thought of that long before," she replied like a grown-up person and, turning to her father, asked, "Can I come to see the place, Daddy?" She was keen to fix up everything lest her father should change his mind. He took her with him lovingly and showed her the place. He suggested that as Mina had herself requested him on behalf of the boy for help he would want

just a little amount as rent. She was all cheerful and waited for the boy to come that evening.

As soon as he appeared near the gate she met him and asked him to follow her. He did so in amazement and awe. As soon as they reached the place she told him that it was for his garden. He couldn't believe it! Naturally he was worried about the money he would have to pay her father. When she had told him all about the way she had obtained that land, he was still worried. But she instantly removed this fear from him, saying that she had gathered enough pocket money to pay for two months' rent plus the seeds that he might need. "And I would come daily to help you prepare your little garden," Mina added. The boy was simply astonished at all this, and felt as though he had been in a story-book where a magic fairy had put away all his troubles. But soon he realised that he was neither in a story-book nor in a dream. So he started thanking Mina who stopped him and said that that was the work she would report at her school as a work done during the holidays.

So from the next day, Pravin, the boy, and Mina got to work and soon they had various plants in their little garden. Mina brought quite a few plants from her own garden despite Ramu's grumbling. These plants started having buds. Mina and Pravin daily worked hard and watched the plants' growth eagerly. In the meantime, her father allowed Pravin to take some flowers from his garden to sell. Thus Pravin could get his daily bread until his own garden had enough flowers.

Mina and Pravin worked regularly and planned out their garden in the most artistic way. In between the plants they made small patches of lawn too. The hedge was made of different flowering bushes. They watered the plants and weeded their beds enthusiastically, imagining the sight of their future garden all full of lovely flowers.

The school reopened. Most of the children were keen to tell the new teacher all that they had been doing. But the sagacious teacher had watched a few children at various tasks during the vacation. He had felt that this much time for this type of idea to take deep roots in the children's mind was not sufficient. So he asked all of them to continue their work and tell him all that they did at the end of the year. Some children were disappointed as they had been over-anxious to tell him what they had done. But some of them like Mina whose work had not yet shown any fruits were very happy to have this extra time to continue what they had begun.

Every day after school, Mina started spending an hour or so in Pravin's garden which had by now already started yielding some flowers. When there was work to do they were at it sincerely. When there was no work, they sat together on the newly grown lawn and talked mostly about flowers. A month passed. The garden was full of flowers and both Mina and Pravin were as gay and happy as the flowers to see in reality what they had till now just pictured in

their minds. One day they were sitting and talking behind the hedge which divided a part of the garden. A tired man plodding on that road happened to see this flowery garden and his tiredness longed to go in and get refreshed. He slowly entered and lazily threw himself upon the lawn.

After some time he heard whispers. He became attentive and heard, "See, Pravin, there are many flowers in this little garden of ours. All of them grow so closely and yet they never seem jealous of one another. Each flower always looks as cheerful and lovely as its neighbour." It was a girl's voice. Someone replied, "I wonder why we human beings can't live as cheerfully and without hatred for one other."

"Yes, I feel very strongly after working in this garden that flowers have a lot to teach us."

The tired man was much impressed. So he got up to see who had been talking. When he saw Mina and Pravin, he asked, "How did you get these lovely ideas? You two along with these flowers have removed all my fatigue and filled me up with a new freshness."

Mina : "Oh but we were just talking."

The man : "Maybe. But I think you can do a very good service to people like me, if the good ideas that you get from these flowers can be conveyed to them."

Pravin : "But how can we do it?"

The man : "You can write down the things about which you were talking just a little while ago and fix the paper on to your garden gate. I shall help you write them down."

Mina and Pravin were extremely happy to have this new work associated with their garden. From the next day small sentences like, "See the laughing flowers," "Listen to what our flowers tell," "Storm or Sun, flowers always smile," appeared on the gate. These attracted visitors to the garden.

Either Mina or Pravin or sometimes both of them were there to greet these visitors with a tiny bunch of flowers. Inside the garden, near various plants, there were several posters describing different aspects of flowers. Every visitor, some time or other, found in them a response to his trouble. An angry father read near a cluster of pink flowers, "Though so many of us grow so congestedly together on a small twig, we don't get disturbed or become uneasy at others' faults," and at once he realised that he should not have lost his temper with his wife and children.

Two unhappy distressed people saw, "Though our life lasts only for twenty-four hours, we send our ardent prayers to God all the time." Wonderingly they looked around and saw once more, "Though short, our life is full of hope and happiness."

A group of children, who came in to sit and plan out how to cheat their playmates of the other street in the next game of marbles, heard some two or

three voices reading. "These flowers look so frank and open because they don't hide any ill-thoughts in them as men do."

"Yes, they bloom out so sincerely that they not only themselves look beautiful but make the whole of the branch and even their neighbouring flowers lovely."

"If all our actions were as frank and selfless as those of these flowers, we would certainly make all people around us happy and cheerful."

Hearing these things the children were stunned and they rose up all at once and found Mina and Pravin talking to the flowers. The children had no need to ask anything. They felt that they were doing harm not only to their playmates but also to themselves with their ideas. Thus they left the garden more or less determined to be better than what they were.

These sort of incidents took place at regular intervals and Mina found boundless joy in her work.

At last the time came when the teacher said, "You have all waited long and I am sure you have worked hard too. Tell me what each one of you has done as your most special work. And then I will tell you a remarkable thing that I have noticed recently."

One by one the children recounted their tasks. Some brought forward whatever money or gifts they had collected for various purposes. Mina also described, when her turn came, how she had helped Pravin to have a piece of land for earning money. When everyone had finished, the teacher praised their work and said some encouraging words to enable the children to keep up enthusiasm for such works in future. Then he described vividly how one afternoon he had gone to a garden and had seen posters showing the usefulness of flowers and how different flowers had different things to teach. He then said that he would take all of them that very day to that garden.

When they reached there, to everyone's surprise and delight it was discovered that it was the same garden which Mina had enabled Pravin to have and where she herself worked with Pravin.

SUNANDA

NATURE'S MUSIC

It was an early Saturday morning and the sun was far below the horizon. The sky was cloudy. Everything was quiet and pleasant. Only the twittering of the swallows was heard. In such an atmosphere I had no intention to get up.

I heard something tapping on the roof. At first I thought it was some birds that were hopping. But then the tapping came louder and the courtyard outside began to get wet. And a cold wind made me shiver in my bed.

I was called by my father, so I was forced to get up, though I did not want to. At about half past five I left my bed to appreciate nature's realm. It was drizzling continuously on the roof. The roses were in bloom and their fragrance filled the air. A gentle wind was kissing all the blushing petals. How delightful and dreamy was the view ! It seemed that nature was the mother of all the flowers and had come back to her beloved children after a long exile. It reminded me of Proserpine returning with Spring from the dark realms.

All the flowers were swaying in welcome. Had I been a poet with a Keats's compact imagination I could have described their smiling faces more vividly.

Flowers which usually bloom in the early morning had already bloomed much quicker, perhaps to welcome their mother. Not only in their petals but all about were raindrops and these were shining so brightly that it seemed that nature had sprinkled precious crystals on the earth.

Rhythmic sound of the raindrops was continually beating on the roof. The squeals of squirrels and the chirrups of the young sparrows, crying for breakfast, added to the symphony. It created such a wonderful music that it easily conquered my sensitive human heart. What a lovely and glorious gift of God it was ! I did not know that raindrops too could create nature's symphony. It was some of the most harmonious music that I had ever heard.

O, the harmonious Voice of creation, how I love Thee !

SRIJIT

THE BROOK

MY ears are fed by a murmur soft
From the tiny brook aloft.

Merciless she's hurled from her mountain home,
Yet ever in her its sweet thoughts roam.

She looks to neither left nor right
In her forward endless flight.

The daffodils follow her course,
They try to know her source.

Deathless, she passes away
Singing all night and day.

ABHIJIT GUPTA