

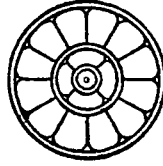
# MOTHER INDIA,

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XIV

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO : The Consciousness of the True Purusha	5
From <i>Rajam Palit</i>	...
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	6
From <i>Nirodbaran</i>	...
REMINISCENCES (Translated by S.K.Banerji from the Bengali)	15
From <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	...
INTRODUCTION TO THE VEDAS (Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali)	19
From <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	...
<i>The Life Divine</i> OF SRI AUROBINDO : ITS LEADING PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS (Classified Excerpts)	21
Compiled by <i>Nathaniel Pearson</i>	...
HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US : Saved in a Train-Crash	24
From <i>Siddheshwar Banerji</i>	...
THE WORSHIPPER (Poem)	26
From <i>Anurakta (Tony Scott)</i>	...
MY HEART (Poem)	27
From <i>Srijit</i>	...
THUS SANG MY SOUL (Poems to the Mother)	28
From <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	...
SELF-TEACHINGS	29
From <i>Narwani</i>	...

## CONTENTS

		Page
THOUGHTS	<i>Girdharlal</i>	... 30
THE TRINITY OF INDIA'S NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT : BAL-PAL-LAL	<i>Chinnmoy</i>	... 31
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE : <i>The Spiritual Heritage of India</i> by Swami Prabhavananda	Review by <i>M. P. Pandit</i>	... 37
NALINI KANTA SEN	<i>Sisir Kumar Mitra</i>	... 45

### Students' Section

TALKS ON POETRY : Talk Thirty-eight	<i>Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna)</i>	... 47
THE ART-LOVING PRINCESS (Short Story)	<i>Sunanda</i>	.. 53
SOME FACTS ABOUT DREAMING		... 57
SANSKRIT SIMPLIFIED : Book I—Lesson 2	<i>Pujalal</i>	... 59

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## THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

### THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE TRUE PURUSHA

A WORD about your Sadhana. It seems to me that the key of your future development is contained in the experience which you say you often attained for a few days at Krishnagore (your letter of the 9th February). "A state which was full of knowledge, calm serenity, strength and wide consciousness—all questions automatically solved—a continuous stream of power passed into the body through the forehead centre—extremely powerful, having undisturbed samata, calm conviction, keen sight and knowledge." This was the consciousness of the true Purusha in you aware of his own supramental being and it is this which must become your normal consciousness and the basis of the supramental development. In order that it may so become, the mind has to be made calm and strong, the emotional and vital being purified and the physical consciousness so opened that the body can hold and retain the consciousness and power. I notice that at the time you had it the body also expressed it. This is a sign that the capacity is already there in your physical being. The calm and strength will descend from above, what you have to do is to open yourself and receive it and at the same time reject all the movements of the lower nature which prevent it from remaining and which are ruled by desires and habits inconsistent with the true being, the true power and the true knowledge. Of course the superior Power will itself reveal to you and remove all the obstacles in your nature. But the condition is that not only your mental but your vital and physical being must open and surrender to it and refuse to surrender themselves to other powers and forces. As you yourself experienced at the time, this greater consciousness will of itself bring the development of the higher will and knowledge. Psychic experiences of a proper kind are of course a great help but in your case it may be that any rich development of the psychic will only come after or in proportion as this consciousness with the calm knowledge, will and Samata takes possession of the different parts of the being.

6th April, 1923

*From* RAJANI PALIT

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran<sup>1</sup> 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. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Puram, 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 eighteenth instalment in the new Series which, except for the present occasion, has followed a chronological order and begun at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India 1952.)*

JANUARY 24, 1939

THERE was some discussion of local politics and a reference to a turn in the fortunes of a political leader. Then we came to general topics.

SRI AUROBINDO : There is a Greek saying that when one becomes too fortunate and powerful, he becomes insolent and commits excesses and that strikes against the throne of God and then retribution begins. X ought to have known that.

Y was never like this. He was never insolent, never pushed things too far. When somebody asked him to arrest one of his opponents, he replied : 'Ça, c'est une mauvaise politique.'

Hitler also is pushing things too far. That is why he cannot last long.

There is a famous Greek story about a tyrant of Samos. Do you know it? This tyrant wanted to make friends with another tyrant. The latter replied : "You are too fortunate. You must sacrifice something or have some little misfortune to compensate for your good luck. Otherwise I can't ally myself with you." Polycrates threw into a river his most precious ring as a sacrifice. The ring was swallowed by a fish. That fish was caught by a fisherman and brought with the ring inside it to Polycrates. When the other tyrant heard about it, he said : "You are too lucky. I will never ally myself with you." Polycrates was later killed by his people who had risen in revolt. "The ring of Polycrates" is a proverbial expression in English.

A Roman poet says something like "The giants fall by their own mass". There is a similar idea in India : "The Asuras are too heavy for the earth to bear." But I must say some Asuras are clever enough to escape and flourish in spite of proverbs !

P : Can it be affirmed that the Asuras by their action meddle too much in the law of evolution or that they contradict the very fundamental urge of humanity ?

SRI AUROBINDO (*after keeping silent for a time*) : There is no such general law. The thing is that the Asuras can't keep balance. The law that demands balance then strikes.

A long silence followed. N, after some hesitation, blurted out a question that had been revolving in his mind.

N : Somebody has asked : Did Vivekananda bring into Ramakrishna's work a spirit not intended by Ramakrishna ?

SRI AUROBINDO : In what way ?

N : He spoke of service to humanity.

SRI AUROBINDO : But was that Ramakrishna's idea which Vivekananda followed ? Did Ramakrishna ask him to do service of humanity and did Vivekananda bring into this work what was not intended by his Master ?

N : As far as I remember, Ramakrishna spoke of *loka hita*, "the good of the world".

SRI AUROBINDO : But that is not the same as service of humanity. The Gita also asks us to work for the good of the world. *Loka hita* can be done in many ways.

P : So far as I know, Ramakrishna didn't say anything about service of humanity. The phrase "*daridra nārāyaṇa*"—"God the poor"—was Vivekananda's. It seems, not all the disciples of Ramakrishna were agreeable to the idea. But some submitted, saying, "Vivekananda should know best."

S : Even from those who didn't object, all didn't take active part in the service. Brahmananda,<sup>1</sup> for example. We have heard that his spiritual realisation was higher than Vivekananda's.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, I think he was spiritually higher. I once met him when I went to see Belur Math. He asked me about some letter received from Government. I don't remember what it was about. I advised him to keep silent and not give any reply.

P : Nowadays in many places people feed the poor. On the birthdays of Saints and Yogis, there is what Vivekananda called *sevā* of *daridra nārāyaṇa*.

<sup>1</sup> This Brahmananda should be distinguished from Brahmanand of Chandod. — EDITOR.

SRI AUROBINDO : What is the use of feeding people one day when they have to go without sufficient food all the year round ? Those who feed them satisfy their own conscience, I suppose. If you could find out the cause of poverty and try to remove it, that would do some real work.

S : But that is not easy, Sir; there are so many difficulties, political, economic, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't think it is so insoluble a problem as all that. If you give people education—I mean proper education, not the current type—then the problem can be solved. People in England or France don't have the kind of poverty we have in India. That is because of their education; they are not so helpless.

C : About 6000 people were fed during the last birthday of Raman Maharshi. But they say nobody is allowed to touch him : they have to stand at a distance, make pranam and have darshan and go away. Special consideration is shown in a few cases.

SRI AUROBINDO . If all were allowed to touch him, he might feel like the President of America who recently had to shake hands with thousands of people and got an ache in the hand ! I have heard that Maharshi complained of stomach trouble from eating the prasad of various people and that the pile of prasad was one of the causes of his trying to fly away from the world !

S : But destiny brought him back. People give a lot of money to Maharshi but, curiously enough, we don't get any. A man actually told me we don't require money, since we have so many buildings, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, that is the impression. They think like Lady Batesman that the Ashram is the work of a genius and genius can do without money ! Actually, it is only the rich minority and the poor who give money. G, for example, earns hardly enough to maintain her family, but whenever she finds an opportunity, the first thing she does is to send some amount here. There is a rumour in Pondicherry that we have a lot of money stored away under Pavitra's cellar !

P : The question of the Ashram's richness reminds me of X. I wanted some blocks from him and he charged me so heavily that I had to write to Y to explain to X my financial position.

SRI AUROBINDO : You should have written about the pocket expense you get, and said that your monthly income is Rs.2.

P : Yes, I was just thinking of that. Anyhow, he gave me some blocks free but advised me that it is futile in India to bring out art books. One is sure to run into debt. People don't understand art.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, people look at art as N looks at philosophy.  
(Laughter)

P : Élie Faure says that Greek art is an expression of unrestrained passion and has no mystery about it ?



SRI AUROBINDO : What is he talking about ? He seems to have a queer mind. Where is the expression of passion in the art of the Greeks ? On the contrary it is precisely their restraint that is so very evident everywhere in their art. The Greeks are well-known for restraint and control. Compared to the art of other peoples, theirs is almost cold. It is its remarkable beauty that really saves it from real coldness. This applies to the whole period from Phidias down to that in which the Laocoon was sculptured. It is only when you come to the Laocoon that you find the expression of strong feeling or passion.

P : Perhaps Élie Faure makes that remark because of the Satyrs.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is quite another matter. The Satyrs are symbolic.

P : He also argues, rather queerly, that the poisoning of Socrates, the banishment of Themistocles and the killing of other great men were an expression of unrestrained passion.

SRI AUROBINDO . What has that to do with art ?

P : He means that the Greek mind being such must have found the same expression in art also

SRI AUROBINDO : It is rather the opposite. It is a sign of the Greeks' sense of control that they checked their leaders from committing what they considered excesses. When two leaders became powerful and combined, the Greeks ostracised one.

Then there was a pause. Sri Aurobindo seemed to have gone into a reverie. We were expecting him to come out of it with something for us. He started speaking on his own.

SRI AUROBINDO . I was thinking how some races have the sense of beauty in their very bones. Judging from what is left to us, it seems that all people had once a keen perception of beauty. For example, take pottery or Indian wood-carving which, I am afraid, is dying out now. Greece and ancient Italy had a wonderful sense of beauty. Japan, you know, is remarkable. Even the poorest people have that sense. If the Japanese produce anything ugly, they export it to other countries ! But I am afraid they are losing their aesthetic sense because of the general vulgarisation. By the way, the Chinese and the Japanese got their art impulse originally from India. Their Buddhist images have Indian inspiration : it is later that they developed their own lines.

Modern artists are putting an end to art. Vulgarisation everywhere !

N : Indian painting is not yet so bad as European. People are not following the leaders of modernism here. Rabindranath Tagore as a painter is not much imitated. Perhaps because of Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose.

SRI AUROBINDO : They, I suppose, praise Rabindranath but don't encourage others to follow him. (*Laughter*)

In Europe, apart from vulgarisation, there is dictatorship acting against art.

In Germany Hitler must have crushed everything fine out of existence—music, philosophy, etc. How can anything develop where there is no freedom? People in Germany have to admire only one thing : Nazism ! I hope Mussolini has still kept some freedom and art.

P : Mussolini speaks of “our art, our poets”. He seems to be proud of Italians as a nation of artists and has tried to preserve the old tradition. A friend of mine recently visited Italy and found that the Italians still have a great sense of painting and sculpture.

SRI AUROBINDO : And of music also. Painting and music are their passion. The Mother had a striking experience of their love of music. She was staying in North Italy for some time and was once playing on the organ all alone in a church. After she had finished, there was a big applause. She found that a crowd had gathered behind her and was enthusiastic in appreciation.

P : Indian music, especially South Indian, has been preserved by the temples. For, expert musicians come there on occasions and play and sing.

Nishta (Miss Wilson) is all praise for many Indian things she sees here. For example, she finds great beauty in the way Indian women walk. She said to me, “You won’t understand it, but I can because I have seen our European women walking. Your women walk as if they were born dancers. They have a beautiful rhythm in their movements.”

SRI AUROBINDO : That is true. It is, I suppose, due to their having to carry pots on their heads. This practice requires balance of the whole body.

P : Nishta praises the Indian saris and says that our women have a keen sense of colour.

SRI AUROBINDO : She is right. I hope our women are not going to give up their saris under Western influence.

N : But saris, though graceful, don’t seem to be good for active work; they are inconvenient.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ? The Romans conquered the world in their togas ! Plenty of Indian women do their work with their saris on. When this craze for utility comes, beauty goes to the dogs. This is the modern tendency. The moderns look at everything from the point of view of utility, as if beauty were nothing.

N : But beauty and utility can be combined.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but at the end utility gets the upper hand.

N : I at any rate have found that the European male dress gives a push for work and activity, while the Indian dhoti produces lethargy, sense of ease, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : That doesn’t prevent the European dress from being the ugliest in the world. I have seen plenty of people leading active lives with the dhoti on. The Europeans are now putting on shorts and just a shirt—most utilitarian, I think.

P : Some Indian women also put on the European dress.

SRI AUROBINDO : Indian women's putting on the European dress is horrible.

P : Nowadays European women also go about in shorts.

SRI AUROBINDO : Is that so ? I understand they are giving up stockings, too. Yet at one time their whole body used to be covered up excepting the hands and the face. I remember an experience of Bapubhai Majumdar's in London. He was coming down from the bathroom in his hotel with his feet bare. Suddenly a lady who came out of a room saw him. She ran away at once and complained to the Manager that a man was going about half naked in the house. The Manager called Bapubhai and asked him not to do so again. Do you know Bapubhai ?

P : I think I do. Once I saw him being stopped in the street by the police for breaking a traffic rule. He gave the policeman a long lecture in English, leaving the fellow flabbergasted.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : That must be he. It is very characteristic of him. He was my first friend in Baroda. He took me to his house and I stayed there for some time. He was a nice man, but what people call "volatile and mercurial".

JANUARY 25, 1939

There was no talk till after 7 p.m., when the Mother went for meditation.

P : After our talk yesterday I suddenly remembered Ramakrishna's phrase : *Lok nā Pok*, "লোক না পোক". So he could not have commanded Vivekananda to do humanitarian work.

N : AB says the idea of service of humanity is Christian and was brought in by Vivekananda on his own. I am told Ramakrishna asked him to do more tapasya, achieve greater Yogic realisation.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't know what exactly was the Yogic realisation he had. I have read many books about him but couldn't gather a precise idea of it. Even the official biography of him doesn't give any quite definite information.

P : People say he did a lot of tapasya at the time he was a *parivrājaka*, a wandering Yogi.

SRI AUROBINDO : Was it this kind of tapasya Ramakrishna meant ?

S : Vivekananda had a sort of Nirvanic experience. He has himself mentioned something about it.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, that experience is the only one definitely known.

P : He also had visions at Amarnath. But he seemed always torn between two tendencies—world-work and direct sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. And he used to put more intuitive flashes into his conversations than into his writings. That's what I found on reading Nivedita's

book, *The Master As I Saw Him*. As a rule too, it is in talk that such flashes come—at least in his case it was so.

N : You said the other day that his spirit visited you in Alipore Jail and told you about the Higher Consciousness from where, I suppose, these intuitive flashes come.

SRI AUROBINDO . Yes, he did tell me. I had no idea about things of the Higher Consciousness. I never expected him and yet he came to teach me. And he was exact and precise even in the minutest details.

N : That is very interesting. He has nowhere in his books or conversations spoken of these things. Could his spirit know after death what he didn't know in life ?

SRI AUROBINDO . Why not ? He may have got it afterwards.

S : Can the spirit evolve after death ?

SRI AUROBINDO . Of course. But either he may not have known in life or else he may have known and kept silent. A Yogi doesn't say all that he knows. He says only what is necessary. If I wrote all that I know, then it would be ten times the amount I have written.

S : People will judge you by what you have written.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) . That doesn't matter.

P : *Lok nā Pok* !

N : Then we shan't know all that you know ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, realise first what I have written.

N : Isn't it possible for those who live in a spiritual consciousness to know about the realisations of other Yogis ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. If one establishes a special contact, it is possible.

P . Vivekananda, in his writings, stresses the realisation of the Brahman in all and says in particular, "I worship my God the poor, the downtrodden, the pariah."

SRI AUROBINDO . Are we to understand that the Brahman is more in the poor and the downtrodden than in others ?

P : If the Brahman is at all present, it is *samam Brahman*, Equal Brahman.

SRI AUROBINDO : AB is right. Vivekananda brought in the idea of service of humanity from Christianity—and also from Buddhism. Both Vivekananda and Gandhi derive it from them. But I don't understand why they speak of serving humanity only. Buddhism, as well as Jainism, includes animals also in its idea of service. Even then the chief idea in Buddhism is *karuṇā*, Compassion.

The ancient sages too were less exclusive. They said, *sarva bhūteṣu*, meaning all creatures, not men alone.

S : But how is one to make a practical application of it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That depends upon the individual and his temperament.

S : Buddha wanted liberation not for himself only but for the whole of mankind.

SRI AUROBINDO : It was not liberation he wanted, What he wanted was to get beyond the sufferings of existence.

S : Still, that was not for himself but for all.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. Yet he had to do it for himself first before he could do it for others.

S : Tibetan Buddhists say, "Nirvana is only a stage."

SRI AUROBINDO (*surprised*) : Is that so ?

P : In Buddhism they have two paths : knowledge and devotion. They consider Buddha an Avatar.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the Mahayana-path that goes through devotion. But isn't it a fact that all Buddhists utter : *Buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi, Dharmam śaraṇam gacchāmi, Saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi* ?<sup>1</sup> Buddha himself couldn't have said it, for he said that one has to do everything by one's own effort.

S : It is said that Buddha turned back from the gate of Nirvana.

SRI AUROBINDO : I thought it was Amitabha Buddha who refused to enter Nirvanā. He is venerated very deeply in Japan.

Modern European scholars are now trying to prove that Buddha's life-story was a later invention.

P : The Tibetan Lamas are believed to be in a direct line from Buddha. But to find the true Dalai Lama is not easy at all. You know about the various signs by which he has to be recognised ?

S : Is Zen Buddhism alive in Japan ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh yes. Lady Batesman is going there to study it. The Zen Buddhists have a very severe discipline.

P : I am told that in Lhasa the meditation is very rigorous and the monks are thrashed for breaking the discipline.

SRI AUROBINDO : We might also begin that here ! P could be deputed as one of the thrashers.

P : Madame David-Neel divides the Lamas into three classes : the low and ordinary, who are the commonest and care only for food and comfort; the intellectual and artistic; the mystic or Yogi.

SRI AUROBINDO : But that applies to all monastic orders. I remember the description of a feast in which the Sannyasins got drunk and began to dance. Also the Sannyasin who is a Pundit is a well-known type. In the Christian orders too, you have the professional monks who practise professional piety; the second type is that of monks who study religion and philosophy; only a very few are those who are dedicated to spiritual practice.

The Carmelite Order has given and is still giving many Saints to Roman Catholic Christianity. The latest is St. Theresa of Lisieux.

<sup>1</sup> "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha."

S : There are two Saint Theresas. One is the great and famous Saint, she was Spanish. The recent Theresa is French. The Spanish Theresa's life was very quiet but intense. She said, "I will spend my heaven for mankind." Many miracles happened after her death.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Spanish have produced many remarkable Saints. Some of them had very powerful experiences. The German mystics show more the knowledge-aspect of mysticism because they are more philosophic-minded. Boehme and Eckhart are examples. Among the French Saints you find more love and charity and a flaming intensity. But the English Saints are tremendous politicians. I don't know how they manage to become Saints at all. They either kill or get killed. St. Thomas Beckett was murdered. St. Duncan was a minister to a king but was in fact the real ruler. He got a king murdered. He used to invite his political opponents and make them occupy one-half of the room. This part would be mined, and all those opponents would be destroyed. That at least is one of his miracles !

The Irish or Celtic Saints and preachers converted the greatest part of the European Continent to Christianity. They have also given the greatest Christian philosopher. They were like the Vedantins. They followed a discipline very similar to the Indian. They were first suppressed by the Roman Emperors who suspected they would help resistance to Roman rule, and afterwards by the Christian authorities themselves.

The Jews have many mystic symbols in their Cabbala. Originally they had no mysticism and didn't believe in the immortality of the soul. They believed that God breathes life into you at birth and takes it away at death. There is no future life or reincarnation. You are rewarded or punished in this single life on earth. The Jews got their mysticism from the Chaldeans and from the Persians. They were captives in Babylon and the Persians freed them. They brought their mysticism from contact with these peoples.

There is a similarity between Chaldean occultism and Egyptian.

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#### NOTE

*Nirodbaran acknowledges the help of A.B. Purani here and there in these two Talks, where he has added a few words or phrases.*

*The next instalment will also interrupt, like the present one, the usual chronological sequence because it too brings in Vivekananda, though not in reference to his visit to Sri Aurobindo in Alipore Jail.*

## REMINISCENCES

### VII

*(The author recalls here his experience of a tornado and of cyclones, which he describes in vivid detail. What lends special charm to this narrative is the occult meaning he reads in these upheavals of Nature, especially when he touches on the period shortly before and after the first World War. Here too we get some glimpses of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.)*

I HAVE once spoken to you of an earthquake and a small fire. Today I shall say something about two or three other inclement natural phenomena of which I have had direct personal experience.

The first was when I was a child, it has left a clear imprint on my mind. Many of you, no doubt, are familiar with storms and hurricanes. But have you ever seen a whirlwind, what they call a tornado ? This word has been rendered by a Pundit into *tūrṇa-ḍa*, a thing that is swift in its flight. I have had a chance to see the thing with my own eyes. Just listen, you will see how terrible a thing it is and how well in keeping with its formidable name.

We were at school then, the District School at Rungpur and were attending class. The day was about over. The sky had been overcast and it looked as if it was going to rain. All of a sudden we heard people shouting, "Fire, fire !" Was there a fire, a real fire ? We rushed out in a body into the open field in front. As we looked up we saw what they had at first taken to be smoke or rather a whirling mass that looked like smoke but was actually a cloud. There was a mass of clouds that kept whirling almost over our heads, and from a distance there came a low rumbling and whistling sound. What could that be ? What did it mean ? They let us off from school and all of us ran in the direction of the sound. It did not rain much, very little indeed, if at all. We ran on, but the sound was nowhere near. Then we heard people saying, "Something terrible has happened, over there, in that direction." We kept running, for a distance of two or three miles from the School and beyond the limits of the town. Suddenly we were brought up short. Right in front there was a wooded tract where the trees had been all smashed up. We moved on straight into the heart of the ruin. It was a strange spectacle, as if an open zig-zag path some fifty cubits wide had been cut across the wood with dozens of bull-dozers driving through and levelling everything down. Bushes and shrubs and trees

and houses—it was lucky there were not many houses—had all been swept clean away—for a distance of four or five miles, we were informed. The place had been sparsely populated, so the casualties were not heavy—some half a dozen men, a few head of cattle and some houses. The demon of destruction seemed to have spent all his wrath on Nature. It was perhaps really the work of some evil spirit.

They said the whirlwind had arisen from a pool of water four or five miles away and it did look like a demon when it came rushing forward with a whirling motion after having churned the waters of the pool. However that may be, we heard this about a pedestrian who had been walking along the road just when the tornado crossed his path. He was caught by the wind, given a few twirls up in the air and thrown down on the ground by the side of the road. As he shook himself up on his feet, he went on muttering, "What fun, I got a free lift to the sky!"—*kaisā majā, āsmān dekh hyā mufat se*. The man was a labourer type from Behar.

As I moved for some distance along the clearing left by the wind, I could see how swift and powerful had been its impact. The trees that had not been uprooted were twisted in a fantastic manner you could hardly imagine. All that was needed now to make a paved road or highway out of the clearing was to remove the bush and throw in some gravel and mud.

What I saw, or rather experienced, on the next occasion was not a tornado, but a prank of the wind-god all the same. It was a wild enough prank and rather dangerous for those of us who were among its victims.

It was here in Pondicherry. At that time we were in the old Guest House; it is old indeed, for after that storm the very look of the house was changed. In those days, Pondicherry used to have regularly every year, in October or November, cyclones of a rather severe type. We do not get anything like them now. The Mother's presence seems to have pacified a great deal the wild forces of Nature. In those days it would not do to bar our doors and windows with ordinary bolts and latches, they needed to be held by regular bamboo poles.

It all happened after nightfall. The sky had been overcast the whole day, it was dark all around and heavy showers fell at intervals—real nasty weather, you would say. We were upstairs. In those days we all lived in the rooms upstairs, the ground-floor was used only for meals. We had just had our dinner and had moved upstairs. In the meanwhile the wind had been gathering strength all the time and the downpour grew heavy. Suddenly, there was a terrific noise, of things creaking and crashing down, which meant that the doors and windows were giving way before the ferocious gale. With it came a whistling sound and splashes of rain. The doors and windows of the two rooms occupied by Sri Aurobindo were blown away, leaving them bare to the wind and the rain like an open field. He removed to the room next door, but there too it was much the same. The upstairs was getting impossible, so we started



moving down. We had barely reached the ground-floor when the shutters and windows along the walls of the staircase fell with a crash on the stairs. We escaped by a hair's breadth. Things did not seem to be very much better in the rooms downstairs. There too the doors and windows had given way and allowed free entry to the wind and rain. All of us gathered in the central hall, and somehow huddled together in a corner.

In the early hours of the morning the storm abated and by daybreak all was clear. Indeed to us it seemed much too clear. That is to say, the rows of Porché trees—we call them health trees—that lined the streets and were considered among the attractions of the city now lay prostrate in their heaps on the surface of the roads, making them impassable. Gangs of workmen arrived from the Municipality with their axes and tools but it took them some time to cut through a passage. Even now you could see, especially on the way to the Lake, huge trees lying about uprooted on the ground with their limbs broken and twisted out of shape.

And now we had to think of our daily needs, about breakfast and lunch. But where to find the milk and foodstuffs, rice and pulses ? Where were the shops ? Everything was a shambles. I do not know if during a war the opposing forces battling through a town or village would leave it in a condition somewhat similar to this. The number of wounded and dead was fairly large, somewhere in the region of a thousand.

I cannot now recall the exact year of this upheaval. Most probably it was 1912 or 1913, that is, shortly before the outbreak of the Great War. We may suppose perhaps that this minor upheaval came here as the harbinger of that world-shaking calamity ?

But it was no less strange that not long after the end of the Great War, there came another storm, not of the same intensity but on a somewhat similar scale. This time it brought a different sort of message and turned out to be a blessing for us in the end.

The Mother had already arrived for the second time, this time for good. She was at the Bayoud House where the Dowsetts now live. We were at the Guest House and I remember well how Sri Aurobindo used to call every Sunday and dine with her. We too would come along and had a share of the dinner. I need not add that the menu was arranged by the Mother herself and she supervised the cooking in person; she also prepared some of the dishes with her own hands. That is the reason why I say we were really lucky to have a share in those meals. At that time we could only appreciate the physical taste of the food we were served, today I realise what lay behind.

After dinner, we used to go up on the terrace overlooking the sea front. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother stood aside for a chat and we stood by ourselves. Sometimes we would request Sri Aurobindo for some automatic writing after the dinner. The writings that came through his hand in those days were

frightfully interesting. I remember somebody came and began to give an analysis of the character of each one of us; he had many things to say about Motilal Roy as well. One day someone suggested that something might be given about the Mother. But she immediately protested, "No, nothing about me, please." At once the hand stopped automatically.

Well, during the Mother's stay in this house, there came a heavy storm and rain one day. The house was old and looked as if it was going to melt away. Sri Aurobindo said, "The Mother cannot be allowed to stay there any longer. She must move into our place." That is how the Mother came in our midst and stayed on for good, as our Mother. But she did not yet assume the name. It took us another six years; it was not till 1926 that she was consecrated by us with that name. You can see now how that last spell of stormy weather came as a benediction. Nature did in fact become a collaborator of the Divine Purpose.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

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

# INTRODUCTION TO THE VEDAS

## VII

THE very name Veda is self-explanatory. The Veda signifies knowledge. It is derived from the root “Vid” (to know). The Veda particularly refers to the embodiment of that knowledge which is the soul and basis of the culture, education and civilisation of the Hindus, the Indians, the whole Aryan race. This knowledge was realised by a body of aspirants called Rishis—where and when it is difficult to trace with certainty. And it is the succession of the Rishis, the realised ones, that has kept up, multiplied and systematised this knowledge. The Veda is otherwise called Sruti, for it is said that from generation to generation the disciples used to receive the Vedic mantras from their preceptors by hearing and store them up in their memory. But this is only a secondary human interpretation. The real reason why the Veda is called Sruti is that the Seers received, by an occult hearing, these mantras pregnant with knowledge. At times they could see the mantras during their meditation. Hence they are called the Seers of mantras and the knowledge acquired by them goes by the name Sruti (things heard). And this gives us the clue to the reason why the Veda is supposed to have no human origin, neither a beginning nor an end. The Divine Knowledge is not a human creation. It comprises the principles of truth inherent in creation. And it will endure for all time. The Seers were merely the instruments for its manifestation.

The Veda as we see it to-day is not in its original form. A whole book entitled *Veda* was not composed at any definite time or at any particular place. The mantras of the Veda were revealed to the different Seers at different times and places. They were scattered all around without being systematised. It was later that they were collected and systematised. Some, nay, the major part of the mantras failed to see the light of day. And it happened also that mantras of later origin got mixed up with the earlier ones.

The systematic collection, no doubt, could not be achieved all at once. A great speciality of the spiritual discipline of the ancient Seers is this that they carried on their spiritual discipline in a body. It was their practice to use the plural terms like *we*, *you all*, *friends*, etc. In this way different groups of spiritual seekers followed different types of discipline. These collectivities consisted of the Masters and their disciples or an ancestor and his descendants. Thus the Veda grew up into innumerable branches, sub-branches and their offshoots. The present Veda comprises only a limited portion of those branches. The major

portion of the Veda is buried in oblivion. So it is no wonder that the Veda got automatically divided into branches according to the lineage and succession of the Masters and their disciples.

However, later on, all the available Vedic mantras were principally divided into three groups, known as *trayī* (a group of three)—Rik, Sama and Yajur. Rik consists of verses or poems; Sama of songs; Yajur of prose works. Miscellaneous things were collected in the Atharva. Thus the Veda developed into four parts.

According to the Puranas the Seers who collected these Vedic mantras are named Vedavyasas. They are as many as twenty-eight successive Vedavyasas whose successive efforts gave the Veda its present form. The last Vedavyasa who divided the Veda into four parts is Krishna Dwaipayana Vedavyasa, the author of the *Mahabharata*. And it is said that in future there will come up another Vyasa of the name of Dronivyasa to re-arrange the Veda once more.

There are indications to suppose that the mantras of the Rigveda were meant for the fire-worshippers, and the mantras of the Samaveda for the worshippers of the Sun, and those of Yajurveda for the worshippers of Vayu, the life-principle. However, we refrain at present from going into the details of the matter. In the next concluding chapter we shall observe whether the Vedas have been in any way regulated by the different methods of spiritual discipline or not.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

*(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali)*

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

(Classified Excerpts)

(Continued)

(viii) PRAKRITI

PURUSHA and Prakriti, the passively luminous soul of the Sankhyas and their mechanically active Energy, have nothing in common, not even their opposite modes of inertia; their antinomies can only be resolved by the cessation of the inertly driven Activity into the immutable Repose upon which it has been casting in vain the sterile procession of its images.<sup>1</sup>

This is the fruit [of a divided being] which Adam and Eve, Purusha and Prakriti, the soul tempted by Nature, have eaten. The redemption comes by the recovery of the universal in the individual and of the spiritual term in the physical consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

In Overmind we have the origin of the cleavage, the trenchant distinction made by the philosophy of the Sankhyas in which they appear as two independent entities, Prakriti able to dominate Purusha and cloud its freedom and power, reducing it to a witness and recipient of her forms and action, Purusha able to return to its separate existence and abide in a free self-sovereignty by rejection of her original overclouding material principle.<sup>3</sup>

Prakriti presents itself as an inconscient Energy in the material world, but, as the scale of consciousness rises, she reveals herself more and more as a conscious force and we perceive that even her inconscience concealed a secret consciousness ; so too conscious being is many in its individual souls, but in its self we can experience it as one in all and one in its own essential existence. Moreover, the experience of soul and Nature as dual is true, but the experience of their unity has also its validity. If Nature or Energy is able to impose its forms and workings on Being, it can only be because it is Nature or Energy of Being and so the Being can accept them and its own; if the Being can become lord of Nature, it must be because it is its own Nature which it had passively watched doing its work, but can control and master; even in its passivity its consent is

necessary to the action of Prakriti and this relation shows sufficiently that the two are not alien to each other. The duality is a position taken up, a double status accepted for the operations of the self-manifestation of the being; but there is no eternal and fundamental separateness and dualism of Being and its Consciousness-Force, of the Soul and Nature.<sup>4</sup>

#### (ix) INDETERMINATES AND DETERMINATES

The first aspect of cosmic existence is an Infinite which is to our perception an indeterminate, if not indeterminable. In this Infinite the universe itself, whether in its aspect of Energy or its aspect of structure, appears as an indeterminate determination, a "boundless finite",—paradoxical but necessary expressions which would seem to indicate that we are face to face with a suprarational mystery as the base of things; in that universe arise—from where ?—a vast number and variety of general and particular determinates which do not appear to be warranted by anything perceptible in the nature of the Infinite, but seem to be imposed—or, it may be, self-imposed—upon it.<sup>5</sup>

...we see the original indeterminate Energy throwing out general determinates of itself,—we might equally in their relation to the variety of their products call them generic indeterminates,—with their appropriate states of substance and determined forms of that substance; the latter are numerous, sometimes innumerable variations on the substance-energy which is their base : but none of these variations seems to be predetermined by anything in the nature of the general indeterminate.... Throughout there is the constant rule of a general sameness in the original determinate and, subject to this substantial sameness of basic substance and nature, a profuse variation in the generic and individual determinates ; an identical law obtains of sameness or similarity in the genus or species with numerous variations often meticulously minute in the individual. But we do not find anything in the general or generic determinate necessitating the variant determinations that result from it.<sup>6</sup>

So too there is an absolute good and an absolute beauty : but we can only get a glimpse of it if we embrace all things impartially and get beyond their appearances to some sense of that which, between them, all and each are by their complex terms trying to state and work out ; not an indeterminate,—for the indeterminate, being only the original stuff or perhaps the packed condition of determinations, would explain by itself nothing at all,—but the Absolute.<sup>7</sup>

#### (x) THE FINITE

It becomes clear from these considerations that the co-existence of the Infinite and the finite, which is the very nature of universal being, is not a

juxtaposition or mutual inclusion of two opposites, but as natural and inevitable as the relation of the principle of Light and Fire with the suns. The finite is a frontal aspect and a self-determination of the Infinite; no finite can exist in itself and by itself, it exists by the Infinite and because it is of one essence with the Infinite. For by the Infinite we do not mean solely an illimitable self-extension in Space and Time, but something that is also spaceless and timeless, a self-existent Indefinable and Illimitable which can express itself in the infinitesimal as well as in the vast, in a second of time, in a point of space, in a passing circumstance. The finite is looked upon as a division of the Indivisible, but there is no such thing : for this division is only apparent; there is a demarcation, but no real separation is possible. When we see with the inner vision and sense and not with the physical eye a tree or other object, what we became aware of is an infinite one Reality constituting the tree or object, pervading its every atom and molecule, forming them out of itself, building the whole nature, process of becoming, operation of indwelling energy; all of these are itself, are this infinite, this Reality : we see it extending indivisibly and uniting all objects so that none is really separate from it or quite separate from other objects. "It stands," says the Gita, "undivided in beings and yet as if divided." Thus each object is that Infinite and one in essential being with all other objects that are also forms and names—powers, numens—of the Infinite.<sup>8</sup>

*Compiled by* NATHANIEL PEARSON

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

(REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER)

### SAVED IN A TRAIN CRASH

It was in the brilliant moonlit night of the 4th of March 1950—*dol pūṇimā*—when we left the Central Station, Madras, by the Calcutta Mail, on our way back to Calcutta after the February Darshan at Pondicherry. Our party consisted of myself, Amiya my wife and a friend, the late Mr. Sarvadhicary—poor man, he died shortly afterwards. Ours was a five-berthed compartment and the three of us occupied the three lower berths. The compartment was a very old one and the switches were all broken and as a consequence none of the lights could be put out—a circumstance which ultimately helped us.

In those days it was usual for visitors to bring with them, while returning from the Ashram, some Ashram publications and deliver them to the Pathamandir or elsewhere as they would be requested and thereby save the cost of transit as far as possible. This time I was bringing with me a bundle of books weighing no more than half a maund. It is necessary to state here how we spread ourselves out in the compartment. Amiya and my friend occupied the two side-berths while I occupied the middle berth and put the bundle of books in the iron luggage-carrier just over my berth; it seemed to be quite secure as it sank into its bosom. By the way, there was one other circumstance which was destined to help our eventual escape from the compartment after the accident; the windows were not then barred by iron rods, as they are at present, and one could jump out of the windows without any difficulty in times of emergency.

As far as I remember the train steamed out of the station at about 9-30 p.m. and as she glided into the glorious moonlit night she belied the faintest suggestion of the catastrophe that was waiting for us only a few miles ahead.

As the train gradually gathered speed she started to sway from side to side, at times, so much so as to seem that the luggages on the upper berths would fall on us. I was tired and I lay down in my bed on the middle berth and tried to sleep. As all the lights were burning on account of the defective switches, I could not fall asleep straightaway. Soon after, as I lay on my berth, I started to feel rather uneasy for I had a premonition that the bundle of books kept in

\* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or the Compiler or directly to the Mother.



the luggage-carrier would fall right on my head. This feeling gradually became so realistic that I had to sit up. Again and again I tried to shake off the feeling, lie down and sleep but again and again some uncanny force, too strong for me, literally forced me to sit up. At last I abandoned the idea of sleeping, for the time being at least, and decided to keep sitting up on the berth, the unkind remarks of my companions notwithstanding. They remarked that there must have been something very wrong with my brain, otherwise how could I imagine that the heavy bundle would jump out of the carrier and drop on my head point blank. But reason could be of no use to me against the persistent feeling of the bundle falling on my head and the uncanny force which compelled me to sit up.

The train was being drawn by one of those big Canadian engines which had already earned a notoriety at the time on account of some bad smashes they had been through owing to some mechanical defects. The train was running very fast and what with the speed of the train and what with the aforesaid premonition getting complete possession of me, any idea of sleep was out of the question and now I most fervently thank the Divine Mother that it was so. I decided not to lie down till I would feel like sleeping.

All on a sudden my premonition came true and there was a sudden crash; our compartment lurched to one side and the bundle of books in the luggage-carrier fell directly on my pillow. I would have been crushed to death if I had disregarded my clear premonition !

The compartment broke into pieces as it rolled down to the adjoining field. But all of us felt the Mother's Presence,—shall I say 'a tangible Presence' ?—the peculiar fragrance that we always get whenever we go near the Mother was there pervading the whole atmosphere and there was no room for any fear or nervousness.

There were altogether twelve of us in the train returning from Darshan and everyone escaped unhurt by the Grace of the Divine Mother. Soon after, some of our friends who were travelling in some rear compartment got down and went running alongside the train calling to us loudly by our names and rescued us from our unenviable predicament. I have no language to express my feelings after we were pulled out of the broken compartment, safe and well, and the sentiment uppermost in my mind at the moment was to bow down to the Mother in utter gratefulness for keeping us free from harm.

SIDDHESWAR BANERJEE

*Compiled by* HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## THE WORSHIPPER

AND a question was put to him :—

“What part will you play in the chaos that may be ahead ?”

Then he raised his eyes and looked beyond—into the sun...

“I ?...I will be the Worshipper—

While planets race and stars burn black,

While scarlet burning winds

Expose Earth's chasm depths

Of dank repulsive ignorance,

While the suffocating dust of broken pride

Buries all this Time-held dignity,

I will worship Her...

Conscious only of Her Bliss,

Knowing only light and calm,

And still with deeper, higher majesty.

“But as I stand alone, in love

And therefore beautiful,

The tortured humankind of Earth,

Complete of horror, hate and fear,

Will pull with bleeding fingers

At the sand and rock beneath my feet,

That I may not forget them in my worshipping :

For they had never seen Her,

Heard Her—known and loved Her,

They toiled and fought towards a vacancy—

Misled, mistaught

By strengths and powers beyond their sight,

But I will show them how to worship Her,

And they will lift their arms beyond mine own,

To bring Her Grace upon their Earth.

Yes—I will worship Her,

Through all the days that are ahead of us,

I will be the Worshipper...”

And so he spoke.

ANURAKIA (TONY SCOTT)

## MY HEART

I BROUGHT my heart with all its smart  
To thy silence sweet,  
Judge me thou and take me now  
To Thy lotus feet.

Watch my soul, an endless dole  
That has come to thee—  
From this heart-beat I want retreat  
To Thy symphony.

Then my life will meet the golden street  
Of Heaven and God;  
So evermore to the divine door  
Show me the road.

If year on year fatigue and fear  
My lot has been  
Gallant I'll face all with Thy grace,  
Thy golden sheen.

When I'll reach my goal after the roll  
Of a life so wild,  
Then I'll be proud, in a crimson cloud,  
As thy own child.

Why was I born that November morn,  
If I never fulfil  
My sole desire : to live out that fire,  
Thy perfect will ?

SRIJIT

## THUS SANG MY SOUL

(47)

### VIII. THE HOUR OF GRACE AND SELF-FULFILMENT

#### 79. MY WORLD-SPAN AND THE REIGN OF LOVE AND JUSTICE

I HAVE travelled far and wide on this earth-speck,  
I have scanned the sweep of God's entire reign.  
I have visioned the various play of multiple man.  
I have peeped through the palaces and the palace-guards.  
I have peeled the yogis and saints, the scientists I have dissected,  
I have analysed the psychologists, the philosophers I have theorised about.  
I have borne hunger, I have dined with dukes.  
I have sported with the chasm, I have danced on the peaks,  
I have tossed on the waves, I have governed the firmament.  
I represent arrogance and pride struggling to be crushed,  
I represent the secret Divine contending to sprout.  
My life has been a constant hanging between the sky and the earth.  
An utter humility sweats my body and soul.  
There rules an equal Grace behind all the ups and downs,  
A mighty Equality supports the entire external show,  
A motionless poise bears all the noise and din,  
All the outward forms rock on the One's firm rock.  
A huge trick of ego miraculously works,  
A false sense of selfhood surprisingly lurks.  
But humanity sheer and nude is the lot of each.  
Sucked down by devils is man, the animal prowls in his sleep,  
Over him spreads a golden infinity of God.  
A Guidance supreme leads through darkness everyone alike,  
Loves all, carries all, helps all, responds to all.  
A Lap divine saves from the most terrible fall.  
O Mother Compassionate, O Might Supreme !  
When Thou appearest unveiled in Thy immaculate Truth,  
When Thy nude divinity treads on the earth uncaring, free,  
When the stripped Godhead dances on the fluency of life,  
The fraud of ego shall burst forth to the face of the world,  
Thy God-Justice will be established in this Earth-Court,  
The kingdom of Heaven descend and clasp the universe.

*(To be concluded)*

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## SELF-TEACHINGS

### THE DIVINE MASTER'S MAYA : HUMAN EVOLUTION

WHEN the soul from heavenly heights plunges into the ocean of matter, it dives right to the bottom of the ocean and gets totally stuck in the mud and sand collected there. It gets so much covered up with the numerous layers of dark mud that it loses the sight of its original form. It struggles hard to free itself from the sticky mud and layer by layer opens out by washing its filthy disguise in the surrounding clean water until it successfully reaches the wideness of the open surface of the ocean. Then it realizes the originality of its actual form with the help of the divine brilliant rays of the Eternal Sun reflected by the blazing mirror of the waves.

Some souls unfortunately during their hard struggle get fatigued and exhausted and temporarily give up the fight for their freedom several times in that process: repeated death and rebirth are theirs until they succeed in reaching back to their surface recognition.

NARWANI

## THOUGHTS

MEN find it easy to credit that iron coming in contact with the philosopher's stone can change itself into gold. But they find it difficult to credit that their mental, vital and physical dross coming into contact with a superconscient yogi's feet can change into the spiritual gold.

What a marvellous thing is man's intellect !

\*

\*

God shall grant me peace if I give up inertia, power if I give up egoistic impulses, bliss if I give up enjoyings, everything if I give up the craving of wanting this and not wanting that.

God shall heap upon me His favours but only if I consent to be consumed by Him.

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Just imagine a junk-heap of flimsy deal-wood planks rotting under torrential rain, and a half-witted carpenter buying it for making a chest of drawers without giving any thought to its worthlessness.

And if someone decides to deposit in it precious jewellery then what would you call him ?

So what shall we call that fellow whose body is festering with lusts and cravings, whose intelligence is devoid of all devotion or whose devotion is bankrupt of all discrimination and who supports himself on outworn and otiose creeds and sets out to realise God and cherishes the hope of turning his body into a temple of God ? Is he not living in a fool's paradise ?

GIRAHARLAL

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

## THE TRINITY OF INDIA'S NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT : BAL-PAL-LAL

THE Trinity of India's national independence movement, started in the first decade of this century, was Bal-Pal-Lal. The harmonious blend of these three great names as of their minds and hearts still gives a thrill of joy and gratitude in the memory of the Nation.

### BAL

The character and personality of Bal Gangadhar Tilak<sup>1</sup> were a rich harmony : his head and heart were equally responsible for his success. This son of Maharashtra instilled into his Indian brothers character, strength, vigour and self-respect which, he thought, would wield a tremendous influence on the future generation. He was one of the voices that never faltered. Also he was one of the voices that could unite and build. He looked down upon conceit and hypocrisy even when they were part of a deliberate plot or plan. His speeches were exquisitely racy and absorbingly significant.

"...a name to be remembered so long as the country has pride in its past and hope for its future." In these few words of appreciation from Sri Aurobindo's immortal pen the world can form an idea as to the contribution of Tilak to his Motherland.

Idleness is an unpardonable error. It gives birth to foolishness. And foolishness aptly shows us the way to destruction. We had managed to lose the power of Vision that resided ever within us. Alas, others had to come and make us conscious of it. Tilak's incisive utterance runs :

"We have been very idle. We have grown so stupid owing to our idleness that we are required to be told by foreigners that our treasures conceal gold and not iron."

Bengal Partition—October 16th, 1905—Tilak was convinced like every right thinking man that those who meekly tolerate wrongs are as much to be blamed as the doers thereof. He asked the Bengalees to muster courage and fight against the injustice committed by the British Government. He inspired them to raise a shout of protest and to condemn the misdeeds of the British.

"You must make a permanent cause of grievance. Store up the grievances till they are removed. Partition grievances will be the edifice for the generation of India. Do not give up this partition grievance, for the whole of India is at your back. It is a corner-stone and I envy the people of Bengal for laying this corner-stone."

Now, a thing never-to-be-forgotten is the bold utterance made by Bipin Chandra Pal about the Partition of Bengal.

<sup>1</sup> July 23 marks the birthday of Tilak. This part of the article may serve as a little homage.

".. Lord Curzon passed his gubernatorial pen, cut the Province of Bengal in twain, Bengal remained one, and all that his attempt did was to create a deathless determination in the people to continue to be one to the end of their life. (*Hear, hear*)...No, gentlemen, the partition has failed. Mr. Morley says, it is a 'settled fact'. History declares that it is a settled failure (*cheers*), and I think 'settled failure' is as good an expression as 'settled fact'. (*Hear, hear*) Now that partition has failed we do not care whether the Partition goes or whether it remains."

As the country can never dare to forget Tilak, even so with the 'Surat split.' Unfortunately, many people are under the wrong impression that this sorry split was all due to divergence in ideals. No, it was just because of difference of opinion as to the method of work which was to be carried out to gain the one common ideal of Swaraj. Tilak sincerely hoped that his Indian brothers would forget before long this deplorable event. To quote him :

"The difference being one of method and not of ideal it would surely be forgotten as time rolls on, and the keenness of it would be lessened every year till we meet again on a common platform "

Needless to say that after the Surat Congress Tilak became an object of contempt to many. They called him the deliberate breaker of the Congress. But, according to Sri Aurobindo, "To no one was the catastrophe so great a blow as to Mr. Tilak." If we at all want to understand Tilak rightly then we have no other go than to listen to the following significant words of Sri Aurobindo :

"He (Tilak) did not love the do-nothingness of that assembly, but he valued it both as a great national fact and for its unrealised possibilities and hoped to make of it a central organisation for practical work. To destroy an existing and useful institution was alien to his way of seeing and would not have entered into his ideas or his wishes."

At a time when our Motherland was swooning under the yoke of subjugation imposed by the British the profusely inspired voice of Tilak, the Father of Indian Unrest, was heard : "Home rule is my birthright." And his voice was propagated from that very moment to eternity.

## PAL

The greatness of Bipin Chandra Pal was many-sided. He was a patriot to his finger-tips, a dauntless and progressive thinker, a man with a prophetic vision, a great literary figure, the possessor of a trumpet voice. He will, no doubt, be remembered longest as an orator. A ceaseless stream of eloquence ran direct from his heart to inspire and conquer the hearts of his countrymen . Unique as an orator, Pal was far greater as a lover of his Motherland. His heart bled for the suffering and slumbering nation. His speeches were nothing short of an over-



whelming distribution of energy and it was often that this energy was successfully communicated to the public like an electric charge. His fiery speeches proved beyond a shadow of doubt that in spite of physical prostration for a few centuries India was still surcharged with an inner indomitable will that would one day enable her to stand in the vanguard of knowledge and power.

Pal failed to see eye to eye with the Congress at the beginning of the present century. The timid political agitation that was carried out by the Congress was, in his opinion, another name for begging. Hence he called the Congress 'a begging institution'. In this respect Sri Aurobindo too could not side with the Congress that stood for a policy of petition, nay, prayer.

It is worth remembering how Tilak differed from Pal :

"All talk about future progress, about the establishment of Responsible Government in the Provinces and afterwards in the Central Government is a very good talk with which I fully sympathise but which I am not prepared to demand as the first step of the introduction of Home Rule in India. That is the difference between myself and Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal. He wants the whole hog at once. I say, it would be granted to you by stages : demand the first step so that the introduction of the second step would be much more easy than it is at present."

Pal was definite in his assertion that India was to work out a new history for herself. It was next to impossible to form a self-government within the British Government, because the empire would be undoubtedly against the spirit of self-respect and self-reliance of the Indian people. On the other hand, he wanted a free and independent United States of India.

Pal was considered to be the most dangerous man in India by Lord Minto, the then Governor General of India. On April 2, 1907, he could not help writing a letter to Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India in London : "I do not think we should allow Bipin Chandra Pal to stump the country preaching sedition as he has been doing." And soon after this he proposed "the deportation of Bipin Chandra Pal on the ground that his behaviour has been monstrous".

It is no tall tale to say that Pal's triumphant call to patriotism reached every heart, rich and poor, wise and unwise. It is an undeniable fact that patriotism is the true love of one's own country. Pal adds something to it. He says : "Love's test is sacrifice." His final conclusion is : "Agitation is not, in any sense, a test of true patriotism. That test is self-help and self-sacrifice."

Indeed one of his self-sacrifices captures our attention and draws admiration from all his countrymen. But for him Aurobindo, his dearest colleague, would have been thrown into jail. He cheerfully accepted six months' rigorous imprisonment just to keep his cherished friend Aurobindo at large.

Pal thundered against those who were in favour of tabooing politics from our schools and Universities. He reminded his opponents of the facts that in the Oxford and Cambridge Unions they discuss politics, and in the school they

bring up brigades. He observed : "Do they not sing the National Anthem in the public schools in England—

Rule Britannia, rule the Waves,  
Britons never shall be slaves ?

"Is it tabooed in any public school in England ? If not, how can you say that singing of 'Bande Mataram' is not consistent with the advancement of the real culture and education among the people of this country ?" (*Shouts of 'Bande Mataram'*)

And he made bold to say that if the student community was consumed with the incantation-fire of 'Bande Mataram', then the education of students would no longer remain a problem. To quote him : "If this is done, you will solve the problem of Education in India such as it has not as yet been solved by the British-controlled Universities and officialised agencies of public institution in this country." Like his closest colleague Aurobindo, he too felt the mantric spirit of 'Bande Mataram' in the depths of his heart. To them 'Bande Mataram' was not a mere sound, but a living force; not even a word, but a fiery inspiration, nay, the vision of an apocalypse.

What is a nation after all ? According to Bipin Chandra Pal, a nation is not simply a collection of individuals. His firm conviction is that "a nation is an organism; it has organic life, and like all organisms a nation has an end unto itself, which is different from the ends that regulate the activities of other similar organisms, other similar nations." And Sri Aurobindo reveals the truth that lies behind the rise of India. "She does not rise as others do, for herself or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be free."

In his unique Uttarpara Speech Sri Aurobindo's lofty appreciation of Bipin Chandra Pal runs : "He is one of the mightiest prophets of Nationalism." No other characterisation of Bipin Chandra Pal's life could be more apposite than this.

### LAL

Lala Lajpat Rai—"The Lion of the Punjab." How tremendously he fought, how terribly he suffered after he had thrown himself headlong into the battlefield of freedom ! It was the profoundest fellow-feeling and not common self-interest that moved his patriot heart. In this connection let us recollect Sri Aurobindo's prophetic utterance about patriotism : "Our ideal of patriotism proceeds on the basis of love and brotherhood beyond the unity of the nation and envisages the ultimate unity of mankind."

Politics was not the sole field of Rai. Strangely enough, he played a magnificent role in social reform and the Arya Samaj movement at Lahore. In this he was heartily helped by the young devoted patriots of the province.

Like Pal he too was definite in his assertion that independence can be achieved only by our own efforts, and to depend on British generosity is to cry in the wilderness. He had little sympathy with Gandhiji's non-cooperation. He knew what fighting means. He was a stranger to satyagraha. Also he failed to be at one with Gandhiji's view of life, that is to say, he did not expect much from mere simplicity in life. What he wanted was "a zest for real life." He was a religious Hindu to the marrow both by temperament and self-training.

To our country's cause he consecrated his whole life, his everything. He was highly inspired by the soul-stirring teachings of Swami Vivekananda. On the one hand, he was the hero of heroes; on the other, he was a Nation-builder. He was terribly hurt when he saw the English-knowing Indian aping his master in all his manners. What he found worse was that the English-knowing Indian cheerfully detested Indian life and took pride in being out-and-out anglicised.

It is worth remembering how Tilak felt for Rai at the time of his deportation :

"Lala Lajpat Rai...had done nothing that was not lawful and yet the whole official hierarchy conspired and acted like one man to deport him. I cannot imagine a clearer sign that the greatness of the British Government is doomed, and that decay and demoralisation have set in." Further, he advised the young men of the Punjab to cast aside fear and not to sink in despondency. "You must imitate your ruler only in one thing, namely, in maintaining an unflinching succession of public workers. If one Lala Lajpat Rai is sent abroad, another ought to be found to take his place as readily as a junior Collector steps into the shoes of a senior."

And on that occasion how Sri Aurobindo with his indomitable will inspired the people of the Punjab is not only striking but highly elevating. It was far into the night. Sri Aurobindo was asleep. One of his co-workers came in and gave him the news of Lala Lajpat Rai's deportation. While searching for paper to write on, he found a piece of packing paper within his reach. He in no time wrote out the following words for publication in his *Bande Mataram* on the morrow :

"Men of the Punjab ! Race of the lion ! Show these men who would stamp you into the dust that for one Lajpat they have taken away, a hundred Lajpats will arise in his place."

"Swaraj is my birthright," so said Tilak.

"Swaraj," said Rai, "is our war-cry, our all-inspiring and all-absorbing aim in life."

According to Sri Aurobindo, "Swaraj means fulfilment of our national life."

Again we are not to forget that Rai was a very competent authority on Education. His book *The Problem of National Education in India* throws considerable light on the true aims and ideals that ought to govern India's vision in every sphere of life. It is indeed a book of boldness and precision.

Rai was eminent in several walks of life. Verily his was a life that knew not how to shock or belittle any human being.

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I now venture to ask my readers to observe how Bal-Pal-Lal looked upon Sri Aurobindo to whom came naturally the understanding of both East and West. No hyperbole, to meet him was to feel the presence of something that could be described as the very essence of culture and refinement.

Tilak's lofty appreciation of Sri Aurobindo runs in this wise :

"None is equal to Aravinda in self-sacrifice, knowledge and sincerity.... It is a dispensation of benign Providence that persons like Aravinda have been drawn to the national work. He writes from divine inspiration, sattwic intelligence, and unshakable determination."

Pal, who was one of his closest colleagues, cherished an unimaginable admiration for Sri Aurobindo. "Youngest in age among those who stand in the forefront of the nationalist propaganda in India, but in endowment, education and character, perhaps superior to them all—Aravinda seems distinctly marked out by Providence to play in the future of this movement a part not given to any of his colleagues and contemporaries...His only care is for his country...the Mother as he always calls her....Nationalism...at its best, a concern of the intellect with some, at the lowest, a political cry and aspiration with others...is with Aravinda a supreme passion of his soul."

Long after Sri Aurobindo bade farewell to politics—to be precise, on January 5th, 1925, Lala Lajpat Rai came to meet him at Pondicherry. There was an exchange of free ideas on current politics. To quote his genuine appreciation of Sri Aurobindo which he wrote long ago : "...In intellectual acumen and in scholastic accomplishments, he is perhaps superior to Har Dayal, but above all, he is deeply *religious and spiritual*."

While Bal-Pal-Lal have left their impress on India's history, Sri Aurobindo is still at work unseen and will do so till Mother India is well set on her peerless pedestal. According to Sri Aurobindo, true independence is that which would make man one with his Creator, an independence that would make the earth a habitation of the Infinite. This is far from realisation, no doubt, but its realisation is as inevitable as to-day precedes to-morrow.

CHINMOY

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Spiritual Heritage of India** By *Swami Prabhavananda*. Publishers : George Allen & Unwin. London. Pp. 374. Price 35s.

Swami Prabhavananda is a senior monk of the Sri Ramakrishna Order whose writings have always had a distinctive flavour of the Spirit that has never failed to communicate itself to the reader. His present work on the Spiritual Heritage of India is again of the same genre, different from most of the current books on the subject which are usually academic chronicles touching only on the externals of the long line of Indian philosophy and religion. Swami Prabhavananda gives, so to say, an inside view of the heritage and lets us feel something of the Breath of the Eternal that has ever enlivened this ancient tradition.

At the very outset, the author wisely points out one or two special features of the Indian philosophy of religion which distinguish it from the Western : "Indian philosophy is not merely metaphysical speculation, but has its foundation in immediate perception. God and soul are regarded by the Hindu mind, not as concepts, speculative and problematical, as is the case in Western philosophy, but as things directly known." Secondly, this Knowledge based upon perception is verifiable by anyone who takes to the appropriate means. Thus philosophy in India is a formulation of Knowledge (of God, Soul and Nature) gained by direct experience and attainable by others under the same conditions.

Speaking on the place of psychology and ethics in Indian philosophy, the author again points out the difference : "The science of psychology, as the westerns know it, is man's attempt to explain the behaviour of his mind with reference to his body and the stimuli received through his senses. Ethics is the formulation of the science of conduct in relation to society as man faces his multifarious activities as a social being. Indian philosophy and Indian psychology are not merely allied subjects, but the latter is actually an integral part of the former. Psychology has its inception in the thinking self and not in the objects of thought. It is not merely content with observing the workings of the mind in the normal planes of consciousness, as is the case with the modern system called Behaviourism, but points out how the mind ranges beyond the conscious plane of psychic activity and how the resulting experience is even more real than experience of the objective world. It differs also from the psychoanalysis of Freud, in that though it accepts the subconscious mind, it holds that man is capable of controlling its impressions as well as those of his conscious mind, and of attaining to the superconscious state, which no school of

Western psychology has taken into consideration. By teaching the normal mind methods of restraining its own vagaries, with the aim of gaining supreme mastery over itself, and of ultimately rising above itself, Indian philosophy distinguishes its beliefs from those of all other known systems of philosophy and psychology.<sup>1</sup> Ethics also has a role in Indian philosophy. Though not identical with it, ethics is its very foundation. Philosophy seeks by ethics to transcend the mere life of conduct, so that ethics supplies the means for making itself superfluous. Moreover Hindu ethics not only concerns itself with outer human activity, but extends to the inner life as well. Every teaching is conditioned by the phrase 'in thought, word, and deed'... Indian philosophy is thus not a mere way of thinking but a way of life, a way of light, and a way of truth."

Beginning with the Vedic literature, Swamiji draws attention to the fact that, unlike other scriptures of the world, the Bible, Koran, etc. which are revelations received through an angel or prophet and must be accepted as such on faith—verifiable or not—, the Vedas are "*apauruṣeya*, divine in origin. In fact God created the whole universe out of the knowledge of the Vedas, *yo vedebhyaḥ akhilam jagat nirmame..* The authority of the Vedas does not depend upon anything external. They themselves are an authority, being the knowledge of God. Their truth is verifiable by any spiritual aspirant in transcendental consciousness."

The Vedas are arranged into four divisions which, the author points out, correspond to the four *āśramas* or stages in the life of the Aryan man. The *Samhitās*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* relate respectively to the *asramas* of *brahmacarya*, life of the student devoted to acquiring knowledge and instructions, *gāṛhaṣṭhya*, life of the householder requiring practice of rituals enjoined in the *Brahmanas*; *vānaprastha*, retirement when one overpasses the rituals and devotes oneself to symbolic meditations; and lastly, *sannyāsa*, renunciation, when all is dedicated to the Knowledge of Brahman.

The *Upanishads* are next introduced as 'reports of insight', not philosophical speculations about the ultimate Reality. As Sri Aurobindo observes,

<sup>1</sup> Reverting to the subject later in the treatment, the author remarks :

... The fundamental difference between the psychology of India and the psychology of the West lies in the fact that Western psychology identifies consciousness with mind, being with thought, and thought with the soul, or the Self, whereas Indian psychology distinguishes mind from consciousness. The distinction is due to the fact that Western psychology recognizes only one plane of experience, and gives no consideration to what Hindus call the pure *cit*, the supreme unconditional consciousness, the Being, which they regard as the real Self, or the soul, different from the rationalising mind and realised in the superconscious or transcendental state. Pure unconditional consciousness cannot be the property of the mind, they believe, for it is the source of the mind's apparent consciousness. Mind is said by the Hindu psychologist to be the 'veiling power' of the pure consciousness, the Self, and it is associated with the Self only as a necessary condition of world experience. All systems of Indian philosophy recognise a Self separate from the mind ." (p. 201).

the Rishis of the Upanishads ask each other, "What dost thou know ?", not "What dost thou think ?" The Upanishads merely record the experiences and realisations of the Rishis in their journeyings to the Brahman. Their standpoints differ, their approaches differ and their experiences too differ. They are all, nevertheless, true and all are set down without care for abstract consistency of logic or other demands of mental reasoning.

Do the Upanishads preach what they call Pantheism in the West ? "If the universe emanated from Brahman, then clearly he—or rather some portion of him—is the universe; and to that extent the idea is pantheistic. But observe that despite this emanation Brahman is, 'still the same'—in which case it is evident, whatever else may be true, that the universe and Brahman are not identical; and it is precisely the identity of the two that the West understands by pantheism."<sup>1</sup>

While on the famous passage from the Taittiriya dealing with the five sheaths of the Self, we are disappointed to note, Swamiji translates *vijñāna* (of the term *vijñānamaya koṣa*) as intellect. Is not this intellect already included in the previous, the third, *manomaya koṣa* ? Mind, *manas*, includes intellect, *buddhi*. Vijnana is really *viśiṣṭam jñānam*, knowledge *in excelsis*, a principle of Knowledge higher than the mental, corresponding to what Sri Aurobindo calls the Gnosis, the Truth-Consciousness, the Supermind.

Rebutting the charge that Indian philosophy is fatalistic, the author points out the stress laid on individual will in determining one's Karma, not only in creating one's future destiny but also in modifying the past *samskāras* or impelling tendencies. He sums up : "It is on this earth that a man determines his spiritual destiny and achieves his final realisation. The other worlds are only places where what is done here is given its reward...Earth, and earth alone, then, is the scene of man's spiritual struggle. A second aspect...is the fact that ultimately all men will achieve liberation, however long, for some, may

<sup>1</sup> The author's remarks on the conception of evolution in these ancient texts and its broader truth as compared with the Western conception are interesting. "The Atman exists equally, they said, in all beings, inanimate as well as animate, rocks and stones and trees as well as birds and beasts and men. 'At the heart of all—whatever there is in the universe—abides the Self.' Beings differ enormously, however, in the degree to which the Atman, present in all, has come to be realised. In all beings, at whatever point in the scale they may be, a spiritual process goes on. Here plainly enough, there is a theory of evolution, though a theory very different from that now current in the West. According to the western conception only animate things evolve, and in these the development implies radical changes in the organism as a whole. Nowhere within the organism is there a permanent element standing apart from the change. According to the Upanishads, on the other hand, all creation evolves, inanimate as well as animate, and the development in which alone they are interested is interpreted not as a process of radical change but rather as a gradual uncovering or bringing to light of a quintessence originally present and incapable of modification. Here, as everywhere else, Indian philosophy holds fast to an immutable element at the very heart of the flux."

be the struggle, and however many returns...The Upanishads know no such thing as eternal damnation—and the same is true of every other Hindu scripture.”

After a brief survey of the Epics and their role as mentors and custodians of the national culture and religion, comes the Bhagavad Gita. The author does not discuss who was Krishna, whether he was a historical character or a legendary figure. He states at once : “This Krishna is the Divine One, the Lord who abides within the heart of all beings. He represents a conception which is the basis of all Indian religious thought, namely, that all existence is a manifestation of God.” Regarding the character of this scriptural text, he quotes from Sri Aurobindo whom he regards ‘as one who perhaps of all the modern interpreters of the Gita has best caught the spirit of the poem’ “The Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare, it is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience, and the view it gives us embraces all the provinces of that supreme region. It maps out, but it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision.”

Raising his voice against exploitation of the Gita which is a spiritual guide-book first and last, for political and other secular purposes, Swamiji underlines the catholic spirit of the Karma Yoga of the Gita and observes .

“Temporal life and spiritual values stand in a relation of harmony, they constitute one divine life—as the Gita tells us. Insistence on the performance of *svadharma*, or one’s secular duty, in the spirit of yoga, is indeed often met with in the Gita, but this insistence ceases to have force and meaning with the growth of higher knowledge. Sri Aurobindo makes this issue abundantly clear when he says : ‘An inner situation may even arise, as with the Buddha, in which all duties have to be abandoned, trampled on, flung aside in order to follow the call of the Divine within. I cannot think that the Gita would solve such an inner situation by sending Buddha back to his wife and father and the government of the Sakya State, or would direct a Ramakrishna to become a Pundit in a vernacular school and disinterestedly teach little boys their lessons, or bind down a Vivekananda to support his family and for that to follow dispassionately the law or medicine or journalism.’”

A short chapter is devoted to the Tantras in the section on Smritis, Puranas, etc. It is shown how the Tantras continue the tradition of the Veda and the Upanishads, both in their philosophy and sadhana, though with an enlarging application. Emphasising the need of a Guru for initiation into spiritual life of the tantric conception, the author speaks of “two kinds of *dikṣā*, or initiation: *śambhāvi* (or *śakti*) and *māntri*. *Sambhavi* occurs when the disciple immediately experiences divine vision, attaining the supreme knowledge by the mere wish or touch of the guru. But this form of initiation is possible only through supreme teachers. Lesser teachers must have recourse to the other form of initiation, namely, *mantri*. In this the guru initiates the disciple by presenting him



with a mantra, or sacred word or formula...The underlying principle (of mantra) being that words and thoughts are inseparable, and that a person may effect a complete change in his character by meditating upon a thought with the help of a word and by repeating the word. The root of initiation, declare these scriptures, is the mantra; the mantra is the body of God; and God is the root of siddhi, or attainment of knowledge and perfection" (p. 147).

Giving a sympathetic exposition of Jainism and Buddhism, Swamiji rejects the common notion that they are contrary to the Vedic tradition. He points out they "accept the authority of revealed knowledge and transcendental experience, though they deny the authority of the Vedas, particularly of ritualistic portions, as a result of certain historical circumstances. They do not contradict the spirit of the Vedas but are in entire harmony with it." Was Buddha an atheist? No, read what he himself says on the point: "There is an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, an uncompounded; were there not, O mendicants, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the made, and the compounded." (Udana VIII.3)<sup>1</sup>

Then follow brief but adequate accounts of the Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, *viz.*, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa. The author is at his best in the chapter on the Yoga System of

<sup>1</sup> Some writers have compared the teachings of the Buddha with the doctrines of certain philosophers of the West. Pointing out how mistaken this is, Swamiji writes

"Buddha's teachings have often been mistakenly identified with the philosophy of flux as expounded by Bergson and Croce. This identification is especially urged with respect to Bergson. Superficially indeed, the two appear much alike, but on deeper analysis they prove to be at opposite poles. According to Bergson, the ultimate reality is an incessant flux, a creative evolution, or real duration. Buddha assumes, it is true, that the universe of experience is in constant flux, but he does not admit that this incessant flux is the ultimate reality. The universe of flux, to Buddha, is neither unreal nor real. It is, and it is not. Bergson, on the other hand, revels in the flux. To Bergson 'time' or 'duration' is real, and we should accordingly strive to see things not *sub specie aeternitatis* but *sub specie durationis*. Buddha perceives the flux but rises above it, above time, space, and causation. Buddha, like Plato, sought to find the state beyond the flux. Bhava-nirodha-nibbanam. 'To withdraw from the flux' he said, 'is to attain nirvana.'

"Bergson and Croce have done great service to Western philosophy by pointing out that the ultimate reality cannot be discovered by the intellect alone, but they have egregiously failed to discover a way whereby one may rise above the intellect and arrive at the very source of knowledge itself. It is true that both Bergson and Croce speak much of intuition, but this intuition of theirs is confined to the realm where 'time' is supreme and a sense of the 'many' prevails. Theirs is essentially a naturalistic interpretation of reality—that is, it issues entirely from the senses and the faculty of cognition. The Bergsonian *élan vital* is merely vital expansion within the universe of relativity and plurality and flux or change—within, that is, the bonds of maya. Frankly, the use of this word intuition by the modern philosophers of the flux—or rather abuse,—can only mean a sinking below the reason and the conscious mind into the realm of instinct which we share with the lower animals. This pseudo-intuition of Bergson and Croce has of course no relation to the nirvana of Buddha, the samadhi of the yogis, and the *turiya*, or transcendental consciousness, of the Upanishads. Nirvana is in fact the 'state in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be', in which 'the sage is delivered from time'. It is the state of *śūnyatā* wrongly translated as 'nothingness' "(p. 179)

Patanjali. Discussing the question whether Patanjali accepts God as an integral part of the Yoga philosophy, he writes : "while Sankhya asserts that there can be no proof of the existence of God, Patanjali advances certain proofs and in his plan of salvation declares that worship of God and meditation upon him are one of the means of attaining supreme knowledge and liberation. He does admit, however, that it is not absolutely necessary to believe in God in order to experience the truth of religion, holding that *truth will make itself felt in spite of belief or disbelief provided one follow the practices of Yoga.*" Nothing could be more rational.<sup>1</sup>

Success in Yoga, says Patanjali, "comes quickly to those who are intensely energetic. Success varies according to the strength of the effort expended to attain it—mild, moderate, or intense". "Sickness, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, sloth, craving for sense-pleasure, false perception, despair caused by failure to concentrate and unsteadiness in concentration; these distractions are obstacles to knowledge. These distractions are accompanied by grief, despondency, trembling of the body, and irregular breathing. They can be removed by the practice of concentration upon a single truth."

"Undisturbed calmness of mind is attained by cultivating friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and indifference toward the wicked."

Posture, *āsana*, has its own importance in meditation and worship. Swamiji quotes from the *Vedānta Sūtras* of Vyasa in this context : "Worship is possible in a sitting posture, because this encourages meditation. The meditating person is compared to the immovable earth. There is no law of place; wherever the mind is concentrated, there worship should be performed" (IV.1.7-9, 11).

The author's comments on the aphorism I.36 are worth quoting.

"Concentration may also be attained by fixing the mind upon the Inner Light, which is beyond sorrow.

<sup>1</sup> God Exists, and "the word which expresses him is Om This word must be repeated with meditation upon its meaning...In the Upanishads the word Om was held sacred by sages and seers, being regarded as a symbol of Brahman. From Vedic times until the present day it has been so understood, and it has been employed as an aid in meditation by all aspirants after God. It is accepted both as one with Brahman and as the medium, the Logos, connecting man and God. It is God, and by its aid man may realise God. The entire history of the syllable is in the revelations of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and this history in the hands of the later philosophers developed into what became known as *sphotavāda*, or philosophy of the Word. The similar doctrine of the Logos, later also than the Vedas and the Upanishads, we discover among Greek metaphysicians—a doctrine which influenced the writer of the Fourth Gospel." After indicating the difference between the Indian *sphotavāda* and the Logos of the Greek Philosophers, notably Heraclitus, Plato, Philo, the author writes "In the beginning was the Word," says St John, 'and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' The verse is almost identical with one in the Vedas *Prajāpatiḥ vai idam agre āsit*—in the beginning was Prajapati (Brahman), *Tasya vāg dvitīyā āsit*—with whom was the Word, *Vāg vai paramam Brahman*—and the Word was verily Brahman.' " (pp. 229-31).

"The ancient Yogis believed that there was an actual centre of spiritual consciousness, called the lotus of the heart, situated between the abdomen and the thorax, which could be revealed to the aspirant in deep meditation. They said that it had the form of a lotus and that it shone with an inner light. It was said to be *beyond sorrow*, since those who saw it were filled with an extraordinary sense of peace and joy...According to the Kaivalya Upanishad : 'The Supreme heaven shines in the lotus of the heart. Those who aspire and struggle may enter there. Retire into solitude. Seat yourself on a clean spot in an erect posture, with the head and neck in a straight line. Control all sense organs. Bow down in devotion to your teacher. Then enter the lotus of the heart and meditate there on the presence of Brahman—the pure, the infinite, the blissful.' And in the Mundaka Upanishad : 'Within the lotus of the heart he dwells, where the nerves meet like the spokes of a wheel. Meditate upon him as Om, and you may easily cross the ocean of darkness. In the effulgent lotus of the heart dwells Brahman, passionless and indivisible. He is pure. He is the light of all lights. The knowers of Brahman attain him.'"

One section is devoted to the different schools of Vedanta, beginning with Gaudapada, the *paramaguru* of Adi Shankara and ending with Sri Ramakrishna. The precise distinctions between the tenets of the different exponents, *viz.*, Shankara, Bhaskara, Yamuna, Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Madhwa, Vallabha, Chaitanya, are underlined and the whole presentation is fair and objective. There are, however, one or two points on which we would like to make our own observations.

Discussing the doctrine of Maya, superimposition, it is stated (p. 284) :

"If we believe that the finite has an absolute reality of its own, and that it has emerged from the Infinite and is an actual transformation of the Infinite, or we regard the Infinite as a transcendent first cause of the phenomenal world, then we must admit that *the infinite is infinite no longer*. A God who transforms himself into the visible universe is himself subject to transformation and change—he cannot be regarded as the absolute reality. A God who creates a world *limits himself by the very act of creation, and thus ceases to be infinite.*"

No, He does not. The Infinite remains the Infinite even after any number of finites are issued out of It. The *Śruti* is unambiguous on the point : "That is Full and This is Full, out of the Full the Full is lifted up. Fullness being taken from Fullness, Fullness alone remains." Again, He creates All, He manifests All out of the Infinitude of His Being and yet exceeds it—*ato jyāyāṁśca pūruṣaḥ*. Has not Swamiji himself, when discussing Pantheism and the Indian view of the universe's emanation from Brahman, warned us : "But observe that despite that emanation Brahman is 'still the same' " ? God's infinity is in no way affected by His own self-formulations in terms of the finite. Note also that it is only what is loosed out as the Universe that undergoes change and transformation which is really the process of manifestation—a willed working

out of some of the myriad potentialities inherent in the Infinite. Indeed, the Infinite cannot be limited to its state of infinity.

After an informative chapter on Sri Chaitanya there follows an intimate narrative of Sri Ramakrishna whose teachings have moulded the life and outlook of the author. Though he has placed this chapter at the close of the book for reasons of chronology, the Spirit of the Saint and his Message—the Fundamental Unity of all Religions—pervades the exposition from the very beginning.

We do not know why Swamiji has not touched upon the subsequent course of Indian spirituality and religion. A section to cover the notable developments during the last six decades is certainly called for.

An excellent work on an excellent subject by an excellent mind.

M. P. PANDIT

## NALINI KANTA SEN

"A NEW world of Truth and Light opened before me and I at once accepted Sri Aurobindo as my Master."

Thus spoke Nalini Kanta Sen, one of Bengal's intellectuals among whose college-mates, fellow-scholars and intimate friends were Prof. Satyendranath Basu, Dr. Meghnad Saha, Prof. S. N. Mukherji and Prof. J. C. Sinha.

By training and cast of mind a rationalist—one glance at his photo had led Sri Aurobindo to call him 'an intellectual'—he had nonetheless a saving feature. His intellectual brilliance could not beglamour him into self-satisfaction. Nor had he any of the materialist stubbornness which would refuse outright all truth beyond intellectual grasp. Otherwise Sri Aurobindo's writings could not have attracted his soul and opened before him 'a new world of Truth and Light.'

His father, the late Dr. J. K. Sen, who belonged to a distinguished cultured family of Kalia, Jessore, was a popular medical practitioner in Delhi. Nalini Kanta was born at Kalia on 30 October 1894. His academic career was throughout high. An Honours man in Mathematics, he stood first in Bengali and obtained the Bankimchandra Gold Medal. In M.A. he took a high first class in Mathematics, standing second, and won the top place in B.L., now L.L.B. He passed the Indian Audit and Accounts Service Examination and in 1921 entered the Central Government Service of all-India cadre. All through he held responsible positions and commanded the esteem and appreciation of the higher authorities. Honest and strict in his work, the lure of popularity could never deflect him in the least from the path of rectitude.

By nature and temperament, he was kind, gentle, affable and sweet-spoken. Subordinates, servants or even naughty children never heard from him a harsh or unkind word.

Massive and complicated figurework, terrifying or dry as summer dust to a layman, could not choke up the underlying springs of his love of culture. The obvious secret was that he was as well at home in the depths of his Vedic and Upanishadic studies, as in the maze of figures; as interested in the charm and beauty of the Sanskrit classics as in science; he knew the subtleties of classical music and the niceties of Indian and European art, the problems of History and the fine points of Philosophy. All these subjects he studied, and whatever he studied he studied to the bottom and assimilated it. He was always on the look-out for important books and freely spent on their purchase. His travel over Europe was more of a study tour than a pleasure trip.

His love for learning and his pursuit of culture did not slacken with age nor did his memory weaken. In his retirement from service he learnt French and German well enough to enjoy their literatures in the original. His knowledge of Bengali, Hindi and Sanskrit was remarkable. He was also acquainted with Latin.

Besides articles in English and Bengali periodicals he wrote two Bengali books on the Vedic and Upanishadic basis of Indian culture as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo.

The range and depth of his cultural achievement was so easily possible not only because of the versatility of his interests but also because of his happy faculty of resilience. In discussion on higher subjects, the standpoint he took up and maintained was invariably based on original thinking, personal conviction or historical fact, never on intellectual arrogance or prejudice. His rich store of knowledge, far from giving him a swelled head, added grace to his humility and sweetness, and seemed to make him all the more receptive to new ideas. It was this receptivity that was for him a spiritual asset of inestimable value. But for this broad openness, could he have thrown himself, heart and soul, into the profundities of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and his revolutionary idealism?

The faith, the devotion and the certitude that we have seen in him in his Ashram life was a complete proof of his having far outgrown his earlier rationalistic trend. It was presumably his first sacrifice; the second was his retirement, before time, to take to Ashram life, as a prelude to the greater sacrifices which he has never disclosed to anybody, nor would he have anybody, supposing one knew, disclose them to the world. For his sacrifices were his soul's worshipful offerings to the Divine, too sacred to be spoken about.

Besides working in several departments of the Ashram, he taught Bengali, Geography and Mathematics at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

His life which had its start with mental brilliance, and its middle caught in the dynamics of the Light Divine, came to an abrupt close on 30 June 1962.

But a life given to and accepted by the Divine Mother can have no close. It means a re-start, a new life invested with greater powers and vaster possibilities.

SISIRKUMAR MITRA

# Students' Section

## TALKS ON POETRY

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

### TALK THIRTY-EIGHT

It was Keats's friend Henry Stephens who, on seeing the first draft of *Endymion*, remarked that its opening line—

A thing of beauty is a constant joy—  
was good but still "wanting something". Keats pondered the criticism a little, then cried out, "I have it", and wrote :

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

We can see at once that here, as the Abbé Bremond says, "the current passes". Inspiration has come through. But what exactly has happened ?

Bremond declares that the inspiration is not due to a change of meaning, for, according to him, the meaning has not appreciably altered. I should think the correct view to be that the meaning has altered its shade in an important manner and yet the inspiration is not directly due to the alteration. If we bring a subtle scrutiny to bear upon the words we shall not fail to find the alteration of shade.

The first version speaks of an enjoyment that takes place with a prolonged consistency, while the second involves an absolute unconditional response that is perpetual. "A constant joy" has a somewhat restricted substance : it moves from moment to moment through one's life—steadily accompanying one, but

not necessarily without beginning and ending somewhere. "A joy for ever" has a free triumphant flow as if from beyond one's birth to beyond one's death—the flow of a larger than individual consciousness, a larger than even any time-consciousness, I might say. It is as if not merely our appreciation of an object but also our sense of an inviolable "archetype" of it on a divine plane were suggested. There is the hint of some endless and undying and godlike essence of beauty, existing and persisting behind earthly objects that perish and human experiences that pass.

Not to see this hint is to miss the final distinction of meaning in the line. And if Bremond does not see it he has not responded with the right alertness of mind. But, while such a hint may strike us as right and also as more in tune with the rest of the *Endymion*-passage, we shall mislead ourselves if we believe that the sheer meaning has metamorphosed Keats's line. Apart from the context of a line, the rightness or wrongness of meaning in poetry is irrelevant. A poet can hold any opinion and turn it to great verse. Though the meaning of "constant joy" does not accord so well with Keats's context, there is nothing in it to prevent a poet from making it memorable in a different context—if he knows how to do so : that is, if he knows how to give it a finer expression than Keats did. Of course, that finer expression will hold a nuance which the original line lacks—the change will come about by the very recasting of it. Yet, in the overall aspect as distinguished from the detailed aspect, there can be some parity, such as does not exist between the original line and Keats's actual recasting of it. So from a general viewpoint we may aver that the meaning of "constant joy" fails in Keats's line because of a failure of inspiration and not by any intrinsic poetic defect. The meaning of "a joy for ever" can also from a general viewpoint make poorer poetry in spite of its being what we may call a greater thought and in spite of its according better with Keats's context. Its effectiveness comes from the way it has been expressed. Modify the expression in the slightest and it may fall flat. The form, therefore, and not the sheer significance of Keats's new line is the wonder-worker.

I may here throw your mind back to Mallarmé's answer to the question of Degas the painter : "How is it that I have so many ideas, yet can't write poems?" Mallarmé said : "My dear Degas, poems are not written with ideas—they are written with words." Mallarmé surely did not refer to meaningless words : poems are not written with gibberish. Nor was he referring to intellectual formulation in language : poetry is not logic set to metre. He was simply stressing the importance of form. Perhaps a less epigrammatic manner of putting the matter would be that poetic form consists of inspired words that embody ideas imaginatively, emotionally, rhythmically. Any kind of idea will do, provided there is a certain choice of words and a certain ordering of the words chosen, creating an imaginative and emotional stir and bringing about a rhythm which reinforces revelatory word-suggestions with revelatory sound-suggestions.



How vitally the imaginative, emotional and rhythmical elements hold together can be easily shown. Mark what a world of difference there is if Keats's line, without any word being altered, suffers a slight change of word-order, thus :

A thing of beauty is for ever a joy.

The overall idea remains the same—and yet that large, unobstructed, profoundly thrilling finality is gone. It is a fine thought but not fine enough feeling and not fine enough imaginative experience : the stirring of the consciousness does not occur in the depths and spaces of our being. A clipping and a jumping enter into the rhythm, and there is a slightly forced imparting of the emotion and the imagination instead of a natural release of them into us. Technically, one may say that the release is done by two means. First, the immediate following of "joy" by "for ever" in Keats's line concentrates, from the standpoint of grammar, a glow of eternity, of divineness, of archetypalness in the former : the reversed sequence, while logically leaving everything the same, seems to thin away the glow. Likewise, "for ever" gets more spiritually neutral, less positive and potent and vivid when it is not mixed and annealed in significance with "joy". To break up Keats's order of the two expressions is to interrupt their mutual enrichment. Secondly, a syllable hanging out in "ever" beyond the pentameter scheme gives by its unaccented extra sound the impression of indefinite continuation, the breaking through from the limited into the illimitable, the exceeding of confines and the emerging into freedom and fulfilment—in short, a reinforcing of word-suggestions by sound-suggestions. Yes, the technique has an effect, but the technique itself is the hand of an inner force fingering deftly its medium, guided by a light and rhythm of the being and not from without by mechanical skill. The mere technical effect could have been achieved by writing :

A thing of beauty is a joy unending

or

A thing of beauty is a joy that's endless.

These variants are no "duds"; nothing in them, however, is so satisfyingly suggestive, so aptly vibrant as "for ever". They lack the perfect inevitability of inner and outer form possessed by Keats's phrase.

Going to the root of the question, we shall find this perfect inevitability to be a mystical value. Keats himself supplies a clue by the Platonic sense of beauty he has brought into his line. That "for ever" extends, as I have indicated, the joy of beauty to a divine and archetypal realm. The beauty, therefore, of a line of poetry as of any other thing can be seen to lie in its participation in this realm. Perfect inevitability of form, according to this view, springs from and

manifests some supreme and flawless Creative Delight behind the time-process. Modern aesthetics fights shy of such a theory, but whoever interrogates clearly enough his experience of poetic or any other beauty at its intensest cannot put by the sense of the ultimate, the absolute, the Divine. It is not mere pleasure that is given us. Poetry does not end with causing a happy equilibrium, as I.A. Richards contends, between the diverse impulses at play in our nature. Pleasure is there and a happy equilibrium is there; there is also much else. What is basic is our recognition of an irreproachable finality, an utter perfection that confers on every poetic statement a godlike power. Various poets make various statements, they differ among themselves, but each of them seems to bring the compelling touch of the ultimate and the absolute. Though our intellect may not agree, we cannot help feeling that here is something unchallengeable, something that can stand like a deity and command our consciousness. We feel that it participates in a Being that is flawless and "a joy for ever". The participation is through form alone : that is why all kinds of statements are possible in poetry and the question of "truth" in the scientific, philosophic, religious or historic connotation does not arise. Perfect form or beauty is "truth", as Keats in his *Ode on a Grecian Urn* declared, in one connotation only : the Being in whose flawless and eternal beauty it participates is the basic reality, the fundamental archetype of all existence, so that whatever fails to manifest this Being is to the extent of its failure a falsity and not the truth.

Art is a wonderful effort to manifest it. Inspiration, that passing of "the current", is the artist's inner sense of it governing his medium. We can analyse the governing, study the elements of imagination, emotion and rhythm, but these elements fuse into a masterpiece because the touch of a mystical Power falls on them. Nothing save that touch metamorphoses Keats's original line and makes it dance through the ages on the lips of men.

Bremond is right in making much of mysticism in relation to poetry. His error lies in making it a direct operator. It is easy to criticise him and show that many poets have no mystical bent, no mystical substance as such. Middleton Murry labours to point out just this fact and thereby convict Bremond of confusion. He counters both the propositions of Bremond—that there need be no thought at all in poetry and that poetry expresses a mystical experience side-tracked. On the first point his position, in effect, is : "True poetry always contains thought, but thought can vary from a comprehensive declaration like Shakespeare's 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on' to the most tenuous apprehension of a quality physical, or spiritual, or both, as in 'the plainsong cuckoo gray.'" Here he is right. But afterwards he falls short and betrays inconsistency. On the second point his position is . "What is essential is that the 'thought' should be an intrinsic part of an emotional field in the poet's mind, and that a corresponding emotional field should be excited in ourselves. No *deus (ex machina* or immanent) has any aid to give. Some poets may

think about God—perchance they may experience Him— but other poets have done neither one nor the other; but all are poets if they have the power so to mate the word to an entire mental experience that its similar is aroused in their readers. By virtue of that power alone they are ‘pure poets’ and their words ‘pure poetry’. Bremond speaks of ‘un plus grand et meilleur que nous’ : the one who is greater and better than ourselves is not God, he is simply the poet who communicates to us the unity of his own inward experience which is indefeasibly our own. At the touch of the poetic experience we become that which we are and which we were not—momentarily whole. Intellect and emotion, mind and heart, regain their lost unity within us. We gain a positive enrichment and integration; we might say, if the phrase were not hampered with theological and psychological obligations, that we are put, if not in possession of, at least into touch with our souls. To avoid those obligations, we must be content to claim a momentary union of thought and feeling. This union is not mystical but it is religious. All great poets must be religious. For high poetry and high religion are at one in the essential that they demand that a man shall not merely think thoughts, but feel them—that his highest mental act be done with all his heart and with all his mind and with all his soul.”

We have here a peculiar exhibition of taking away with one hand and giving back with the other. While refusing to grant a mystical quality to poetry Murry is yet driven to talk of soul and religion. But is it not rather ridiculous to boil soul down to a union of thought and feeling—as if “a momentary union of thought and feeling” could create that deep or exquisite sense of the flawless that poetic expression gives? It is the research into this sense that takes one to the threshold of the mystical. And what a poor definition of religion we have in the formula : “not merely think thoughts, but feel them” ! Is it because Shakespeare felt his thoughts that we have that passage over which Murry exults, the passage whose thought is the futility of human existence ?—

Tommorow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
 To the last syllable of recorded time;  
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !  
 Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
 And then is heard no more; it is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing

On the thought in this, Murry comments : “It is one which the well-tuned man would rather not believe to be true; and yet, when he has listened to Macbeth,

something is changed. There are undreamed-of riches, it seems, even in ultimate despair; a glory is shed over the road to dusty death. This despair is not despairing, because it is complete. The act of the poet's mind has thrilled the poet's heart." May we ask Murry why a glory is shed ? Can the thrilling of the poet's heart by the poet's mind shed it ? No. It is because the lines have the gait as of a god. Perfection is somehow abroad. Shakespeare's heart-beats, when Shakespeare expressed his thought, became the footfalls of that Perfection : some haloed power walked out from the poet's depths into his poetry and stamped on it its unimpeachable faultlessness of form. And it is the striving for and the vague receptivity to this power that constitutes religion. Murry is made to introduce terms which he finds unavoidable but which he attempt to water down. The impression that all poets do not believe in or sense God has covered his eyes to the fact that poetry cannot be unless the mystical presence acts in its intensity and converts it to an aesthetic form of the absolute. If we have to speak of soul and religion, let us plumb the true implications of our necessity. Mysticism, rightly understood, is the real maker of "pure poetry".

AMAL KIRAN (K.D.SETHNA)

## THE ART-LOVING PRINCESS

IN the hilly region of the north, there ruled a king who was very fond of art. Everything in his palace and the garden surrounding it was artistically selected and arranged. The king was well esteemed for his taste all over the world because he would pay any price in order to buy for his palace a piece of art he had set his heart upon.

This king had a little daughter called Nayana, so named because of her large vivid eyes. In her young age she showed great aptitude for beautiful things, so the king had made up his mind to make her a great artist. When she was seven, a man with long girlish hair and a sweet smiling face was appointed by the king to teach painting and drawing and sculpture to Nayana. The little princess tried hard to put on paper whatever was suggested but her attempts were very poor. Her fingers did not do the things her heart so vividly saw and understood. She was distressed and unhappy, still she tried. Very often she was seen sitting alone, motionless and erect with eyes closed. When asked what she was doing she replied, "I am trying to notice exactly the details of all the wonderful things I see somewhere. They are so beautiful and the colours are so silent yet cheerful. If only I can learn to paint these things! What daddy has gathered up from all over the world are nothing in comparison with these lovely objects. There the colours stand out in their beauty and relate their stories, here the colours are silent and yet you know they have such a wondrous tale."

The listeners were shocked and the teacher laughed rudely, saying that this was the effect of her failure. The king tried to be patient with her and asked her to be more practical and do some real work instead of dreaming about unreal things. But to Nayana and her large eyes nothing else seemed real. Time passed and she was soon eleven but without having succeeded in her art. The king began getting tired with her and her stories of the things she saw. He sent away the teacher and utilized the money saved by it in buying new curios for his ever expanding museum of arts and crafts. He was greatly disappointed in Nayana who was his only hope to carry out his ambition.

Once Nayana asked the king to let her go out for a walk in the forest a little away from the palace. The king asked angrily, "Isn't my garden a fit place for any princess to have a walk?"

"Yes, daddy," she replied hesitatingly, "but it's so different out there. The flowers grow here and there and are so different from ours. The trees too are different with their rustic not polished growth, here when I walk I know at

every corner what is ahead of me, a bed of peony buds or an angel fountain or a rose bush or something else. But there everything comes up unexpectedly, it is so different, the ground beneath your feet, the thorns, the rough branches in your way, the birds and oh ! the very air smells.. ”

“Different, different, different,” snapped in the king, “enough of your childishness. Go wherever you like and don’t let me hear again that wretched word, ‘Different’.”

Nayana gulped heavily at the king’s shouting and very slowly walked out, away from his presence and away into the woods.

She was a princess and not used to long walks alone. Soon she was tired and upon seeing the first little brook she went down on her knees and felt the cool water trickling through her hot fingers. She touched her forehead with her wet hand and felt so relieved that she remembered at once how her garden had so many artificial brooks and fountains yet none were so pleasant. She dipped her fingers once more into the running water and sat comfortably leaning against the tree near-by. Soon the thought of her father’s anger came back to her and she felt miserable. She wanted so much to come up to his expectations but how miserably her fingers had failed her ! She was wondering, “Why ? why is it so ?” with her eyes fixed on the softly babbling brook. Suddenly she saw something sparkling in the water. She bent forward and reached for a crystal-clear stone, cut in an oval shape. She rolled it several times in her palm and was surprised to find such a precious stone in the brook.

“Who could have dropped it ? How he must be searching for it !” She brooded. But before long she saw a fine square emerald tumbling in the water. This was astonishing. It looked like a dream-brook not a real one, where precious stones flowed with the water at random. She became curious to know from where they came. So she got up and walked along the bank of the brook.

At length she saw a broad banyan tree and a young boy under it working over a piece of glass with a tiny chisel cutting it in quick, successive strokes. She went up to him and putting out her hand said, “Do these gems belong to you ?”

The boy looked up startled. He had soft, long curls and dark eyes which made his half-open mouth so impressive. With an effort he said, “Princess Nayana?...Yes, they were mine but as I had no use for them I let them roll down in the water. They looked sparkingly beautiful, didn’t they ?” His voice had no more fear by the time he finished his sentence. Nayana was absolutely taken aback at these words. “You mean you did not need these valuable stones ?” she asked.

“No, they aren’t valuable, they are mere broken glass pieces I collect in the streets and when I have no work I come here and chisel them up just because they look much more beautiful like that. And I let them loose in the running stream because I don’t know where to keep them.”

"Oh ! but you are silly. You can sell them in the big stores and they will pay you handsomely and then you will not have to wear that old coat with so many holes in it," Nayana said haughtily.

"No, sweet princess, you are too innocent. No one will buy my gems because I am not one of those supposed artists. On the contrary they would suspect me of theft if they saw me in possession of such precious things. And maybe I would be pushed into a prison and then my old father will not even have the little help I can give him," the boy explained. "But my father has bought so many objects set with stones like these and he praises them so often," put in Nayana quite puzzled.

"Yes, because they come from the hands of famous experts," he spoke, slowly pronouncing each word bitterly.

Nayana was so sorry to listen to such things. She realised that she must go back to the palace. So she said, "I want so much to learn how to use this chisel. Do you think you can teach me ? I would come here whenever you do. Would you teach me ?"

"Yes, certainly. But would you like to sit on the rough ground here in the woods ?"

"I would love it. I must go now." And she rushed away.

Their lessons began. Nayana pored over the glass pieces which her companion and teacher Mohan used to gather up and hide under the trees. The same fingers which could not handle pencils and paint brushes or moulding clay now turned out sparkling gems of all colours in a variety of shapes. She was so happy in the woods with Mohan, working to fulfil secretly her father's ambition.

After some time Mohan took Nayana to a small hut in the same woods. There lived an old man who had a wonderful hand at chopping away rocks and making them into exquisite statues. Nayana was dancing with joy to be friends with such a genius.

As she was already accustomed to the use of the chisel, she requested the old man to teach her its use on the rocks. A few more months passed, during which Nayana made good progress under the guidance of the old man. Once Nayana hurried up to the old man and said, "My father has announced that at the end of this month, on the full-moon day, he would like to hold an exhibition of the most artistic small pillars. He would choose the best one for a special gift to a foreign land as a token of our friendship. I know lots of people are going to exhibit their art in front of the king. Why can't we, all three of us, do some such thing ? We'll keep it a secret, of course, until the last day."

Mohan and his old friend also thought it the best opportunity to bring to light Nayana's art which was as yet unknown in the court. So they got to work. Nayana sat often quietly to see the beautiful designs in that special land which she could see with closed eyes. She described every detail and the

old man helped her to put her visions into form. Nayana and Mohan often worked hard to turn out gem-like beauties from glass for putting them in stones. As the time neared, their hidden work grew grander day by day.

The evening of the full-moon brought many artists with pillars of various sizes. Some were wrapped up in fine shining tissue paper, some in gold or silver cloth, some lay in beautiful boxes. Every one of them stood in long rows in the open ground for the king wanted to see their effect in moonlight. At the appointed time the king, in all pomp, walked down among the rows. He liked some, he disliked others. Some were good pieces of art but had no effect in the moonlight; while some were sparkling in the moonlight but were crude as art. He selected a few while he walked down and when he came towards the end of the rows, whom did he see there but his own princess, Nayana, standing erect with a fifteen inch high pillar wrapped in white cotton wool ? Her large eyes met those of the King and the two pairs of eyes turned to the pillar in her hands.

In the meantime her fingers slowly removed the cotton wool and the king saw an exquisite pillar in grey stone. He lifted it up to the moonlight to observe the details and was stunned to see the minute work and smooth curves and over and above all that the scintillating, twinkling, tiny stones set so beautifully to make it a perfect gift which would be as lovely in moonlight as in the day.

There were shouts of triumph all around and Nayana humbly introduced Mohan and the old man to the king. The eight eyes gazed admiringly at the pillar, happy and triumphant.

SUNANDA



## SOME FACTS ABOUT DREAMING

INVESTIGATIONS at various universities have revealed many startling facts about dreaming.

If you want sweet dreams, sleep with the light on. The chances are, you will enjoy every minute of your doze.

A darkened room tends to produce gloomy, depressing dreams.

A sleeper can be started on a pleasant dream by holding perfume under his nose, by keeping a soft light on, by whispering and by placing a pillow on his lap.

If a sleeper is stimulated in this way when he is already dreaming, the mood of the dream will probably become more contented or end altogether.

For one experiment two groups of dreamers were probed : those who reported dreaming almost every night and those who said they seldom or never dreamed.

For four nights the subjects in both groups were wakened periodically and asked if they had been dreaming. The so-called non-dreamers recalled dreams less frequently. Though they had claimed that they never dreamed, questioning showed that they did have at least one dream each during the study thus proving that everybody dreams, though for some the memory is fleeting.

During a twenty-eight-day study, personality tests were taken following daily dream reports.

These showed that those who recalled dreams most vividly were more aware of their secret feelings and anxieties, while those who forgot details of their dreams tended to be more inhibited emotionally.

One of the most fascinating discoveries made during the investigations was that it is possible to tell when a person is dreaming by checking whether his eyes are moving under the lids.

When we dream, our eyes follow the story created by our minds as if we were watching a film.

If a sleeper is dreaming about climbing, his eyes move up and down.

If there is a lot of action in the dream the eye movements will be fast and jerky.

Of the one hundred and ninety-one sleeping subjects wakened when their eyes showed that they were in the middle of a dream, one hundred and fifty-two were able to recall their dreams in detail.

The details always fitted the movements of their eyes. By keeping a close

check on the eye movements of dreamers, doctors were able to explode old theories that dreams do not last long.

The average dream period was found to be twenty minutes, although some went on for as long as an hour.

It was estimated that the average person spends about twenty-two per cent of his or her sleeping time dreaming.

The investigations—which took place in the United States—showed that the only pronounced difference between the dream habits of the sexes was that men rarely dream in colour, while women see vivid colours in most of their dreams.

In many instances, however, the colours were not necessarily the true colours of the objects seen.

One “guinea pig” reported that snakes and trees were always green and yellow.

Several people said they saw colour only when fire featured in their dreams.

The most colourful dreamers were deaf people.

But whether we dream a lot or a little, in colour or in black and white, the studies showed that dreams are good for us.

To prove it, some volunteers were put in a hospital laboratory and watched closely for five nights.

Each time their eye movements indicated that they were dreaming they were wakened.

Deprived of their dreams the subjects became anxious and irritable. They could not concentrate and they developed ravenous appetites.

One subject backed out of the experiment in a panic.

Others failed to stand the strain for the full five nights.

These symptoms were not caused by lack of sleep. In later experiments the same subjects were wakened only when there were signs that they were not dreaming, and, apart from tiredness, they suffered no ill-effects.

These findings suggest that dreams are the mind’s emotional escape-valve and that without them we would store up more of our troubles.

*(Condensed from “Science Digest”)*

# SANSKRIT SIMPLIFIED

## BOOK I

### LESSON II

There are in Sanskrit three personal pronouns—those of the first, second and third persons; three genders—masculine (m.), feminine (f.), and neuter (n.), three numbers—singular (sing.), for one, dual (du.), for two only, and plural (pl.) for more than two.

All pronouns, except those of the first and second persons, and all nouns belong to the third person.

A noun or a pronoun, when used in a phrase or a full sentence, expresses a variety of its relations mostly with a verb or a participle and in one case with some other noun. In English and similar languages the place of a noun in a sentence or some preposition expresses that relation; but in Sanskrit and allied languages various terminations are added on to a noun or a pronoun to serve that purpose. Thus the same word assumes different forms in different senses. This is what in English is called 'case' and in Sanskrit विभक्ति vibhakti. Thus nouns, pronouns, adjectives and words doing the work of adjectives are all capable of assuming various विभक्ति forms. Such words end either in a vowel or a consonant. But for the present we shall deal only with words ending in अ. They are in gender either masculine or neuter.

We start with the masculine word, देव —m. god, and give its various विभक्ति forms with their significances but in the singular only:—

१. देवः subject of a verb, as in देवः दयालुः अस्ति । *God is compassionate.*
२. देवम् object of a verb, as in देवम् अहम् नमामि I bow to *God*.
३. देवेन agent or instrument, as in देवेन रक्षितम् जगत् । The world is being protected *by God*. (by or with).
४. देवाय means one to whom something is given or for whom something is meant, as in देवाय पुष्पम् समर्पयामि । I offer a flower *to God*.
५. देवात् means one from whom or which something proceeds, as in देवात् वरः प्राप्यते । A boon is got *from God*.

६. देवस्य this is the possessive case form, as in देवस्य दया अपारा।

Boundless is the compassion of God.

७. देवे —the place where or the time when the action indicated by the verb takes place as in देवे दिव्यता निवसति। Divinity lives in God. अहम् आश्रमे वसामि। I live in the Ashram. अहम् प्रभाते उत्तिष्ठामि (get up). अहम् आसने उपविशामि (sit).

८. हे देव —nominative of address, as in देव त्वम् एव मम शरणम्। (O) God ! thou alone art my refuge.

In the case of neuter nouns ending in अ all the forms of विभक्ति except those of no. 1, 2, and 8 (१. २. ८) are similar to those of similar masculine words. We take the word जल n. water : १. जलम् as subject, २. जलम् as object, ३. जलेन with or by water, ४. जलाय for water ५. जलात् from water, ६. जलस्य of water, ७. जले in or on water, and ८. (हे) जल (O) water !

### Study

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| १. बालः पुस्तकम् पठति।              | The boy reads a book.                                 |
| २. त्वम् हस्तेन लिखसि।              | Thou writest with the hand.                           |
| ३. अहम् मुखेन सत्यम् वदामि।         | I speak the truth with (my) mouth.                    |
| ४. सः पठनाय विद्यालयम् गच्छति।      | He goes to school for study.                          |
| ५. फलम् वृक्षात् पतति।              | A fruit falls from the tree.                          |
| ६. जलम् मेघात् पतति।                | Water falls from the cloud.                           |
| ७. शिष्यः मस्तकेन गुरुदेवम् नमति।   | The disciple bows to (his) preceptor with (his) head. |
| ८. भक्तः भक्तिभावेन ईश्वरम् भजति।   | A devotee worships God with devotion.                 |
| ९. वानरः वृक्षस्य फलम् खादति।       | The monkey eats the fruit of the tree.                |
| १०. अहम् आश्रमस्य साधकः अस्मि (am)। | I am a sadhak of the Ashram.                          |
| ११. त्वम् कूपस्य जलम् पिबसि।        | Thou drinkest the water of the well.                  |
| १२. कुमारः भोजनालयम् गच्छति।        | The boy goes to the dining-room.                      |
| १३. सज्जनः पापम् त्यजति।            | A good man gives up sin.                              |
| १४. व्याघ्रः वने वसति।              | A tiger lives in a forest.                            |
| १५. अहम् पञ्जरे सिंहम् पश्यामि।     | I see a lion in a cage.                               |
| १६. कमलम् तडागस्य जले भवति।         | The lotus grows in the water of a pond.               |
| १७. मत्स्यः जाले पतति।              | A fish falls into a net.                              |
| १८. चोरः मध्यरात्रे धनम् हरति।      | A thief steals money at midnight.                     |
| १९. अहम् वने व्याघ्रम् न पश्यामि।   | I do not see a tiger in the forest.                   |
| २०. सः आश्रमात् गृहम् गच्छति।       | He goes home from the Ashram.                         |
| २१. कः पुष्पाय उद्यानम् गच्छति ?    | Who goes to the garden for the flower ?               |

## New Words (in the order of the sentences)

हस्त-m. hand.	पत-(verbal base) fall.	आश्रम-m.n. Ashram
मुख-n. mouth, face.	शिष्य-m. disciple.	कूप-m. well.
पठन-n. study.	मस्तक-m. n. head.	साधक-m. sadhak.
फल-n. fruit.	भक्त-m. devotee.	कुमार-m. boy.
वृक्ष-m. tree.	भक्तिभाव-m. devotion.	भोजनालय-m. n. dining room.
व्याघ्र-m. tiger.	वानर-m. monkey.	सज्जन-m. good man.
पञ्जर-n. cage.	मत्स्य-m. fish.	गृह-n. house.
सिंह-m. lion.	जाल-n. net.	पुष्प-n. flower.
कमल-n. lotus.	चोर-m. thief.	उद्यान-n. garden.
तडाग-m.n. pond.	मध्यरात्र-m. midnight.	कः-m. who ? वन-n. forest.

(NOTE : Using all the words learnt in lessons I and II, the teacher can teach how to form a variety of other sentences. The student too can try this for himself.)

## Exercise 1.

Translate into English or your own tongue :-

१. मम (my) पुस्तकम् अधुना कः पठति ? २. कः सदैव ईश्वरम् भजति ? ३. त्वम् सदा सायम् किम् पठसि ? ४. अहम् सर्वदा प्रातः परमेश्वरस्य (परमेश्वर-m. the Supreme Divine) पूजनम् (पूजन-n. worship) करोमि (do) । ५. कुमारः तत्र वृक्षे वानरम् पश्यति । ६. यदा सः गृहम् गच्छति तदा त्वम् किम् करोषि (dost) ? ७. साधुजनः (a good man) कदापि (at any time) पापम् न करोति (does) । ८. गजः (गज-m. elephant) सरोवरस्य (सरोवर-m. lake) सलिलम् (सलिल-n. जल water) पिबति । ९. पण्डितः कदापि विद्याभ्यासम् (विद्याभ्यास-m. pursuit of learning) न त्यजति । १०. ईश्वरः भक्तस्य दुःखम् (दुःख-n. misery) हरति ।

## Exercise 2

Translate into Sanskrit :-

1. Do you (sing.) eat the fruit of the mango-tree (आम्रवृक्ष-m.) ?
2. Where does the student (छात्र-m.) go for study ?
3. Do you (sing.) drink milk (दुग्ध-n.) in the morning ?
4. Yes, I drink hot (उष्ण-n.) milk in the morning.
5. Never eat the fruit of a poisonous tree (विषवृक्ष-m.)

6. A good son (सुपुत्र-m.) always bows to (his) father (पितरम् or जनकम् or तातम्) in the morning (प्रभात-n. morning).
7. God sees everything (सर्व-n.) everywhere.
8. When does Mohan (मोहन-m.) go to the dining-room ?
9. Why don't you (sing.) come to my house in the evening ?
10. Take (हर) my book for the study of Sanskrit.

### श्लोक २

शैले शैले न माणिक्यं, मौक्तिकं न गजे गजे ।  
साधवो नहि सर्वत्र, चन्दनं न वने वने ॥

(1) The final म् of a word followed by a consonant is generally changed to अनुस्वार Anusvara.

Words : शैले शैले in every mountain (शैल-m. mountain) न not माणिक्यम् a ruby (माणिक्य-n. ruby), मौक्तिकम् a pearl (मौक्तिक-n. pearl) न not गजे गजे in every elephant, साधवः saintly persons (साधु-m. saintly person) न हि (are) not सर्वत्र everywhere, चन्दनम् sandal-wood tree (चन्दन-n. m.) न not वने वने in every forest.

श्लोकवाक्यानि sentences from the श्लोक (वाक्य-n. sentence)

१. शैले शैले माणिक्यं न भवति । २. गजे गजे मौक्तिकं न भवति । ३. वने वने चन्दनं न भवति । ४. तथैव (in the same way) सर्वत्र साधवः न भवन्ति ।

प्रश्नाः (प्रश्न-m. question):-१. शैले शैले किम् न भवति ? २. गजे गजे किं न भवति ? ३. वने वने किं न भवति ? ४. सर्वत्र के (who m. pl.) न भवन्ति ?

अपरे प्रश्नाः :-१. जले किं भवति ? २. विद्यालये कः पठति ? ३. शिवः कुत्र वसति ? (कैलास m. mount Kailasa) ४. सूर्यः कदा उदयति (rises) ? ५. चन्द्रः (m. moon) कदा उदयति ? रात्रौ (at night). ६. कः सर्वत्र वसति ? ७. प्रातः कः उदयति ? ८. कः सदैव पठति ? ९. त्वम् सायम् किं खादसि ? १०. अधुना त्वं किं करोषि ? ११. सः सायं किं करोति ? १२. अहम् अधुना किं करोमि ?

A suggestion to students : To master Sanskrit please keep in touch with it. Spend five to fifteen minutes daily on going through the lessons which need to be constantly revised. Learn the words and their various forms.

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