

# MOTHER INDIA

MARCH, 1969

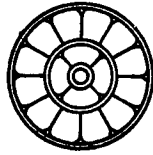
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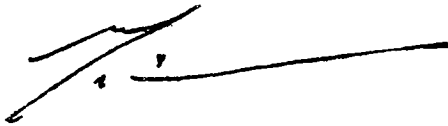


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. XXI

No. 2

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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28.2.69

Freedom is possible  
only in union with the  
Divine

To unite with the Divine  
one must have conquered  
in oneself the very  
possibility of desire,



28. 2-69

"Let light, peace and joy  
be with all those who  
live in Curwilla  
and work for its re-ahitation."  
Blessings

# **THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE OF JANUARY 9, 1969**

## **FOR THOSE AT THE PLACE NAMED "PEACE" IN AUROVILLE**

"PEACE". The foremost thing must be Peace. Whatever you do must be by peaceful means.

The second thing necessary is Harmony, not only general harmony but also between the individuals living there. You must begin to look for the harmony in each individual and not dwell on the disharmony. The disharmony exists everywhere but you must reject that and allow only the harmony to enter.

There must be a sense of Order.

Each individual must have a sense of self-discipline, and actually practice it.  
**PEACE, HARMONY, ORDER, SELF-DISCIPLINE.**

\*  
\*\*

What we are doing now is a new thing; it has nothing to do with the past.

## A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO IN FRENCH

*Q. Pourquoi l'illusion de la sexualité ne se dissipe-t-elle pas?*

R. Trop de racines dans le vital humain. Le sexe, cela a une tenacité terrible. D'ailleurs, la nature physique universelle en a un tel besoin que même lorsque l'homme le repousse, elle le verse sur lui aussi longtemps que possible.

17-1-1935

*Q. Why does the illusion of sex not disappear?*

A. Too many roots in the human vital. Sex has a terrible tenacity. Besides, universal physical nature has such a need of it that even when man pushes it away, she throws it upon him as long as possible.

17-1-1935



## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of February 21)

6-7-1934

*Q: I have egoistic desires and passions. I want them to be removed totally from me. What should be done for that?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a matter of self-discipline and opening of the being to the Divine.

*Q: I want to start every action of mine after knowing the Divine Will. But how to find out the Divine Will?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It needs a quiet mind—in the quiet mind turned towards the Divine, the initiation comes of the Divine Will and the right way to do it.

8-7-1937

*Q: When in Pondicherry, I sometimes remember my children (residing in Delhi) and feel a little sorry. But I am soon awakened to the truth that there is nothing in the world to love except the Divine. This struggle goes on. How to be relieved of it?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is as the love of the Divine grows that the other things cease to trouble the mind.

9-7-1934

*Q: Today when I was taking my food I noticed for a moment that Lord Krishna was taking it with my spoon. I had a smile from him and then the figure disappeared.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is an experience sadhaks often have—that it is the Divine who is taking the meal.

*Q: While sitting for meditation I see the figure of the Divine at two different places. One on the forehead and the other somewhere in the mind. It seems easier to hold the image for some time in the first than in the second place.*

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a centre of consciousness (chakra) in the forehead which is among other things the direct centre of inner vision—that is why it is easier to hold the image there. The other must be a mental image and can be held long only if the mind is very still.

16-7-1934

*Q: Today during prayer-time I felt as if there was a mountain beyond a sea. The saints were going to the mountain. They invited me to join them. But I said, "I have been sent here (on the earth) by the Divine to perform certain duties; hence it is not the time for me to accompany you." Then a vague image of Lord Krishna appeared before me and approved of my statement. What does all this indicate?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It indicates probably that the possibility of a spiritual realisation (the mountain) beyond life (the sea) such as the Sanyasins seek was put before you. Your refusal saying that you had a work to do for the Divine in the world and could not leave it and your answer was approved by the Divine.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

MARCH 18, 1940

P: Hitler's sudden meeting with Mussolini and the postponement of Sumner Wells' return seem to suggest a peace move again from their side.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but if the Allies sell out to Hitler, Hitler will only wait for an advantageous time to strike again.

P: Have you heard of the prophecies of Leonard Blake? A Parsi who had come here has offered to present a copy of Blake's book if we are interested.

SRI AUROBINDO: You can ask for it. Buying won't be worth while but if anyone offers it we can accept.

S: Among Parsis there are no spiritual men. But the Parsis seem to be quite catholic: wherever they find anybody spiritual, they accept him, whether he is a jnani or a bhakta. It is strange they have themselves nobody markedly spiritual.

P: Haven't they got Meherbaba?

S: Oh yes, one example.

SRI AUROBINDO: But this one example is considered the Saviour of the world! Zoroastrians claim to have had seers and magi among them. They ought to have some spiritual figures.

N: Have you read of J.L. Banerjis's death during the Congress election?

SRI AUROBINDO: I thought he had been long dead and I took this Banerji for a different person. Or has he risen from the dead to fight the election? At one time he was a Moderate and stood for compromises. Of course he changed many times. First he attacked me vigorously and then became a strong devotee of mine. Afterwards he turned a Moderate. Perhaps he has come to the Congress now.

N: Now here are some letters sent by Anilbaran from friends. One new friend of his writes that he is very often dreaming about you and, if things go on like this, he will have to forsake his children and start for Pondicherry.

S: It is going to be like Sannyasins.

N: Why? People can come here with all their children.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bah!

S: Somebody said to me that you have no sympathy for Sannyasins. I replied that we are practically Sannyasins ourselves, leading a Sannyasin life though of course

it may be as a temporary phase, for our own lifetime only, because you want a new creation, don't you?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but a new life has to be based on spiritual experience. I have dealt with that in *The Life Divine*.

S: The very fact that we have an Ashram means that we have to keep aloof from the world for a time. Else we could as well establish ourselves in the world.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): "Ashram" is only a conventional name. As I said, we can't start a new creation except on the basis of spiritual experience. The starting of a new life has been a strong idea among many people for a long time. Anukul Thakur, Radhashyam and Dayanand had all the same idea.

#### EVENING

N: In the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* there is a report that Surendra Mohan Ghose is unanimously going to be chosen as the President of the new B.P.C.C.

SRI AUROBINDO: I am rather surprised. Let me see the report.

N: Suren Ghose seems suddenly to have come into prominence.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. But at one time he wanted to give up politics.

#### MARCH 19, 1940

As usual, N was meditating during Sri Aurobindo's walk. He was in a sort of trance and so did not know that the walking had finished and the Mother had been waiting.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling, after the Mother had gone*): Deep trance?

N: Just at the last moment. But I don't know if it can really be called a trance: something was happening inside.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a trance all the same: you know that you were somewhere but don't know where. That alone is not enough; you must know where you have gone.

N: I tried again for intuition but as usual failed.

S (*smiling*): N is trying the straight path through intuition.

N: To Supermind?

S: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): I am afraid the straight path is the longest.

N: S tells me that instead of trying for the Supermind I should try to realise the Self first. The other is a very long path. (*Sri Aurobindo began to smile.*)

S: I was just going to say that again. You are trying for intuition but you don't get it.

N: But I get the trance.

SRI AUROBINDO: And it may lead to intuition.

N: My trance is only for a short time.

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you know? In a trance one has no sense of time.

N: Yes, but here I was quite awake and saw the time: 11.20 a.m., and I expected that you would stop walking any moment. Then suddenly I went off and woke up at 11.25.

S: The word "trance" is rather vague; it doesn't convey the real sense.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? In English that is the only word. "Trance" means the loss of outer consciousness and going within. One can't say all that every time. Of course, as with samadhi, there are many kinds of trances.

N: I read somewhere that a patient under chloroform was watching his own operation from above.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the rise of consciousness out of the body. In hypnotism the subjects can know all their experiences and under chloroform they can do the same. During fever one gets vital experiences.

N: How? There is no loss of outer consciousness then.

SRI AUROBINDO: The non-physical centres are excited. We can use our favourite term "physical crust" and say that it temporarily gets thin and the centres just below it become active.

P: The English writer Hilaire Belloc has said that Germany will make a strong attempt to break through the Maginot Line. Once she breaks through it, France will be vulnerable.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was German generals who were against any such attempt.

P: But after breaking Poland so easily they have got confidence.

SRI AUROBINDO: But there was nothing to break in Poland. The Poles couldn't even offer any resistance to speak of.

N: Finland had some defence.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the Mannerheim Line, though nothing equal to the Maginot Line. The Russians could only make a dent.

MARCH 20, 1940

P: In Sweden the public opinion seems to be in favour of Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

P: That is why no help was given to Finland.

SRI AUROBINDO: Norway and Sweden have become pacific. Of course the Norwegians are not said to be particularly good fighters, though once the Norwegian Vikings went even up to Sicily. The Swedes are known to be good fighters, and in the earliest periods they were a great power; they ravaged the whole of Northern Europe.

EVENING

P: The French Cabinet has resigned. But it seems Daladier will be again asked to form the Ministry.

SRI AUROBINDO: They passed a vote of confidence the other day.

P: But this may have happened yesterday. Some 300 members remained neutral. They seem to be dissatisfied with the war policy and also the dictatorial power of Daladier. Daladier refused to appoint new ministers.

SRI AUROBINDO: What do they expect in war-time? One has to be dictatorial.

P: They also want a more vigorous action.

SRI AUROBINDO: What vigorous action? Attacking the Siegfried Line?

S: **But** how long can this go on? Sitting on the fence like that?

SRI AUROBINDO: What else can be done? It is the nature of this war. What is the use of breaking your heads against a stone wall?

S: That may be, but like this the war will prolong itself endlessly. England and France declared war and they are on the defensive.

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you mean for that reason to say that they should lead an invasion against the Siegfried Line? Already Germany has more men than the Allies. And if one million men are sacrificed to Hitler by trying to break the Siegfried Line, then the war is finished. There is no sense in that.

P: Perhaps they are dissatisfied with the treatment of Communists, the government's putting them in detention-camps.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bah! What do they want then? To let them be free and spread a revolution behind the lines? They were plotting against France, taking orders from Stalin and trying to help Hitler. What else could be done to such enemies of the country? Allow them to betray France? The Socialists also agree to the Government policy. When Blum went to London he said that he would have done the same to the Communists—only in a different way.

P: Some people may be saying that Daladier is too much led by Chamberlain.

SRI AUROBINDO: If a quarrel starts between England and France, the war is done!

S: Every day they are spending £6,000,000.

SRI AUROBINDO: That can't be helped. It was the same during the last war.

P: The Allies did want to prosecute a vigorous war by helping Finland. Only, Sweden refused to allow passage to their troops.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but the Labour Party was dead against war with Russia. Now they have published that they had kept 100,000 soldiers ready to send to Finland under the plea of "non-intervention"—a queer phrase invented by Mussolini.

N: Sweden says England promised help too late.

SRI AUROBINDO: How can that be? Chamberlain has said that the soldiers were kept ready and they were to be asked for in May by Finland but Finland didn't call because of Scandinavia's refusal to allow them passage.

*(To be continued)*

# SRI AUROBINDO AND MAJOR C. H. DOUGLAS

## A LETTER AND AN ARTICLE FROM ENGLAND

300 High Street, Cottenham, Cambs, England, 6-2-69

Dear Mr. Sethna,

Some time ago you kindly offered to consider further contribution<sup>s</sup> from my pen for publication in *Mother India*; hence I beg to submit the enclosed article on 'Sri Aurobindo and Major C. H. Douglas'.

I have also enclosed (1) A copy of *The Fig Tree*, a quarterly which was started in 1936 but discontinued after 1938 and during the war. It ran again from 1954 to March 1955 but we were unable to continue, mostly because the editor's health began to deteriorate. The June 1954 issue contains an article by me entitled 'Food and Finance'. Enclosure (2) contains a review and criticism of the 1966 Reith Lectures which were given over B.B.C. radio by Prof. J. K. Galbraith who, I believe, is well known in India. I hope that you and, perhaps, your students will find these two enclosures interesting.

As regards the article, I am well aware of inadequacies. For instance, I have not attempted to give Major Douglas's views on present day unemployment policies. He had much to say about these: to him, unemployment is a sign that we are entering an age of leisure or rather that we could be entering an age of leisure for which national dividends would be an appropriate provision. Thus, on p. 107 of *The Monopoly of Credit* Douglas says that "some agreement is necessary as to whether unemployment, in its alternative description of leisure, is a misfortune or whether it is a release. If it is a release, then obviously it must not be accompanied by economic, or rather financial, penalisation. If it is a misfortune, then clearly every effort should be directed to restraining the abilities of those engineers and organisers who are prepared to make not two, but two hundred blades of grass grow where one grew before. "Again, on p. 108, he says, "We must recognise that the world, whether consciously or not, is moving towards the Leisure State.... Production and still more the activities which are commonly referred to as 'business' would of necessity cease to be the major interest of life and would, as has happened to so many biological activities, be relegated to a position of minor importance to be replaced, no doubt by some form of activity of which we are not yet fully cognisant."

Perhaps, if you have space, you could incorporate these two quotations at the end of the article should you decide to publish it. I have avoided technicalities but I am sure that the banking system would, if properly constituted as agents instead of owners (see *The Monopoly of Credit*, p. 122 (2) ) of financial credit, be able to attend to the technical side. They would be charged with the duty of seeing that (a) credit was not withheld from properly approved projects calculated to increase the real wealth and wellbeing of the community and (b) that the purchasing power in

the pockets of the people was sufficient to buy the goods produced plus imports received in exchange for equivalent exports. I was once present when a prominent and respected Social Creditor told an audience that he had had the opportunity to ask a leading world banker if he could put Major Douglas's proposals into practice. The reply was "Certainly, *if I had my orders.*" The difficulty is to get at the people who are able to give the orders.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
T. N. MORRIS

P.S. I am well aware that *real* and terrible shortages exist in India and that Rome was not built in a day. At the same time I suppose that India is rapidly becoming industrialised in some areas and is really fairly well equipped to supply many needs.

---

IN a previous letter and article (*Mother India* Aug. 1968) I drew attention to some similarities between the ideals and thought of Major C. H. Douglas the Scottish engineer-economist and Sri Aurobindo the student of Eastern and Western classical literature and the authority on integral philosophy and Indian yoga. I wish now to develop this subject a little further.

To use his own words,<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo saw the world of his time as "a huge cauldron of Medea into which all things are being cast, shredded into pieces, experimented on, combined and recombined either to perish and provide the scattered material of new forms or to emerge rejuvenated and changed for a fresh term of existence." He regarded Indian yoga as "one of the dynamic elements of the future of humanity" and saw it "emerging from its secret retreats in which it had taken refuge and seeking its place in the future sum of living human powers and utilities."

But just as "the multiplication of scientific processes has its disadvantages and tends to develop a victorious artificiality which overwhelms our natural human life under a load of machinery and to purchase certain forms of freedom and mastery at the price of increased servitude" so "the preoccupation with yogic processes and their exceptional results may have its disadvantages and losses. The yogin tends to draw away from the common existence and lose hold upon it; he tends to purchase wealth of spirit by an impoverishment of his human activities, the inner freedom by an outer death. If he gains God, he loses life, or if he turns his efforts outward to conquer life he is in danger of losing God." Therefore yoga must "rediscover" and "reorganise" itself and effect a "larger synthesis" so that it may enter "more easily and powerfully into the reorganised life of the race" and lead it to its highest development. The aim should be to "re-unite God and Nature in a liberated and perfected human life... for man is precisely that term and symbol of a higher existence descended into

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 1.

a material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the forms of the lower. To avoid the life which is given him for the realisation of that possibility can never be either the indispensable condition or the ultimate object of his supreme endeavour or of his most powerful means of self-fulfilment.”<sup>1</sup>

As a result of his spiritual experiences Sri Aurobindo delighted in life and was no advocate of abnegation and scarcity: he desired a “simply beautiful (i.e., not ostentatious or extravagant) life for all” and, on p. 10 of his work *The Synthesis of Yoga*, he shows that he was not against scientific and technological advances which had the “right preliminary aim”, viz., “a sound individual and social body and the satisfaction of the legitimate needs and demands of the material mind, sufficient ease, leisure and equal opportunity so that the whole of mankind and no longer the favoured race, class or individual may be free to develop the emotional and intellectual being to its full capacity ... *And when the preliminary conditions are satisfied, when the great endeavour has found its base* (my emphasis), what will be the nature of *that further possibility* which the activities of the intellectual life must serve?” (my italics)

This and other statements by Sri Aurobindo are of a kind on which a satisfactory economic and social policy could be built and can be interpreted to cover the same ground as those which I quoted previously from Major Douglas’s book *Economic Democracy* and from his address on ‘Social Credit Principles’. Near the end of *Economic Democracy* there is a passage which takes the matter still further, thus: “The policy suggested in the foregoing pages is *essentially and consciously* aimed at pointing the way, in so far as it is possible at this time, to a society based on the unfettered freedom of the individual to cooperate in a state of affairs in which community of interest and individual interest are merely different aspects of the same thing”—surely an integrating policy.

Sri Aurobindo’s background and his achievements in literature, philosophy and Indian yoga and his views on world policy are well known to readers of this journal: hence I need not dwell on them here. But, so far as I know, he did not attempt a detailed analysis of the world’s economic and financial systems or suggest specific adjustments. He evidently thought that these would come in due course as a result of a general awakening and enlightenment: there might be dark days before this happened but they would come eventually.

Douglas had a very different life. He was connected with the famous and distinguished Scottish family of that name and went to Cambridge University in the late 1890’s to study mathematics. After taking his degree he became an engineer and, by the beginning of World War I, he was near the top of his profession, having had experience in America, Argentina, India and England. During the war he became Assistant Director of the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, a very large and important government works, and was given the rank of Major. Here as in all

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.



government factories during the war careful accounts of expenditure were kept and there was considerable competition in efficiency between different establishments, *i.e.*, in achieving high production at low cost.

It became part of Major Douglas's duty to examine the costing of the various products of the factory. In the course of this work he found evidence which convinced him that "the present financial system does not provide enough purchasing power to buy the goods which industry produces". This condition is world-wide but is particularly true of countries which are heavily industrialised. He considered that this is "the central fact of the existing economic system and that, unless it is dealt with, no other reforms are of any use whatever." Further, "the fundamental defect of the financial system, as operated, is mathematical not political. The existing financial system is not a correct reflection of economic fact, as it should be, and is misleading and restrictive."

If we assume that the delivery of goods and services is the proper objective of the industrial system, it is obvious that "the rate of flow of purchasing power should be equal to the rate of generation of prices. The existing financial arrangements make a crude effort to approximate to this condition by issuing purchasing power to manufacturing organisations in the form of loans<sup>1</sup> which, in turn, the manufacturing organisations distribute in wages and salaries against future production. In other words, the existing financial system increasingly mortgages the future in order to sell the goods existing at present, the most recent form of this practice being the instalment system of buying. Since the financial system is in essence merely a book-keeping system the defect in it is obviously capable of adjustment."

Increases in wages are necessarily reflected in increased prices; hence they do not solve the problem. Also, "merely to endeavour to re-allocate the initially deficient amount of purchasing power by taxation, as at present, can only result in a serious curtailment of production": it discourages enterprise and does not increase total purchasing power.

There is, as Douglas pointed out, only one way of increasing purchasing power, namely, a realistic and proper application of credit. He was therefore at great pains to explain the nature of credit: *real credit* he defined as a correct estimate of the rate, or dynamic capacity, at which a community can deliver goods and services as demanded. *Financial Credit* is a device by which this capacity can be drawn upon. Real Credit is obviously a property of the community, individually and collectively and, even when Douglas wrote, he was able to argue that the problem of producing sufficient goods and services to satisfy all reasonable human needs had been solved. That was nearly fifty years ago and, since then, productive capacity has probably multiplied several times over through the increasing substitution of machine-power for man-power, the latest developments being automation and computerisation.

<sup>1</sup> Chiefly for capital goods, goods for export, armaments, &c., not purchased by individuals in the country of origin.

But financial credit, expressed as a flow of monetary purchasing power, particularly that available to individuals as distinct from institutions, has not reflected these physical developments. It has not permitted that good life which Sri Aurobindo prescribed in the paragraph quoted above. On the contrary, it has promoted intense competition in exports, leading to war, the manufacture of armaments, and projects of doubtful priority like space ventures which are of no immediate advantage to the poor and needy. Indeed in condemning the economic policies of leading industrial countries, and particularly that of the United States, the late Aldous Huxley said: "Without war and waste your economies would collapse."

Major Douglas's Social Credit proposals were designed to correct an economy about which such a terrible condemnation could be spoken. He claimed that the use of credit to reduce prices to consumers, while compensating producers, would benefit all concerned while, of his proposals for National Dividends, he wrote: "...remembering that a satisfactory financial system is simply a reflection in figures of a state of affairs alleged to exist in fact, or is, in other words, simply an accounting system, it is not difficult to understand that wages and salaries in relation to dividends ought to become increasingly unimportant. Production is far more dependent upon real capital than it is upon labour, although without labour there is no production. More and more the position of labour, using this word in its widest possible sense, tends to become a catalyst in an operation impossible without its presence, but carried on with a decreasing direct contribution from labour itself."

"Let us at this point...identify the community with the nation and, in so doing, be careful not to confuse administration with ownership. It ought not to be difficult to see that a situation which may truly be described as revolutionary is disclosed. In place of the relation of the individual to the nation being that of a taxpayer, it is easily seen to be that of a shareholder. Instead of paying for the doubtful privilege of being entitled to a particular brand of passport, its possession entitles him to draw a dividend, certain, and probably increasing, from the past and present efforts of the community of which he is a member....Having more leisure he is less likely to suffer from either individual or national nerve-strain, and having more time to meet his neighbours he can reasonably be expected to understand them more fully. Not being dependent upon a wage or salary for subsistence, he is under no necessity to suppress his individuality, with the result that his capacities are likely to *take new forms* of which we have so far little conception."

This brings us close to Sri Aurobindo and, perhaps, the following is still closer. In considering the rise and fall of civilisations Douglas wrote: "You may find an analogy to this state of affairs in the life history of many insects—the may-fly for instance. They are brought to a certain stage of development in water, but once that stage is reached they either escape into the air or are drowned. It is even probable that all life on this planet is compelled by the nature of things thus to change *on to a different plane* on pain of extinction."

T. N. MORRIS

## THE PROCESS OF GREAT POETRY

POETRY attains the highest excellence possible to it through a twofold process of super-normal perception.

In the first place, the poet, whether his vehicle of expression be the passionate life-gusto, the visionary thought-urge or the mystic *élan*, becomes a conscious power of self-identification with anything and everything. Our normal mind-stuff is being constantly moulded into sense-data and images. The sea beyond my window is caught by me through my mind-stuff taking a certain form representative of the object it contacts—a manifold form resulting from the various sense-instruments through which my mind-stuff works. When the object is not directly present, I can still recover its form by means of an image, a memory-representation. But both in immediate sensation and after-image, the form into which the consciousness is projected is something held as other than the very self of the knower: I do not feel one entity with the billows and, so long as I do not, I can only describe them in various general terms, scientific, practical, reflective, or aesthetic. If I go beyond this manner of experience and feel their nature with a strange intimacy as if for the time being we were not separate but somehow identified, I shall be knowing them by what psychologists call empathy or “in-feeling”. Total empathy is a rare phenomenon: what occurs more frequently is partial interfusion; and if at the interfused moment words could express my experience I should have at least the stuff of fine poetry: it would be as though the object sprang into eloquent self-awareness within me. If the awareness lived in a peculiar rhythm of subtly recurrent sound, I would have the pattern of fine poetry as well as its stuff. For poetic descriptions of a high value are based on various degrees of metrically rhythmmed empathy: genuine poetry can never come without at least a spark of it, since its function is to give us a vivid and harmonious intuition of things, a language which reveals their hidden modes and their vibrant laws of existence.

Thus Arnold seems to lay bare the very spirit of wide waters in a certain wasteful aspect, when he writes:

The unplumbed salt estranging sea,  
or Yeats in his equally empathic line:

The murderous innocence of the sea.  
Now, this faculty of blending one's self with an object in an intimate revealing way or with a psychological situation so as to catch the inner throb of its significance as done by the words and rhythm of Sri Aurobindo's exquisitely pathetic turn in an early narrative:

O my sweet flower!

Art thou too whelmed in this fierce wailing flood?—  
this intuitive faculty, however exercised, has its root in the fact that the world is at bottom one single consciousness in diverse states. Any given state is, of course, expe-

rienced by the poet not in its utter purity but in association with his own temperament and mood. Aeschylus, viewing the foam-flecked shine and leap of the Aegean, heard unlike Arnold and Yeats

The innumerable laughter of the waves.

All the same, the flash of knowledge and the shock of feeling by identity are there, a brief transcendence of outward limits in order to merge in some intimate awareness behind the veil, implying that below the surface demarcations all things exist as moments of one universal Spirit whose sudden point of contact provides the poet's language with the common base of self and consciousness necessary for experiencing from the inside what seems normally outside him and foreign to his own being.

A further indication of the universal Spirit is given by the resort to simile and metaphor, perhaps the most characteristic turn which poetic empathy takes. No doubt, all figurative language limps, because everything has its uniqueness as well as its resemblances to other things, but in a successful figurative phrase the poet packs his vision of the same essence in two different objects. William Watson, interpreting a seascape—

And I beheld the waters in their might  
Writhe as a serpent by some great spell curbed  
And foiled—

or Shakespeare expressing how the mast-climbing shipboy's eyes are sealed up in a drowse and his brain rocked

In cradle of the rude imperious surge

conveys to us an extremely vivid perception of the hidden sameness between phenomena that in ordinary appearance are unrelated; two experiences are intermingled, two objects reveal the same significance, the same reality, the same fundamental oneness. The world, to the poetic vision, is a splendid scheme of mutually interpretative symbols which can be caught by intuition's plunge beneath the superficial limits and separatenesses. Each time a fine simile or metaphor is found, the poet's soul becomes a fiery focus wherein some light of the world-spirit's underlying multiple unity is brought to conscious prominence.

Nor is this all that constitutes the sovereign poetic process. It is just one side, the outflow of what Chattopadhyaya recognises as

An elemental life deep down within.

The other is a mirroring of an absolute beauty in the elemental vision. The great poetic phrase does not photograph: it transmutes the external appearance by displaying to us on any level of awareness the concealed core of actuality; it opens in us eyes other than the physical, the immediately extravert; it brings out a power or a delicacy which is the central stuff of a thing, the central quality of a situation, and which partakes of some intrinsic beauty whose thrill is the true life of the universe. It brings out this miracle by carrying its vision in a word-form and a rhythm-movement that have a sense of utter and inevitable perfection: the vision glimmers in a body of significant sound which converts whatever it echoes of sublime or grotesque, blissful or

tragic, into a shape of loveliness irreproachable. There is an extreme of beauty felt in each true poetic creation, as though some divine archetype were embodied. The poetic insight into the common world-soul throws up interpretative values which have to be caught in a speech-form of ideal beauty: the proof of success is a certain completeness, a sheer aesthetic finality of expression. There is a hidden spiritual tone in all genuine inspiration, even though, on the surface, things ordinary are spoken of; but it is a tone which is conveyed through perfect aesthesis: the meaning is not directly mystical, only the art discloses by a complete and unimpeachable form of word and music some archimage, some high absolute vibration whose broken shadows and vague quivers we contact in the time-world. What impregnates a line of verse with its sovereign tone is this ultimate presence. The urge to release it in word-music is what made Keats write about his poetic moods: "There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of immortality."

One with a mystical bent of mind can disengage through the words and the rhythm of each fine poetic moment a Platonic ideality. The thought and the emotion deal with human or natural phenomena, but together with their overt appeal there can float to us, because of the utter perfection of form, a suggestion of transcendental values. I recollect how that line of Shakespeare's in which he speaks of wintry boughs—

Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang—

set me wondering with its flawless music what supreme beauty of chaste aloofness it was that had worn the disguise of those chill and empty branches while hinting itself through words so magical. Tennyson's

Let the wild

Lean-headed eagles yelp alone

moved me in an analogous way, though here the allusion seemed to be to some highest beauty of intense and solitary power shining out in a symbol of fierce remote bird-life. That vision of suttee—remarkably un-Hudibrastic—by Butler,

Like Indian widows gone to bed,

In flaming curtains, with the dead,

changed to a spectacular leap of *amor dei* through an all-exceeding and self-consuming human gesture; while the wooing cadences in which Christabel's preparation for night is traced,

Her gentle limbs did she undress

And lay down in her loveliness,

sounded to my imagination like a response to some exquisite Beyond of mystery. Seumas O'Sullivan's

And many rivers murmuring in the dark

came, again, *sub specie aeternitatis*—the evocative art filled the rivers and the murmuring and the dark with attributes above themselves, attributes of a plenary Creative Process by which some primeval chaos was vivified. When, however, I read in Wordsworth,

The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,  
 I had a sort of inner awakening as if the language struck with a direct breath of the transcendental, uplifting or in-drawing the imagination to a mystic rapture. I thought that this was the kind of poetry I myself would most desire to write because of the rarity of its rhythm as well as of its revelation and the satisfying glow it kindled in something that was the root and core of me and by means of which alone I had strained always to draw from the sense of absolute aesthesis a secret religion.

In general, the poetic process requires no direct mysticism. For the universal consciousness can be touched by any faculty in us and the Archetype set glowing the hues of a million moods. In art, beauty is all—though we must understand by the term a beauty of substance no less than of style if we are to have poetic passion at the highest pitch. Not substance of this particular kind or that, but a sufficient subtlety or weight of meaning mated with music. And the poet who would prove a master in his own psychological domain—life-desire, thought-thrill or spirit-surge—must see that poetry dives and soars beyond the labouring brain and that the more quick is the imaginative soul in him through a faithful self-consecration to his art, the larger the kingdom he will rule of magic sea and miraculous sky.

K. D. SETHNA

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## SING EVER, O SOUL!

THE gather'd treasure of the three wide worlds  
 Is nought save vacant dust coloured by Her breath,  
 The Life behind life at the roots of the universe,  
 The Truth behind the shining lid of truth.

Dazzled no more by the pale mortal suns,  
 Released from the dim muddy walls of sense,  
 Each level of the being lit by Her gleam  
 Exposes the shy murmuring guests of Time

To the fire-tongue of the blue solid flame;  
 And drunk with the god-milk of the splendid Name  
 Sing ever, O Soul!—out of the cage of dream—  
 Her Lotus Feet, the overflowing bright spirit-stream—

The song of the eternal's immaculate birth—  
 The unexpected dawn-gold divinising earth.

VENKATARANGA

# KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

## CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

(Continued from the issue of February 21)

### VII

#### THE WAY OF VIRTUE

As Rama stood moved by Lakshmana's boundless love, Sage Vasishtha arrived on the scene from the royal court. The two princes bowed to Vasishtha, who cast a look at them and their hermit weeds and plunged himself in grief.

He looked at their faces  
and into their minds;  
he looked at the golden shine  
of the tree-bark dress they wore;  
Stricken with grief,  
the self-possessed Saint,  
became self-forgetful.

Vasishtha wondered within himself, "How intriguing is the play of Destiny! An auspicious day was fixed to crown Rama the King of all the world. On the day he was to wear the crown and the golden accoutrement of Royalty, he stands draped in the skin peeled from trees!"

"On the propitious day  
fixed for the heralding of prosperity,  
Adversity arrives  
to clothe him in the bark of trees.  
Can Destiny, which encircles one,  
be kept at bay,  
were it even the Four-faced Brahma  
that is so encircled?"

Plucking up a little courage, Vasishtha, who comes close to Rama, tells him:

"If you leave for the region  
of the stately hills,

the one, who is lord  
 over the vast army of warriors,  
 will cease to live.”

By suggesting that Dasaratha would die if Rama left for the forest, Vasishtha made an oblique attempt to dissuade Rama from obeying the royal command. Rama scotched this attempt with a gentle admonition.

“It is my duty,  
 in reverence to the King,  
 to carry out his command.  
 To wipe out his grief  
 is your duty;  
 this is the way of Virtue, too.”  
 Thus spoke the One,  
 who had come down to the Earth,  
 from his couch  
 of the myriad-headed Cobra.

Whenever Kamban is moved by Rama's inflexible adherence to Virtue, he invariably emphasizes, for the benefit of the reader, the Avatarhood of Rama.

“My father did accede  
 to the boons;  
 my mother has issued  
 the command;  
 I have accepted the command  
 in reverential obedience.  
 Are you dissuading me,  
 O noble Sage?”  
 So asked the One,  
 who came down to install  
 the Eternal Verities.

Rama's rebuff silenced the Sage, who stood motionless, shedding tears. Rama saluted Vasishtha and moved on, towards the gateway in the high, gold-embedded walls of Dasaratha's palace.

Now the Poet shifts our attention to the grief-stricken citizens. “Why speak about the people's grief?” he asks. “For even the gods, who had requested the Lord to incarnate himself as Man and destroy the Rakshasas and who ought to have welcomed Rama, going to the forest for destroying their enemies, forgot their request and were immersed in grief.” It is by such subtle devices that Kamban unlocks that



magic door which opens out the commerce between Heaven and Earth.

#### AMBALS IN BLOOM

The next scene is placed in the courtyard of the palace. In the golden age of hereditary monarchy, the question of royal succession enjoyed uncommon importance and issueless kings felt constrained to marry numberless wives, primary and secondary. The primary wives enjoyed the status of queens, but the secondary wives did not.

Besides his three Queens, Dasaratha had sixty thousand wives, all of whom regarded Rama as their darling child. They rushed behind Rama across the palace courtyard.

The King's wives,  
 sixty thousand in number,  
 of spotless chastity  
 followed the young Prince,  
 with their eyes raining tears,  
 their hearts breaking down;  
 they sent up, like the wave-flinging Sea,  
 loud moans of lamentation.

Those women different from one another in beauty, grace and complexion—

Like a herd  
 of peacocks, *kuyils* and swans  
 which would droop down to the earth,  
 when deprived of their wings,  
 they fell down and,  
 in anguish, fluttered—  
 they, who had borne  
 no child but Rama  
 for the support  
 of their souls.

It is daytime now. Crimson Ambal flowers are nocturnal flowers which would blossom only in the dark. But now they seem to bloom even in daytime as the open-mouthed Princesses make their plaintive requests.

“Give us refuge,” they cried to Rama,  
 “we will follow you to the Jungle.”  
 And as they stood pitifully entreating their son  
 with their crimson mouths open,

the royal courtyard resembled a pond  
 in which  
 the Ambal flowers blossomed during day.

Like the great artist that he is, Kamban is fond of describing the beauty of women in agony, for in the selfless abandon of grief woman's beauty sheds its sophistication and receives an added charm.

Unmindful of the entreaties of the mothers, Rama walks through the palace gate and down the streets.

The One, who had gone in procession,  
 in the gem-studded chariot of gold,  
 to wear the glittering Crown,  
 goes down the street again,  
 clad in bark  
 of closely woven fibre.

The people, who see this pathetic sight, complain, "Our hearts don't break even after witnessing this cruelty. Harder than our hearts is our life. How obstinately does it stick to this body! And our health, how disgustingly sound it is!"

Our lives are stronger, indeed,  
 than our hearts,  
 which refuse to break asunder  
 after bearing witness  
 to the great betrayal  
 of our charming blue-black Prince;  
 Why say more?—  
 More tormenting than poison  
 is our Health."

"We lined the streets expecting Rama to feast our eyes with his crowned head. Now we find we came to see him off, unfeelingly, to the forest!"

"It is a sin to be born with eyes  
 in a country  
 where a savage woman rules."

Others speak in self-reproach:

"The hero, who has gained the Kingdom by right of birth  
 goes forth to dwell in the tiger-infested jungle.

Seeing this  
 we keep quiet  
 and, keeping quiet,  
 weep.  
 Funny, indeed, is our love!"

Some others direct their bitterness against Dasaratha:

"Fathers, replete with children,  
 lay their lives down  
 if they lose the cripple  
 of a child;  
 the King has a heart of iron,  
 who seeks  
 to keep his word  
 by seeing  
 a full-formed son  
 off to the woods."

#### WEeping VOICES

The women rolled on the ground in groups, like herds of exhausted deer, falling wounded by the hunter's shaft.

The poignancy of the scene invaded the homes. Stunned housewives ceased to perform their domestic chores; cooking stopped; women failed to bathe and to perfume their hair with incense; they turned indifferent to the needs of domestic pets and crying infants.

The kitchens lost their smoke;  
 the terraces lost  
 the incense of burning sandalwood;  
 cupfuls of milk the parrots lost;  
 the cradles lost  
 the rocking hands of women,  
 the babies squealing.

This is great drama-literature that makes the kitchen and the terrace, the milk-cup and the cradle, walk and talk.

Ayodhya's streets would be usually filled with song and merriment. But, now?

The sound of *mridangam*  
 ceased;

the stringed lutes  
 were hushed;  
 stilled was the noise  
 of the festive crowds;  
 with nothing  
 but weeping voices  
 the regal streets were filled.

How about the reactions of the enlightened Yogis, who had learnt to regard Time's vicissitudes with equanimity?

Why look at those men,  
     who, with broken hearts,  
         accept woe as a wage of sin  
 or at the others,  
     who submit to pleasure  
         as the result of their virtuous acts?  
 Even the Yogis  
     who look, with equal calm,  
         upon weal and woe  
 twisted in agony.

#### SITA WEARS THE REEDS

Rama went to the place of Sita, followed by hordes of such grief-stricken people.

The girl, who resembled a painted picture,  
     rose, startled,  
 as she saw Rama coming in,  
     attired in the incongruous attire of tree-barks  
 encircled by the dust-bathed figures  
     of weeping mothers, sages, priests and kings.

The mothers-in-law enfolded her  
 in their arms and sobbed  
 and bathed her in the fresh waters of their tears  
 and wailed;  
 the startled Sita, knowing not the cause  
 of all this distress,  
 looked at Rama, shedding copious tears  
 from her eyes.

With a body shivering like lightning  
 she said:  
 "Oh, wearer of the golden anklets!  
 Has anything  
 happened to our glorious King?  
 Else, why all this sorrow?"

Rama replied:  
 "My peerless brother  
 will rule the Kingdom.  
 Bearing the command of my parents both  
 I go to the woods today.  
 Grieve not, I will be back here."

Sita grieved not  
 that her darling  
 would go into exile  
 nor that he had lost  
 the sovereignty over the Earth;  
 but she sobbed  
 as her ears were pierced  
 by those heartless searing words:  
 "I part with you; grieve not."

Could she bear to hear  
 he would leave her behind  
 and go!—  
 the One,  
 who had, together with him,  
 left the Serpent-couch on the Milky Sea  
 and remained inseparate from him  
 even after he took birth in Ayodhya  
 to keep Virtue from going astray?

Sita thought:  
 "Holy indeed is his resolve  
 to obey the command  
 of father and mother.  
 But how dare he say  
 I should stay behind?"

As she dwelt upon his words again and again, she felt her life ebbing slowly away.

Rama tries to console her by saying that she cannot stand the forest heat. Sita retorts:

“With a mind without pity,  
without love,  
you wish to part.  
The ancient Sun would burn there, you say,  
but where?  
Can the huge forest burn hotter  
than your parting?”

The feelings of Sita cannot be expressed more movingly. “The Sun would burn me, no doubt, when you leave me behind, but not when I am with you. And separation will be hotter far than the tropical jungle.”

Rama was moved. He peered through her tears into the sea of grief that was raging within her mind. He was in a dilemma and he stood lost in thought. At that moment, Sita went into the inner chamber, audaciously put on a saree made of the bark of trees, came out and stood beside the Prince who was plunged in thought, and firmly clasped with her hand the long arm of Rama, which looked statelier than the palmyra tree.

Those, who saw the action of frail Sita, fell down on the ground and fainted.

Die they did not.  
Could they die—  
those who are fated to live?  
Even if Space and Time  
were to crack and crumble  
those, who are destined to survive,  
cannot but survive.

The despair of excessive grief is effectively brought out by the rhythmic beat of the original of this song.

In the Ramayana of Valmiki, Sita does not wear the hermit's weeds voluntarily but is forced by Kaikeyi to wear them. The coarseness of the garment shocks Sita, who trembles at the very sight of it 'like a deer trembling at the sight of a net cast to catch it.' She tearfully receives the garment from Kaikeyi and asks Rama in anguish, "How do the forest-dwelling Saints wear such coarse weeds?" Vasishta and Dasaratha curse Kaikeyi for her hard-hearted gift to Sita, but Kaikeyi turns a deaf ear to their curses. Kamban, on the contrary, makes Sita wear the coarse garment voluntarily and cheerfully and thereby lends dramatic finality to her resolve to follow Rama into exile.

## LOVE'S REBUFF

In contrast with the grief of the people was the smiling radiant face of Sita, who now felt happy and secure in the arms of Rama. Looking at that beaming face, Rama says:

“You have teeth so white  
 that they will vanquish  
 the *Mullai* flower and the marine pearl;  
 think you not  
 of consequences; you seem set  
 for starting.  
 Your following me  
 is fraught with endless trouble.”

Hearing these words, the one, whose voice is sweeter than the *kuyil*'s, flared up and said:

“Is this the only trouble  
 that afflicts you?  
 You will be merry, perhaps,  
 after deserting me!”

Rama could find no rejoinder to this biting sarcasm. Dumbfounded, he came out into the street, wading with difficulty through the milling crowd, followed by Sita draped in the hermit's weeds and preceded by Lakshmana holding a stout bow in his hand.

The people, who saw this spectacle, realized that the inevitable could not be prevented. They stopped weeping; they clustered together and declared, “We will go to the forest ahead of Rama.” Making a deafening noise they went behind him.

As Rama went along the street past the gate of Dasaratha's palace, he looked up at the sorrowing Queens, saluted them and appealed to them to comfort the old King. Hearing this gracious appeal, the Queens fainted and fell down. They eulogized the bravery of Rama and Sita and showered their best wishes on Lakshmana. “Protect them, oh gods!” they shouted till their tongues became thick with shouting.

## DEPARTURE FOR THE WOODS

Taking leave of the Queens and saluting Sage Vasishta, who stood in front of him, Rama mounted a chariot along with his beloved brother and his lotus-dwelling consort and drove away.

Whoever did not leave  
 with the leaving Prince—  
 except  
 the vast Army  
 and the numerous wives,  
 who could not leave Dasaratha,  
 and except, of course,  
 Ayodhya's statues,  
 which could not leave  
 for lack of life?

It was sunset when Rama started for the jungle. The light of the setting Sun was lingering awhile on the hill-tops in the West and slowly slipping out of sight. Herds of cows and buffaloes were plodding homeward. The pale stars got a chance to exhibit their lustre in the sky as the Sun went down.

Daylight stepped aside  
 that the Stars might shine with lustre;  
 with the homing buffaloes and cows,  
 the Sun rushed home amidst the western hills,  
 as if speeding to hide his face in the rocks  
 and saying,  
 "No, I cannot bear the sight  
 of Rama's going into the woods."

In the eyes of Kamban, Nature is a conscious participant in the human drama, not an indifferent mass of inanimation. Then came the hazy twilight and then the night.

As Evening's dim light  
 departed,  
 the Earth, bereft of her splendid gold,  
 darkened,  
 darker than the mind  
 of peerless Kekaya's daughter,  
 muddied with the poison  
 of Mandarai's speech.

Rama drove about 20 miles from Ayodhya and reached a fragrant grove, where he alighted for the night. As he was conversing with the Rishis in that grove, a dense circle of citizens, ten miles in diameter, converged on the bird-filled grove and covered its outside as if with a blanket. They settled themselves down on river beds studded



with colourful stones, on gradually rising sand slopes, on the green grass, on every available patch of land. They did not open their mouths to eat; nor did they close their eyes to sleep; they choked and wept.

### THE SLEEPING BEAUTIES

The women were lying on the ground in lovely clusters. Each bright face with its pair of closed eyes resembled an open lotus blossom with two blue-bell buds embedded in it. They wore sarees woven as if out of milk-foam and, keeping part of the sarees tucked up as pillows under their heads, they slept like tender yaks with their outspread hair transmitting a sweet perfume in the forest air. It would be blasphemy to translate this song, which, in the vividness of its colour-words and the ravishing music of its rhythm, is a miracle of poesy. For the benefit of the curious, the original is reproduced below:

வாவி விரி  
 தாம ரையின்  
 மாம லரில்  
 வா சக்  
 காவி விரி  
 நாள்ம லர்  
 முகீழ்த னைய  
 கண் னூர்  
 ஆவி விரி  
 பால்நு ரையின்  
 ஆடை அணை  
 யா க  
 நாவி விரி  
 கூழை இள  
 நவ்வி யர்  
 துயின் றூர்

Some of the women lay twirling in their sleep, like creepers of faded beauty, trembling around *champak* trees. The others with their breasts, just the size of their blouses, slumbered like red coral creepers put forth by the sandy tracts. While engrossed in these unhurried descriptions of the sleeping beauties, Kamban is utterly unobsessed by the stupendous task that lies ahead of him, the task of putting into poetry the rest of the long epic. It is this capacity of Kamban for undistracted absorption in the Eternal Now that gives to his poetry a deep spiritual quality. An intense exposure to such poetry arrests the wavering mind and gives it a ballast and a mooring.

As the crowd started sleeping, the unsleeping Rama called Minister Sumantra, who had driven him here, and told him, "You have to do something more for me. It is difficult to coax these loving folk to go back and it is cruel for me to go away, leaving them here. Please take the chariot back to Ayodhya straightaway. When they wake up, these citizens will see the wheel-prints of the Chariot and, thinking I have gone back to Ayodhya, they will return, too. This is my request to you."

#### THE AMBASSADOR OF DEATH

It is easy for Rama to make this request but hard for Sumantra to carry it out. How is he to face Dasaratha? He asks:

"Am I to tell him  
 I have launched the Darling Prince upon the forest of flowers  
 followed by his consort and brother?  
 Or am I to tell him  
 that I have brought the Prince  
 back to the King?  
 With what words  
 can this iron-hearted one  
 face the King?  
 Am I to tell him  
 that, like the ancient friend that I am,  
 I have left behind  
 On rugged ground  
 his warrior sons,  
 along with that jacketed peacock,  
 whose feet are too tender  
 to walk unhurt on a bed of flowers!  
 And that I have returned  
 unhurt, intact,  
 and in a chariot?"

"This stone-hearted, unfeeling  
 wicked man—  
 Is he  
 to tell the King  
 (whose bones are crumbling in despair)  
 something worthy of your nobility?  
 Or is he  
 to accost him  
 as the Ambassador of Death?"

Am I to go  
 and tell him,  
 'Gone is the lion,  
 born of your loins,  
 as a result of endless penance'?  
 If I tell him so,  
 Kekaya's daughter will appear  
 to our King  
 sweeter far than me."

With these moving words Sumantra fell down at the feet of Rama and rolled and lamented. At once Rama lifted up Sumantra with his strong hands, embraced him, wiped the tears off his eyes and made him sit by his side and spoke to him. The Poet, who is moved by the tenderness of Rama, whispers into our ears,

Thus spoke the One,  
 who is inaccessible  
 save to the Cosmic Consciousness of those  
 who have mastered the Senses Five  
 and gone beyond the internal faculties of the Mind.

Rama tells Sumantra how he has to face the prospect of going back empty-handed to Ayodhya.

"Involvement in human birth  
 means  
 involvement in the consequences of birth.  
 You have a heart so pure  
 that you can see things straight and whole;  
 whilst infamy approaches you from without  
 and you have to suffer it, unshared,  
 would you forget Duty  
 because of the anguish it brings?"

In loving reproof, Rama adds:

"Virtue establishes at first your Fame  
 and, as you mature in Virtue,  
 it brings you joy eternal.  
 Would you conform to Virtue  
 if it produces pleasure  
 and renounce it  
 if it produces pain?"

“Going to the forest may be fraught with perils but that is no reason why a courageous hero like you should expect me to give up my duty and bring infamy to the long line of my royal ancestors who have never strayed from Virtue.”

“The King uses Truth as a lever  
for accomplishing great things.  
To send his beloved son into the forest  
is a mark of his uncommon *tapas*;  
that I should revere his command  
and go into exile  
is a mark of my *tapas*.  
Grieve not, Sir,  
on this account.  
Tell the King—that rider of mighty elephants—  
that he should not lose heart,  
that I will be back at his feet  
after whiling away the twice-seven years;  
then you must cause the blessed sage, Vasishta  
to comfort the King with his words.”

Lastly, Rama requests Sumantra to convey his regards to his three mothers and to give solace to Bharata.

“Convey my hearty salutations  
to the three mothers  
who have given birth to me;  
wipe out the sorrow of Prince Bharata  
and be constantly by his side.”

This amazing compassion of Rama moves the Poet to exclaim:

So said the One,  
    who, hiding from the Scriptures,  
took to dwelling in the woods.

The idea of Kamban is that mere theological learning is a hindrance to the discovery of Reality. Such learning merely thickens the ego of Man and puts Reality at a greater distance from him. The more we burrow into the Scriptures, the more perplexed we become about the nature of Reality. God, therefore, decided, for the benefit of Man, to quit the Scriptures and to give more convincing proof of Himself by going into the woods. And how does going into the woods demonstrate to Man the reality of God?

In the artificial city the handiwork of Man is more in evidence than that of God. Man becomes drunk with his egotistic powers as he sees in the city the glory of his achievements. But, when Man leaves the city and goes out into the forests and mountains and sees stately trees with myriad-tinted leaves or wild cascades flowing down the hills, he feels humbled, forgets the achievements of his own ego and is overpowered by the unseen Presence of God. As a visit to the wilderness turns the mind of Man from his own Ego to God, Kamban justly says that God hides himself from the Scriptures and chooses to dwell in the woods.

This profound sentiment crosses the mind of the Poet as Rama (the Incarnate God) has discarded the city of Ayodhya and is about to go deeper into the forest. The request made by Rama to Sumantra to stand by Bharata and console him is so refreshingly free from the pettiness and envy we associate with human nature that Kamban makes this memorable exclamation so that the reader may notice this existential proof of the divinity of Rama—"So said the One, who, hiding from the Scriptures, took to dwelling in the woods." The whole sublimity of the passage derives from the weight of passionate insight thrown into it. This is not cleverness or artifice, but genius.

#### THE MYNA AND THE PARROT.

After listening to the words of Rama, Sumantra gets the moral courage to pursue the path of bitter duty. He turns now to Sita, who is looking forward to a joyous future in the forest. She tells Sumantra, "Convey first my regards to the King and my mothers-in-law. Then tell my loving sisters to carefully nurse my golden *Mynah* and parrot." Sumantra was moved by this child-like request of the simple unsophisticated Sita, who had known no sorrow and who had not the slightest notion of the rigours and perils of forest life. As he thinks of her pathetic innocence, Sumantra breaks into tears. Sita wonders if she has given offence to Sumantra. She muses, "I merely said the birds must be looked after. Why should he weep?" Though she could not divine the reason for his tears, she started weeping.

Sumantra wept,  
Unweeping Sita wept, too,  
over his undisclosed grief.

#### LAKSHMANA'S MESSAGE

Sumantra now turns to Lakshmana and asks him if he has any message for the King. Lakshmana is provoked by the reference to the King.

He says:  
"Can he still be called the King—  
the 'truthful' one,  
who plighted the Crown to my Rama

and, diverting it,  
handed it over  
to that woman of perfumed curls?

“Tell that unlying King  
who gormandizes  
whilst his son eats unripe fruits in the wilderness,  
tell him  
of that stubborn strength of mine  
which keeps my soul sticking to this flesh  
without letting it fly heavenward.”

In the same tone of devastating sarcasm, Lakshmana asks Sumantra to deliver the following message to Bharata, the prospective king:

“Tell ‘King’ Bharata,  
whose sword was born as twin brother to lightning,  
tell him  
that I am born as brother  
neither to King Rama  
nor to him who has grabbed the Kingdom  
and is ruling it,  
nor to Satrugna, my younger brother.  
Tell him I am born brother to my lone self  
and that I am hale and hearty.”

Hearing these words, Rama told Laskshmana, “Brother, do not utter words which are improper.” With a quaking heart, Sumantra prostrated himself before Rama and went towards his chariot. It was difficult for him to part with Rama. He paused and paused again. He slowly collected the horse and the chariot and, collecting, he slowly harnessed the horse to the chariot and, harnessing, he signalled to the horse in the direction of Ayodhya and, signalling, he drove the chariot with such deft softness that none of the sleeping citizens was awakened by the sound of its movement. His bewilderment and his slow-moving reluctance and hesitancy and his noiseless departure are skillfully reflected in the metre and rhythm employed by the Poet.

#### THE GODLY MOON

Leaving the sleeping legion of citizens, Rama takes this opportunity of going farther into the jungle. It is pitch dark now and who accompanies Rama into the dark? The Poet says:

The chastity of Sita,  
 the manliness of his own Virtue,  
 and his younger brother and the bow—  
 these were the protective armoury  
 that escorted this Earth-descended Grace,  
 as he launched out into the darkness of the Night.

As the three groped forward, the darkness seemed to have an obstructive solidity about it; it seemed to collude with the Rakshasas, the friends of Evil and, out of friendship for them, to obstruct the march of the trio. It is by such whispered intimations that Kamban suggests the impending confrontation between Good and Evil.

Out of the darkness comes now the Moon.  
 Driving  
 the ink-drenched darkness out,  
 came the Godly Moon,  
 as if the Sky, lighting a lantern,  
 had lifted it up with its hands.

In some subtle way the Poet involves the reader in this pilgrimage through the darkness and the ensuing crusade against Evil. Kamban expresses our sense of sudden relief and gratitude by calling the timely Moon "Godly." In the whole epic we get a continual consciousness of eternal law and order and good.

As the Moon breaks through the Night, the Poet gives a verbal silhouette of the three figures moving in the moonlight. Rama moves like a black-washed hill. Lakshmana is like a hill having the same contours but plated with gold. The play of moonlight on the ground is so soft that the Moon would appear to have spread out filaments of whitest cotton in order that the tender feet of Sita might tread the forest unhurt. Leaving the three in these gay idyllic surroundings, Kamban takes us along with Sumantra to the poignant scenes in Ayodhya.

*(To be continued)*

S. MAHARAJAN

## ON THE SHORE OF SUPERMANHOOD

AWAKE, my mind, in this holy place of pilgrimage.  
on the shore of supermanhood  
that is India.

Here do I stand with arms outstretched  
to hail Man Divine  
and sing his glory in notes glad and free.

These mountains rapt in meditation,  
these plains with rivers like rosaries,  
behold this earth for ever holy—  
on the shore of supermanhood  
that is India.

No one knows whence and at whose call  
came pouring endless waves of men  
rushing wildly along—  
to lose themselves in the Sea;  
Aryans and non-Aryans, Dravidians and Chinese,  
Scythians, Huns, Pathans and Moghuls—  
all have merged and lost themselves in one body.  
Now the West has opened her doors  
and with gifts in hand they come—  
they will give and take, meet and unite,  
none shall turn back or be turned away  
from the shore of supermanhood  
that is India.

In this land did once ring the unceasing hymn  
to the One, the primal source and wonder of creation,  
the music of many hearts mingling  
in that single harmony.  
Open the vision once more,  
of the sacred flame, the spirit's endless endeavour,  
and gather again  
on the shore of supermanhood  
that is India.



Then welcome pain, welcome anguish  
to make us united once again,  
free of fear, free of shame.  
This agony shall end  
and the spirit, vast and boundless, be reborn,  
and the Mother awake in her spacious abode  
on the shore of supermanhood  
that is India.

Come, ye Aryan, come non-Aryan,  
Hindu, Muslim, come,  
come ye English, come ye Christians,  
come Brahmin, cleanse your mind  
and hold others by the hand,  
come ye outcastes, come ye lowly,  
fling away the load of shame!  
Fill the sacred bowl and let all unite  
and consecrate the waters  
on the shore of supermanhood  
in India.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*(Translated by Sisir Kumar Ghose from the Bengali)*

# FASTER-THAN-LIGHT PARTICLES

## I. An American Report

FOR Columbia University Physicist Gerald Feinberg, the monthly magazine *Fantasy and Science Fiction* is as compelling as any learned scientific journal. It has printed a continuing debate between Authors Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke over the existence of a particle that travels faster than light. "Impossible, that's all," Asimov insisted in 1967. "Possible, that's all," retorted Clarke in a recent issue. Feinberg's fascination is understandable. The particle is his conception although he is still not certain that it really exists.

Feinberg has long felt frustrated by Einstein's 1905 conclusion that velocities greater than the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) are absolutely impossible. Such speeds must be approached before man will ever be able to travel to distant stars, and Feinberg says that he does not "like the thought of being permanently confined by limited velocities to a small region around our solar system."

Spurred on by the hemmed-in feeling, Feinberg brazenly began questioning the inviolable Einsteinian speed limit more than a decade ago. But no matter how he analyzed the set of mathematical equations that define relativity, he could not escape the conclusion that matter cannot be accelerated to the speed of light, to say nothing of higher velocities. The equations showed that at the velocity of light the mass and energy of any ordinary particle would become infinite—a clearly impossible situation. Beyond it, his mathematics suggested, the mass and energy of the particle can only be represented by the kind of number that mathematicians call imaginary<sup>1</sup>—also an inconceivable state of affairs.

Feinberg was unable to get around this mathematical road block until he was struck by an ingenious idea. If mass becomes imaginary at high velocities, why not see what happens when an imaginary number is substituted for mass at rest? When he made the substitution, he was able to derive a real number for the energy of a particle travelling above the speed of light. Translating this concept into physical terms, Feinberg conjured up a strange particle that seemed to exist only on the other side of the speed-of-light barrier; it could move at velocities greater than 186,000 m.p.s. but never at that speed or slower. Thus, because it could never stop, its rest mass was irrelevant and could indeed be an imaginary number.

According to the relativity equations, that "tachyon" (a name that Feinberg coined from the Greek word for "swift") should have other strange characteristics. Unlike familiar particles, which gain mass and energy as they accelerate toward the speed of light, Feinberg's particle would lose mass and energy as it accelerated beyond

<sup>1</sup> Any multiple of the square root of minus one.

the light barrier. At infinite speeds it would theoretically have no mass or energy at all. Like a plane going faster than the speed of sound, a tachyon with an electrical charge would generate a "light boom" as it travelled faster than 186,000 m.p.s. The boom would take the form of visible light that might well be detectable.

With these characteristics in mind, researchers in Sweden, at Princeton and at Indiana State University have been working on a variety of complex experiments designed to detect tachyons—so far without success. Feinberg himself has suggested a massive, computer-aided survey of existing bubble-chamber pictures of particle collision, hoping that someone may find a pattern that will confirm the presence of tachyons.

If tachyons are some day found—and somehow harnessed—Feinberg's dreamed-of trip to the distant stars may yet be possible. The Einstein barrier to higher speeds would still be unbreakable by man and his space craft, but with their unbelievable speeds, the particles could serve to accelerate men closer to the velocity of light.

(*Time*, The Weekly Newsmagazine, February 14, pp. 52-3)

## 2. An Indian Report

On a quiet street in suburban Syracuse lives an Indian-born physicist whose favourite limerick contains the frivolous lines:

There was a lady named Bright  
 Who travelled faster than light.  
 She took off one day  
 In a relative way  
 And came back on the previous night!

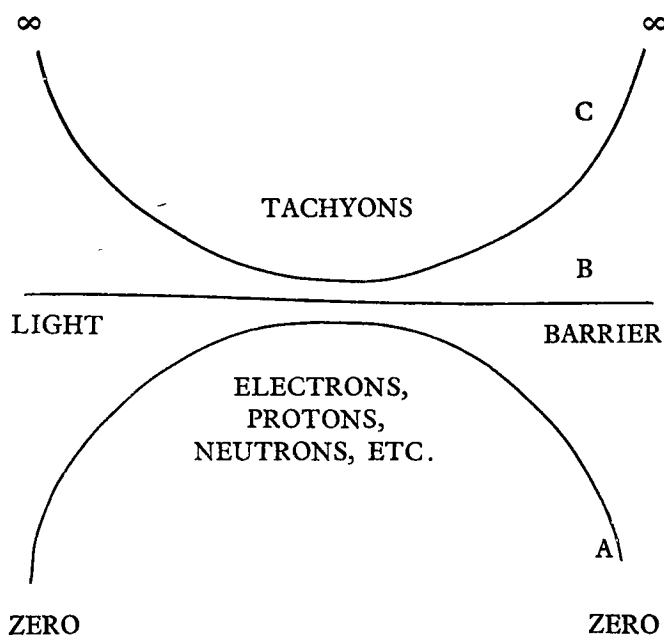
Joking apart, this is precisely what the young lady may very well be able to accomplish one day if laboratory experiments now in progress in several countries succeed in locating the faster-than-light particles which Dr. E. C. G. Sudarshan, one of the pioneers in elementary particles physics, has, in theory, proved exists.

In brief, what Dr. Sudarshan has postulated is this: The universe, as we know it to-day, is composed of two kinds of known particles. In Class One belong all those objects which are at rest or in motion (a lazy man lounging in an easy chair, or an electron or proton) but which have one common characteristic: none of them can attain the speed of light (186,000 miles per second). Class Two is a more exclusive club and its members are photons (the particles of light) and the elusive neutrinos. They travel exactly at the speed of light and can neither be accelerated or decelerated without our destroying them.

Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity sought to establish that in the universe there can be nothing which can exceed the speed of light. And scientists have since then accepted the fact that there is a "light barrier" which nothing can crash past.

Dr. Sudarshan (like other physicists since he formulated his theory) believes

that there must be a third class of particles which not only travel faster than light but are incapable of travelling at or below the speed of light. These particles, in fact, lie on the other side of the light barrier. Dr. Sudarshan and his colleagues have named them tachyons (Greek for swift) and they claim that these have no upper speed limit—they can attain infinite speed. Their existence and behaviour pattern is vouched for by at least two unwritten principles of science (though they are not the only grounds on which the claim is held valid). One is that in physics anything which is not prohibited is compulsory. The other is that symmetry is inherent in nature at the most fundamental levels. The following diagrammatic representation of the three kinds of particles illustrates the dialectic:



Curve A shows Class One particles whose speeds range from zero to speeds below that of light. Line B shows the constant speed at which photons travel. And curve C shows the path of tachyons which always travel above the speed of light and whose upper limit is infinity.

Dr. Sudarshan and his contemporaries have not set out to prove that Einstein's theory is wrong. What they have done is to show that that very theory provides the justification for their own hypothesis that there are particles which travel faster than light.

Einstein held that Class One particles, as they gained speed, also gained energy and mass. As they approached the speed of light, through acceleration their energy and mass reached infinity—and thus they were precluded from crossing the light barrier. Dr. Sudarshan says that this was not meant to apply to objects which are already and always travelling faster than light. They have characteristics exactly opposite to those of Class One particles—as they gain speed tachyons lose energy and eventually reach a transcendent state where they have zero energy and infinite speed. When this occurs a tachyon could seem, to an observer, to be reaching its destination before starting for it (like the lady in the limerick). One could quite conceivably travel backwards in time.

If, indeed, such superphotic particles can be located physically (for all we know the world may be crisscrossed by them, says Dr. Sudarshan) it has striking practical applications. At the least they would enable man to communicate not only with other solar systems (there are 200 billion of them in our own Milky Way galaxy) but even with other galaxies (of which there are several trillions). At man's imaginative best he might be able to harness the tachyon to his space rocket engine and travel to other earths in the universe. Even communication with these far reaches are now out of man's grasp because of the light barrier.

Alpha Centauri, our nearest star, is four light years away. This means that if we were able to ride a beam of light (the fastest thing we have to-day) it will take us eight years to get there and back. If our ambition, however, was to get to a star in the more distant galaxy called the Whirlpool Nebulae, it would take us twelve trillion years merely to transmit and receive back a message using light or radio waves. Some of the more remote galaxies in the expanding universe will always remain unseen and unknown by us because they are flying away from us at speeds approaching those of light itself. Light waves from them will never reach us.

But, says Dr. Sudarshan, with tachyons existing, this need no longer be true. "In fact, it is almost imperative that such faster-than-light particles exist, since, otherwise, such a lot of the universe will remain unknown to us. After all, our optical and radio astronomy studies should be properly considered as galactic archaeology and cosmic palaeontology! What we see in the heavens to-day is what existed long ago. In the primitive state of cosmology this hardly matters, but it is an exciting possibility that we may be able to study the universe as it is! Instantaneous transmission of impulses, which tachyons are capable of, could make this possible."

Dr. Sudarshan, with whom I had a talk at his home in Syracuse (by a strange coincidence his house stands in an avenue named after another pioneer in mathematics, Euclid) is not unaware of the science-fiction-like nature of his discovery. He was quite amused recently to find that a space fiction magazine had indeed included an article about his theory in an issue otherwise devoted to ghoulish tales about space travellers.

It took Dr. Sudarshan several years to make his theory seem respectable to other scientists. He recalled, for instance, how, when he first submitted a paper on it to a

learned physics journal, its editor returned it with the note that the expert to whom it had been sent for advisory opinion had said it was absolutely not feasible. "I sent the article back to the editor suggesting that he consult another independent expert, but he, as well as a third critic, concurred with the opinion of the first man, I then sat down and rewrote the thesis, but this time, after outlining the theory, I myself adduced reasons why it may not be feasible. The article was published." Thus, by questioning its validity himself he was able to find a scientific audience for his theory. That was several years ago. Today physicists are actively hunting for the tachyons that Dr. Sudarshan first indicated exist.

EASWAR SAGAR

(*The Hindu*, "Weekly Magazine", February 23, 1969, p. 1)

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## DISENTRENCH ME, O MOTHER!

DEEP-hushed, self-wrapped my statted lonely hours  
 Have grown unending stabbings in my heart;  
 Haunted by the Ideal's unwon dream-powers,  
 Wordless my deepening recesses smart.

A shadowing light has ever driven me ahead,  
 A luminous Power goads my conscious days,  
 An irresistible deep call has led and led  
 My spirit to Her through all mortality's maze.

I've been a victim of Her ruthless Love,  
 A bearer yoked to unbearable agonies,  
 Entrenched in body, I flutter for Her move,  
 Instancy-seized, soul-gripped that body be bliss.

Self-giving, waiting, trusting do not go waste,  
 For She does have her own zero-hour of haste.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## GIFTS OF GRACE

(Continued from the issue of February 21)

### DESCENT OF THE MOTHER'S FORCE

As stated before, in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga all depends upon the opening and ripeness of the *ādhār*. Here the work of the Guru is not over, as is commonly done elsewhere, with imparting a *mantra* to the aspirant. It is our feeling that the Mother pours Herself into us and does the sadhana for us provided we allow Her and are surrendered in our attitude.

Once I heard a voice, "You are possessed by the Mother's Force and it is Her Force that is doing the sadhana."

When I referred the above to the Master on September 1, 1936 the reply came: "Yes. It is certainly the Mother's Force that is doing the sadhana."

An important turning came to my sadhana with the descent of the Mother's Force.

It had begun when I was at P's place just after my first visit to the Ashram. I use the word "descent" because Sri Aurobindo used the word in reply to my letters. One of them runs: "It is an experience of descent of the Force into the mind with the lightness of the physical body-consciousness as a result. It is not symbolic." (25.7.1936)

I had not even heard the word "descent" at the time nor did I know what it signified.

The morning hours I used to spend in *Pūjā* (devotional pursuits) or repetition of the name of the Lord without moving the tongue. This helped me to get absorbed in no time. When I was unable to do so I read the life-stories of saints. It served to inflame my aspiration. At times tears streamed from my eyes while invoking the Mother. This was followed by meditation.

One day during a deep meditation, the inner being felt a shock while the outer lay immobile. Though one part was shaken as if by a strong blast, the other part welcomed it.

In regard to one such experience, the Master wrote:

"It is simply that some part of the nature has come up which is not yet open to the descent. The fear of it is common to these lower vital and physical—so it must be something there. Aspire for the opening of this part.

"There should have been nothing horrifying in this last experience. It meant only a descent into the subconscious physical plane but under very favourable conditions, descent of light, not into obscurity. A tempest also may mean only a movement of inner change, the action of Indra, the Maruts to clear the atmosphere of the

Vritra forces. Whatever the experiences, the fear or alarm should always be rejected.”

So long as I was in X's place I suffered from pain all over the body as an after-effect of the descent, but gradually the experience proved less and less shocking.

Every experience of the descent brought spontaneous and blissful meditation for days together; hence despite the shocking experience again and again there rose an aspiration for the return of the descent.

The first few months of my permanent stay were dull. I feared how I should pass all my life in a world which was confined to the Ashram and to my room. Very few of us liked to go even to the seaside or market. The same food, the same environments, all this made life so monotonous.

Those were the days when the Mother did not like that people having taken up the sadhana should come in contact with the outside world. Once an I.C.S. man wanted to take one of us to show how things were done outside but the Mother is reported to have said that she did not allow her people to go out.

There were only a few who kept contact with their families and others. I too, for six years, did not write a line to anyone of my family.

The freedom that is allowed here is hardly seen elsewhere in a similar institution but not at the cost of discipline. All have to obtain permission to visit the Ashram unless one's connection with the Mother has grown so intimate that he has become one of us. My family waited for years for favour of permission. I also thought that if children were brought up in the Ashram atmosphere nothing could be better for them. I prayed for permission many a time, but to no avail.

Then I had the thought of leaving everything about my family in the hands of the Mother. She only knows where lies their good as well as mine.

Having lost all hope, they came in 1945 without permission. I got almost un-nerved. The Ashram had just been flung open for children, especially of the Ashramites.

With a beating heart I broke the news of the arrival of my family to the Mother. She gave me a benign touch and a blessing flower and, to my pleasant surprise, did not say, "They must leave the Ashram." Gradually all arrangements were made and later four rooms were constructed on the second floor of a house for their comfortable stay. This was one of my first lessons of reliance.

We, Ashramites, did not like to do anything which we sensed the Mother might not like, not even taking medicine. My wife had been suffering from pain in the knee for long. A doctor had come from Bombay with a friend of mine. The latter suggested, "Why not get her treated by the Bombay doctor?" I hesitated. Straight-away I went to the Mother. Perhaps she did not like my putting the question and said, "I don't know." Without the Mother's permission I did not feel like getting my wife treated by an outside doctor. Then the Mother said: "Doctors prescribe penicillin. And I don't like the injection of penicillin."<sup>1</sup> There ended the matter.

<sup>1</sup> The disapproval of penicillin here cannot be made a rule for all time. All cases are not the same for the Mother.



It was the descent of the Yogic Force, I repeat, that made my stay in the Ashram possible and pleasant despite terrible attacks of iritis and rheumatic pain. We shall have occasion to revert to the subject. After a six months' stay, I wrote to the Master about two experiences:

QUESTION: For three or four days I have been feeling a kind of peaceful rest in the hands and feet giving a soothing comfort, more especially in the feet. But other parts remain unaffected. Is it due to the touch of peace in the physical?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

QUESTION: After a strong descent the power slowly seemed to pass into the waist and a portion of the back without any resistance. Was it a going into the inner lower vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

Regarding the soothing effect, Sri Aurobindo says: "(It) ...was a touch from the psychic—one of the touches that prepare the opening of the psychic with its gift of inner peace, love and joy."<sup>1</sup>

As time passed the descent happened more frequently and its duration was longer and longer. Its intensity also increased according to my capacity to receive. It happened mostly at night before I fell asleep or at dead of night.

At times I heard a roaring noise while in sleep as if of railway wagons rolling down from a mountainous height or of a heavy shower pouring with terrible force. Many a time I saw myself flying in the air with my limbs outstretched like the wings of a bird. The subtle body would soar high like an arrow shot from a bow. It was not a momentary vision, but a concrete experience.

I quote two of Sri Aurobindo's remarks about the flying.

"The rising to the sky means the connection of the physical with the spiritual."  
(19.8.1936)

"The flying up was, I suppose, the ascent of the mental being to move in the higher planes."

To X the Master had written on 10.9.1933:

"When anything of the higher consciousness descends, it works to change the lower consciousness into a part of itself."

As regards the result of descents he writes:

"Whenever there is a descent of the higher consciousness in the *ādhār*:

- 1) Part of it is stored up in the frontal consciousness and remains there.
- 2) Part of it goes behind and remains as a support to the active part of the being
- 3) Part flows out into the universal Nature.
- 4) Part is absorbed by the inconscient and lost to the individual consciousness and its action."

The following two experiences with the Master's observations may prove of some interest.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother*, p 38.

QUESTION: Today while meditating I saw a huge circle with myself as a point in it. I could not merge myself into it but seemed to be maintaining my separateness. A little after, I saw a very wide luminous space. At a distance it seemed the Ganges was flowing. Does it all indicate anything?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is again an image of the higher consciousness in its wideness. The Ganges is the symbol of the descent of the waters of the Truth and Light. (29.9.1936)

QUESTION: The part below the navel disappeared and the space was filled by a tub which was itself made of white light.

SRI AUROBINDO: A communication or conduit in the consciousness through the higher parts (mind and heart) for the descent of the higher consciousness. The year 1935 opened with some fateful experiences which Sri Aurobindo explained:

“Red is the physical—white-blue is Sri Aurobindo’s light—so it means that the Mother was bringing down Sri Aurobindo’s Light of Consciousness in the physical (centre).

“The crystal white moon is spirituality—it became red by descending into the earth. The ditch of water is the vital material. You rose towards that spiritual light and then came down with it into the vital material.

“Pure yellow means mental light. Yellow light in the sex centre means that it is being mentalised so that it is no longer to be an irrational impulse but ready to be transformed into a source of *ojas* or power.”

QUESTION: What would be the result of mentalisation of the physical parts?

SRI AUROBINDO: It prepares them for something higher than mentalisation. The physical parts unmentalised are blind and dark—mind is an intermediate enlightenment between this blindness and the spiritual Consciousness. (4.1.1935) And the year closed with the following interchanges. The first was after the experience of an “attack” which was met by a saving voice.

QUESTION: Can it be said that the Mother’s Force has taken the charge of my sadhana?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is doing so increasingly

Yes. Such attacks very often take place and the way to meet them is that indicated in the experience itself. One should drive out all fear and apprehension and call to the Mother. The voice came from the psychic.

QUESTION: What does this widening into the sky, the akash, show? Some touch from beyond the individual existence?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, very usually when one enters into the Cosmic Consciousness, momentarily or permanently, one has this feeling of being one with the akash, a subtle existence spread through or identical with the akash and the feeling of the head or the body as a whole does not exist or exists only as a principle, something attached to this subtle self.

On some other experiences the comments were:

“It is the body consciousness turning from its all-engrossing insistence on being

considered as one's real self."

"Probably it was the higher energy enveloping the being."

"It is the symbol probably of the psychic in a luminous condition."

QUESTION: Has the whole being grown open to the influence of the psychic?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is so becoming.

QUESTION: Does the experience indicate that the psychic is active and the physical has come under its influence?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

(16-12-1935)

Two years later there started the descent of Peace. This made me feel the real joy of meditation, the memory of which even today brings an inner elation. In the beginning its effect lasted as long as the descent did but after 1937 its effect remained practically the whole day.

The following comment of Sri Aurobindo on the experiences will speak for itself:

"It is the descent of the peace and light of the higher consciousness—when that is complete (not in its preparatory but in its definite power) then one becomes that peace or light; the body sense disappears. The two points were the apex of the physical centre and that of the mental centre. At these two points there must have been complete connection with the light above."

"It is the same process. The vast field meant the higher consciousness (of self or spirit) which is wide and limitless, when one lives in it one is no longer in a body but in that wide consciousness. The approaching day-break meant that liberation at this stage is drawing near."

QUESTION: In 1938 one day I had a descent of peace for about two hours and once I felt that I had merged into a depth of light and peace. Then for three days I could at will empty not only my mind but my heart and sex centre also. I would sit silently and see what rose in me. No impulse, no sensation or anything would rise except a thought or two which I could stop by being alert or watchful. One day it looked as if the world was calm and quiet, then a luminous wide space appeared before me, and the body seemed all vacant and became one with the empty space before me.

SRI AUROBINDO: The emptiness, silence and peace are the basic condition for the spiritual siddhi—it is the first step towards it. It enables the Purusha to be free from the movements of Prakriti, to see and know where they come from since they no longer rise from within the mind, heart etc., these being in a state of quietude and to reject the lower movements and to call in the knowledge, will etc. of the higher consciousness which is above.

It is the Purusha consciousness in one of its experiences; the Purusha has to know itself as separate from the mind, separate from the life activities, separate from the body.

A symbol of total surrender in the physical being.

(23-9-1938)

How these descents made a temporary flight to the realms of light almost effortless

can be inferred from the marginal notes of Sri Aurobindo on a letter dated 14-5-1937.

“Probably you went up above the body into a plane of Light and Ananda.”

QUESTION: Once I saw the Mother in the moonlight and heard her saying, “Remain in this moonlight.” I do not remember exactly whether the Mother said “moonlight” or “cool light”.

SRI AUROBINDO: It may have been moonlight—indicating delight of the spiritual mind planes. (21-10-1938)

QUESTION: For a time it seemed to me that I was moving into a place where there was no sorrow or restlessness or anxiety of any kind; peace alone seemed to reign; does it indicate that peace is settling in the vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but probably at first in the dynamic mental and vital mind together.

Descent was more frequent than ascent. I had only a few experiences of ascent. One of them is given here.

QUESTION: Following upon the above, suddenly my consciousness rose tremendously high into the sky and there I saw a vastness full of white light. The outer sky seemed to be very limited in comparison to that vastness. This was followed by the luminous space and shining sky seen under different forms. The whole of the following day I was very quiet and meditation was pressing on me. I pray to be told something about it.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was probably an ascent to one of the higher planes (spiritual mental).

The following extract from one of my letters may give some idea of how we had an access to these higher regions without any effort on our part:

“In fact I do nothing. Simply I pray and aspire. No sooner do I feel the action of the Mother’s force than I leave myself entirely to its charge.”

“That is very good,” was Sri Aurobindo’s illuminating reply.

*(To be continued)*

A DISCIPLE

## HOW TO KNOW AND EXPRESS THE TRUTH\*

THE Truth we are seeking to know is in essence the same for everybody, but the ways of approaching it can proceed along many different lines; so also the ways of expressing it can be through a richness of diversity.

This world, as it is, is a manifestation of a divine Truth which is capable of throwing itself out into a multitude of possibilities and variants of itself, everyone of which is different from the others. This differentiation has a purpose; Sri Aurobindo says: "it is a means of greater unity, not as in the egoistic life a means of divisions; for we enjoy by it our unity with our other selves and with God in all, which we exclude by our rejection of his multiple being."<sup>1</sup> This kind of unity is a higher and a more comprehensive one than an exclusive absorption into a state of pure, featureless unity far away from all the multiplicity, which also, we must not forget, is the Divine. On the other hand, why should the Divine Being take so much trouble and pains to develop this world through a slow process of evolution, if this exclusive kind of unity was his intention? No, it cannot be so, the fulfilment of his work must be to enjoy and to participate in the large possession and the bliss of His universal being. This is our *raison d'être*, this is the fulfilment of our individuality.

Our aim is simultaneously to be aware of Oneness in Multiplicity and to see Multiplicity as an expression of the One. By this integral experience we live in Truth, in Immortality; we must attain to the highest without blotting ourselves out from the cosmic existence. God has the liberty of expression and of freedom from expression and because we are a part of Him we too can attain to the same divine self-possession. The harmony of these two tendencies is the condition of all life that aims at being really divine. Either of these two modes of being is a limitation and an ignorance. In order to live in the Truth we must embrace both of them.

This Truth is the supreme Reality of things on which all these innumerable and finite relativities depend for their existence and without which nothing could be.

Because we are a part of this Divine Being, somewhere in our own being we must possess this Truth as a Divine spark and to know it must be our sole occupation. The discovery of this soul, the secret psychic entity, the Divine element within us, is the first indispensable necessity. And once discovered we must make our psychic being our guide because it spontaneously knows the Truth, the good and, by its own law and working, is able to lead our life and being towards spiritual completeness.

The Mother has said: "...each element has to manifest as perfectly as possible its own law, what it should be in the whole, in order to do to the maximum what it has to do. It is therefore the conscious, illumined, one might almost say disinterested dis-

\* A speech delivered at the Fifth Annual Conference of the New Age Association held on the 16th August 1968

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (American Edition), p. 335

covery of the truth of each being that is for him the first, the most important necessity.”<sup>1</sup>

How do we achieve this in our life?

First of all the will to discover the Truth of our being and to unite with it must always be living, always present behind all that we do, all that we experience, all that we think. By maintaining throughout a courageous will, sooner or later we shall see all our difficulties melt and vanish before the radiant consciousness of Truth.

Another equally important thing to have is sincerity. Without sincerity how can we hope even to know what is truth and what is falsehood? We must acquire a sharp sense of discrimination. “And the surest way to have discernment,” says the Mother, “is a conscious, willing and as total a surrender as possible to the Divine Will and Guidance. Then there is no risk of making a mistake or taking false lights as the true ones.”<sup>2</sup>

The Mother has also shown us four indispensable conditions by which we can know the Divine Will:

“The first essential condition—an absolute sincerity.

“The second—overcome desires and preferences.

“The third—silence the mind and listen.

“The fourth—obey immediately when you receive the order”<sup>3</sup>

The first condition we have already mentioned. The next is: to surmount our desires and our preferences. How are we to do this? Once again the Mother’s advice can help us:

“One must have an aspiration burning in the being, like a constant fire and each time you have a desire, a preference, an attraction, you must throw it into the fire. If you do that persistently, you will see that a little flicker of true consciousness begins to take birth in your ordinary consciousness.”<sup>4</sup>

The third condition is to make our mind completely silent, because only in silence we can hear the little, tiny voice of Truth that is trying to make itself heard from the depths of our psychic being. It is indispensable to get rid of all kinds of desires, preferences, prejudices, prejudgments and preconceptions, because it is exactly these things that drag us down into the lower consciousness and imprison us with their narrow barriers of rigidities. Only when we live a unified and an harmonious life centred round our soul by not having two masters in one house and thereby leading a double life, can we hope to catch the Truth. If we have succeeded in establishing this silence throughout all our being then, indeed, we have the best possible conditions for hearing the little, tranquil voice that speaks from our heart’s silence.

The last condition needs hardly any explanation. If we do not obey the impulsion

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, April 1961, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, February 1962, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, August 1965, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, November 1963, p. 29.

we receive from our psychic being, then the first three conditions must somehow or other be flawed or imperfect in their application, and most certainly there is a lack of sincerity.

It should be carefully noted that as long as the seeker after Truth is still living in the ignorance he cannot avoid following in some measure a certain standard of conduct, a dharma; but this standard should be free from the ordinary notions of morality, because moral concepts and Truth are very far from each other. Each sadhak must find the plastic means and instruments for his own development.

Then, after many years of practical endeavour, when everything has become, as Sri Aurobindo expresses it, "self-determined by truth of consciousness and truth of being, there can be no standard, no struggle to observe it, no virtue or merit, no sin or demerit of the nature. The power of love, of truth, of right will be there, not as a law mentally constructed but as the very substance and constitution of the nature and, by the integration of the being, necessarily also the very stuff and constituting nature of the action....Once that is done, the need of standards of virtue, dharmas, disappears; there is the law and self-order of the liberty of the spirit, there can be no imposed or constructed law of conduct, dharma. All becomes a self-flow of spiritual self-nature, Swadharma of Swabhava."<sup>1</sup>

HENNING

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 885.

# THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

## THE VISION AND THE REALISATION IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

(Continued from the January issue)

### CHAPTER X

#### DEATH AT THE SERVICE OF LIFE

I have given thee thy awful shape of dread  
And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain  
To force the soul of man to struggle for light  
On the brevity of his half-conscious days.  
Thou art his spur to greatness in his works,  
The whip to his yearning for eternal bliss,  
His poignant need of immortality.  
Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.

Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book X, Canto IV.

This world was built by Death that he might live. Wilt thou abolish death? Then life too will perish. Thou canst not abolish death, but thou mayst transform it into a greater living.

If Life alone were and not death, there could be no immortality...  
Death transformed becomes Life that is Immortality...

Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*.

When the earth will not need to die in order to progress, there will be no more death.

The Mother, *Bulletin*, Vol. XV. No. 3, p. 47.

I am Immortality as well as Death.

Sri Krishna in *Bhagavadgita*, IX. 19.

THE body's death is a veritable instrument serving the interests of perpetually evolving life. Indeed, as we shall see in the course of our study, given the imperfect and limited self-cabined instrumental capacity and capability of man, the process of death has become necessary as a means, and salutary in its effect, because "eternal change of form is the sole immortality to which the finite living substance can aspire and eternal change of experience the sole infinity to which the finite mind involved in living body



can attain. This change of form cannot be allowed to remain merely a constant renewal of the same form-type such as constitutes our bodily life between birth and death; for unless the form-type is changed and the experiencing mind is thrown into new forms in new circumstances of time, place and environment, the necessary variation of experience which the very nature of existence in Time and Space demands, cannot be effectuated. And it is only the process of Death by dissolution and by the *devouring of life by Life*, it is only the absence of freedom, the compulsion, the struggle, the pain, the subjection to something that appears to be Not-Self which makes this necessary and salutary change appear terrible and undesirable to our mortal mentality".<sup>1</sup>

So we see that the whole perspective of our discussion of the problem of death has changed, and we are led to the conclusion that in the as yet imperfect status of Life so far evolved and elaborated upon earth, death cannot be viewed as "a denial of Life, but as a process of Life".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Life, in its still imperfect manifestation, requires the spur of death in order to evolve to progressively higher and higher forms of existence. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"Death is the question Nature puts continually to Life and her reminder to it that it has not yet found itself. If there were no siege of death, the creature would be bound for ever in the form of an imperfect living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibility."<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, death has proved to be highly salutary, certainly to the evolution of higher types of species, but also to the individuals constituting the species, thanks to the spiritual phenomenon of soul-rebirth.<sup>4</sup>

Death serves a beneficial role for the individual creature, because it is an indispensable means to awaken in the latter's consciousness the need of perfection and progression. Indeed, "without it, creatures would remain contented indefinitely in the condition where they are,"<sup>5</sup> and it would have been well-nigh impossible to break the "dead resistance in the mortal's heart"<sup>6</sup> and "his slow inertia as of living stone."<sup>7</sup> In the luminous words of the Mother:

"Opposites are the quickest and the most effective means of fashioning Matter so that it may intensify its manifestation.... In view of this, there is evidently an analogous experience in respect of what one calls life and death. It is this kind of 'overshadowing' or constant presence of Death and the possibility of death, as it is said in *Savitri*: you have a constant companion throughout your journey from cradle to grave; you are ceaselessly accompanied by the menace or presence of Death. And along with

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 179

<sup>3</sup> *Thoughts and Glances*, pp 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Readers wishing to know more about the rationale, the sense and the potentiality of the phenomenon of rebirth may consult the following works of Sri Aurobindo (i) *The Problem of Rebirth*, (ii) *The Life Divine* (Book Two, Chaps. XX-XXIII), (iii) *On Yoga II*, Tome One, Chap. VIII

<sup>5</sup> *Bulletin of Physical Education*, Vol. IX, No. 2, p. 81

<sup>6</sup> & <sup>7</sup> *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto II.

this there is in the cells *an intensity of the call for a Power of Eternity which would not be there but for this constant menace*. Then one understands, one begins to feel in quite a concrete manner that all these things are only *ways of intensifying the Manifestation, making it progress, making it more and more perfect*. And if the ways are crude, it is because the Manifestation itself is very crude. And as it perfects itself, as it becomes more fit to manifest that which is eternally progressive, cruder means will be left behind for subtler means and the world will progress, without the need of such brutal oppositions. This is so, simply because the world is still in its childhood and human consciousness also is altogether in its childhood".<sup>1</sup> (Italics ours)

From a more practical point of view too, the dispensation of 'natural' death comes indeed as a boon to the life-weary individual in his present status of ego-bound ignorant consciousness. Did not the grandfather of Edison find life too long after a century and die because he wanted to? It is only divinised consciousness and life that can find sources of perpetual interest to keep them going on. For the ordinary time-bound limited "I" of the individual, the very prospect of physical immortality will prove to be a damnable curse. In the picturesque words of A. W. Momerie:

"Think of the kind of life which these immortals would have to live. Century after century, millennium after millennium they would see the same everlasting faces, confront the same ever-recurring phenomena, engage in the same worn-out exercises, or lounge idly in the same unchanging stagnation. They have drained every spring of knowledge. They have exhausted every source of enjoyment. No dim marvels, no boundless hopes, beckon them towards the future. They have no future. They have nothing but never-ending now. The incessant repetition, the unmitigated sameness, the eternal monotony of things would grow horrible and appalling to them. The world would become a hateful dungeon, and life an awful doom. What would they not give to migrate to some untried existence! They would be thankful even to lie down for ever in the attractive unconsciousness of the tomb."<sup>2</sup>

The process of death has served the interests not merely of the individuals as individuals but of the species as well. Was it not Goethe who declared: "Death is Nature's expert contrivance to get plenty of life"? Indeed, the deathlessness of the constitutive individuals would prevent others of the same species from being alive at all. A simple calculation would show that the descendants of Adam, endowed with physical immortality, would have doubled every twenty-five years and in that process produced, in less than a hundred generations, many trillions of human beings so much so that their bodies, packed two or three deep, and conglomerated into one solid mass, would have covered the entire surface of the planet<sup>3</sup>!

As a matter of fact, the remarkable truth that "the natural individual<sup>4</sup> is a minor

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, Vol XV, No. 3, pp. 45-47

<sup>2</sup> *Immortality* (H. R. Allenson, London), p. 16

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 14-15

<sup>4</sup> As distinct from the essential individual in respect of whom Sri Aurobindo has remarked "The individual is a centre of the whole universal consciousness, the universe is a form and definition which is occupied by the entire immanence of the Formless and Indefinable." (*The Life Divine*, p 38)

term of being and exists by the universal”<sup>1</sup> and that “the individual life is compelled, and used, to secure permanence rather for its species than for itself”<sup>2</sup> is borne out by biological evidences that have been specific and manifold. The opinion has even been expressed that all living matter once possessed potential immortality and death as a condition, non-existent in the beginning, was eventually adopted for the simple reason that “just such a safety-valve was necessary to permit of the perpetuation of the race”.<sup>3</sup> Instead of going into an unnecessary elaboration of the evolutionary evidences in support of this hypothesis, we may well quote from the writings of a few savants, thus bringing into focus the consensus of opinion held by contemporary men of science.

*(To be continued)*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine*, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Carrington and Meader, *Death*, p. 7.

## CAN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BE PROVED?

(Continued from the issue of January 1969)

(This is a discussion between three philosophers: (1) an Anselman (A) who believes that the existence of God can be rationally and strictly demonstrated; (2) a Kantian (K) who holds that all arguments that claim to demonstrate God's existence are fallacious; and (3) a Critical Philosopher (C) who agrees with K, but at the same time holds that the proposition 'God exists' is self-evident to the wise.)

- K. Will C now complete his argument to show that 'God exists' is self-evident to the wise?
- A. It will help if C gives a brief summing up of the ground covered last time.
- C. Last time I had approached the proposition 'God exists' from the side of the subject, *viz.*, God, and tried to show that 'God' is the criterion-concept of metaphysical thinking and hence to be a metaphysician is to operate with the concept of God as the basic concept in the light of which all things are judged in respect of their value and all propositions in respect of their truth. And since the criterion in the light of which we question and evaluate things and pronounce on their validity cannot itself be questioned, to call the existence of God in question is to undermine the whole enterprise of metaphysical thought. I further showed that the atheist or the agnostic does not operate with any basic criterion-concept and hence their standpoint is not only at the pre-critical level, but, when raised to the level of self-consciousness, it reveals itself as either pseudo-philosophy or pseudo-science.
- K. You are indeed, like the absolute idealists, taking the high *a priori* road with a vengeance. One may almost call it the high-handed *a priori* road!
- C. The absolute idealist regards philosophy as the *a priori* science of the *a priori*. I agree with this in part. The *a priori* is not necessarily valid *a priori* and hence to arrive at the ultimate *a priori* presuppositions is the result not so much of reasoning as of detached contemplation. The philosopher, in taking the *a priori* road, is high-handed if, like the absolute idealists, he legislates for all thought while allowing thought to remain at the pre-critical or purely constructive level. He is not high-handed if his apriorism raises thought to a full awareness of itself and permits it to yield up its own implicit commitments.
- A. I have noticed that you are very anxious to show that your way of thinking differs from mine even though they both lead to the same result, *i.e.*, unconditional affirmation of God's existence.
- C. Yes, that is because the difference in approach reflects a difference in the *level* of

thought and hence is also reflected in the final result. Consequently, the content and significance of 'God exists' is also different. For you it is a logical truth; for me it is an expression of faith pressing towards a higher realization.

- A. But a faith that excludes all other faiths?
- C. Not other faiths, but the alternative of lack of faith.
- A. On logical grounds?
- C. Does logic ever provide a ground? There is a logic involved in it, certainly, but the spirit and form of 'logic' is internal to, and not the ground of, faith.
- K. I think we should postpone this dialogue between A and C for another occasion. In the meantime I suggest we allow C to get on with his argument.
- C. I would now like to approach the proposition, 'God exists' from the side of the predicate. I think that the concept of 'existence' has not received a sufficiently careful analysis, in spite of Kant. All that Kant did was to show, and that too not consistently, that 'existence' cannot be treated as a defining characteristic. But this does not tell us what 'existence' is.
- K. What is the problem you have in mind?
- C. What do we mean when we ask, 'Does God exist?' or whether anything, for that matter, has 'existence'? What does the question, 'Does X exist?' mean?
- K. I suppose one could answer simply that it means: is the concept of X instantiated?
- C. But that is only another way of asking, 'Does X exist?'
- K. In that case we should say the notion of existence is not further analysable.
- C. That may be with respect to existence as such. But 'existence' does not stand for an abstract, contentless being. What about the specific mode of existence? Is not the existence of God different in kind from the existence of a table or a man?
- K. Even if it is, how is the difference relevant to our inquiry? Our question is, 'Does God exist, whatever be the mode or grade of His existence?'
- C. Consideration of the specific mode of existence is relevant if we are to find an answer to the question, 'Does X exist?' Take, for example, the question, 'Does the Loch Ness Monster exist?' How do we set about answering this question?
- K. I suppose in the last resort we must look to see if it is there. If we come across it we say that it exists. If after examining the entire length, width and depth of the Loch we fail to come across it, we must conclude that it does not exist.
- C. Precisely. But would you set about discovering whether God exists or not in the same way, by scouring the length and breadth and depth of the Universe?
- K. A rhetorical question! The answer is no, for God, unlike the Loch Ness Monster, is not a physical being perceptible through the senses.
- C. So you see that the question of the mode of existence is relevant for determining the answer to the question of existence. How we are to answer the question, 'Does X exist?' depends on the mode of existence of the object in question. In the case of the Loch Ness Monster, its existence is to be verified in sense-experience because it is, by definition, a spatio-temporal object.
- A. What about the question, 'Do Numbers exist?'

- C. I think this is a question of a different kind. We are not here asking whether there are such things as Numbers but whether it is legitimate to raise the question of existence in the case of Numbers.
- K. Yes, I think this is a different problem.
- C. Now let us come to our main question, 'Does God exist?' To answer the question we must first ask, 'What is the mode of Divine existence?' This will enable us to find out how the question is to be answered. Philosophers in the past have made the mistake of attempting to answer the question by flinging arguments at each other, instead of asking the prior and more important question, 'How are we to decide, *i.e.*, in the light of what criterion, whether God exists or not?' Thus on the one side we have the traditional 'arguments' for the existence of God, the most important being the ontological and the cosmological arguments; on the other side we are presented with a counter 'argument' based on the fact of evil and suffering. The agnostic does not find the arguments from either side sufficiently convincing, but he is no better off than the traditional theist or atheist because he still looks for arguments *more geometrico* to settle the question one way or the other. The philosopher should never enter into a dispute without first deciding how the dispute is to be settled, and when he does this the nature of the dispute is transformed. I would even say, the problem remains but the dispute vanishes.
- K. Well, let us carry out your recommendation that we first ask how we are to decide whether God exists or not, instead of plunging into a flurry of arguments and counter-arguments.
- C. When we ask, 'Does God exist?' we must first realize that God's mode of existence is not only unique, but it is existence in its fullness and absolute perfection. Existence, therefore, is primarily predicated of God in the sense that God's existence is existence without qualification and limitation.
- K. But this does not prove that God exists.
- C. True. My purpose is to concentrate attention on the mode of God's existence. It is existence which is self-contained and all-inclusive and is the ground of the existence of all else that exists.
- A. In other words, you are saying that Divine existence is appropriate to Divinity.
- C. More than that. I am suggesting that Divine existence and Divinity are one and indistinguishable. The existence of the Divine is the Divine.
- K. We still haven't got to the existence of the Divine but only to a hypothetical identification of the Divine's existence with Himself!
- C. You mean we have not yet answered the question 'Does God exist?'; but I was concerned with what I suggested were the essential preliminaries. Now how shall we set about deciding whether God exists or not? What criterion shall we adopt? Obviously this question cannot be answered with reference to a verification-process which terminates in sense-experience. To derive the proper criterion we have to attend to the mode of existence of that whose existence we are ques-

tioning. God's existence is self-existence, *i.e.*, it is a mode of existence which contains all possible conditions of existence within itself. Speculative thought comes to rest in God's existence and is not carried beyond it as it is in the case of the existence of a finite being.

- K. But this gives us the concept of God. God is the infinite self-contained being, reaching which no further questions arise.
- C. Precisely. As I said, God and His existence are one. We should not say that essence *involves* existence in the case of God, for God's existence is one with God's essence. The concept of God's existence is impregnated with the concept of God.
- A. If God and His existence are one, would it not follow that 'God does not exist' is self-contradictory?
- C. That would be your line of reasoning. What I am committed to is that the existence of God is one with God, but we may still ask 'Does God exist?'
- A. You said that in the case of God essence is as much one with existence as existence with essence.
- C. I was anticipating the next step in my argument! God's specific mode of existence is such that it is one with God. Since the idea of God enters into and defines the idea of God's existence we have the answer to our question, 'What criterion shall we use to decide whether God exists or not?' The criterion is provided by the idea of God itself.
- K. How is that?
- C. In the case of the Loch Ness Monster we saw that the question of its existence is to be decided by the test of sense-experience. That is because the Loch Ness Monster is, by definition, a perceptible object. To say that it exists means, or at any rate implies, that it is or has been perceived. Now in the case of God, existence is self-existence or existence that rests wholly in itself. To determine, therefore, whether God exists or not we have to adopt a criterion according to which thought is satisfied or certifies that it has reached the truth only when it alights on that reaching which no further questions arise. The notion of God's existence provides the criterion but the criterion is seen to be one with the idea of God! Thought cannot rest till it reaches the self-existent and the self-existent is simultaneously God and the existence of God.
- K. It is not clear whether you derive the criterion of metaphysical thinking from the idea of God and then apply it to determine if God exists or whether you derive it directly from the idea of the existence of God.
- C. This brings us to the crucial point. If God's existence were distinct from His essence as the existence of a finite thing is distinct from its essence, then the criterion would have to be derived merely by reflecting on the nature of God's existence. But since God's existence is one with God, to reflect on His existence is at the same time to bring to clear consciousness the idea of God itself. Thus the alternatives you proposed—whether the criterion is derived from the idea of God or directly from the idea of the existence of God—are not really alternatives. And

- this is what is distinctive about the proposition 'God exists' or the question 'Does God exist?' The criterion derived from reflecting on the predicate of the proposition 'God exists' is one with the criterion derived from reflecting on the subject of the proposition. The distinction is only with reference to our approach.
- K. But the criterion you derive from reflecting on the nature of God's existence is the same criterion already derived directly from the idea of God itself.
- C. That is so.
- K. Then what is the point of the further reflection, of approaching the question of God's existence from the side of the predicate?
- C: There are two reasons why it is necessary to show that God's mode of existence is one with His essence. The first reason is this: Last time K raised the objection that the idea of God could perhaps be admitted to be a regulative idea, but we still had to show that it is a constitutive idea. My answer was that the distinction was untenable. But now perhaps I could give a more convincing answer to the objection. Admitting that we must organize the totality of experience in the light of the idea of the Perfect Being, the question is, Does the Perfect Being exist? We have examined the notion of the existence of the Perfect Being and have found that it brings us back to the idea of God as the criterion-concept. Thus the regulative principle is seen to be one with the constitutive principle.
- K. This, I think, is a more satisfactory answer. It is not enough to reject the distinction, as you did last time, on the ground that it rests on the illegitimate demand that we should *demonstrate* our conclusions.
- C. Perhaps, I am not sure.
- K. What is the other reason for approaching the question from the side of the predicate?
- C. That is closely connected with the first and it also brings my argument to a close. It reveals that the proposition 'God exists' is self-evident. Since God's existence is one with His essence, *i.e.*, since the idea of the existence of God brings us back to the idea of God which functions as a criterion-concept, the question 'Does God exist?' is seen to be equivalent to the question 'Is God God?' and the proposition 'God exists' is reaffirmed as the tautology 'God is God'.
- K. Tautologies are vacuous.
- C. With this single exception. It is a luminous tautology since it requires sustained thinking and intellectual penetration to arrive at it. Indeed, thought has to be raised to the level of vision to apprehend the coincidence of the subject and predicate concepts in the proposition 'God exists'. Their identity is not the result of mere repetition like 'A is A'. It is not apparent to a casual glance: one has to win through to it by hard thinking culminating in intellectual insight. It is a tautology in the perception of which thought mounts to Intuition and restores the lost vision of Identity.
- K. How is this luminous tautology related to the vacuous tautology, 'A is A'?
- C. 'A is A' may be taken either as an empty affirmation of a thing's identity with



itself or as a symbolization in propositional form of one of the basic laws of thought, the law of identity.<sup>1</sup> The former is in essence a caricature of the metaphysical tautology 'God is God' or, as the Bible puts it, 'God is "He Who is".' The latter symbolizes the basic structure of thought as such, the identity of thought's essence with itself. 'God is "He Who is"' expresses on the ontological side the identity of Substance, of God with Being. The identity of thought is self-evident at once, but the identity of God's essence with His existence (not merely of His existence with His essence) is self-evident only to the wise. Thus the existence of God provides the ultimate validity of the laws of thought. This I take to be the truth of the ontological argument which is misleadingly expounded in the form of a demonstration *more geometrico*.

- A. Though I can't say that I am yet convinced that C's argument for the existence of God differs essentially from mine, I think we have had a most interesting and fruitful discussion.
- K. I agree. I think, however, that C's argument does differ in a significant way from A's. To accept C's position it is not enough to understand a single line of philosophical argument but to understand philosophy itself in a radically new way. I believe philosophers should devote far greater attention to the question, 'What is philosophy and what do we do when we ask and answer philosophical questions?' than they have hitherto done.
- C. I think that these questions will set the main problem of future philosophy.

(Concluded)

J. N. CHUBB

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> The laws of thought cannot literally be expressed in propositional form. Their import must be somehow grasped but cannot be stated. Taken literally, the statements of the laws of thought become vacuous tautologies. For the same reason these laws cannot be literally instantiated.

## FOCUS

### 5. 'Appeal'

After his return from England, and during his stay in Baroda, Sri Aurobindo learned Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages, assimilated the spirit of Indian civilisation and its forms past and present. Though he continued the writing of poetry, which he had started in England, in these years he commenced writing articles of political and cultural import. But it became difficult to keep track of these writings in the midst of crowded political activity in Bengal, and many of them have remained untraced up to now. We intend to point out these missing articles and seek help from our readers in finding them.

While studying Bengali literature Sri Aurobindo translated many old poems into English and they were published under the title *Poems from Bengali* in 1956. Out of them, three poems of Chandidasa had already been included in *The Collected Poems and Plays* brought out in 1942. There is a fourth poem, 'Appeal', appearing there, of which the original source of suggestion is unknown. We are giving it below in the hope that some of our readers may guess that source.

### APPEAL

Thy youth is but a noon, of night take heed,—  
A noon that is a fragment of a day,  
And the swift eve all sweet things bears away,  
All sweet things and all bitter, rose and weed.  
For others' bliss who lives, he lives indeed.

But thou art pitiful and ruth shouldst know.  
I bid thee trifle not with fatal love,  
But save our pride and dear one, O my dove,  
And heaven and earth and the nether world below  
Shall only with they praises peopled grow.

Life is a bliss that cannot long abide,  
But while thou livest, love. For love the sky  
Was founded, earth upheaved from the deep cry  
Of waters, and by love is sweetly tied  
The golden cordage of our youth and pride.

*Suggested by an old Bengali poem : Collected Poems and Plays : Vol I : P. 133.*

## *Students' Section*

### **THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION**

#### **FIFTEENTH SEMINAR**

28TH APRIL 1968

THE Fifteenth Seminar of the New Age Association was held on the 28th April 1968 from 8.30 to 9.54 a.m. in the New Hall of the Centre of Education. The two subjects chosen by the Mother for the Seminar were:

1. *How to remain young?*
2. *What is the secret of perpetual progress?*

The following eight members of the Association participated as speakers:

*Bharati, Debranjani, Henning, Mounnou, Nanda, Rose, Srijit and Tarun Vishnu.*

The programme began with listening in silence to a short piece of recorded music of the Mother. Then Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman, made the following introductory remarks:

FRIENDS,

The two subjects which the Mother has chosen for this Seminar are, as you must have noted, related to Her New Year Message this time (1968): "*Remain young, never stop striving towards perfection.*" Though couched in a few words, this Message is of profound significance. It will be our endeavour in this Seminar to explain this significance and its many-sided implications in a few short speeches by our members.

First, however, I shall read out to you the Mother's own answers to two questions, which we had put to Her, pertaining to the subjects of the Seminar.

*Q: Since the process of decline and disintegration which brings old age is really the beginning of death, is it possible to prevent getting old without conquering death?*

*Is it possible to keep the body constantly young without the complete transformation of its material cells by the supramental Ananda?*

MOTHER: How can these questions be answered before the supramental is manifested upon earth? It is only after that manifestation that we may know how it came and how it manifests.

25-4-1968

*Q: Does Your answer mean that the supramental is not yet manifested upon earth? Or are You referring to its full manifestation down to the roots of inconscient Matter? 29th February 1956 has been declared by You as the beginning of the supramental manifestation. So Your answer may be referring to its complete manifestation. Will You please clarify this point?*

MOTHER: I am speaking of a supramental manifestation evident to all, even the most ignorant—as the human manifestation has been evident to all when it happened.  
26-4-1968

Now Manoj will read a passage from Sri Aurobindo bearing on the subjects. Then the eight members will deliver their speeches. After that some other members will read a few writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother which are very helpful to grasp the real significance of the Mother's New Year Message.

After this Manoj read out the passage from Sri Aurobindo. Then the members were called upon to deliver their speeches in the alphabetical order of their names.

The speech by Nanda is reproduced below. Some of the remaining speeches and the passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother will be published in the ensuing issues of *Mother India*.

## HOW TO REMAIN YOUNG?

### I

One of the earliest preoccupations of man on this earth was his aspiration to attain immortality. Ceaseless have been his efforts in this respect. But alas! he has till this day not succeeded in his endeavour. However, he has managed to prolong the span of his youth, and thereby the span of his life, by means of physical practices as in Hathayoga and even by scientific methods as in the recent cases of heart transplantation. But his dream of immortality still eludes him and will always remain unattainable so long as he does not discover its true secret.

So long as man is bound by his lower nature, he lives in ignorance and is therefore subjected to the inevitable laws of nature. It is only when he breaks the wall of ignorance and rises from his "flat earthly state: To the discovery of a greater self"<sup>1</sup> that he can overcome all mortal laws. And the "muddy vesture" will no longer decay.

The youth to which the Mother refers in her New Year's Message is not so much

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri* (1954 ed.), Book I, Canto IV, p. 53.

the youth of the body as the youth of the spirit—that is, to remaining young in consciousness. In fact, as she says, “Youth does not depend on the fewness of years one has lived, but on the capacity to grow and to progress”.<sup>1</sup> It is not a time of life but a state of mind, a season of hope, aspiration and energy, a period when one enjoys life for one finds joy and beauty in all that one sees. The secret of eternal youth is perpetual progress.

What is it that makes us progress? It is the aspiration to realise our ideals that stimulates us to march on the ever-lengthening road of progress. Aspiration is a joy forever and it is this that renews our energy and keeps us moving on an ascending scale of progress. Therefore our aspiration should be high and noble, for on the quality of our aspiration will depend the quality of our progress. Shoot at the midday sun or else the effort is not worth the aim.

The idea of aspiration brings us to the idea of the future. “To be young is to live in the future, for the future,” says the Mother. The refusal to be bound by old conventions enables us to look into the future which carries in itself the promise of realisation. This instils in us a spirit of adventure and thence we begin, in a way, to live dangerously—“come what may”, we are ready to take a leap into the depths of the unknown gulfs.

Youth depends not only on the capacity to live in the future but also on the capacity to make much of the present hours. To see the world with a fresh consciousness is what makes the world an object of wonder. Interest and curiosity or, in a higher sense, let us call them hope and aspiration, strip the veil of familiarity and show the world in all its splendour of form and colour. Things common are gilded with the alchemy of the uncommon. Thus the commonest raindrop on a glass pane becomes “a visitor from the solitudes of time”. And the meanest flower brings “thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears”.

We are so busy getting and spending that we do not have time to stand and stare. So occupied are we with digging gold out of the ground that we neglect the other treasures which toss about in profusion during the operation. It is when we are fresh in ourselves that we can perceive the “dearest freshness deep down” in all things. We should cultivate the habit of seeing things as if we were seeing them for the first time. In fact, this is the secret of remaining ever green.

All kinds of experiences pour in when we look at the things around us with a child’s wonder. Experience gives us a true knowledge. And each one is only a stage on the road to truth. Through the gateway of each stage gleams the eternal world which recedes further and further as we move towards it. The very fact that we move, makes us progress. We should progress not because we want to have the fruits of our efforts but for the sake of progress itself. “To travel hopefully,” says Stevenson, “is better than to arrive.”

So long as we move on the path of progress, so long as we strive towards perfection

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of Physical Education*, April 1949.

without being satisfied with what has been achieved, we remain young. And the heart's recording machine receives messages of beauty, cheer, hope and courage.

As soon as we are fully content with ourselves and feel that all has been done, as soon as we "want to sit and enjoy the benefits of past efforts",<sup>1</sup> we cease to progress. We fall back and begin to degenerate. We grow old not by living a number of years but by deserting our ideals, by refusing to grow and to progress. The snow of pessimism and the ice of cynicism begin to deposit themselves and to benumb our nerves. No more do we receive messages of cheer and courage. Life ends in becoming a sad dull meaningless tale.

Unless we remain young in spirit, life would not be an interesting episode. Oh! it is bliss to be young when joy ever stirs in the dancing blood. Youth bubbles with life. It breaks through the wall of past habits and beliefs and marches breast forward towards the future which, as the Mother says, "like an attractive sun shines with the innumerable possibilities yet to be achieved".<sup>2</sup> To be young is very heaven when existence itself becomes "a divine experiment". And the days become "a happy pilgrim march".

NANDA REDDY

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin, of Physical Education*, February 1968. p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,

## MY BASIC EDUCATION

I WAS six and in class II in a village Primary School and my name was Sikandar Lal. The village 'Vahalee' in District Jhelum now in Pakistan was a picturesque cluster of hamlets perched on a hillock which was surrounded by hills. The school had only one teacher, and the total number of students was round about forty but only boys, ten of whom used to come from our village while the rest came from adjoining villages at a four to five miles' distance. Girls were not permitted to go to school in those days.

I was living with my grandmother. She would wake me up at 6 a.m. and put me directly under the teats of our goat and thrust them into my mouth and go on squeezing them. The fierce streams of milk would hurt my throat but she would keep the whole of my body tight between her legs and my neck in her left hand and would not let me move in spite of my strugglings. In any case the milk would go in as 'forced feeding', fresh and untouched. The 'memna' (goat's kid) and I would cry together.

Now, after some crying, I was ready for the school. I would take my slate, slate-pencil, Takhti and Qalam (indigenous pen), my Urdu Primer and an earthen inkpot with black ink soaked in a piece of cloth. All these I had to carry in my left hand and I would pick up the stick in my right, and my grandmother would untie the goat to be taken by me and left in a herd about a mile and a half up on the other hill.

After leaving the goat I would go for my morning conveniences in the jungle and then come down and have a bath under the cold and heavy shower of the Persian-wheel in the valley and put on my shirt and pyjama which would at first be wet with the water on my body and then dry up before I reached the school at 7 a.m. Late-comers were punished there and then—no explanations, no arrears!

Round about 11 o' clock my grandmother would bring food for me along with water in an earthen vessel called 'Battakh' (duck) which would contain one to two glasses of water. She would make me relish my food under the shade of the tree in the courtyard of the school and would go back humming some folk-lore.

In the evening at about five the school would be over and I would run to the goats' herd again to bring back our goat. I had to be very careful lest I should spill my ink because there were no lids over the ink-pots.

Mostly the goat would behave itself and come back home with me but sometimes it would dodge and run to the jungle and I would have to be after it. If I found some help from some passerby in the jungle, I would succeed in bringing back the goat in the night, otherwise the whole night I would be running after it. In the meantime my grandmother with one of two of her relatives would come searching for me with a hurricane lamp. Mostly she would fail to trace me and all of us would reach home one after another by the next morning. That would afford me a holiday from the school and my grandmother would go to school to inform Munshiji (today's 'Sir')

about the night episode and get my absence excused.

Normally, I would reach home with the goat at about seven in the evening. Luckily there would be no forced feeding with the goat-milk because the milk would be needed for curds, butter, lassi, etc. for the next day. In the evening the goat would give twice or thrice the quantity of milk because it had had a nice feeding on the natural herbal plants of the jungle. So no ailment and no application for sick leave from the school.

Nine months of the school would pass easily because we would be reading and writing in the school, sitting on the 'Tat-patti', shouting and learning our lessons at the top of our voices and writing on the the Takhti or the slate alternatively: arithmetic on the slate and language on the Takhti. Utmost stress was laid on calligraphy and you could not hope to get good marks without a neat handwriting.

During the day we had a long period of drill (physical exercises) and then we had to rush to the jungle to bring firewood, vegetables and fruit for Munshiji. Natural herbal vegetables like Sag (jungle spinach), Khumb (mushroom), Dussan (medicinal vegetable), etc. and fruits like Ber, Toot and Pillu were available in abundance in the jungle and one could have them in any quantity with a little effort.

The only difficult period of the year would be the last three months when Munshiji would suddenly become very harsh and severe to make us prepare, not for the University Examination but for the 2nd or 3rd class annual examination and would not allow us to be let loose except for his firewood. We had to study and work very hard under the threats of the cane. Almost everyone had his share and chance of being beaten every day for some mistake or other, maybe in mathematics, spelling, geography or calligraphy.

The punishments given for the serious mischiefs of a vulgar, unhealthy and undesirable nature were very very severe and torturous. For example, one was made to bend down, bring out his arms from between the legs and catch his ears and keep the hips up; still harsher, a stone of about 20 kg. was placed on his back in the same position.

In these three months the school would not be over in the day. After having our evening meals we had to reach Munshiji's house, "Chaubara", by 8 o'clock, where my grandmother would leave me with a hurricane lamp and bring me back at night at about 10 o'clock. During these two hours we were made to study oral arithmetic, practically in the dark, as there was only one small earthen oil-lamp in a corner of the room. Munshiji would go on speaking the figures for addition, subtraction, multiplication or division and we had to write the answers individually with our fingers on Munshiji's palm. The right answer would be applauded by "Shabash" and the wrong condemned with a slap.

The fee for the whole year was Re 1/- per child for the rich, annas eight for the poor and annas four for the poorest, which had to be offered to Munshiji for promotion to the next class.

The most important and interesting feature of my Basic Education was the visit



of the District Inspector of Schools, which was an annual feature. Information was received by Munshiji that the Inspector would be reaching the school for inspection on any day that week. It could not be fixed because the inspection of the schools from village to village of that district was always uncertain. So for one week we had to keep on sitting in the school up till 10 or 11 o'clock in the night waiting for the caravan of the Inspector. My grandmother was kind enough to bring for me food late in the night, make me eat and go back.

One day a message was received through a passing villager that the Inspector and his party were on the way and would be reaching the school shortly that night; and the party reached at midnight.

The whole school-premises were profusely decorated by the children with coloured paper flags—'Jhandian'—which fluttered producing sweet music as the party entered the school.

The party consisted of the District Inspector with twelve others, his assistants and servants with all their luggage on three camels, two horses, and four mules with the same number of owners of the animals. The feast for all these people was ready. It was provided by the parents in bits and made into a collection. After the visitors had taken their food, our examination started in the early hours of the morning and was over at 7 a.m.

I do not know whether it was a test of Munshiji or that of the boys, because poor Munshiji was on his toes all the time showing registers, Takhtis, time-tables and what not.

At 7.30 we bade good-bye to the Inspector and his party who left the school for the next destination, and by the grace of God we had a jolly holiday that day.

SURENDRA NATH JAUHAR

## **EYE EDUCATION**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Q. When I read big print I feel a strain and discomfort but when I read small print I feel relaxed and comfortable. Why is it so?

A. In reading big print one has to see a larger area at a time and this affects the sensitiveness of the eyes and gives the feeling of strain; while in reading small print one sees a smaller area and this helps the eyes' sensitiveness and so one feels relaxation. When small print can be read in the right way, without any discomfort, it becomes extremely beneficial to the eyes.

Q. You say successful PALMING is very effective in relieving strain and headache and in improving eyesight, but when I do palming I do not see perfect darkness before my eyes. What do you suggest?

A. Look at something black or the chart letter, then close the eyes and recall the black colour seen. Repeat this several times till the memory and the sight are equal. Then do palming. Continue palming for 15 or 20 minutes.

Q. My eyesight is all right but I cannot read comfortably, the right eye suffers. What to do?

A. Read fine print in good light and in candle-light alternately three times, with both eyes and each eye separately.

Q. When I get up in the morning, my eyes open with difficulty, at times there is some headache also. And I find my memory is becoming dull.

A. Before sleep and after sleep practise palming for about 20 minutes.

Q. How is it that on some days I can see the whole chart but on other days only a few lines?

A. When there is no strain the vision is normal. Continuous practice will make the sight all right on other days too.

Q. Why is my vision worse on a rainy or cloudy day than in broad daylight?

A. Because you strain to see on a dark day. Practise palming more on such days.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL