

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JANUARY 1976

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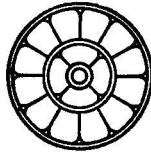
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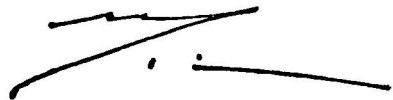


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVIII

No. I

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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A CALL FOR THE NEW YEAR: THE GAYATRI,

THE most sacred Mantra of the Rigveda is the Gayatri, directing us towards the Solar Godhead—Surya-Savitri—and this spiritual signpost is the one Mantra that has been on the lips of Indians throughout the millennia.

Even at the present moment every Brahmin utters it morning after morning. From the foot-hills of the Himalayas down to Cape Comorin the Gayatri goes ringing at each daybreak. And it suffices to show that, as Sri Aurobindo maintains, the Rigveda is not a mere system of religious ritualism or a hymnal of primitive priests to deified Nature-powers but a mighty symbolic scripture couching in semi-ritualistic semi-naturalistic terms an inward movement towards mystical illumination.

But, with the advent of Sri Aurobindo, not only has the secret of the Rigveda been revealed: its very Yoga has been taken higher and deeper. Sri Aurobindo has re-coined the Truth-gold of Rishi Vishwamitra's great formula.

The old chant reads:

*Tat savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhimahi
dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.*¹

Let us meditate
on that most excellent light
of the divine Savitri
that it may impel our minds.

The new Mantra, with Sri Aurobindo's own translation of the recast, runs:

*Tat savitur varam rūpam
jyotiḥ parasya dhimahi
yannah satyena dīpayet.*

Let us meditate
on the most auspicious form of Savitri,
on the Light of the Supreme
which shall illumine us with the Truth.

Vishwamitra's Gayatri seeks the Sun of the Divine Consciousness to invoke it as a radiant drive to our intelligence from the Beyond. Sri Aurobindo's version seeks it to draw its revelatory Power towards us and make that "most auspicious form" descend into our being and radiate there the Perfection which the seers at the dawn of India's spiritual history called *Satyam Ritam Brihat*—"the True, the Right, the Vast"—and which Sri Aurobindo designates Supermind.

We cannot start the New Year better than by answering his call to fix our hearts on the all-beautiful and transformative Shakti of the supramental Godhead:

Wisdom-Splendour, Mother of the universe,
Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride,

whose world-saving incarnation he set before us not only in the heroine of his epic *Savitri* where these lines occur, but also in real life, within the Ashram of his Integral Yoga: his companion and co-worker amongst us whom we have daily adored over the years as the Mother.

K. D. S.

¹ Rigveda, III. 62-10

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

10-1-1967

Bonne Année!

To do yoga, one of the most important things to achieve is to get rid of all attachment to the past.

Let the past be past and concentrate only on the progresses you want to do and the surrender to the Divine you have to achieve.

My blessings and help are always with you.

*

3-11-1965

You are right in keeping quiet in front of those who do not understand, because the Divine is with you, and that is the only thing that matters.

Yes, we must all be the faithful army of the Truth.

*

I am glad you are taking all this "drama" as it deserves to be taken, that is to say with a good laugh.

They call you "refugees" but it is indeed a glorious thing to be God's refugees and to enjoy this shelter and His love ...

Let them write if it pleases them to display their lack of faith in the Divine Life, we cannot be affected by that.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat fragmentary, incomplete form. The translation of the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication as a book in French, came out in book-form in 1973. We are giving this translation here.)

FEBRUARY 13, 1957

“Pain and grief are Nature’s reminder to the soul that the pleasure it enjoys is only a feeble hint of the real delight of existence. In each pain and torture of our being is the secret of a flame of rapture compared with which our greatest pleasures are only as dim flickerings. It is this secret which forms the attraction for the soul of the great ordeals, sufferings and fierce experiences of life which the nervous mind in us shuns and abhors.”

(Thoughts and Glimpses, The Centenary Edition, Vol. 16, p. 386)

QUITE naturally we ask ourselves what this secret is, towards which pain leads us. For a superficial and insufficient understanding, one could believe that it is pain that the soul is seeking. Nothing of the kind. The very nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic; but it is true that if one can face suffering with courage, endurance, and unshakable faith in the divine Grace, if one can, instead of shunning suffering when it comes, enter into it with this will, this aspiration to go through and find the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things, the door of pain is often more direct, more immediate than that of satisfaction or contentment.

I am not speaking of pleasure because that indeed turns its back constantly and almost completely upon this profound divine Delight.

Pleasure is a deceptive and perverse disguise which turns us away from our goal and we should certainly not seek it if we are in haste to find the truth. Pleasure turns us into thin air; it deceives us, leads us astray. Pain brings us back to a deeper truth by obliging us to become concentrated in order to be able to bear it, be able to face this crushing thing. It is in pain that one finds the true force again most easily, when one is strong. It is in pain that one finds most easily the true faith again, that in something which is beyond, above and beyond all pain.

When one enjoys oneself and forgets, when one takes things as they come, tries to avoid being serious and looking life in the face, in a word when one seeks to forget, to forget that there is a problem to solve, that there is something to find, that we have a reason for existence and for living, that we are not here just to pass our time and go

away without having learnt anything or done anything, then one truly wastes one's time, one misses the opportunity that has been given—this opportunity, I cannot say unique, but marvellous—of an existence which is a place of progress, which is the moment in eternity when you can discover the secret of life, for this physical, material existence is a wonderful opportunity, a possibility given to you to find the *raison d'être* of life, to make you advance a step towards this deeper truth, to make you discover this secret which puts you in contact with the eternal rapture of the divine life.

(*Silence*)

I have already told you many a time that to seek suffering and pain is a morbid attitude which must be avoided, but to run away from them through forgetfulness, through a superficial, light movement, through diversion, is cowardice. When pain comes, it is to teach us something. The quicker we learn it, the sooner does the need of pain diminish, and when we know the secret, it will no longer be possible to suffer, for that secret reveals to us the reason, the cause, the origin of suffering, and the way to pass beyond it.

The secret is to emerge from the ego, get out of its prison, unite ourselves with the Divine, fuse into Him, not allow anything to separate us from Him. Then, once one has discovered this secret and realises it in one's being, pain loses its *raison d'être* and suffering disappears. It is an all-powerful remedy, not only in the deeper parts of the being, in the soul, in the spiritual consciousness, but also in life and in the body.

There is no malady, no disorder which can resist the discovery of this secret and the putting of it into practice, not only in the higher parts of the being but in the cells of the body.

If one knows how to teach the cells the splendour that lies within them, if one knows how to make them understand the reality which gives them being, makes them exist, then they too enter the total harmony, and the physical disorder which causes the illness vanishes like all the other disorders of the being.

But for that one must be neither lax nor fearful. When the physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine Grace, It will settle in these cells as It establishes itself in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight.

TWO LETTERS FROM THE ASHRAM

May 12, 1954

I WONDER why you write: "Nobody mentions the Mother." Either my letters haven't reached you or else you don't read them rightly. I think they mention hardly anything except the Mother. Surely one need not speak of her directly in order to mention her. My letters are one long spiritual autobiography. And what is a spiritual autobiography from here except a various presentation of Mother-moodedness?

What shall I say to your question about S and me and the psychic being? I think both of us live, each in an individual way, in something of its glow—at least frequently if not all the while. But that is different from the outburst of the psychic. That outburst is different also from a soft steady light. I may say that something like an outburst happens now and then, for a short while. But for it to be constant a firm poise is to be found inside, and that poise is not always easy to come by when one has made a choice of the spiritual life. This will strike you as a paradox. But really there is a difference between short trips to God's land and a permanent stay there. The trips are enthusiastic and the very shortness of them feeds the fire. The permanent stay means "business" and when one gives notice to one's defects to quit they protest persistently and even violently and one has calmly and smilingly to bow them out and lay a firm foundation of purity and peace. The whole movement is somewhat dissimilar. In the short trips the defects can be completely forgotten and ignored. Now they have to be faced as long-standing parts of one's self. And one has to go deep, break through many barriers, suffer occasional blowings-up in order to emerge into an air of freedom in which one may turn to the Mother and be her child in every detail and on every layer of one's being.

A more complicated process is this and one does not remain in a fixed felicity or a constant flame. But the sense is there, all the same, that a far greater thing is being done than during any brief visit, however resplendent. And the light that gets kindled in one is more effective, for all its slowness and interruptedness, because it comes from the utmost profundities and seeks to spread to the utmost widenesses. Here is the process not only of changing your central consciousness but also of changing the whole of your life.

Considering all this and considering various other circumstances I think that matters are moving at a not unsatisfying rate, though, of course, there is ever a better beyond one's best. An inner freedom, an inner readiness to change in all directions and to become anything the Mother wants, even if that goes against one's cherished beliefs or inclinations, a smiling turn towards the Mother as if one were not bound at all to anything, a slow but unmistakable feeling that, with a growing warmth in the heart and an increasing glow in the mind, one is mysteriously proceeding towards some kind of sweet security in a background region midway between the heart and the mind, until one shall be quite out of the problem of the lower nature—all this

seems to be the sadhana at present.

I said: "Out of the problem of the lower nature." This does not mean that the problem ceases. No, it remains there—but oneself is no longer in it. One deals with it as if from outside it, like a sculptor chiselling the rough stone to a perfect Hermes or a flawless Aphrodite, the hardest blows and dints and scrapings hurting not himself at all—himself playing the part of only an instrument of the inspiring Spirit, within whose freedom and farness he is caught up!

August 24, 1954

I suppose you want spiritual news from me. On the whole it is definitely good. And it is as a whole that we must see sadhana if we are to measure it correctly—especially a sadhana like that of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga where a single-track move to the Divine is not permitted and all the turns and twists of one's nature have to be negotiated patiently and persistently. But this Integral Yoga can have two kinds of progress. In one we have, time and again, side-tracks leading off from the main progressive line and these have to be led back by a counter-force because otherwise they would point quite away into the all-too-human morass on either side of the Godward course. In the other type there are driftings too, but they are like curves which of themselves after a little side-swerve turn back to the luminous line. Here the deviations occur because of our complex unregenerate constitution but they are a natural part of the journey and held together in the general scheme by an inner spontaneity of soul and do not require, as in the first type, a deliberate act of the will. Of course, the will's co-operation is called for on occasion — but mostly to cut short the deviation to let the curve be as small as possible. The point is that even if the will did not come to add its own helpful quota the Godward course would be rejoined by the drifting slide-offs. And it would be rejoined because the final choice has been made—the mighty Purusha above the head has thrown in the lower being's lot with the Eternal, and the Purusha behind the heart, "no bigger than a man's thumb", as the Upanishad describes the evolving soul, has tuned in to the God-affirmative broadcast of that lordly dweller in the Infinite's ether and his whole being vibrates in unison with that music of the spheres. Difficulties, tensions, perplexities occur, yet the very discords are woven into the multi-toned echo the deep soul with its fire-tongue makes to the Sun-cry above. We may consider the deep soul's echo as a composition in the modern style—a lot of counterpointed movements in which everything is not smooth and there are oppositions and yet a harmony is achieved.

The two types of sadhana may be called the forcefully willed and the spontaneously controlled. Mine at present is of the second type. It was of the first type when I came to the Ashram twenty-seven years ago. Perhaps the more accurate way of putting it would be that my sadhana was always of the second type but long ago the deviating curves were so large that they looked like straight shootings away and had to be met by the forceful will—until in a large view over years and years one saw that the joining

back to the spiritual course was in the very nature of the phenomenon. Somewhere inside of me I always knew that there was no possibility of ultimate deviation, but the outer self did not share the inner knowledge. Now it does and that is why, in spite of all disturbances, there is the sense of security and, together with all puckerings of the brow, a smile of certainty. This, however, does not make everything a process from light to light—the way is long and uneven, yet there is no fear, no doubt, no hesitation. All shall be well: that is the mantra heard hour after hour and right through the darkest spells.

Coming to the most external life, I may say that I feel sometimes unspeakably happy in this little wide-verandaed flat which seems poised in Sri Aurobindo's vast peace and caressed by the Mother's million winds of love. My work goes on with a sweet efficient rhythm and S's presence is no jar at all but a natural portion of God's magnificent day and mysterious night. She is as much a child of the Mother as I am—and, although there are several differences in our temperaments, they are as nought in the sweep of the one love towards the All-Beautiful. This is a grace I had dreamt of and hoped for and striven after: it has come sooner than expected and better than visioned.

AMAL KIRAN

A CORRECTION

A careful reader has drawn the Editor's attention to two points.

The wording of the introductory note to "November 17" in the *Mother India* of November 1975 can give rise to the impression that after the quoted piece of writing the Mother wrote nothing at all on this date during all her years in Pondicherry. What was meant was that the quotation made here from her *Prayers and Meditations* was the only Prayer and Meditation from her pen on November 17 during all the years.

In the second place, it must be made clear that what was quoted was not her original writing in English but a translation by another hand from her French. So in the literal sense it cannot be said to have come from her pen.

THEY HARBOURED "HIM"

A LETTER

Dear Soma,

Whenever we meet, you ask me: "Didi, story? Tell me a story." So you see, dear child, I have sat down at long last to tell you a story. Only please don't get disappointed if my tale is not of kings ruling wide kingdoms or charming princes rescuing beautiful princesses or heroes fighting mighty battles. This tale is about houses. Now, now, please don't pull a long face. These are no ordinary houses. These are the houses, here in Pondicherry, that harboured Sri Aurobindo. Could they but speak, what wonderful stories they could tell us! Surely of vaster kingdoms than any ever dreamt of by kings or emperors, or of charm and beauty surpassing any fairy tale, or of battles mightier than any fought by History's heroes.

But today let us lay the ground on a few simple facts.

1. When Sri Aurobindo landed in Pondicherry, on 4th April 1910, He was taken to a house in Comoutty Street (now No. 39 Calvé Soupprayan Chetty Street), known as Shankar Chetty's house. There He lived as a guest, with Moni (Suresh Chakrabarty) and Bejoy Nag, His two young companions. They all stayed there for about six months, up to the beginning of October 1910.

2. Then a house was rented in Rue de la Pavillon (present Rue Suffren No. 40) known as Sundar Chetty's house. Sri Aurobindo moved there with His two companions. Saurin, who had arrived the previous day, helped them with the removal. Noloni-da joined them in November. They lived in this house for just over six months, that is to say from 1st October 1910 to the beginning of April 1911.

This house, opposite our Theatre, is now occupied by Monsieur Rassendren. Isn't he lucky!

3. The third house was No.10 Rue St. Louis, Raghavan House (by the side of the French Institute). Sri Aurobindo resided here two years: from April 1911 to April 1913.

4. Another shifting. To Mission Street this time (No. 59 Rue des Missions Etrangères), for a shorter spell of six to seven months: from April to October 1913. The rent was Rs.15 per month.

5. In October 1913 another house was rented, at Rs. 35 per month: No. 41 Rue François Martin. It is bounded on the north by Rue Law de Lauriston. This is the Guest House.

The Mother's long spiritual search culminated here on a momentous 29th March 1914.

Again, on Her return from Japan in 1920 (24th April) the Mother found Sri Aurobindo in that same house. And later on, from the 24th November to be exact, She herself lived there.

So for nine years (October 1913 to October 1922) Sri Aurobindo lived in No. 41

Rue François Martin, the last two years the Mother also.

Purani had the luck to occupy the same room as Sri Aurobindo's for 6 years and Amal the still greater good fortune to be there for 10 years.

6. In October 1922 Sri Aurobindo and the Mother moved together to No. 9 Rue de la Marine, the Library House. They stayed in this block till February 1927.

7. The last change of residence took place on February 8, 1927. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother came to live in the Meditation House.

You see, dear Soma, on the Coromandel coast we have already the famous "Mahabalipuram of the Seven Pagodas". Now the Bay of Bengal can also claim another famous site: "Pondicherry of the Seven Houses."

Don't you like this idea?

More next time.

Affectionately,

Sujata

Sunday, May 18, 1975

"MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH THE MOTHER"

LALITA, who contributes pp.1-13 to the book with the above title, edited by M. P. Pandit, has sent a request to make one correction in regard to the "memorable moment" which ends with the account on p. 13: "And as I gazed at the stars day after day a strange thing happened. I saw them moving at a fast speed, yet so harmoniously. And so vast was the space that separated them, that the movement seemed to make very little difference to their positions. I looked over and over again but they were distinctly moving." Lalita writes:

"There is a mistake in my memory here. Now I have verified that I had seen the stars not moving in one direction but swinging from side to side. When I wrote to the Mother about this, Sri Aurobindo replied that what I had seen represented the inner rhythm of the stars' being."

A PROGRESSION OF FRAGMENTS

20.9.75

CAN any evil be beneath this Moon?
A silver rain of purity
One single planet bright enough to share
That radiance, floating in the East;
Fire-flies flash like fairy lights adorning the silent trees;
A million crickets' symphony,
The clash of palm-leaves, though naught else stirs,
The heavy scent of tuberose and champa
Filling the silver air.
A golden kitten circles, purring at my feet
Moved by some feline, liquid ecstasy
And all the garden lifts its listening leaves
Adoring entranced the dream-chant of the moon.

20.9.75

Once my lord Jesus, as a boy
Found on the village street a little toy—
A bird of clay. He took it in his hands of joy
And breathing on it secretly
Filled it with life and ecstasy,
So it took wing and eagerly
Flew singing, singing, high and high—
Lost in immensities of sky.
And still its triumphant, loving cry
Was heard below in streets of mud
By men of earth. O loving Lord,
I offer you my human heart.
It is not very wide or very pure
And all its depths are still obscure
To me, though you with your clairvoyant eye
Have plumbed perhaps its little mystery.
This struggling heart, O purify—
Let it be worthy of the flame
It longs to bear, and of its name.
O take it in your hands of song
And breathe upon it secretly.
Then will this little bird of clay
Take wing and fly towards the Sun.

SHRADDHAVAN

THE RAMAYANA — MYTH AND REALITY

THE title of this article is inspired by the book it seeks to review, *Ramayana—Myth or Reality?*¹, a compilation of three lectures dealing with the historicity of the Ramayana. Professor H. D. Sankalia, the author, is a well-known archaeologist and has distinguished himself in his field. He is devoted to reconstructing the history of ancient India. Having pioneered many of the excavations undertaken in this country he is now involved in the study of our ancient literature, looking for more clues to help him piece together India's past.

This preoccupation with the historicity of the Ramayana is not new; the subject has come under intense and often absurd debate ever since Western scholars began to take an interest in India's great epics, at least a century ago. Nor is it that Professor Sankalia is particularly original; his work represents some sort of a *précis* of the opinions of one group of scholars—the supporters of the theory that Lanka, Ravana's fabled city, was located near Jabalpur in Central India. This assertion forms the base of the opinion that the Ramayana is a vastly inflated account of an episode that may have occurred but certainly not on the scale as is depicted in the poem.

The other side of the coin is represented by a brief monograph entitled *Location of Lanka* by A.D. Pusalkar.² This reputable scholar asserts that Lanka is none other than modern-day Sri Lanka, that Rama did go there to destroy Ravana and that there is a much greater measure of historical truth in the Ramayana than is generally admitted.

It is perhaps unfortunate that there is no well-documented record of the history of ancient India. What little we know of her long and glorious past has been pieced together with the help of obscure clues and snippets of information from archaeological studies and from the wealth of literature that we have, most of which is quite difficult to date. The seers and rishis, who formed the foundation of Indian expression and endeavour, devoted themselves exclusively to the realisation of the highest spiritual truths and to bring to life the greatest ideals. There was little room for historical records in such a life style. It is clear that there is no plausible means of establishing the historicity or not of the Ramayana. In a talk with a disciple Sri Aurobindo made a statement to this effect. It is interesting to note that Professor Sankalia has quoted only this from Sri Aurobindo. What he has not mentioned is that Sri Aurobindo expressed an entirely different approach to the Ramayana, and I would like to quote a passage from one of his essays on Indian culture that certainly gives a more thorough and perceptive account of the epic:³

“The Ramayana is a work of the same essential kind as the Mahabharata; it differs only by a greater simplicity of plan, a more delicate ideal temperament and a finer glow of poetic warmth and colour. The main bulk of the poem in spite of much

¹ People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973. Price: Rs. 15.

² *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda, Vol-XV, No. 3-4, March-June 1966.

³ *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (The Sri Aurobindo Library, Inc., New York, 1953), pp. 326-28.

accretion is evidently by a single hand and has a less complex and more obvious unity of structure. There is less of the philosophic, more of the purely poetic mind, more of the artist, less of the builder. The whole story is from beginning to end of one piece and there is no deviation from the stream of the narrative. At the same time there is a like vastness of vision, an even more wide-winged flight of epic sublimity in the conception and sustained richness of minute execution in the detail. The structural power, strong workmanship and method of disposition of the Mahabharata remind one of the art of the Indian builders, the grandeur and boldness of outline and wealth of colour and minute decorative execution of the Ramayana suggest rather a transcript into literature of the spirit and style of Indian painting. The epic poet has taken here also as his subject an *Itihasa*, an ancient tale or legend associated with an old Indian dynasty and filled it in with detail from myth and folklore, but has exalted all into a scale of grandiose epic figure that it may bear more worthily the high intention and significance. The subject is the same as in the Mahabharata, the strife of the divine with the titanic forces in the life of the earth, but in more purely ideal forms, in frankly supernatural dimensions and an imaginative heightening of both the good and the evil in human character. On one side is portrayed an ideal manhood, a divine beauty of virtue and ethical order, a civilisation founded on the Dharma and realising an exaltation of the moral ideal which is presented with a singularly strong appeal of aesthetic grace and harmony and sweetness; on the other are wild and anarchic and almost amorphous forces of superhuman egoism and self-will and exultant violence, and the two ideas and powers of mental nature living and embodied are brought into conflict and led to a decisive issue of the victory of the divine man over the Rakshasa. All shade and complexity are omitted which would diminish the single purity of the idea, the representative force in the outline of the figures, the significance of the temperamental colour and only so much admitted as is sufficient to humanise the appeal and the significance. The poet makes us conscious of the immense forces that are behind our life and sets his action in a magnificent epic scenery, the great imperial city, the mountains and the ocean, the forest and wilderness, described with such a largeness as to make us feel as if the whole world were the scene of his poem and its subject the whole divine and titanic possibility of man imaged in a few great or monstrous figures. The ethical and the aesthetic mind of India have here fused themselves into a harmonious unity and reached an unexampled pure wideness and beauty of self-expression. The Ramayana embodied for the Indian imagination its highest and tenderest human ideals of character, made strength and courage and gentleness and purity and fidelity and self-sacrifice familiar to it in the suavest and most harmonious forms coloured so as to attract the emotion and the aesthetic sense, stripped morals of all repellent austerity on one side or on the other of mere commonness and lent a certain high divineness to the ordinary things of life, conjugal and filial and maternal and fraternal feeling, the duty of the prince and leader and the loyalty of follower and subject, the greatness of the great and the truth and worth of the simple, toning things ethical to the beauty of a more physical meaning by the glow of its ideal hues.

The work of Valmiki has been an agent of almost incalculable power in the moulding of the cultural mind of India: it has presented to it to be loved and imitated in figures like Rama and Sita, made so divinely and with such a revelation of reality as to become objects of enduring cult and worship, or like Hanuman, Lakshmana, Bharata the living human image of its ethical ideals; it has fashioned much of what is best and sweetest in the national character, and it has evoked and fixed in it those finer and exquisite yet firm soul tones and that more delicate humanity of temperament which are a more valuable thing than the formal outsides of virtue and conduct.”

So here we have a widely conceived uninhibited account of the Ramayana. It is a compact as well as a densely formulated appreciation of this masterpiece of poetic ingenuity. Its completeness, balanced and sharp perspective and fluent harmony with the poet's vision express a profound love for and a deep inner response to the work of Valmiki. In ancient India self-expression was a means towards the realisation of the Divine Presence that resides deep within the innermost being of man. Valmiki was true to this ideal and as such his work and that of any other poet, writer or artist faithful to such an ideal necessitate a similar inward approach for maximum effect. However, in the work of Sankalia and Pusalkar the scientific and necessarily constrained framework of observation tends to diminish the value of the dissertation. Of course it may do for some, but I feel that anybody with a love for this poem will agree with me, for here the Ramayana has been stripped of all spiritual and cosmic significance and reduced to the level of a wildly fantastic concoction based on a somewhat dubious historical event.

Before examining some of the assertions, deductions and speculations that are packed into these theses, it is perhaps worth dwelling on the subject of admissibility of evidence. Both scholars rely exclusively on the Critical Edition—a manuscript prepared by collating all of the known manuscripts of the Ramayana, the earliest of which is dated to the 11th century A.D. Sankalia says that such an edition probably gives us a version that corresponds to the Ramayana as it existed around the 5th century A.D. I have no clear idea of how he arrives at this conclusion but I imagine he has his reasons. I am neither familiar with the critical edition nor with the method by which it was prepared, but I feel that there are no particularly significant revelations to be had from its study. I may be wrong, of course. Nevertheless, I feel that a historical study of the Ramayana would greatly benefit from the application of some criterion to the selection of passages before they are considered for analysis, because in this epic we have the strife between the divine and titanic forces, a battle which is certainly not confined to the physical plane. And I am sure that an archaeologist or historian would like to restrict himself to physical reality if he is to make any worthwhile study. But in the absence of any scientific authority on the subject of the different planes of existence I feel it is perhaps better to put it this way: Valmiki was a poet and a seer—and in his vision he conceived of something far beyond the scope of the human mind and succeeded in capturing it in an eloquent manner and not without a liberal use of poetic licence. Surely a historical approach demands some rudimentary quali-

fictionation as to whether a particular passage is realistic or whether it is a product of the poet's imagination.

Sankalia displays a certain tendency to lump together all sorts of passages describing places, incidents and events and in each case delivers some archaeological pronouncement. We are informed¹ that there was no ancient city that had gates or walls of gold (as Lanka is described to have had) and that a 100-*yojana*-long bridge across the sea, constructed in five days using only timber and stones is quite far-fetched, to say the least. And of course Rama's fight with and single-handed victory over 14000 Rakshasas in the Dandakaranya forest taxes the imagination unnecessarily. This is all very well if one wishes to be very negative in an already narrow framework. But Sankalia does not wish to be so. He wishes to commence excavations in Ayodhya (as yet there is no doubt as to its location) and this city is quite well described in the Ramayana. He admits that Valmiki knew the city well and I am certain that his knowledge of the kingdom of Koshala was far from scanty. Here is a case of Valmiki being reliable and I would expect a deeper assessment of the possible facts to be gleaned from these pieces, but the Professor is remarkably reticent. If he has already gained some insight into the life and workings of ancient Ayodhya, he is keeping it a close secret, for he scarcely touches on the subject.

It is also quite clear from the tone of Professor Sankalia's account that he is more concerned with what he calls the inflation that the poem has been subjected to. By suitably deflating the epic, and by supplementing it with his study of the vegetation of India, he expects to arrive at a reliable estimate of what the original story that formed the source of Valmiki's inspiration was. I can see that such a process is quite valid in the study of the Ramayana from his point of view but I am compelled to question the workings of his logic. Some examples will suffice to show what I mean.

When Rama learns that he is to be banished to the forest he goes to his mother Kaushalya to tell her the news. She is in her chamber in the ladies' part of the palace, the Antahpura, where she is engaged in performing sacred rituals. On learning the news she is overwhelmed by grief and collapses and falls to the floor. Rama picks her up and gently strokes her dust-covered limbs. To the mind of Sankalia the dust on her limbs conjures up the image of mud huts. He says²; "... this small, insignificant detail, overlooked by the poet, possibly gives a clue to the real nature of the original houses at Ayodhya" — and he concludes that they were made of mud. This statement immediately raises a number of questions.

How does a sloka in the Ramayana tell him anything about the original houses at Ayodhya? Does he not mean the palace at Ayodhya as described by Valmiki, or does he mean the royal residence (whatever its size, shape or mode of construction) in Ayodhya, or is it really the earliest houses that formed the ancient city of Ayodhya, that he wishes to talk about? And why is it so important to examine such an insignificant clue when Valmiki has adequately and wonderfully described Ayodhya in so many other places? Could he really be accused of becoming careless and letting an

¹ P. 16. ² P. 46.

innocent fact slip into a work consisting of some 24000 slokas, which the Professor labels as considerably inflated?

We may as well examine this small insignificant detail. Here is a transliteration of the appropriate lines:¹

*Tām aduḥkhochitām dṛishṭvā patitām kadalīmiva
Ramaḥ tu utthāpayāmasa mātaraṃ gatachetasaṃ
Upāvṛtya utthitām dīnāṃ vaḍavāmiva vahitām
Pāṃsu guṇṭhita sarvāṅgīm vimamarśa cha pāṇinā.*

The translation² used by Sankalia, I also reproduce:

“Rama seeing his mother, who deserved no distress, fall down like a plantain tree and insensible, raised her up, and finding her covered with dust all over her body like unto a mare risen up after rolling on the ground on account of toil bearing heavy burden, wiped off (her body) gently with his hand.”

I am sure that Mr. M.N. Dutt, an extract from whose translation is quoted above, would have been more careful if he had known how his work was going to be interpreted. It is obvious that he had something of the spirit of Valmiki in him and attempted to do justice to the masterful use by the poet of the epic simile. For in Sankalia’s work we have a confusion that has resulted largely from a misunderstanding of Valmiki’s use of simile as well as Mr. Dutt’s slight (but nonetheless important) misinterpretation of one word. Let us try another and (I feel) more accurate translation.³

The first two lines pose no problem, and they read—“Rama seeing his mother, who deserved no sorrow, fall down senseless like a plantain tree, raised her up.” The third line gives—“(she was) miserable (or wretched), as an overburdened mare (or mule) who had risen up after rolling on the ground.” The last line reads—“with his hands he gently stroked her dust-covered limbs.”

Now the picture is much clearer. The epic simile is a powerful tool used by the poet to instantly convey a certain scene and as such has one or two or more points of contact with the event or idea it is supposed to highlight. We realise immediately that it is Kaushalya’s fall that is being compared to that of a felled plantain tree, not any other movement or characteristic of her being. In the same way, Valmiki’s comparison of Kaushalya with the mare holds specifically for the state of having risen up after sinking to the ground. When a mare (or a mule) has been carrying a heavy load and collapses under it, she may roll helplessly on the ground. Then when she gets up or is helped to do so, she presents a certain image. It is precisely this image which Valmiki wishes to identify in the scene when Rama’s mother gets up with his help after having been on the floor. It is possible that she has been rolling on the floor as the mare may have done, but Valmiki does not underline the point. He is

¹ Ayodhyakanda, Canto 20 in most editions.

² M. N. Dutt’s translation of the Ramayana, Calcutta, 1882-1893.

³ I am indebted to Pujalal, a Sanskritist of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, for his invaluable assistance with this translation.

concerned only with the helpless fall and the subsequent recovery. The other point of contact between the simile and the incident is that both the figures involved have a burden—Kaushalya carries her grief and is borne down by it, the mare has the same fate with her load. And we are certainly not told that the queen is dusty in the same way that the mare might be. Sankalia's conclusion leans heavily on the quantitative aspect of the dust on her limbs. He assumes, and wrongly, that she was covered with dust precisely as the mare would have been. And then it is no wonder he gets the impression of an earthen floor. However, Valmiki is to the point; he only states that her limbs were dust-covered—and I see absolutely no reason why this should not be so after contact with a stone, wood, brick or cement floor. It is quite consistent with the notion of the palace. If Sankalia wishes to establish mud houses in Ayodhya for this period he will have to present a more substantial case.

Also, his conclusion rests upon another error—the reference to Rama wiping his mother's body. The root *marśa* refers to rubbing, stroking or caressing. Inherent in it is the implication of gentleness. Consequently it is used in the sense of providing comfort. Rama gently strokes his mother, thereby offering her his consolation. If there is the intention of wiping her limbs it is quite secondary: his prime motive is to comfort his mother and to remove whatever dust may have collected on her. Valmiki does not tell us the amount: his "dust-covered" simply indicates that dust was upon her body.

I have dwelt on this point at such length only because I feel it is a typical example of the kind of reasoning (and misinterpretation of evidence) that is to be found in such dissertations. In examining a great poetic masterpiece for archaeological and historical fact there is a very strong need for the greatest caution and care in the treatment of evidence — especially where poetic Sanskrit is involved. We can see from this example how easy it is to make an error merely from a slightly incorrect translation.

(To be continued)

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PSYCHE

A PLAY IN VERSE

Persons in the Play

EROS, the God of Love

APHRODITE, his mother, Goddess of Beauty

PERSEPHONE, divine Queen of the Underworld

ZEPHYRUS, Spirit of the West Wind

EURUS, THERME, AUSTRALIA and other SPIRITS of the air

CHARON, ferryman of the river Styx

KING

EUNICE

DAPHNE } his daughters

PSYCHE }

CHIEF PRIEST

DEMETRIUS, a palace guard

PHILLIP, his son

LORDS, LADIES, PRIESTS, WRAITHS, DEMONS

PROLOGUE

OLYMPUS

APHRODITE *seated. Enter to her EROS.*

APHRODITE: Eros. Speak, my son.

EROS: I am drawn to earth.

All heaven's beauty has descended there
And made a mortal body its abode.
It is as if the gold of one great sun
Had been condensed to make a single gem:
A white and ardent dwarf of diamond light
Packed with the contents of the infinite.
There is a greater beauty in earth's rose
That blooms its perfect moment in the sun
Giving the precious present of its life
And its colour and the wonder of its form
To all that wander by, before it dies,
Than all the unfading joys of paradise.
I tire of flawless and untainted bliss
And of this light whose lustre never pales;
This bodiless and unsubstantial air

Oppresses me, my fingers long to feel
 The rich resistant answering touch of earth.
 I want to know first-hand her mysteries,
 Her stones and minerals and hills and streams,
 The green and curious fretwork of her plants
 And animals with warm and scarlet blood,
 But, most of all, her greatest miracle, man.
 I want to taste the sweet wine of his life,
 Admire the stately grandeur of his thoughts
 And worship in his heart's most secret shrine.
 And of his race this child is unsurpassed,
 A paragon of body, life and mind,
 Beautiful veils to wrap a perfect soul.
 She is the daughter of a king of Greece
 And mingles with the bearing of a queen
 The grace and laughter of a little girl.
 Oh Mother, have you seen her, have you heard
 The widely chanted fame of one whom men
 Call Psyche?

APHRODITE:

I have heard and seen and know.
 But listen, child, to what I have to say.
 Beautiful she is, but roses there
 Conceal a prick beneath the petals' glow
 And even deity when it descends
 Can feel the sting of pain and pangs of death.
 Although the god within remains immune
 The human mantle of mortality
 That all must wear that walk the ways of earth
 Can easily be torn and that is pain.
 And when the call to reascend is heard
 There is a clamour of the nerves and flesh,
 A jangling of life's sweet familiar tune,
 A passion and a cry and that is death.
 Descend to her you love but like a king
 That meets a country girl incognito.
 Possess her, be possessed by her, but stay
 Above her, her high worshipped chevalier;
 For she must never look upon your face
 And she must never hear your secret name.

EROS:

But, Mother, why? Must love himself keep veiled
 Its outward body, like a man ashamed
 To show that he adores one not himself?

For though love unexpressed is not less love
 Than love loudly proclaimed on every side,
 Its sweetest secrecies remain unknown
 To him whom fate or circumstance denies
 The chance to lay bare utterly his heart:
 To stand free, all disguises cast away,
 In the occult chambers of sublime desire,
 Able to be his inmost and most real
 And filled with the power the fusion of love sets free.

APHRODITE: Hear, child. If you reveal too soon to her
 The sun-like splendour of your native form,
 Difficult even for gods to gaze upon,
 She could not bear it. Like the moon descend
 That lets its cool reflected ray increase
 From finest crescent to full rounded orb,
 And through slow cycles of evolving years
 Accustom her to godhead; then, when she
 Is ready to receive the truth of love,
 Give all yourself to her, but not before.

EROS: But, Mother, I yearn to her and she yearns to me.
 Her heart is a blazing canticle of fire
 That calls down a responsive ardent chord
 Of heaven's love, my love. Why must we wait?
 If on earth she cannot receive my power
 Let her ascend, becoming outwardly
 The goddess she is within. Let her enjoy
 Her birthright of felicity, the cup
 Of divine ambrosia.

APHRODITE: Not pointlessly
 Have she and other men been born below.

EROS: What reason is there to justify their pain?

APHRODITE: No reason, but the sovereign will of God.
 That will I do not question but obey.
 Go to her, child, my blessings go with you.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Outside the palace.

Enter EUNICE and DAPHNE.

EUNICE: What do you mean you don't know where she goes?
 I can't believe it. Do you mean to say

That every morning for six months you've watched
Your sister, your own sister, leave the house
At midnight ...

DAAPHNE: She's your sister too, besides
I never told you midnight.

EUNICE: Yes, you did.

DAAPHNE: I did not, Eunice. All I said's that she
Gets up an hour before the bell rings.

EUNICE: Bell?
What bell?

DAAPHNE: The—there's a bell that rings, I think
To wake the cooks and servants.

EUNICE: I wouldn't know
And I can't believe you don't know where she goes.
She never told you anything?

DAAPHNE: Not once.

EUNICE: Oh splendid! So now what are we going to do?
I told them that we'd find her. I can't believe
She never told you anything. I think
You're in this with her, Daphne, you must know,
You sleep in the same room with her.

DAAPHNE: Now wait!
It's not my fault she's gone. You can't blame me.

EUNICE: Who will I blame then? Oh, tell me it all again.

DAAPHNE: The only thing I know is that each day
Before the sun has risen she gets up,
Puts on a dress—a plain white cotton dress—
Goes down the hallway, to the left, I guess
She takes the back stairs ...

EUNICE: But I can't believe
She'd go without telling you, Daphne.

DAAPHNE: But she thinks
That I don't know she's going. It's still dark,
But she doesn't light a candle and she walks
On tiptoe, barefoot, she thinks I'm still asleep
And doesn't want to wake me.

EUNICE: I should say
She doesn't want to wake you, the little sneak.
The back stairs! I suppose she climbs the wall
To make her fairy tale complete?

DAAPHNE: Oh no.
She takes the west gate.

- EUNICE: How can you be so sure?
 DAPHNE: I watch from the window. Old Demetrius
 Is there. He lets her out.
- EUNICE: Immortal gods!
 It goes from bad to worse. Demetrius?
 A palace guard? He'll get twelve stripes for this,
 Before we throw him out the same west gate
 That he so sweetly opens every day
 Or night or I don't know and lets our sister—
 Our little sister—does she go alone?
 Alone! Wait till I get my hands on her
 I'll ...
- DAPHNE: Eunice, look. She's coming. Psyche, here.
 Come quickly. Hurry. Everyone's looking for you
 And Eunice is upset.
 [*Enter PSYCHE*]
- EUNICE: Upset! Come here.
 Where have you been? Where do you go? Alone,
 And dressed like that, like a sweet shepherd-girl,
 With flowers in your hair. You only need
 A pan-pipe and we'd swear you'd just stepped out
 Of some Sicilian idyll. Do you know
 That father and the whole assembled court
 Are waiting for you?
- DAPHNE: Psyche, the oracle ...
- EUNICE: Be quiet. Are you aware that father sent
 A messenger to Delphi to find out
 If anyone was ever going to come
 And take you away ...
- DAPHNE: She means to marry you!
 He sent someone to ask the Pythia—
 Apollo's priestess at the oracle
 At Delphi!—to ask who your husband would be
 And now he's come—the messenger—Oh come.
 I'm so excited, hurry.
- EUNICE: Do you think
 I'm going to let her go with you before
 I'm through with her?
- DAPHNE: But, Eunice, there's no time.
 She has to go and change. She can hardly go
 Inside, with all those people, dressed like that.
- EUNICE: But all this time she hasn't said one word.

- Not one, not even one "I'm sorry" and not
 A single thing about her escapade,
 Her six months' escapade. Well, where do you go?
 PSYCHE: Just up there—to the mountain—where we go—
 Daphne and I—across the valley. There.
 Near Aphrodite's little shrine. You know
 The place that overlooks the town. I go
 To watch the sun rise. It's so beautiful.
 It's still dark when I get there. Then the light
 Comes slowly, flickering in the darkness, pale,
 Uncertain, but it comes still, more and more
 And more and more. The grey sky turns to blue
 Like magic, filled with magical clarity.
 God's wonderful clear light fills all the world
 And everything looks beautiful. The birds
 Sing out for joy...
- EUNICE: Enough. We'll put an end
 To your bird-watching shortly. Go get dressed
 And quickly, but don't think I've done with you.
- DAPHNE: Come, hurry. You can wear my blue silk gown
 Or else the green one. I don't know. Oh hurry!
 [*They go out*]
- EUNICE: So Psyche at long last is to be wed;
 Our pretty little Psyche. Since no man
 Has come to court her, father has had to send
 To the famous Delphic oracle and now
 We are to hear the great Apollo's word:
 The message of the son of Zeus, as if
 The mutterings of some priestess, half insane
 From breathing noxious vapours were inspired
 Prophetic superhuman utterances!
 How credulous they are. Some likely name
 Will be pronounced: the son of some small king
 With rich gifts for the father of the bride
 And for Apollo's priests—a chest of gold?
 A herd of swine? Who knows? And then the prince
 Will come and take our Psyche unto wife.
 Oh let him be young, handsome, brave and wise,
 Like my dear husband—the old senile fool.
 At least I'll have his kingdom when he dies.
 [*Enter MESSENGER*]
- MESSENGER: Madam, the princess has been found.

EUNICE: I know.
I found her.

MESSENGER: Begging your pardon, madam, but
The king your father...

EUNICE: Yes?

MESSENGER: Desires...

EUNICE: Yes?

MESSENGER: That,
So please you, madam...

EUNICE: What?

MESSENGER: Desires that you...

EUNICE: Attend his majesty.

MESSENGER: So please you, yes.
So spoke the king your...

EUNICE: Tell my father the king
His daughter the princess will arrive post-haste.
[MESSENGER *hurries out*]
Indeed, she wouldn't miss this for the world.

SCENE TWO

PSYCHE'S room

Enter DAPHNE and PSYCHE.

DAPHNE: Don't waste time. I'll be right back. Comb your hair.
And take that out. I'll go get my blue gown,
But see if one of yours will do. Come on,
Stop dreaming, Psyche. There's no time for that. [*Goes out*]

PSYCHE: Love, it is you, I know. Our time has come,
The long awaited moment. I shall make
Myself most beautiful for you. My heart
Is beating like a hammer and my knees
Are weak. [*Sits*] I must compose myself. Be still
Be still, my soul, prepare to meet your lord.

How long have I waited?
Waited for my lover to come,
Hoped and anticipated
And prayed till my fingers were numb,
Prayed for my lover to come.

How long have I wandered

Looking for the trace of his feet?
 How many hours have I squandered
 Wondering when we finally should meet?
 Listening for the sound of his feet.

Now the waiting is over.
 The time for fulfilment is here.
 Now my days as a rover
 Are ended, my lover is near.
 The time for fulfilment is here.

[Enter DAPHNE]

- DAPHNE: Psyche, what are you doing? There's no time.
 Everyone's waiting. Here, give me that comb.
- PSYCHE: You're hurting me.
- DAPHNE: Well, you deserve much worse.
 Singing a song, admiring yourself in the mirror
 While they're all waiting. What were you singing about?
- PSYCHE: About my lover.
- DAPHNE: Oh? So that's where you go.
 Watching the sun come up! Well, I was fooled.
 Who is he?
- PSYCHE: I don't know.
- DAPHNE: Oh Psyche, please.
 Come here and let me button you. Now tell.
 Who is he?
- PSYCHE: But I told you, I don't know.
 And it's true I go to see the sun come up.
 Apollo, he's my lover.
- DAPHNE: Well, today
 You're going to get a human lover too
 Or at least a human husband.
- PSYCHE: Do you think
 That he'll be as handsome as Apollo?
- DAPHNE: Humf.
 Just hope he's handsomer than my old man.
- PSYCHE: You musn't call him that.
- DAPHNE: Why not? It's true.
 He's nothing but an old unpleasant man
 And I detest him.
- PSYCHE: Why did you marry him then?
- DAPHNE: You know as well as I. He "asked for my hand"

And promised father six fine regiments
To fight in his damned war. Where are your shoes?
Under the bed.

PSYCHE:

DAPHNE:

Go put them on. I hope
That you'll have better luck than Eunice and I.
Perhaps the mystic oracle will have
A surprise for you.

PSYCHE:

DAPHNE:

Do I look all right?
Just fine.
Now come. We've kept them waiting long enough.

(To be continued)

PETER HEBHS

“OPEN TO MY HELP, IT WILL NEVER FAIL YOU”

O TRAVELLER of eternity, light-child,
With thy staff of faith glide on thy path; mourn not
Thy slips; cross pitfalls, conquer valleys wild,
And safely to Her care leave thou thy lot.

Heaven at times may refuse to hear man's cry;
Not in high heaven thy heart of happiness lies,
But here on earth is She thy saviour sky,
To Her must each of thy calls and prayers rise.

Let no life's loves tie thee to the world, O soul;
Body's geotropic pull has been too strong
For a sun-born love-flame, but let thy role
Be singing for world thy God-heralding song.

Stumblings and Nature's engulfing deluge are there,
But stronger, if clung to, are Her Love, Her Care.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

DIALOGUES

(Continued from the issue of December 1975)

Synopsis

An infant human soul starts on her voyage through time. She awakens first in the land of the ancient goddess, Astarte, suffers an early death, and returns to life in Athenian Greece. There she presents herself at the temple and finds she is able to converse with the deity, Pallas Athene, whose statue is installed therein.

Chapter II

THE girl had scarcely settled herself comfortably when she was rudely disturbed. A number of people had crowded into the temple, priests foremost, and as they came upon her they all started talking at once:

“What’s this? Get her out.”

“Quickly!”

“The hour is auspicious and we cannot let the moment slip by.”

“Out, out!”

But even though they hustled her away, her inner voice continued to speak.

“Great Mother, must I go? Why are they driving me off?”

It was then that she saw the warriors in their full regalia of shields, weapons and crested helmets, while outside their chariots clattered and their horses pawed, pranced and snorted.

Still, the goddess deigned to answer her small, shrinking child.

“Yes, little one, you must move aside. But first look well. I am sending my sons to war. Are they not splendid, arrayed for battle?”

While they pushed her from the altar she continued to feast her eyes on the sight. “Splendid as the gods,” she gasped.

“There, you see? You have said it yourself: ‘as the gods.’ Now watch and observe the mortality fall away from each man like a shabby disguise from a prince. Go, go, hide behind that pillar and you shall see everything.”

Indeed, as soon as the girl had left the immediate area of the altar, the priests and warriors no longer concerned themselves with her. They had urgent work to do and they absorbed themselves in it—the sacrifice, the incantations, and finally the climactic moment when the entire company knelt before the goddess for her blessings and her word. Nor did she disappoint them, for to each she spoke in his heart so that each could hear and understand:

“In the name of Zeus and of my own godhead, I take your arms and bless them. In our sacred names may they smite the enemy to dust—the enemies of beloved Athens, the enemies of man. I take your hearts and offer them on the white altar of godly courage. Hold back neither from victory nor death—both are the lot of the

warrior and both you must look upon with an equal resolve. Now go. The gods are with you and I myself ride beside each of you in your war chariot. Go forward for the glory of Athens and the eternal honour of her gods."

When her last utterance had faded away, they rose and turned to leave. But it was clear that they were not departing as they had come. Something had been transmuted in them, some base and ordinary human part into a swelling, more-than-human force that glowed and pulsed, and gave them an aura of invincibility. Once again the outer courtyards came to noisy life. Horses reared, wheels, armour and weaponry ground, clashed and scraped. Men shouted and coaxed and swore, until all the company had disappeared down the steep winding path to the placid, sun-washed city below.

When all was quiet, the girl crept out again and crouched before the altar.

"Will they die, great Mother?" her heart's voice whispered.

And once more the goddess answered her: "Yes and no, child. Something of them will die, yet much more of them will live—beauty, courage, steadfastness of will, the spirit of Athens. Oh yes, much more will live than will die, and it will live forever." Her words trailed off into an intangible realm of dream, and the girl herself began to feel herself transported, lost, adrift in a world of abstraction where she did not belong and could find no bearings. Distractedly she turned from the towering form of the goddess and looked out through the pillars at the blue rectangles of sky beyond. The air was warm and balmy, silent and perfectly still. What had the goddess said? It was all so vague, and she couldn't remember any more. Death and life, glory and oblivion—and not one clearly distinguished from the other. No, she did not understand, and perhaps she never would. Her eyes closed on the world, on its problems, on the goddess herself. Nor was anyone about now to awaken her. She slept on undisturbed until the voice of the deity itself infiltrated her slumber.

"Child," Athene was saying, "It will soon be past noon. Life slips away as you sleep, for you are not yet strong enough to understand the truths of the gods, and all your struggles to do so are in vain. Go out into the city instead and live as all mortals must. Toil through your days and the duties of your woman's existence. Honour the festival days of the gods and keep your reason within its own limits. Then fortune shall be always with you. When at last you are stronger, return to me—you yourself shall know the proper time. Go now, my little one, into the world of work and effort, and my blessings shall be with you."

As the goddess was speaking, the girl felt something closing within her. Gates that had stood open to a great light slowly began to swing shut until finally the light was blocked from her vision. At last, even before the goddess had spoken her last words, the girl turned from the closed gates within her that loomed before her inner vision like a vast and impenetrable bastion, and sought to see the world through external eyes. Below, the city of Athens spread out before her, and she saw it indeed to be a world of work and effort and daily labour—a world not of gods but of men, where mothers scolded their children, cooks baked bread, farmers cultivated their olive

groves, slaves swept and cleaned and scrubbed, scholars discoursed in the agora, athletes sweated in their gymnasiums over their exercises; and somewhere, some miles distant, a band of warriors tramped through the dust on their way to war.

From that moment onward she dreamt no more, but lost herself in the life of her people. She too married, and bore her allotted brood, and grew old. And through all her days she never again spoke to the goddess, for something within her knew she was not yet ready.

Then at last the day came when the gates of her physical vision too, that had looked out upon the bright city and the earthly brilliance of its sunlight, closed, and she was gathered into the goddess's arms without once having glanced into her resplendent, helmeted face. For the inner eyes of the one who had been the girl remained closed, and she knew only the blessed darkness of rest after her long labour.

How many ages did she traverse thereafter as a somnambulist, a dream-voyager without apparent purpose? How could she know? She had no way of judging where she had been or how, what she had done or why. The gods gave no hint of their existence from behind their closely barred doors and her inner voice remained silent. Then finally at a given moment it happened. Her long sojourn in oblivion came to an end. Refreshed, miraculously reconstituted out of an apparent nothingness, she found herself dreaming—floating from one disjointed image to another as one does even in human dreams, when gradually the dreaming metamorphosed into remembering. Now long-forgotten realities relived themselves before her vision and the gods took breath again in her consciousness.

She returned to far beginnings before Astarte or Pallas Athene. When men still worshipped the naked sun, the dawn, the thunder and the fire, the ocean and the mountain peak. It was then that she had first learnt to speak to the gods. It was then that she had first understood they would answer and live within her without aid of priest or temple, for she had her own gift of the voice and the ear with which to converse with them. The elders of that first stone age tribe to which she had belonged had been much in awe of her gift, for they knew it to be inborn and true, and so they had made her the priestess of their rites and installed her in their midst as their medium between earth and heaven. She remembered now that their decision had held no fears for her, despite her youth, and she had gladly consented to her position as chief spokesman between her people and the great gods that ruled their lives. Yet as they were but nomads and herdsmen of the steppes and had never thought of home or settlement, they could build her no edifices to shield their deities. Instead with arms outspread their young priestess invoked the gods beneath the vastness of the sky. She built her fire of worship on the great plain with her tribe and their herds around her. And the gods in turn replied to her, not in the darkness of a stone sanctuary, but beneath the splendour of a full moon sky, or the red glory of a rising sun.

That had been her transcendent moment. Afterwards, times had changed. Cities had come with walls and enclosures, fields of growing grain, temples and markets, and all varieties of men—householders, merchants, warriors, tillers of the soil.

Therefore, when next she found herself among the living, all the great gods and their natural magnificence beyond reckoning had receded and disappeared over a distant horizon of time. Subsequently, for years she had looked at the stone-hewn deities in their temple niches and recognized nothing of god or man—only totems to be feared—grotesque, voiceless things whose dark, cold souls rejoiced dolorously at blood sacrifice. Ah, those altars where creatures had died in terror—how they stank and how she had shrunk from them in her child's heart. Only the temple fires attracted her sometimes. There was something about the leaping flame that sent a tremor through her and stirred some long-muffled recollection, which nevertheless refused to wholly revive.

Finally came the day when she looked into the face of the great statue, immense Astarte, and knew and saw again with a voice and with eyes that other men did not possess. Both faculties had returned as naturally to her as she had known them on the steppes of her nomadic homeland among her long-vanished tribe. It was Pallas Athene who had closed the doors of her perception again. For it was she in her wisdom who had divined that a mystic might dwell in Delphi or distant Asia, that there the gods might appear yet to man, but that in Athens there was other work to do. In Athens the physical world waited to be built—in words and thoughts and ideas no less than in hard, enduring stone. And so she had sent her child out of the temple to suit her greater purpose.

Now the brilliant confines of the Athenian world too had passed away, even in recollection. All other dream-images also vanished and she found herself awake at last in an air more soft, an earth more lush than any she had known before. After all her wanderings, Astarte's and Athene's child had come to the land of the fabled Ganges. Its ancient forests surrounded her, and through an opening in the trees she could see the expanse of the venerable river, seemingly as still and enduring as eternity itself. Behind her, nestled in a banyan grove, were the huts of the small ascetic community to which she belonged—a rishi white with a century of life and his handful of disciples of whom she was one. For was it not fitting that a priestess of the dawn ages should return eventually where she would feel most at home, rather than waste more of her years, her lives, in those little knots of human activity known as cities? Yes indeed, she had seen enough of them. Now, seated in meditation beneath her favourite tree, the beloved river before her, she cast all thought and memory aside and resolved to live the reality of the moment with all her conscious being. As she did so, a single voice reverberated through the depths of space within her:

“Seek no further. I am here. I am everywhere, I am love. I am wonder. I am the whole splendour of being. I am the river and the tree, the sky and the earth. I am all the gods you have ever known or ever seen in bronze or stone or moulded clay. Being in all and through all, yet I call this place particularly my own and welcome you to it.”

In reply she could utter not a word, for in fact there was nothing to be said. Instead, she felt herself afloat in such a cool and mystical delight that she abandoned

herself to it, swimming as languidly in this marvellous medium as a gold-fish in a sea of crystal water.

All her life thereafter became the unfolding fulfilment of her realization of the One—the One that had spoken to her in her meditation and that now held her in the perfect inner silence of its consciousness. Yet everywhere, beyond the four horizons of the jungle, the world struggled and changed in its habitual agitation, while the rishi's grove and its residents remained forever the same. So it was that Time finally manifested its impatience and gathered up the sage and his followers, inexorably one by one, until she too perforce gave up the body and the life that had brought her such enduring and tranquil bliss.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

HARSHNESS

WHY be harsh to anyone?
 Why not love everyone?
 Every trait is enjoyable
 As every note of music is.
 The presence of harshness in us
 Is a proof of something unbaked
 Somewhere lurking in us
 And requiring
 To be placed in an oven
 If not in a furnace.

GIRDHARLAL

NIGHT AND DAY

THE other day I sat
Through the listening night,
And heard innumerable voices repeat
Meaningless images and sounds —
Sounds that echoed
Through the empty day,
Like truth appearing with a grinning mask —
And every image broke into hideous laughter.

Ceasless toil through aeonic hours
Revealed life's wonders
Out of matter's mud —
Shapes and patterns
That in a dizzy spin entered
The luminous chambers of the Being.

And music escaped
Like lightning through the night.
A vision gazed into the eyes:
From the heart's chapel
A slowly emerging light
Flooded the unfolding secret skies of Bliss.

In the moments when triumphant love
Stole through the smiling flowers
An untold glory was his dream
Dreamt by him alone.

And the listening night saw
And felt, and longed
In a hushed expectancy —

A losing of self in a joyous vast.
She reached out for her greater Self,
A serene presence in her growing soul.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

A SEARCH APROPOS OF R. C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

(Continued from the issue of October 1975)

9

SOME MISCONSTRUCTIONS BY ZAEHNER OF INDIAN SPIRITUALITY

TEILHARD has an intense drive towards the mystical, and a keen intellectual pursuit of the object towards which he drives. But his intensity is narrowed in several respects because his intellect tries to shut out certain instinctive movements of the mystic in him and to make options he considers necessary if not compulsory. No Teilhardian has equalled his merits but most have escaped his defects. Among them we may count Zaehner as pre-eminent on the whole. Intellectually he is more hyper-Catholic than Teilhard and certainly more ecumenical in the religious field. That, however, does not save him from some grave misconstructions of Indian spirituality as well as of Sri Aurobindo

We may begin with his favourite quotation¹ from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (2.5.15): "Just as the spokes of a wheel are fixed together on to the hub and felly, so are all contingent beings, all gods, all worlds, all vital breaths and all these selves fixed together in this Self." It is not fully interpreted by Zaehner. It does not only mean, as he makes out, a Centre on to which everything converges. As the word "Self" must suggest, it also means that everything has its essential and inmost reality in one basic Existent and that everything is supported by this Existent and emerges or radiates from it. In addition, some central region in our being seems suggested, where all things find their sense of reality for us, go home to us and where we can reach by a profound inwardness or interiorisation (as Teilhard would say) the Self of all. This Upanishad has often the turn: "the Self that is within all" (*e.g.*, III.4.1), and the emergence or radiation of everything from this Self is clearly illustrated in an earlier stanza: "As a spider moves along the thread (it produces), and as from a fire tiny sparks fly in all directions, so from this Self emanate all organs, all worlds, all gods and all beings" (II.120)² The various shades of significance, along with a pointer to some central region in our being, come out directly from three stanzas of the Mundaka Upanishad (II.ii.5,6,1):

¹ *Evolution in Religion: A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (The Oxford University Press, London, 1971), p. 3.

² *The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, translated by Swami Madhavananda (Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 4th Ed., 1965), p. 390.

“He in whom are inwoven heaven and earth and the mid-regions and mind with all the life-currents, Him know to be the one Self...”

“Where the nerves are brought close together like the spokes in the nave of a chariot-wheel, this is He that moves within,—there is He manifoldly born...”

“Manifested, it is here set close within, moving in the secret heart, this is the mighty foundation and into it is consigned all that moves and breathes and sees...”¹

Perhaps Zaehner fails to gauge the fundamental meaning of the Upanishadic Selfhood, even though he² has cited the Gita (6.29): “...the yogin sees his ‘self in all beings standing, all beings in the self: the same in everything he sees.’”—and even though he³ has himself given us the Isha Upanishad’s answer to his question about “the abiding truth within”, which he considers “the central message of Hinduism”. The question is: “And what kind of Self did [the sage who turned his eyes inward] find?” And the answer is:

“When once one understands that in oneself
The Self has become all beings,
When once one has seen the unity,
What room is there for sorrow, what room for perplexity?”⁴

And the verse (6) just preceding the above goes, in Sri Aurobindo’s translation:⁵ “But he who sees everywhere the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self, shrinks not thereafter from aught.”

It is the deficient comprehension of the Self of the Upanishads that throws Zaehner quite off the track when he faces another revelation of the Brihadaranyaka (I.4.10) which he⁶ translates: “Who so thus knows that he is Brahman becomes the whole [universe], even the gods have not the power to cause him to un-Be, for he becomes their own self.” With the two expressions—“un-Be” and “own self”—staring at us, the sense is obvious: “The knower of Brahman realises and cognises, in terms of his own being, the single essential self-aware Existent who is all, and nothing can dislodge him from this omni-selfhood that is his. The gods might think they have the power to make him forget what he is, but they too must fail, for he is even their self-essence, and how shall they dislodge what is their own selfhood? Can they obscure or obliterate the Brahman-consciousness which is the Being of all beings?” What does Zaehner have to say?

His context is a passage of Teilhard’s, which begins: “When a man has emerged into consciousness of the cosmos and deliberately flung himself into it, his first impulse is to allow himself to be rocked like a child by the great Mother in whose arms he has just awoken.”⁷ By “the great Mother” Teilhard means material Nature, which,

¹ *Eight Upanishads*, translated by Sri Aurobindo (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1953), pp. III, 109.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 41. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 94. ⁴ Verse 7.

⁵ *Eight Upanishads*, p. 9. Sri Aurobindo’s version of verse 7 is: “He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?”

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 18. ⁷ *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 28.

according to him, is the objective of "all pagan pantheisms". The end of the passage runs in Zaehner: "The essential revelation of paganism [by which Teilhard means Hinduism and Buddhism as well as nature mysticism in general] is that everything in the universe is uniformly true and valuable: so much so that the fusion of the individual must be effected with all things, *without distinction* and *without qualification*." Zaehner¹ comments: "This is the mysticism of the earlier Upanishads." Then he makes his quotation from the Brihadaranyaka and gives his gloss:² "This is to merge into the diffused state of primal matter, a state in which neither self-consciousness nor conscience has yet appeared: hence there is no sense of good and evil."

Here there is, first, the gratuitous assumption that primal Matter is the Upanishad's Brahman. When the Upanishad speaks of the Brahman-knower becoming the whole universe it has in view the Self of all—and the universe concerned includes the gods who certainly cannot be considered Matter. There is, next, the assumption, equally gratuitous, that the Upanishad is describing a state which is so rudimentary that self-awareness and the moral sense have yet to arise: besides being unconscious, this state is devoid of conscience and is capable indiscriminately of doing any evil without the least compunction. Zaehner has constantly on his mind the idea of an a-moral or immoral component of Indian mysticism: he could not help referring to it even in the brief talk we had during his flying visit to the Ashram in 1969. And it breaks out in full force in what follows the interpretation he gives to the Brihadaranyaka's verse. With another verse of the same Upanishad in mind, he³ continues:

"To the man who has had this experience these two thoughts do not occur, "so I have done evil", or "So I have done good." He shrugs them off. What he has done and what he has left undone does not torment him.⁴ This is the eternal temptation or the eternal glory (as some might say) of Hinduism: for the man who is merged in cosmic consciousness, in Brahman, good and evil no longer have any meaning. This is quite brutally asserted in the *Kaushītaki* Upanishad (3.1)..."

Zaehner gives the assertion:

"Indra did not swerve from the truth, for Indra *is* truth. So he said:

"Know me, then, as I am. This indeed is what I consider most beneficial for mankind—that they should know me. I killed the three-headed son of Twashtri, I threw the Arunmukha ascetics to the hyenas. Transgressing many a compact, I impaled the people of Prahlāda to the sky, the Paulomas to the atmosphere and the Kāla-kānjas to the earth, and I did not lose a single hair in the process.

"The man who knows me as I am loses nothing that is his whatever he does, even though he should slay his mother or his father, even though he steal or procure an abortion. Whatever evil he does, he does not blanch.'"

Then Zaehner asks:

"But what is Brahman? Is it pure spirit, or is it merely undifferentiated matter? Whatever it may be, this transcending of good and evil in a state of undifferentiated oneness is typical of Hinduism but not, significantly, of Buddhism. Even the *Gitā*

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 18. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 19-20. ⁴ 4.4.22.

(18.17) reaffirms the doctrine in no uncertain terms: 'A man who has reached a state in which there is no sense of "I", whose soul is undefiled—were he to slaughter all these worlds—slays nothing. He is not bound.' As Teilhard says, 'the fusion of the individual must be with all, *without distinction* and *without qualification*' with what we generally regard as evil as well as with what is obviously good."

Here is a pretty kettle of fish. We shall first clarify the intent of the Brihadaran-yaka. The verse from which Zaehner has culled the passage about having done good or having done evil is followed by another (5-4-23) which has the words: "This is the eternal glory of a knower of Brahman: it neither increases nor decreases through work. (Therefore) one should know the nature of that alone. Knowing it one is not touched by evil action. Therefore he who knows it as such becomes self-controlled, calm, withdrawn into himself, enduring and concentrated, and sees the Self in his own self; he sees all as the Self. Evil does not trouble him, (but) he consumes all evil. He becomes sinless, taintless, free from doubts, and a Brahmana (knower of Brahman)."¹ Surely, the man who is self-controlled cannot be one who would indiscriminately indulge in evil and good? Nor can he who consumes all evil be irresponsibly capable of it. What is expressly said is that the Brahman-knower becomes self-controlled because no evil action touches him: there is no prompting to evil action within him. The same thing is said when we are told that no evil troubles him. Indeed, how can it since the state he has reached is one that consumes all evil: that is, purifies and enlightens the passionate nature and brings about an utter freedom from egoism, freedom that is the infinity of the one Self in all? Evidently, what the preceding verse of the Brihadaranyaka means is: "The Brahman-knower, attaining the supreme Self, becomes free from the hold of all actions he has done, for he has left all his ignorant past behind and there is no remorse for the evil of his past any more than satisfaction for the good of days gone by. Mental torment for committing bad deeds or omitting good ones is no part of his liberated consciousness." Zaehner's suggestion that the knower of Brahman makes no distinction between evil and good is absolutely unfounded.

It is all the more surprising because the portions that Zaehner has not quoted of the very same verse are themselves enough to give it the lie. They run: "The Brahma-manas seek to know (that great birthless Self) through the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, charity and austerity consisting in a dispassionate enjoyment of sense-objects. Knowing it alone, one becomes a sage The ancient sages, it is said, did not desire children (thinking), 'What shall we achieve through children, we who have attained this Self?' They, it is said, renounced their desire for sons, for wealth, and for the worlds, and lived a mendicant's life This Self is That which has been described as 'Not this, not this.' It is imperceptible, for it is never perceived, undecaying, for it never decays; unattached, for it is never attached; unfettered—it never feels pain, and never feels injury."² It is after this passage that Zaehner's culling comes. Is it not absurd that sages, mendicants, world-renouncers, who keep a dispassionate and unattached attitude to sense-objects and practise austerity should be thought of as leap-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 375. ² *Ibid.*, p. 349.

ing into evil action without a scruple just because they are in a state of consciousness beyond the ignorant, troubled, evil-tempted, good-groping that is the common lot? Besides, the passage Zaehner gives is precisely a reference to actions already finished: "What he has done and what he has left undone does not torment him." This pointer to the past is enough to weigh against Zaehner's case.

No doubt, there is a further aspect to the state of Self-knowledge: this state "neither increases nor decreases through work." The same notion occurs in the portions before Zaehner's selection: "It does not grow better through good work nor worse through bad work."¹ Being beyond the world of mutation, the world of conflicting opposites—being infinite and complete—the Supreme Self has no need of any work as such: nothing can add to it, nothing can take away from it: increase and decrease belong to the sphere of dualities like pleasure and pain, possession and loss, merit and demerit, good work and bad work. Yes, the Self is beyond good and evil in this sense of world-transcendence and innate perfection. Nowhere do the Upanishads figure the Self-knower as below either conscience or self-consciousness. He is above our ordinary moral struggles just as he is above our ordinary egoistic individuality. But, as the Brihadaranyaka pointedly says, he thereby "becomes sinless, taintless", which is the same as what Zaehner² twice quotes St. John as saying in his first Epistle (3.9):

No one who has been begotten by God sins;
because God's seed remains inside him,
he cannot sin when he has been begotten by God.

As for the Gita, there is the identical teaching. Krishna's directive is towards a state free of sin, pure of evil. By knowledge of the Divine, even he who was at one time the worst offender can rise above them: "Even if thou art the greatest doer of sin beyond all sinners, thou shalt cross over all crookedness of evil in the ship of knowledge" (IV.36).³ And Krishna's promise to the God-lover is: "I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve" (18.66).⁴ The Gita never tells us that the mystic sinks below the human level of conscience. No less than Buddhism, Hinduism enjoins work for the good of all creatures after God-realisation has been obtained. The work may be static or dynamic: the God-realised man may stay in one place and help people by being their spiritual guru or he may shoulder an active undertaking in some walk of life. But work as a duty ceases for him and he is not bound by any work: he has no personal reactions, for he is beyond the little ego that usually does work and that is attached to its results. And whether he works or not, the inner plenitude remains the same and he is forever and infinitely free in the depth of his being where the Self of selves is known either as the universal Ground or as what the Brihadaranyaka, in the verse on which Zaehner has drawn, calls "the controller of all, the lord of all, the ruler

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 348. ² *Op. cit.*, pp. 57, 105.

³ *The Message of the Gita, as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo*, edited by Anilbaran Roy (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1946), p. 83.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

of all, the protector of all.”¹ This relation of works to him is shown in the Gita’s: “When a man liberated, free from attachment, with his mind, heart and spirit firmly founded in self-knowledge, does works as sacrifice, all his work is dissolved” (IV.23).² The inner freedom from the effect of works is emphatically put with an eye particularly to one’s past actions when the Gita says: “As a fire kindled turns to ashes its fuel, O Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge turns all works to ashes.” (IV.37).³ And this very thought is differently expressed by the Gita’s declaration that a man whose soul has passed beyond the world’s “dualities” and is jealous of none and is equal in failure and success “is not bound even when he acts” (IV.22).⁴ The freedom from bondage to action is also one of the themes in the citation Zaehner has made with the aim of proving the Gita’s support to the doctrine that for the man merged in Brahman good and evil no longer have any meaning. Indeed it is the master-theme in the verse, but Zaehner has missed its bearing. In the light of it the meaning we get is: “Acting without the sense of the small ego, of the common ‘I’, acting from the ever-undefiled immutability of the Self, the Yogi ‘is not bound’, he is as if he did not act at all, and even though he may slay the whole world’s people he is not the slayer.” Here is an extreme manner of reiterating the Isha Upanishad’s “Action cleaves not to a man” (2).

But there is one important shade more. And this shade is what makes Zaehner stumble, for he misses the great revelation of Vedanta that the God-realised man does not act out of his own sense of good and evil, or in deference to society’s conventions of virtue and vice or in obedience to some Shastra’s distinction of right and wrong: he acts by an inspiration from the Divine Consciousness with which his soul has become one or else to which his being is completely surrendered. The call to such unity or such surrender, with its consequent inspiration issuing in action, is sounded in Krishna’s: “Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in me alone” (18.66).⁵ The inspired action may happen to be a terrible slaughter like the mighty battle of Kurukshetra in which Krishna asks Arjuna to take part with a liberated inner being. Not Arjuna but the Master of the Worlds to whom he has to give himself will then be the doer. A greater Good than any we can conceive with our normal standards will be the result of an action, be it ever so norm-shattering, which is *truly* inspired by the more-than-mental Consciousness.

The shattering of norms brings us to Zaehner’s excerpt from the Kaushitaki Upanishad. Two points must be made at the very outset. First, the exploits Indra enumerates with a high pride in them are all concerned with supernatural hostile beings, as should be obvious from the three-headedness of the son of Twashtri, the sky to which the people of Prahlada and the atmosphere to which the Paulomas were impaled. Even apart from these clear clues we know from myth and legend, as R.E. Hume⁶ showed in the footnotes to his translation, that Indra is mentioning demons,

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 748. ² *The Message of the Gita*, p. 78. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 83. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁶ *The Ten Principal Upanishads* (Geoffrey Cumberledge, Oxford University Press, Indian Reprint, 1954), p. 321.

Asuras. In ridding the occult worlds behind the earth-scene of devilish powers that extend their working to the earth-scene as well, Indra is doing immense good and becoming all the more worship-worthy. Also, he adopts tactics suiting the diabolical character of his enemies, and in any case the "ethics" of dealing with non-human evil-doers who are devoid of conscience or soul-sense, cannot be evaluated by ordinary standards. Next, there is a linguistic problem connected with the second part of Indra's assurances to his would-be worshipper. Zaehner translates them all in the present tense, implying that the man who serves Indra is given *carte blanche* to do anything, however evil. Hume's rendering has no touch of the present tense. It¹ goes: "So he who understands me—by no evil whatever of his is his world injured, not by stealing, not by killing an embryo, not by the murder of his mother, not by the murder of his father; if he has done any evil (*pāpa*), the dark colour departs not from his face." Here the direct implication seems to be: Indra's knower comes to a state of spirituality in which all his past Karma, be it ever so evil, has no force any more: as the Gita says, "the fire of knowledge turns all works to ashes" for him who has turned from his sins to the Divine. As Hume explains in a footnote, the God-realised man is no longer an individual consciousness and whatever he may have done as an individual cannot relate to him or affect him in his liberated condition: his face does not become pale with the thought of even the most sinful past.

Supposing Zaehner's present tense to be valid, then too the whole Kaushitaki-excerpt has a lesson to teach. It is framed as a "shocker", an extreme mode of stating the inalienable purity and rightness of all that is authentically activated by the super-human Light for the ultimate good of the world, no matter how heinous it may look in the immediate view. To the follower of this Light no loss can come: he remains divinely innocent even if he seems superficially to do evil. But it is important to remember that Indra is not asking anybody to go in for evil-looking deeds, to make it his special job to "slay his mother or his father, ...steal or procure an abortion." He just asserts that one who lives in the genuine knowledge of the Indra-nature does not act the prude or the puritan or the conventional moralist but understands from the inside, so to speak, the unspotted spontaneity, the unimpeachable liberty of the divine consciousness. The quality of that consciousness is hinted in the very first phrase: "Indra did not swerve from the truth, for Indra is truth."

Zaehner, with his Christian background and modern humanitarian mind, seems to take Indra's "brutal" outburst as a call to horrible activities. Nor does he realise that an activity becomes horrible only when the divisive ego operates: where the divisive ego is in abeyance or surpassed, we cannot bring the ordinary ethical yardstick to measure the work accomplished. It is by this yardstick that Zaehner also fails to gauge some aphorisms of Sri Aurobindo's. Obviously he² reads the Kaushitaki's Indra in the aphorism where Sri Aurobindo has "dared to say": "God justifies Himself in the end even when He has masked Himself as a bully and a tyrant."³ The crucial word

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 320-321. ² *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

³ *Thoughts and Aphorisms* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1958), p. 82.

“masked” seems ignored: it implies that God is never really what His face apparently suggests and that what appears to us as bullying and tyranny is a long-sighted super-human deployment of overpowering energy to achieve a good undreamt-of by man.

Neither this aphorism nor the Kaushitaki, neither the Brihadaranyaka nor the Gita blurs the distinction of good and evil in the ordinary world. Certain actions are as a rule to be avoided. Without their avoidance the whole movement of Indian Yoga would be shorn of one of its arms. But, for the arrived Yogi and for the ways of God with man, we have to suspend our customary judgments. Does not Zaehner himself recognise the need of such suspension and recommend to us a higher consciousness’s shocking norm-transcendence when he¹ describes how the Logos-made-man among the Jews “lived in flagrant opposition to all the received standards dictated by all the egoisms, both individual and collective, that had accumulated since the ‘Fall’ ”? There is “the excoriating twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew... addressed to the religious establishment of the time, but addressed also to all the establishments, whether religious or secular, of all time”.² In the “Jesus of the Synoptics” “we have a life which is the absolute antithesis of the kind of life the Jews expected from their Messiah”, a life not only “of humility and self-effacement”, “hardship and... spiritual anguish and near-despair”, but also “of absolute and deliberate rejection of all the accepted social norms and of cant and humbug in all their manifold disguises (for was he not the friend of tax-collectors and prostitutes?)...”³ Zaehner⁴ has further reminded us “that Christ, the Prince of Peace, had also said... ‘It is not peace that I have come to bring, but a sword.’ ” We may look at the whole sequel to these surprising words: “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”⁵ A radical shattering of norms, if ever there was one, is here—and it is interesting that the victims of the norm-shattering are some of those who figure in the Kaushitaki, one’s most intimate relatives against whom any action would normally strike one as most culpable.

We may add that Zaehner elsewhere has noted a paradoxical trait even in Jesus’s attitude to the problem of worldly life and interest. He⁶ writes apropos of Jesus’s Church:

“From the beginning...she was a casuist; and for this at least she cannot be blamed, for the sayings of Jesus are themselves quite often not consistent. ‘Ye cannot serve God and Mammon’, ‘You cannot be the slave both of God and money’,⁷ Jesus had said. This, however, she has successfully done throughout her chequered career, and in this she could have claimed the authority of the Lord himself, for it was he, not she, who commended the unjust steward. You will all remember this most puz-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 74. ² *Ibid.* ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112. ⁵ Matthew 10.34.

⁶ *Concordant Discord: The Interdependence of Faiths* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 368.

⁷ Matthew 4: 1-10.

zling of all the parables—the incompetent steward who was dismissed for extravagance and who then proceeded to cook the accounts of his master's debtors. But 'the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'¹ Or, in a more modern version:

"The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light. And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity.'

"In these two things, then, at least the Church has been faithful: she has wielded the sword and she has never hesitated to 'make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness'. In neither case was she totally disloyal to her master..."

Zaehner seems once to be on the verge of formulating the problem of "beyond-good-and-evil" correctly. In a book² later than the present one, he discusses the Buddhist concept or experience of "Emptiness" and "Suchness", to which the Tao of the Taoists is akin. Here, he says, "there is neither Nirvana nor *Samsāra* [= the world], neither Oneness nor multiplicity. Or, more positively, you could say that it is a Oneness beyond all number or a 'Goodness' beyond good and evil. 'Love and do what you will', St. Augustine is alleged to have said. A Zen master of the Tokugawa period said in a similar vein: 'Die while alive, and be completely dead: then do whatever you will, all is good.'" The phrase "a 'Goodness' beyond good and evil" hits the mark, and the Zen master's dying while still being alive indicates the transcendence of the ego which lives in the midst of "dualities" — like and dislike, pleasure and pain, right and wrong, all of them rigid reactions of a limited separative consciousness. Freed from this consciousness, one is not below the right and wrong of the ego-stance but far above it. St. Augustine saw in that freedom a love in immediate touch with the true soul in man, as distinguished from the ego — the soul that is infused with the Divine Light. Proceeding from the selfless warmth of this Light, from the golden glow of the heart's union with God, one would have no need for common criteria of good and evil, for one would spontaneously move in tune with the Supreme's purpose in the world and carry out the works of a transcendent Goodness, whether understood of men or not.

As a last word of clarifying sanity on the theme of "Beyond-good-and-evil" in relation to Hinduism we may quote a passage from an early writing of Sri Aurobindo's³. Expounding the attitude of the epic Mahabharata's author, Vyasa, particularly with the figure of Krishna in view, he tells us:

"The drift of Vyasa's ethical speculation has always a definite and recognisable tendency; there is a basis of customary morality and there is a higher ethic of the

¹ Luke 16:8-9 (A.V.).

² *Drugs, Mysticism and Makebelieve* (Collins, London, 1972), pp. 124-5.

³ *Notes on the Mahabharata* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1956), pp. 47-9.

soul which abolishes in its crowning phase the terms of virtue and sin, because to the pure all things are pure through an august and selfless disinterestedness. This ethic takes its rise naturally from the crowning height of the Vedantic philosophy, where the soul becomes conscious of its identity with God who, whether acting or actionless, is untouched by either sin or virtue. But the crown of the Vedanta is only for the highest; the moral calamities that arise from the attempt of an unprepared soul to identify self with God is sufficiently indicated in the legend of Indra and Virochana.¹ Similarly this higher ethic is for the prepared, the initiated only, because the raw and unprepared soul will seize on the non-distinction between sin and virtue without first compassing the godlike purity without which such non-distinction is neither morally admissible nor actually conceivable. From this arises the unwillingness of Hinduism, so ignorantly attributed by Europeans to priestcraft and the Brahmin, to shout out its message to the man in the street or declare its esoteric thought to the shoeblack and the kitchen-maid. The sword of knowledge is a double-edged weapon; in the hands of the hero it can save the world, but it must not be made a plaything for children. Krishna himself ordinarily insists on all men following the duties and rules of conduct to which they are born and to which the cast of their temperament predestined them. Arjuna he advises, if incapable of rising to the higher moral altitudes, to fight in a just cause, because it is the duty of the caste, the class of souls to which he belongs. Throughout the Mahabharata he insists on this class-standpoint that every man must meet the duties to which his life calls him in a spirit of disinterestedness,—not, be it noted, of self-abnegation, which may be as much a fanaticism as the grossest egoism itself. It is because Arjuna has best fulfilled this ideal, has always lived up to the practice of his class in a spirit of disinterestedness and self-mastery that Krishna loves him above all human beings and considers him and him alone fit to receive the higher initiation...

“And even the man who has risen to the heights of the initiation must cleave for the good of society to the pursuits and duties of his order; for, if he does not, the world which instinctively is swayed by the examples of its greatest will follow in his footsteps; the bonds of society will then crumble asunder and chaos come again; mankind will be baulked of its destiny. Sri Krishna illustrates this by his own example, the example of God in his manifest form.”

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ “Both of them came to Brihaspati to know from him of God; he told them to go home and look in the mirror. Virochana saw himself there and concluding that he was God, asked no farther; he gave full rein to the sense of individuality in himself which he mistook for the deity. But Indra was not satisfied; finding that there must be some mistake he returned to Brihaspati and received from him the true God-Knowledge which taught him that he was God only because all things were God, since nothing existed but the One. If he was the one God, so was his enemy, the very feelings of separateness and enmity were not permanent reality but transient phenomena” (*Ibid.*, p. 57).

A SECOND LETTER TO THE AUTHOR OF “THE MOTHER OF DREAMS”

RELATING TO THE INSTALMENT PUBLISHED IN THE ISSUE OF
NOVEMBER 1975

29/30.10.1975

Dear Amal Kiran,

Going over what I sent you yesterday, I found I had forgotten to mention something fundamental about the dream of August 29, and other things as well. On August 29 you were right at the dimensional point in Time that corresponded to the day the Mother's body was placed in the Samadhi. In the light of what I said regarding that section of Time with respect to the Transformation, its aspect of *re-birth* and not death as we know it, it makes great sense to me that the Mother should have said to you in that dream that she was celebrating her 'birthday'—and especially significant was the remark of the attendants, that she could not celebrate it on February 21st and was doing so then.

Actually the ancients saw that this particular time/space section was both the *womb* and the *tomb*, and that the womb of the physical mother and a tomb of whatever order of Mother Nature served the same purpose. Depending upon the development of consciousness of the individual any number of possibilities would be there concerning the regeneration of form. Nothing was limited—the only limiting thing was the boundaries of the individual consciousness. Thus in the question of Time (which holds the key to all this) and hence Destiny, there is not *one* time but many, many different dimensions therein, *many different Times*, each with its own set of possibilities. Therefore there are also many different destinies for an individual, within a certain space. It is only a matter of expanding the consciousness to such an extent as to include an ever wider set of possibilities and finally to give form to the highest of these out of the infinite range of the dimensions of Time. To us then such a being possessing these capabilities, who has expanded in this way, appears to be “free of all laws”; yet what really happens is that that being has merely embraced more and more laws within himself and therefore his field of action appears infinite compared to ours, unlimited—free. Such was the case with Sri Aurobindo, and in your article you mention the fact that he left his body at a time that an astrologer had predicted, which then might give the paradoxical impression that Sri Aurobindo was bound by a rather limiting set of mechanical laws, that he had not realised the highest, and so on. In fact, as is always to be noticed in this topsy-turvy world of ours, it was because he had realised the highest that he was *free* to leave his body at a time he chose to, which was not a breaking of the laws of the cosmos but rather making use of them for the benefit of the Earth evolution, because the fact of a transformation of matter into a more divine substance *is contained in the laws of the cosmos*, and it is through these that the work is to

be done. For most people the time of death usually reveals the same disharmony as the totality of their lives. It is not easy to "die" in harmony, that is, in harmony with the laws of the Cosmic Truth and not the Ignorance. This is the sense to Sri Aurobindo's continuous insistence that his work was "for the Earth". If we want to work "for the Earth" we must find a harmony with it in terms of its essential Truth. And for this reason the lives of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother conform to *the most perfect harmony within the Manifestation* that we have knowledge of. Rather than "escape", in their very beings they have shown us the way to a perfect embodiment of Harmony within the field of Earth possibilities.

So, for the Mother, entry into the Samadhi—to which you tuned-in beforehand by slipping into the same dimension in Time—signified a re-birth regarding form, as she had announced to you in your dream. This was the passage, within the cosmic laws, into the womb/tomb.

By this you can easily understand why the Pyramids in Egypt, which in very ancient times were used for the process of regeneration, later came to be looked upon by Science merely as tombs—not only by Science but actually within Egypt itself once the ancient knowledge had been lost. Here in India also there are traces of such knowledge but most of it is gone now, because therein also a regeneration has come about, a new revelation for a new age. But here too, even in the present day, such a reality as the physical regeneration exists, for there are stories told about yogis who retire into a cave in the Himalayas for such a purpose, closing themselves up therein, performing certain acts and then, it is said, they enter trance for *9 months*, after which a regenerated form emerges, like the serpent that sheds its skin. In this way they postpone Death. Note that here also it is the same as a gestation in the womb/tomb, which in this case is the cave, and the necessity for complete isolation from outside influences for a period of 9 months. The Mother's entry into the Samadhi took place exactly 9 months to the day after her 95th birthday, and that, as could have been expected, corresponds to the cosmic position of the womb/tomb which is reached through a process of dissolution, the details of which are determined by the individual herself or himself.

In a gestation period of 9 months, be it of a human being, a cow or whatever, the full period is divided into spans of three months, and science and experience tell us that each three months completed signifies the completion of a certain process regarding the foetus in gestation. This can be seen as well in the Mother's case because from her 95th birthday if we count three months we come to 21 May. From February 21st to May 20th she continued to receive some people but she withdrew from work activities. Then May 20th marked entry into the second group of three months, a new more concentrated phase, and thus on that day a more radical withdrawal occurred. Darshan Day came on August 15th and the completion of the second three-month span would have happened on August 20th. I do not know myself whether a change was noted by the attendants at that time, but I would say that after August 20 she would have withdrawn to such an extent that a further

“darshan” would have been impossible. Finally the last of the three-month periods ended exactly with the placing of her physical sheath in the Samadhi on November 20th, 1973. To sum up: we have/February 21 to May 20/May 21 to August 20/August 21 to November 20.

This gestation process of the Mother was concerned with the concentration of power in the “body” she was to release in the atmosphere at the time of her “death”. She built this up as one would give form to a child, and then cast it out into its own independent existence.

Some people may feel disturbed that the Mother followed such a clearly defined cosmic rhythm, wishing her to be beyond and above all law. I find it magnificent, and the greatest of graces for the Earth.

This, in any case, is a work which would have occupied the last nine months of the Mother’s physical embodiment. Your dreams which contained this knowledge in a hidden form took place nine months after your birthday.

Another thing that your dreams bring up and I am personally very interested in concerns the numbers 11 and 47, because I have always felt that a fundamental experience for the Mother regarding her yoga of physical transformation was the experience of April 12/13, 1962—her “death” experience. Note therefore that her withdrawal took place *11 years* later, and August 1973, the time of your experiences, would be *11 years and 4 months*, and November, the time of the Mother’s withdrawal, would be *11 years and 7 months*. Thus your dreams contained this fact in the numbers 11 and 47 but above all in the *time* you experienced them, the study of which makes it possible to piece all this together!

Look at it in this way: Imagine that your destiny, your Time, is a line, and you are moving along this line. With respect to the Earth and its evolution this is the same line the Mother moves along, only her entry into it occurred at a point of greater and more perfect harmony. Perpendicular to this line there are the other dimensions of Time. In August you reach the point on the line that is the Mother’s passing, because it is in fact the same corresponding point on the Mother’s line of Time. All lines are coinciding all the time, but when it is an event that is to radically alter your life, or produce a profound impact of some sort, you “tune-in to it”, you burst into the Mother’s line as it were, because she holds the experience within her Time, the experience that is to change your life. And in that process of “tuning-in” you touch upon knowledge of many different levels, mixed up with the personal aspects of the experience which we need not discuss here, and usually we are able to understand only a fragment of it. We may ask: How is it possible that all this was contained in Amal’s dreams? In the last chapter of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, entitled “Towards the Supramental Time Vision”, Sri Aurobindo succinctly gives the answer in the portion that I have italicised in the quotation:

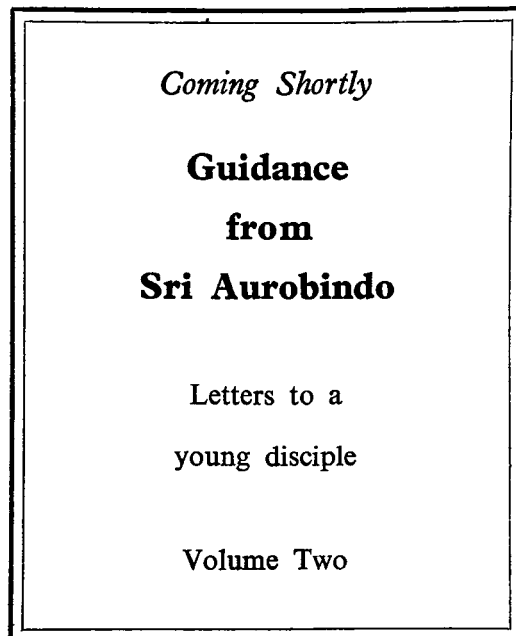
“Man, confronted by this incapacity of the intelligence and yet avid of the knowledge of the future, has fallen back on external means, omens, sortileges, dreams, astrology and many other alleged data for a past and future knowledge that has been

in less sceptical times formulated as veridical sciences. Challenged and discredited by the sceptical reason these still persist in attracting our minds and hold their own, supported by desire and credulity and superstition, but also by the frequent though imperfect evidence we get of a certain measure of truth in their pretensions. *A higher psychical knowledge shows us that in fact the world is full of many systems of correspondences and indices and that these things, however much misused by the human intelligence, can in their right place and under right conditions give us real data of a supra-physical knowledge.* It is evident, however, that it is only an intuitive knowledge that can discover and formulate them,—as it was in fact the psychical and intuitive mind that originally formulated these ways of veridical knowledge,—and it will be found in practice that only an intuitive knowledge, not the mere use either of a traditional or a haphazard interpretation or of a mechanical rule and formula, can insure a right employment of these indices....¹

Such dreams as yours take on a more objective meaning when they make use of a symbol that is universal, in this case numbers; by so doing those portions of the dream stand out from the more subjective aspects, which, though they may be personally important experiences and valid in this sense, do not bear the other more universal character. Number gives them a "matter-of-fact" nature, as the Mother expressed in your dream.

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

¹ *On Yoga I: The Synthesis of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1953), p. 1021.



SIVA: THE UNIQUE CONCEPTION OF RĀMALIṄGAM

(Continued from the issue of December 1975)

IV. The Illimitable Nature of Siva

IN the context of the illimitable freedom of Siva all conflicting ideas find their proper place giving rise to an illimitable concept corresponding to the illimitable nature of Siva.

When Siva is described as the one, which is not two, etc., all that is meant is this: there is no second entity besides himself; hence there is nothing outside to limit his independent existence. But it is wrong to turn such a description into a rigid conception that Siva is incapable of phenomenal differentiation or manifestation. Siva is One because he exceeds but does not exclude multiplicity. Hence Rāmaliṅgam describes Siva as '*the One and the Many*'.³⁸

Siva is referred to as the attributeless. It is wrong to take the attributelessness as a negation of attributes. If Siva is devoid of attributes he will be deprived of his freedom of having attributes. In view of his unrestricted freedom the attributelessness cannot mean absence of attributes; it only means absence of the limitation by attributes. It does not deny but only transcends the attributes. Therefore Rāmaliṅgam says that Siva is '*possessed of attributes and no attributes*'.³⁹

Siva is spoken of as having descended into the cosmic forms such as the Lord (*Paṭi*), the self (*Paśu*), and the world of matter (*Pāśā*). It means the descent is from a level other than these forms. That is to say, it must be from a level of formlessness for the simple reason that we cannot think of a form higher than these highest forms. But the formless⁴⁰ can not be a condition of absolute void. Unless it is a positive condition, forms cannot come into being. In other words, the formless does not exclude the power of formation. It only exceeds the latter. Hence the declaration of Rāmaliṅgam that Siva is '*the formed and the formless*'.⁴¹

Siva is said to be undifferentiated. Taken in an absolute sense, an undifferentiated reality excludes all that is differentiated. It means it is a blank state in which nothing exists and from which nothing can arise. Since Siva is possessed of the freedom of self-limitation or self-differentiation, the undifferentiated ought to mean a condition greater than the power of self-differentiation. It is to bring home this truth that Rāmaliṅgam says that Siva is '*one in whom nothing exists and in whom everything exists*'.⁴²

Siva is described as the immutable. To take immutability as the opposite of mutability is to insist on a rigid division of these two ideas. Thus understood Siva must be a reality incapable of the power of self-modification and self-manifestation. Since Siva has the freedom of self-manifestation, the immutability ought to mean a condition greater than the mutable forms brought into existence by that self-manifesting power. It is in this context that Rāmaliṅgam says that Siva is '*the reality which*

has become all and which is other than such becomings.⁴³

Siva's nature is spoken of in terms of contrary predicates. To insist that the contraries are co-ordinate, that they should not be taken successively, Rāmaliṅgam says:

It is one; it is many;
it is one *and* many.⁴⁴

Though this kind of co-ordinate predication is the only means by which Siva's illimitable nature can be adequately expressed, it is by no means exhaustive. For his original nature exceeds even the formula of contrary predication.⁴⁵ Hence Rāmaliṅgam declares:

It is one; it is many; it is one and many;
it is *other than these*.⁴⁶

Considering the immensity of his nature, Rāmaliṅgam simply but suggestively calls Siva '*the One in natural position*' (*tyarrkaiyānai*).⁴⁷

The description that Siva is the natural Truth, Consciousness and Bliss is chiefly aimed at giving expression to his illimitability: the natural Truth is not limited either to the level of phenomenal order or to the level exceeding it; likewise, this interpretation applies to the other two aspects also, the natural Consciousness and the natural Bliss. To take the epithet 'natural' in any other sense would be tantamount to missing the true significance of the teaching of Rāmaliṅgam.

V. Suddhasanmarga: the Synthesis of Siddhanta and Vedanta

Philosophically speaking, Rāmaliṅgam describes Suddhasanmārga as a synthesis of Siddhānta and Vedānta.⁴⁸ Obviously he is not speaking from a historical point of view, that is to say, he is not thinking of these systems with reference to their chronological position. In his philosophical or spiritual career he gradually moves from the less perfect to the more perfect view, from the less harmonious to the more harmonious idea. So when he talks about Siddhānta or Vedānta or Suddhasanmārga, he is only referring to the corresponding view or idea in the process of his philosophical development. Stated in clear terms, in saying that Suddhasanmārga is a synthesis of Siddhānta and Vedānta it is meant that the latter two as less perfect views lead to Suddhasanmārga, the more perfect view (mark the word '*suddha*' which means 'perfect'). In other words, Siddhānta and Vedānta mark the different stages in his philosophical development, the highest point of which is represented by Suddhasanmārga. Hence we may speak of three stages of his philosophical development: first the stage corresponding to Siddhānta; second, the stage corresponding to Vedānta; third, the stage corresponding to Suddhasanmārga which comprehends the views of both Siddhānta and Vedānta.

(1) As for the first stage, there is clear evidence in his works that Rāmaliṅgam held the Siddhānta view first. In one of his speeches known as the Supreme Message he mentions how he was first deeply absorbed in this view.⁴⁹ Some of his descriptions

of God and soul confirm how he was in favour of this view:

- a) It is the God of Siddhānta (*cittānta tevam*)⁵⁰
- b) Having been made ripe for the freedom from *Pāsā*, having been shown the original nature of *Pasu*, having been made to reach *Pati* (*pati cēra vaittu mur-pasunilai kātṭṭṭ pāsa vimōcana pakkuvan ākki*).⁵¹

It is possible to multiply such quotations from his works. Needless to say, the triple reality of *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pāsā* is a Siddhānta conception. From this some scholars hasten to conclude that Siddhānta is the final view of Rāmaliṅgam, without fully looking into his teachings.

(2) Secondly, Rāmaliṅgam passes on into the position of Vedānta. He says that God is-

- a) the attributeless Brahman (*pirama nirkuṇam*)⁵²
- b) perfect without qualities *nirkuṇa nravai*)⁵³
- c) an entity bereft of qualities (*kuṇa rakatap poruḷāki*)⁵⁴
- d) the reality which is not two (*uḷḷatu iraṇṭilai*)⁵⁵

All these are evidently descriptions of God from the point of view of (*advaita*) Vedānta. Rāmaliṅgam considers that this view is possible only after one has passed through the first, the view of Siddhānta.

Unless one goes through the dual state, the Lord declared, it is not possible to realise the non-dual state.⁵⁶

In view of Vedānta, which is a non-dual view, Siddhānta may be regarded as a kind of dual view. For the latter holds that *Pati* is the independent and the rest (*Pasu* and *Pāsā*) are the dependent. Here too some scholars go to the extreme of saying that Rāmaliṅgam is a vedāntist, though this conclusion is hardly justifiable.

(3) In fact Rāmaliṅgam is neither a siddhāntist nor a vedāntist, exclusively. Let us consider the following statements.

- a) Siva is the only Reality (*civam onrē poruḷ*)⁵⁷
- b) How did the three (*Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pāsā*) become one at the end (*monrum onrāy muṭintatu enna*)?⁵⁸

These clearly show that though he may be in favour of the Siddhānta view, he refuses to limit himself to this view. They indicate how the conception of three realities is exceeded in the conception of one reality. A defect in the Siddhānta view is that *Pati* has other realities (*Pasu* and *Pāsā*) by his side though he is in an exalted position by virtue of his infinite, spiritual and auspicious qualities. As we have already pointed out, *Pati* as the God of Siddhānta falls short of the highest reality which is never in the position of another (*vide* section III). Likewise, he is inclined towards Vedānta and yet not willing to limit himself to this view either. There is a difficulty in Vedānta too. According to this view Brahman is never in the position of another. But limited by this negative condition, it is deprived of the freedom of becoming all and exceeding such becomings. So Brahman cannot rise to the status of ultimate reality which not only does not have another by its side but has the power of becoming all and exceeding all (*vide* section III). Hence Rāmaliṅgam says:

The true Siva who is capable of becoming all and exceeding all, is superior to Brahman (*ellām āki allātataṅkum...unmaic civam pīramamuṭiyē*)⁵⁹

Though each view has a defect of its own, each has a value: Vedānta emphasises that the ultimate reality should be free from the position of being another, whereas Siddhānta stresses that the world cannot exist in the absence of the cosmic forms of *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pāsā*. Rāmalingam tries to bring about a harmony between these two views so that their best elements may be retained and defects removed in a comprehensive view. It is in this mood that he asks himself,

Is it possible to arrive at a synthesis of Vedānta and Siddhānta?⁶⁰
or expresses his desire,

I have to find out the common point between Vedānta and Siddhānta.⁶¹
He is now looking for a higher level of consciousness or a larger view where Vedānta and Siddhānta would be naturally complementary to each other. This is the third level of development marked by the emergence of the view of Suddhasanmārga which believes in the illimitable nature of Siva (*vide* section IV).

Suddhasanmārga is a synthesis of Siddhānta and Vedānta in the sense that it *accepts* as well as *exceeds* them; it contains the idea of the One without a second but it is more than the idea of Vedānta, for it adds that the One is endowed with the power of becoming all and exceeding all; it also contains the idea of the triple cosmic form of *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pāsā* but it is more than the idea of Siddhānta, for it adds that the triple cosmic form is the expression of the self-becoming of the One without a second. Hence Rāmalingam declares that Suddhasanmārga does not reject the views of Vedānta and Siddhānta but simply goes beyond them as the most comprehensive view of God.⁶²

(Concluded)

N. JAYASHANMUKHAM

NOTES

38. *Ibid.*, 6-96-3 39. *Ibid.*, 3-1-35 40. *Ibid.*, 3-5-14 41. *Ibid.*, 6-102-1
42. *Ibid.*, 6-2-13 43. *Ibid.*, 6-46-16 44. *Ibid.*, 6-81-21 45. *Ibid.*, 6-81-1241
46. *Ibid.*, 6-81-21, 22 47. *Ibid.*, 6-44-10
48. Though Rāmalingam speaks of six traditional views—Vedānta, Siddhānta, Bodānta, Yogānta, Nadānta, and Kalānta—he points out that the last four are comprehended in the first two, the third and fourth in the first, and the rest in the second.
49. ūran Adigaḷ, *Rāmalinga Adigaḷ Varalāru*, 1971, p. 497 (hereafter called RAV).
50. *TA.*, 6-41-10 51. *Ibid.*, 6-85-8 52. *Ibid.*, 6-81-942 53. *Ibid.*, 6-46-24
54. *Ibid.*, 3-5-14 55. *Ibid.*, 6-20-8 56. *Ibid.*, 3-18-27, 28 57. *Ibid.*, 6-134-20
58. *Ibid.*, 4-27-13 59. *Ibid.*, 6-140-11 60. *Ibid.*, 6-11-3 61. *Ibid.*, 6-65-1
62. *RAV.*, p. 243

Corrections

In *Mother India*, December 1975, p. 992, line 8, read “(*vide* c)”;
p. 995, line 16, read: “(ellām tān alatāy)”.

CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Introduction

SRI Aurobindo has brought a new Yoga for mankind. The Mother has spoken about it and lived it in her relationship with the sadhaks and in every detail of Ashram life. This paper is an application and extension of the principles which they have given to the field of Business Management.

Because it was originally intended for an audience in the West unfamiliar with the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the principles have been stated in their most general terms. For sadhaks of the Integral Yoga the references to the Inner Divine, Higher Consciousness, Responsiveness of Life, etc., are properly understood as directly referring to the Mother in her Immanent, Transcendent and Universal Personalities. In this light the entire approach reveals itself as a methodology based on Sri Aurobindo's teachings and the essence of the method is a discovery of the Mother in oneself and in the world.

I. As we are to life, so life is to us

The Consciousness Approach is applicable to any field of human activity. Before considering in depth the specific case of Business Management, we wish to discuss the fundamental principle upon which the entire approach is based and to consider its wider application in the life of an individual. We do so because there can be no clear division between a man's personal and professional life; the two overlap and constantly interact.

This principle denotes that there is a direct correspondence between man's inner life of thoughts, feelings and impulses—his consciousness—and the circumstances and events in his outer environment. The external situation is an extension of his inner consciousness expressed in outer life. This principle is derived from the most universally accepted spiritual knowledge, the truth of Oneness. There is but One Reality which manifests itself as many. All are essentially One. The sense of separation, independence, difference is a surface phenomenon. Yet even on the surface all beings, things and events are linked in mutual interdependence. Man's ego acts as a knot dividing the individual from the world around, the inner from the outer. But the fact of oneness remains. This principle implies a very powerful tool for affecting the external world by discovering the point in one's consciousness which corresponds to an outer condition and acting on that point by an inner effort. Normally life events are a *reaction* to one's inner condition. When a conscious effort is made to change oneself within, life *responds* to that effort.

If one scrupulously examines the events of a single day in the light of his

thoughts, feelings, impulses, a pattern of correspondence will begin to reveal itself. This knowledge can gradually be extended to include all the conditions, circumstances, events in his personal and professional life. Then by a firm decision in the mind or an intense will in the heart one can modify his thoughts, feelings, impulses. He can replace negative attitudes, biased opinions, impatient expectations, confused rambling thoughts with clear, objective, positive mentation or even a silent receptivity which allows a higher understanding to be born. He can reject turbulent feelings, insatiable desires, possessiveness and selfish demand to attain a calm, peaceful, harmonious condition in which the deeper emotions of sympathy, goodwill, self-giving and love can emerge. To the degree that this inner mastery and perfection is achieved, outer conditions and events take on a strongly positive and cooperative character. Life brings constant opportunity and fulfills every requirement. The area of one's effectivity depends upon the development of his consciousness and the field of outer life with which he concerns himself, identifies in thought and emotion. It is most powerful in the close proximity of one's personal environment, family, home and profession. As the consciousness grows, expands, enlarges to identify itself with wider fields of human activity, there is an increasing capacity to affect the greater life of the society. This type of effort falls within the domain of Yoga.

In business these correspondences can be seen in all aspects of institutional operation, most easily perhaps in the relationship between management's attitudes and feelings on specific issues and the behaviour of employees. For example, it is a common complaint of management that staff are not interested in the quality of work they do, only in the monetary rewards for the job. Yet in almost all such cases it can be easily verified that the manager is not at all interested in the individual worker for his own sake, only in his productivity. Both look after their own interest and do not bother about any greater good. In unusual cases where the manager truly takes interest in each individual, in his health, welfare, creativity and happiness, the workers are very concerned about the quality of the work performed and the success of the entire enterprise. In either case the attitudes and behaviour of the employees toward work are a direct reflection of management's attitudes toward them.

Another common situation is one in which management concerns itself with the happiness and welfare of its employees only when a crisis comes, such as a threatening walk-out or a strike. The corresponding employee attitude is a refusal to work without constant supervision and reprimand. In either case a sincere attempt by the organizational heads to reverse their attitudes will bring about an immediate change in the behaviour of the staff.

There are any number of examples for this principle, for it expresses itself in an infinite number of ways through every aspect of life. All of the other principles discussed below derive from this truth. These separate principles are considered because it is easier for the mind to see life from a single viewpoint and each of these principles looks at the Oneness of Life from a different angle. If one becomes directly aware of the One Divine Reality through the practice of Yoga, then all mental prin-

ciples fall away before the clear preception of the true relationship between all the manifold elements of existence.

All of the illustrations which follow are from the author's personal experience testing these principles in actual practice both in India and in the United States.

II. The Company

An institution cannot be properly described by categorizing it solely in terms of a business, social, political or educational function. It is much closer to the truth that an institution is a living organism with a personality, history, life experiences, skills and capabilities all its own. The original founding idea, concept or ideal, the pioneering individual, the social and economic climate and context, the prior condition of the field in which it is established, all contribute to determining the character of the institution even in the distant future. All present attributes can be traced back to their seed origin in the past. In Sri Aurobindo's terms, each institution has a mental part composed of the constituting ideals, principles and rules for governing its operations, decision-making processes and systems of communication. It has a vital part composed of the energies and dynamic processes which translate plan into action and yield concrete results and it has a physical part, the building, equipment, tools and machines. The individuals employed by an institution contribute their own personal qualities and resources to these different levels. But besides these, every institution is like every individual and every nation, an evolving being which has behind and within it a higher element of divinity, a soul spark. Like the individual and the nation, the institution can only fulfill itself by discovering this element, bringing all its life into conformity with that living ideal and expressing it in daily functioning. In short, every institution regardless of its nature—political, social, religious or economic—has a role to play in the growth of those who participate in it, a role to play in the growth of the larger community of which it is a part, a rightful seeking for its own fullest and highest development as a manifestation of some aspect of divinity. A business institution is a living organism and, like any person, it responds to us.

The practical value of this viewpoint is immense when rightly applied to a specific institution, a business for instance. First, it makes for a much truer awareness of exactly what the business is and the important role played by so many factors in forming its present make-up. With individuals, it is natural to attribute a particular personality characteristic to a childhood circumstance or other life events. Such an approach yields a fuller comprehension of who the individual is. The same is true of an institution. Secondly, this approach provides a key for the proper understanding and resolution of specific problems in the present. A company is dependent on but not limited by any element such as owner, manager, expertise, sales potential, etc., though all of these contribute to its character and may powerfully influence its very existence. Whoever seeks to truly know the company or fully relate to it, whether

he is management, staff, client, etc., can best do so by recognizing this truth and seeking contact with the central personality. Furthermore, to the extent that anyone does relate to the central personality and identify with it, to that extent he gains influence over all aspects of its present existence and future destiny. One individual taking sincere interest can change the functioning of a large enterprise. All depends on the degree of his interest and the application of his will.

(To be continued)

GARRY JACOBS

WHILE READING "ABOUT SAVITRI"

TO A SMALL GROUP IN NEW YORK

WHEN lightning strikes a sharp
 Streak of line shining
 On the bosom of the Dark Sky
 On a Slumbering Night
 It is the Divine Laughter
 Of the Divine Universal Mother.

When the Dark Clouds
 Rumble and churn
 The Cup of Sky
 There comes the beautiful
 Downpour of Sweet Tears
 Of the Divine Mother,
 Rushing off her soft silken cheeks,
 Bathing her child with
 Her Divine Purity and Touch
 Making the Mother Earth
 Green and Lush
 Starting the Cycle
 Of Four Seasons—
 The Four Powers of the Divine Mother
 Turning this
 Great Wheel of Time Eternal.

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of October 1974)

(7)

We took the Romantic Road to Frankfurt. What romance had given this part of the Autobahn this romantic name no one seemed to recollect.

We were in the very heart of West Germany now. Roads ran out in all directions, towards the north-east and the north to Berlin, Leipzig, Hamburg, and Hanover city on the river Weser "deep and wide" that "washed its walls on the southern side". Who knows, there we might be meeting a modern Pied Piper of Hamelin if we chanced to alter our course. By the way, men of Hamburg do not eat the famous steak named after their city for reasons gastronomers only can tell. Towards the south stretched the road to Stuttgart and Strasbourg. The latter evokes memories of the Franco-Prussian War and all its aftermath in European diplomacy. Stuttgart was the birth-place of Hegel the great German philosopher.

*
**

And far to the south-east lay Vienna, a city of nostalgic dreams which for some unknown reason had been left out of our itinerary, but one we could hardly forget while passing through Germany. Vienna was the city where the heart-beat of Europe throbbed through centuries.

A place for life to live and flow,

A place for love to live and glow,

Vienna is her name,

A fairy land of fame.

When once you've heard her laughter gay,

You weep when you are torn away;

A thousand memories call you back for one more day.

As the years roll on and your youth is gone,

You will remember Vienna:

You will recall evenings in May,

Sweethearts who came and vanished away.

Whence did they come, where did they go,

Vienna will never let you know.

The memories of Vienna in its days of glory filled the ears with strains of great music. Most of the great composers of the 18th and 19th centuries had to go to Vienna to get recognition; Vienna was their Mecca. Once established there, lauded there,

their future was secure, their name was made. The first impact of this world of music was felt as we crossed the river Danube, just after Munich. We were all seated very demurely no doubt in our comfortable air conditioned coach, yet the heart danced with the Emperor's Waltz and the Voices of Spring. The spirit of Strauss seemed to hover above the scene and led us in a dance through a whole world of fantasy. And when we were too tired of waltzing, Brahms appeared with his Lullaby and Liszt brought his Liebestraum. Mendelssohn was there with his sister Fanny, his chief source of comfort and inspiration. Titanic Beethoven, deaf to the noises of the outer world, poured into our ears his symphonies and the Moonlight Sonata in torrential cascades. In the magnificent Opera House of Vienna (rebuilt after the War) people seemed to dance Paderewski's Minuet in G Major. Who were these people? Ah, well, perhaps Queen Christina and Catherine the Great, the Empress Maria Theresa, Marie Antoinette. And their partners? Maybe, a Gustavus Adolphus or a Duke of Marlborough, the hero of Blenheim; or was it the Duke of Wellington or a cosmopolitan Edward VII of England who was so fond of the good things of life? Or perhaps it was the great Napoleon who came to Vienna as its conqueror and ended by marrying an Austrian princess to wipe off the stigma of his plebeian birth. One may comment that many of these crowned heads of Europe were not there when the composer wrote his music. The answer would be: wherever did you find a fantasy logical or a dream chronological?

Then came Mozart with his Magic Flute and the Requiem which filled our ears with strains now gay and sweet, now sad and grim; with Mozart's music came the apparition of that mysterious man dressed in black and his face covered by a hat, who had left an unsigned letter with Mozart. The writer of this letter commanded Mozart to compose a Requiem. Was the man a visitor or a visitation? Or was it a premonition? For Mozart died soon after he finished the Requiem—it was his own Requiem. Then came Chopin, with his delightful Polonaise and the Nocturne which softened the garish day. Like the ghostly visitor of Mozart, George Sand flitted around the name Chopin. George Sand was Chopin's unladylike girl-friend who hastened his end by forcing him to appear at concerts when the youthful composer was too tired even to eat. When Chopin was gone quietly came in Tchaikovsky with his Concertos. And Rimsky Korsakov appeared whose music has a certain exotic charm that pleases the Indian ear. Finally Wagner broke the spell with the thunderous complexities of his Lohengrin, and Tristan and Isolde, as if ushering the atomic age. "I like his music," once commented Queen Victoria, "but do not understand it; his music is for the future." Most of us would agree with the Queen.

The Spanish Riding School is an institution in Vienna that every tourist ought to visit. It is something that is not a fantasy but simply fantastic. The performance of the Lippizan horses is truly magnificent. The horses' capriole is comparable to a ballerina's leap in the air. The show once seen could never be forgotten. This institution peculiar to the Austrian capital is something unique in the world. The cine-lords were fond of making films of these horses in the olden days. We still remember some

of those films we had seen when we were young. They say the Lippizan horses are born jet black in hue and turn spotlessly white as they grow. How that could happen, by what miraculous alchemy, it is impossible for us to say. During the War these beautiful horses were threatened with extinction again and again. And the gorgeous hall was turned into a prisoners' camp. Some brave men, lovers of horses, rescued them and found them a safe haven elsewhere. The horses, we understand, have since come back and perform their feats before distinguished gatherings once more.

The Austrian of today though he has lost practically everything that made his life so gay at one time is still remarkable for his carefree manner. We met a few on our way. On the other hand Vienna was known to Europe not merely for its evenings in May and its gay laughter, but also for the enormous prestige it enjoyed as the seat of a great empire. This empire, founded by Charlemagne exactly a thousand years before Napoleon ended it, provides one of the most colourful panoramas of European history. In the 8th century the Italians and the Pope, then the most powerful personage in Italy, had no love for the Empress Irene ruling over the tottering Roman Empire in Constantinople. Her crimes and atrocities shocked the intelligentsia of Italy. They chose Charlemagne as their emperor. And the new Empire that thus came into being was given the name of the Holy Roman Empire to distinguish it from the old one, which was just the Roman Empire. La Vallée puts it this way: "There was nothing Roman left in the world. A Christian priest [this was Pope Leo III] gave to a German soldier the title of that which had ceased to exist." And perhaps Voltaire was justified to some extent in his oft-quoted *bon-mot*: "It was neither holy nor Roman nor an empire." Charlemagne was a German and remained a German to the end. His aim was to make Germany the leading nation in Europe. It was Charlemagne who brought Christianity to the wild German tribes. He brought them peace and a thin veneer of culture. Under him the first German grammar was compiled. He introduced into Germany the Romanesque style of architecture, which later developed into the famous Gothic form. He was illiterate, although they say he always kept several exercise books handy; perhaps he did not find the time to use the pen as he was too busy wielding the sword. He lived mostly in Aachen but the later emperors made Vienna their capital.

How far did Charlemagne succeed in making Germany the leading nation in Europe it is difficult to say. For European civilisation is a complex of many strands and each of the great nations has contributed to make it the great thing it has been. Travelling through Germany, we asked ourselves: What was Germany's part, what was its special contribution to European civilisation? In the Middle Ages it was Germany that supplied the Empire with powerful and colourful Emperors. For with the downfall of the Carolingian line France was permanently separated from the Empire. Henceforward the Emperors were elected from among the kings of Germany. There were five major kingdoms: Thuringia, Saxony, Swabia, Franconia, and Bavaria. As the centuries went by, the electors grew in number. Many a large city, commercial

towns, marks and margraves became independent. The political history of Germany is as chequered and as varied as possible. When the other European nations had organised themselves into strong and unified states, Germany was still a loose confederation of innumerable political entities. When Napoleon invaded Germany he found not one Germany but three hundred Germanies.

The Renaissance left Germany practically untouched so far as the intellectual and artistic life of the German people was concerned. Scientific research too was negligible. In the field of religion on the other hand Germany's contribution was very great. For it was Luther's ninety-five theses that started the movement known as the Reformation. Luther was summoned by the Emperor to defend his position at the Diet of Worms — "worms" that were destined to eat into the heart of Christendom! There he asserted that he would not change his views. This instantly made him a national hero. His ideas spread like wildfire and brought in Protestantism. Erasmus had deplored the low intellectual standard of the German people. At least in one field Germany vindicated itself.

(To be continued)

CHAUNDONA AND SANAT K. BANERJI

A CORRECTION

IN "Europe 1974: A Travelogue" in the June issue of *Mother India* there was a slight mix-up between "right and "left" in the first paragraph. The correct version is:

The dare-devils of modern Europe prefer the left hand path and not the one on the right, just as the medieval Tantrics did when they chose the *vāma mārḡa*, as the quickest road to perdition.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Altar and Flame by *Amal Kiran*. Published by Aspiration, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1975. Price: Rs. 20; \$ 4.95.

THE artist has a responsibility: it is to express as truly as he can the highest vision he can receive or command. This implies a sincere craftsmanship and a constant upward orientation. If these conditions are fulfilled not only will his art be always at its peak for his own growth and satisfaction, but will also have its full utility and influence in the world. It is because artists have become irresponsible in these respects that the Muses in our century have withdrawn and the arts have lost their way.

Who outside the circle of his devotees can credit that a major poet lived and worked in this century—Sri Aurobindo—one worthy to be named with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare? One can readily imagine the incredulity that would greet this assertion in our faculties of Literature. But fortunately for the future and for the Art of Poetry, not only did such a poet live and work, towering above the limitations of his day, he also fostered in his light a circle of lesser but indubitable poets who can prove a heartening inspiration and encouraging model for those of us who dare not aim to scale Olympus but would yet adventure on the lower slopes of the divine mountain.

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna to the wider public) is one of those who received inspiration and critical encouragement from Sri Aurobindo as well as spiritual guidance. His latest book of poems, following *The Secret Splendour* and *The Adventure of the Apocalypse* after a lapse of more than a quarter century, shows that he has continued to fulfil the poet's responsibilities, with the richness and warm charm that are his special gift. Aspiring poets should resolve to follow his lead of meticulous craftsmanship and spontaneous self-offering to the Heights. One poem can illustrate some of Amal's poetic virtues and intensities, and indicate the unique poise that colours all his poems:

ANTICIPATION

Surely in future ages some
Thinker will brood upon a theory
That my strange poet-passion of love has come
To worship an august philosophy
Whose intellectual rays
Of truth have woven all this dream of hair
Streaming in beauty from an angel face:
Else how could man give such ideal praise?
Was ever woman pure enough to bear
A mirrored paradise
Within the changeful glory of her eyes?

Poor sage! whose bloodless kin denied
 Lips to the smile that Dante sighed
 Through hollow years to see again—
 Will you with your unpassioned abstract brain
 Make clear how the august philosophy
 Which I was song-allured to speak
 By symbol of a white brow's majesty
 Had one dark mole upon its rapturous cheek?...
 That miracle you never shall explain,
 For incorruptible truth has beckoned me
 Not through a drudging wisdom but because
 A woman's mouth breathed like a perfect rose
 Deep-rooted in her soul's divinity!

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An intriguing poetical exercise has been filled with meaning in

TRUTH AT THE BOTTOM

What's a well?
 Fathomed well
 It's an 'I'
 Whose hidden eye
 Has never forgot
 What skies have got.
 Deep in the soil,
 Free from all soil
 A spirit sees
 What moving seas
 Always behold
 Yet never hold.
 Here a still spot
 Can ever spot
 As selfed in it
 The infinite.

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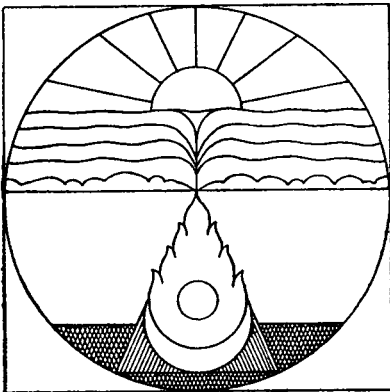
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